

Metropolitan Council

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Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee  
September 1, 2021

Members/Alternates Present	Chair Charlie Zelle Mike Barnes Molly Cummings Dan Duffy	Jason Gadd Debbie Goettel James Hovland Chris LaTondresse	Jake Spano Brad Wiersum Brett Hjelle (Alt)
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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Charlie Zelle called the September 1, 2021, meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Zelle presented the June 2, 2021, SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Mayor Hovland made a motion to approve the minutes. Mayor Wiersum seconded the motion. After a roll call, the minutes were approved.

**3. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

Chair Zelle welcomed today's attendees. Chair Zelle reported that the first tracks have now been laid in Hopkins. Chair also talked about the August 24 visit from Senator Smith and FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez. This was a great opportunity for publicity and great comments were made. Chair Zelle introduced Jim Alexander for the Project update.

**4. PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr. Jim Alexander, SWLRT Project Director, provided project highlights. Photos were shown of the construction. Jim said there are 65 Minnesota counties with someone bringing home a paycheck from this project. Photos were shown and Jim described the construction work around Civil, Systems and the Franklin Facility.

Mayor Spano asked about trail detours and if there is a sense of timing for reopening the trails. Jim reported on anticipated trail opening schedules: the North Cedar Lake Trail under Glenwood Avenue will be closed for construction through 2022. Opening the Kenilworth Trail is tied to tunnel completion and the Project Office is currently working with the contractor on the schedule for the tunnel work. On the South Cedar Lake Trail, the segment from Beltline Boulevard to the Greenway is also tied to the tunnel work. We are evaluating whether we can open the segment from Beltline Boulevard to Wooddale Avenue later this year. We are also evaluating whether we can open the segment from Hopkins Depot to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue South by the end of the year. We are currently working with the contractor on this and will open trails when safe to do so and access is no longer needed in those areas.

Mayor Hovland commended the staff and contractors for the great work leading and getting this 14.5-mile line in place. He thanked the team and contractors for the great work.

Mayor Wiersum appreciates this presentation and noted the progress made is tremendous. He has confidence in this project and what it will bring to the region. Seeing the progress being made really puts it in context, and feels these regular updates are helpful.

Mayor Spano mentioned that the developers near the Beltline Station are interested in converting the planned transit parking into something else if all the spaces are not needed. With the transit ridership numbers being down and the workplace shift happening all relative to COVID, is there any flexibility with to reevaluate the number of parking stall numbers? Jim said the Project currently includes 268 parking stalls at Beltline Boulevard Station, which are to be included in the development. Formerly the Project included a surface lot, which was removed from the plans in coordination with the City. Jim suggested Project Office staff could meet with City staff to discuss further if desired.

## **7. DBE AND WORKFORCE UPDATE**

Mr. Jon Tao, DBE Specialist for the project provided an update on the DBE and Workforce activity. The supplemental disaggregated data was sent out to members in a separate email. Jon went over the DBE achievements as of June 30, 2021. There was a slight dip in the Systems DBE participation this past month, and the contractor reports that they now increased their DBE participation since then.

The Franklin O&M Facility is 75% complete and they are showing 18 – 19% DBE participation. Jon shared the disaggregated data, and also shared a chart with DBE contract participation.

Jon went over the workforce participation data. The Civil contractor is working with the Urban League on the hiring season. As other projects in the area are winding down, some of their workers are being transferred to our project. The trend from last year shows women participation increasing. We also anticipate POCI hours to increase.

The DBE/workforce Advisory Committee continues to meet monthly and discuss ways to increase these numbers. Jon mentioned the DBE and Workforce committees are recorded in case anyone wants to hear any of these meetings.

For the Franklin O&M Facility, the DBE numbers aren't as high as we would like, and currently the Dept. of Human Rights is reviewing the good faith efforts. We will continue to work in areas to increase participation.

Chair Zelle mentioned that when the MnDOT projects with I-35 and 94 wrap up, we may be able to get some of those workers on our project.

Mayor Gadd asked with the shortage of workers out there – has this been seen on this project? Jon said the contractors mentioned some workers are not able to be retained. This varies from year to year as well. We use the workforce training, with the need to show models that there are options for a career. Commissioner Goettel mentioned women also are having problems getting their hours in to retire when they can. We need to work with unions to find a path forward for these categories. Hennepin County has a lot of experience for disaggregating contracts. Chair Zelle also suggests staff meet with Hennepin County to discuss opportunities.

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

Sophia Ginis, Manager of Outreach, provided an update on outreach activities. Outreach continues with the regular construction updates. Currently, there are over 17,000 subscribers with a 46% open rate for these construction updates. Outreach also continues to offer corridor tours. Sophia mentioned she recently had 20 people on a tour of the SouthWest Station. Another round of public tours will be scheduled for the fall.

## **9. ADJOURN**

Chair Zelle thanked all for participating today. The next quarterly CMC meeting will be December 1. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary