

**North Loop Neighborhood Association**

**Planning & Zoning Meeting Notes**

**October 19, 2016**

**6:00 P.M.**

**Heritage Landing Community Room, 415 1st Street North**

1. October Board Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M.
2. Ten committee members were in attendance: DJ Heinle, Dave Decker, Kelly Nelson, Mark Hill, Neil Reardon, Karen Rosar, Francesco Parisi, Alice Eichholz, Jo Vos, Sydney Anderson; Darwin Lookingbill was absent.
3. **A motion is made, seconded, and approved by the Board to approve the Board Meeting Agenda.**
4. **A motion is made, seconded, and approved by the Board to approve the September 2016 Board Meeting Minutes.**
5. Metro Blue Line Extension – Dan Pfeiffer, Metro Transit
	1. The Blue Line Extension, starting at Target Field and traveling northwestward, will have 11 stations and an anticipated 27,000 daily rides. The record of decision was issued last month and municipal consent was given earlier in the year. Now Metro Transit is taking the design from 30% to 100%. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2018; heavy construction will continue through 2020; the line will be opening in 2021.
	2. The bridge and the HERC driveway are some of the areas most relevant to the North Loop Neighborhood. At a prior meeting, the Committee stated its preference for less of the wall and more of the bridge to be visible to make a better pedestrian experience. Metro Transit is currently in talks with Hennepin County about what the design of the area underneath the bridge could be; currently, there is a lot of black chain link fence, but it will be much more pedestrian friendly. The aesthetic proposed for the Blue Line will complement the Green Line features as well. Since the last time Metro Transit presented, it has adjusted the bridge, adding another span and reducing the length and height of the retaining wall. Metro Transit has been incorporating feedback – as a result, if one is walking on the sidewalk, the areas on the other side of the bridge open up sooner, there is room on the sidewalk for trees and grates in the boulevard zone near curb, and there is a generally more comfortable walking experience.
	3. The Committee likes the updated design much better. There are questions as to whether the extra fenced-in space under the bridge could be used as a bio swale and for storm water management. Metro Transit will examine the possibility; they will also continue to analyze the grading of the area. Metro Transit specifically mentioned that they would like feedback from the Committee to inform the next set of plans, which will be the 60% plans. They will then return between 60% and 90% to present again.
	4. The Committee also mentioned the possibility for educational or art displays along the fence, similar to those fabricated images of Twins players between 5th and 7th, which is a Mississippi Watershed grant project. The commission iterated that it is a great opportunity to educate people and to present HERC as the asset that it is.
	5. There was a request made for more trees to be added south of the light (as depicted on slide 11); however, with 300 vehicles accessing the driveway daily, there is a significant need to protect sightlines and thus, trees in that area might not be feasible.
	6. There is no lighting currently under bridge; however, the design at the Olson intersection is still in development and will need to coordinate with Southwest.
	7. Some members are disappointed with the “bad urban design.” Perhaps there could be more greening on the wall and fence, although the budget for such things is unknown. Metro Transit explains that the structural soils will encourage growth of the trees; however, it is challenging to put greenery on the wall, as is north-facing and vines won’t thrive there.
	8. Recommendation is made for aesthetic lighting that pulls people’s eyes upward. Lights cannot be near the LRT lines because of cross currents; however, linear lights may be able to be placed along the edge of bridge.
	9. Metro Transit will be sure to add more lighting and refine the design of the fence. The next design level (60%) will probably be ready in March or April, but Metro Transit will certainly let the committee know if anything is ready before that point.
6. Heywood Campus Expansion – Cathy Nordin and Robert Rimstad, Metro Transit
	1. The two projects presented are part of the Master Plan process that was discussed about a year ago.
	2. Transit Police Headquarters
		1. The new building will be a 60,000 square feet facility. The site plan shows that the bus drive will remain in the same space; squad parking will be behind the new building; the building entrance will now between the new and existing buildings.
		2. There will be crosswalks across 6th Avenue. The design is narrowing the width of the bus drive by 6 feet so that there will be a shorter walk for pedestrians crossing the driveway (6 feet is the most that they can reduce the width.) There will be also be a light with a walk request and the ground will be striped for added pedestrian safety measures. There will be both stairs and ramp access to the building entry. The setback for the building along 6th Avenue is about 40 feet from the sidewalk. There isn’t really room for trees in 6-foot wide sidewalks, so the trees will be planted in planters on the property.
		3. The building’s façade will be made of anodized aluminum and will have glass windows. It will have a fairly simple design, as there are many other buildings in the area with a lot going on. There will be a retaining wall, where the grade drops about 8 feet, for security and to prevent vehicular traffic from turning into the building. The mechanical space and arrested persons intake will both be on the northern side of the building.
		4. The projected employment for the building in 2040 is 400 full- and part- time officers, spread over 3 shifts. This administration building will not be open 24-7; however, there will be meeting rooms on the 3rd and 4th floors open to public. The entire building will be secure except for the atrium space. Chamber for council meetings will be moved from the existing building adjacent to this facility. Existing parking lot will become visitor and handicap accessible. There will also be solar panels on police headquarters.
		5. There was a question regarding the force’s ability to arrest people. Metro Transit will look into the ability to arrest and will bring along officers with them next time so that the Committee can get to know them better.
	3. Bus Garage
		1. This new structure will be the “home base” for storage and maintenance operations for over 200 busses. The existing facility has exceeded its capacity.
		2. Maintenance, operations and bus parking will all be on same, main level. Potential future additions are shown as part of larger campus plan, which include an instruction center visible to the public.
		3. The renderings of the structure show lot of materials and colors to break up the massing of the immense structure (540 feet x 400 feet). Metro Transit wants the building to have a good presence, especially coming from north to south. The landscaping plan is still being developed, but there will be a green roof area for employees. This feature structure would have rooftop solar energy collection – as much as 2 megawatts. A third party vendor would own and operate the panels.
		4. Buses would exit the property out on 5th by fire station and then turn onto 10th, rather than turn directly onto 10th because of traffic and curb cuts. The site’s proximity to the freeway significantly reduces operating costs.

