

Minutes

Equity Advisory Committee



Meeting date: January 20, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Virtual

Members present:

- Co-Chair, John Pacheco Jr., District 5
- Co-Chair, Carmeann Foster, District G
- Yassin Osman, District 7
- Dr. Tyronne Carter, District 3
- Toni Carter, District 14
- Michael Luseni, District A
- Vacant, District B

- Samirra Isse, District C
- Anita L. Urvina Davis, District D
- Zakariya Abdullahi, District E
- Vacant, District F
- Vacant, District H
- Vacant, at large

- Mitchel Hansen, at large
- Markeya Knight, at large
- Astrid Benedetto, at large
- Vacant, at large
- Vacant, at large
- Vacant, at large
- Vacant, at large
- = present, E = excused

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

A quorum being present, CM Toni Carter called the regular meeting of the Equity Advisory Committee to order at 6:03 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by Torri Hampton.

Agenda approved

It was moved by Mitchel Hansen, seconded by Astrid Benedetto to approve the agenda. Committee Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Mitchel Hansen, seconded by Astrid Benedetto to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2025, regular meeting of the Equity Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Public Invitation

No conversation here.

Information

Presentation Title-

Blue Line Extension and Anti-Displacement Update- **Nkongo Cigolo- Mgr, Public Involvement-TMSA / Capital Programs BLE Presentation**

Presentation Overview-

- 13.4-mile Blue Line Extension with 13 new stations
- Connects Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park
- Single-seat ride to Downtown, MSP Airport, and Mall of America
- 60% design completed; environmental review finalized (AROD)
- Construction planning underway pending full federal funding
- Design shaped by community input to reduce property impacts
- Route adjustments made along West Broadway and 21st Avenue
- Station redesigns and safety, pedestrian, and roadway improvements
- Right-of-Way process beginning; full and partial property acquisitions
- Relocation assistance available for impacted residents and businesses
- Environmental mitigation incorporated into project scope
- \$5M Business Support Program during construction
- \$5M Community Investment Fund for housing and community stability
- Cultural place keeping integrated into station design
- Anti-Displacement Community Prosperity Program launched (\$2M pilot)
- Workforce development with local hiring and training focus
- Extensive community engagement ongoing
- Next steps include funding approval, final design, and construction prep

Presentation Notes-

Carter, Toni (1:30:47)

Okay, great.

Well, it was an incredible presentation - very, very long and I just want to say thank you to Nkongo and the team that is here with us tonight for such a complete set of information.

I especially wanted to comment on the slogan that was mentioned: "It's not about the train, it's about the people."

This project, in the manner in which it is being managed today - and I know we learn lessons and we will continue to learn lessons - does show the extent to which the input of the people matters. The project has changed to reflect so much input and concern from the community.

I'm hoping that it is visible, and that it's not just because the project is great, but because the people have been so vocal, impactful, and clear about what is needed. So I'm really thankful for all of the work that's been done and for the people who have come forward. Ricardo, I believe you were the one who shared that slogan and the beautiful piece of art.

I have a lot of questions, but I'm not going to ask them all. First and foremost, thank you for such comprehensive information tonight. We've got a long way to go yet, and thank you for being on that pathway toward a successful project that is good for people.



There is one thing you didn't really get to share much information on, and that was the relocation program. You did say there's a brochure - I don't think we got that - but I'm looking forward to seeing it.

Can you talk a little bit about the relocation program? Who it's for, whether it's temporary or permanent, what resources are provided, who qualifies that kind of thing.

Let me stop there. If you could expand just a little bit on the relocation assistance program.

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:33:22)

Chair, thank you. I'm not an expert, but I will share what we know.

The relocation process is regulated by statute, and it lists exactly what needs to be done and what can be done.

The way a business or property owner qualifies for relocation is that they have to be housed or conducting business in a property that is going to be purchased as part of the project. Eligibility begins as soon as the project makes an offer to the property owner.

Once the property owner receives that letter from the project office, the tenants within that property then qualify for relocation. A relocation agent is typically assigned, and that agent works directly with the businesses or residents who are eligible to be relocated.

Carter, Toni (1:34:55)

Okay.

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:34:59)

If you would want us to come back and provide additional information, we could bring a right-of-way manager to go more in depth about the process.

Carter, Toni (1:35:11)

No, that's okay. That is good information. It's good to know that businesses receiving an offer letter for purchase would qualify.

So this would be for full purchase of their property?

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:35:35)

Correct.

Carter, Toni (1:35:35)

I would assume that if it's a partial purchase, that may not allow a business to qualify. Is that correct?

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:35:43)

For properties with partial purchase -and this would need to be vetted with the right-of-way team - if we're not impacting the dwelling, then there wouldn't be relocation provided.

Carter, Toni (1:36:07)

Okay. And is that businesses only?

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:36:11)

It includes both residences and businesses. Both qualify.



Carter, Toni (1:36:14)

Got it. Thank you very much. I have others, but I'll hold for other hands.

Anita Urvina-Davis (1:36:23)

Does anybody else have any questions? I don't see any raised hands. Tori, do you see any?

Oh -Mitchell, and then Michael Luseni.

Mitchel Hansen (1:36:39)

Hey there. I just wanted to say hey to Nkongo, Kelsey, and Ricardo. Thank you so much for your presentation. It's been a minute.

I don't know if I should recuse myself based on my experience from Harrison, which I'm happy to do. My experience is as a social worker, and I've witnessed what happens after these projects.

I wasn't at one of your meetings, but I cried at another meeting not long ago because I said I don't have the resources anymore to help anyone. That was the first time I cried in public, the first time I cried in a meeting, and I still feel that way.

I see improvements, but I feel like people are still ending up in bad situations. Just money for the community needs to be released. We know how this happens - when insiders know, when it's announced, during construction, and then afterward.

I spoke with a woman in my neighborhood tonight, and she asked me how you can say "housing stability" and "relocation" in the same sentence. I didn't know how to answer her.

I remember attending meetings where women were crying because values were placed on their furniture and belongings - their lives were being evaluated.

When people hear terms like cultural place keeping, public realm improvements, and livability, it can feel disconnected. I'm not trying to be difficult. I've been in the trenches a long time, and the world is worse than it's ever been right now.

Five million dollars doesn't feel like a lot for businesses. Energy costs are high. There are pieces that still need to be addressed - workforce issues, safety, fear, terror, and also love.

Who needs funding right now to stay where they are? The community does. Businesses do.

I'm not trying to be difficult - I just think this is a moment to come together and recognize it's not about different kinds of people; it's about people staying in place.

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:40:16)

Excuse me.

Mitchel Hansen (continued)

We all want what's best for people. We want people to stay in their communities.

I noticed for the Great Northern Festival, if you donate \$150,000, you get free Metro Transit ads. That feels unequal. Maybe Northside businesses should receive similar promotion if we're serious about preventing displacement.

I recognize my privilege as a white male. I've seen people give up and sell their homes. I've lost my own insurance. People are done.



Mitchel Hansen (continued)

What do we need to do to release funding to keep people in place? Free rides for youth — basic things.

I appreciate you all. This comes from a place of care.

Anita Urvina-Davis (1:43:14)

Thank you, Mitchell. Michael Luseni, your mic is off.

Michael Luseni (1:43:41)

This started as a statement, but it's becoming a question.

Some property owners you're offering to purchase from don't have businesses inside their buildings.

There may be culturally specific businesses renting those spaces that may never reopen.

So what is the plan for non-property-owning businesses that are displaced to help them stay in the area?

Those barber shops and cultural businesses may never open again. I just wanted to make sure that's part of the dialogue.

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:45:28)

Thank you.

Carter, Toni (1:45:38)

I want to follow up on that. My understanding is that businesses occupying buildings that are being purchased would qualify for relocation assistance.

Can you confirm that businesses who rent space are eligible?

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:46:27)

That is correct. If the project purchases a property and a business is a tenant, they are eligible for relocation assistance.

Carter, Toni (1:47:05)

And are we offering assistance to find space within the community if businesses want to stay?

Cigolo, Nkongo (1:47:08)

Yes. Part of the relocation process includes looking for space within the same area, if available.

Anita Urvina-Davis (1:47:42)

I have two comments.

First, regarding cultural place keeping at 21st and James -has anyone raised concerns about the historic Tangle town area in North Minneapolis?



Young, Kelsey (1:48:23)

Yes, we have a mitigation topic related to historic and cultural resources in that neighborhood. We're exploring interpretive panels and other options, and we can share more information as mitigation planning develops.

Anita Urvina-Davis (1:49:06)

Thank you.

My last question is about environmental mitigation- Crystal Lake, Hollingsworth Park, Lakeview Terrace Park in Robbinsdale. How are you protecting those areas?

Young, Kelsey (1:49:42)

During construction, we manage sediment and stormwater to prevent pollution of nearby lakes and streams. We can come back closer to construction with more detailed environmental mitigation information.

Anita Urvina-Davis (1:50:15)

That would be helpful. Thank you again for your presentation.

Announcement

EAC Recruitment Update
2025 EAC Summary postponed to 17 February 2026 EAC Meeting

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Equity Advisory Committee meeting of January 20, 2026.

Approved this 17th day of February 2026.



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