There is a traffic impact study for 5th and 10th that is being submitted to the City. There is likely to be a request for a signal at 10th, and at 7th, as well as a larger left turn lane. The main level of the building is unable to meet the sidewalk due to the 12-15 feet grade change and the fire access lane that must surround the building.

* + 1. Metro Transit will return when the design is more detailed. In response to Committee’s urging, it will push for trees and an evolved landscape plan. The budget has not been finalized yet, but the focus of much of the design efforts will be along 7th Street.
	1. Both projects are still in the design phases. Metro Transit is still trying to fund additional money for the bus garage, but are targeting to start in 2018-2019. The police headquarters will be opening in 2019.
1. C Line update – Scott Janowiak and C. Terrence Anderson
	1. This 2nd BRT route for the region will be replacing bus route 19. The line, which will run from the Brooklyn Center Transit Center down Penn Avenue, will temporarily be routed on Olson Memorial through to Downtown to HCMC; however, it is recommended that the line move onto Glenwood Avenue once the Blue Line opens. Preliminary design is currently underway; the route will be under construction in 2017; it is anticipated to open in 2018. In 2021, it will shift to Glenwood Avenue. The alignments and station locations on Olson and Glenwood will not be in exact parallel locations, but they will be similar. By having LRT on Olson and BRT on Glenwood, there is the hope that economic development will occur on both routes.
	2. Service is not starting on Glenwood initially because there is a significant need to preserve existing service on Olson, as there is very high ridership there. Also, the bridge connecting Glenwood Avenue to Downtown will be under construction during same time frame and will be unable to accommodate any traffic. There isn’t a significant cost difference by putting in temporary structures along Olson, as the shelters can be relocated to other stops in the transit system and the payment stations themselves are mobile.
	3. The platform will be about 9 inches high (instead of the usual 6). The bus will still kneel so as to allow for wheelchair access.
	4. Metro Transit will potentially be removing route 9; however, route 675 will be rerouting (645) from Downtown to West End; the trip will be reduced from a 26 to 8-minute ride and will charge a local fair instead of express fair because the route will be less than 4 miles.
	5. Will there be an enhanced art budget for the permanent station? Metro Transit is not at that point in design development; however, a public art administrator will be hired in the springtime.
2. Committee Business
	1. Neighbor Comments
		1. Twin Cities Film Festival is this weekend. NLNA is invited.
		2. There are vacancies on the Historic Preservation Commission. There is an application process for this city-wide position, which the City Council will appoint. It would be great if there was representation from the North Loop on this commission.
		3. Privacy of the Committee’s personal e-mail addresses
			1. A change.org petition was circulated to the personal e-mail addresses of the committee members without their approval.
			2. Karen read aloud from a document that she distributed: “I need to speak with regards to the change.org petitions that were emailed out to me and committee members last week. Whoever distributed my personal email address: You are not authorized, nor do you have my permission, to use my personal email address for anything other than internal committee communications. Cease and desist in doing so. Karen L. Rosar”
			3. Neil seconds Karen’s concerns and letter, as the meeting serves simply as a forum. Kelly specifies that the committee doesn’t have any authority; it can only advise developers. Development presentations occur at this committee meeting, while neighbor comments are presented at the NLNA Board meeting.
			4. Going forward, any new e-mails will be sent through the NLNA website as the Board sends them, so that personal e-mail accounts won’t be shown publicly. Diane does a great job managing the e-mail account, p&z@nlna.org, which should be used for communications as well.
		4. Veronica, a new resident, is looking for the correct venue to give feedback regarding her concern about development in the neighborhood. Though there has been a lot development, most of it appears to be residential – there are no cafes, no community spaces that she has seen. High rental prices may be discouraging other types of development. She would like the Committee to be aware of this issue and to keep it in mind when supporting future developments. The Committee empathizes with her sentiment and emphasizes that sometimes commercial developments come after a certain threshold of population in such a market-driven community; they also stress that connectivity in the western edge of the neighborhood is not as good as it is in the eastern portion, where much commercial activity is centered. The Committee suggested she read the guidelines if she is interested and that she also becoming more involved in the NLNA if she liked. Two organizations – Downtown Families and North Loop Kids – were also mentioned.
	2. Subcommittees Updates
		1. Hewing Hotel will be submitting for its liquor license.
		2. Tractor Works’ windows replacement project will be going to HPC in the near future.
		3. There is a typo regarding the new Trader Joe’s grocery store coming to the City; it will be located at 713 *South* Washington Avenue, *not* 713 North Washington Avenue in the North Loop.
		4. The next Planning & Zoning Committee meeting is being moved from November 23 to 16. The Board meeting will remain on November 30, as initially scheduled.
	3. Next meeting is November 16, 2016.
3. Any additional concerns
	1. No additional concerns.
4. New Business
	1. No new business.

Adjourned at 7:27 P.M.