

Metropolitan Council

City of St. Louis Park Chambers, 5005 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park 55416

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

August 7, 2013

Members Present	Susan Haigh, Chair	Jan Callison	James Hovland
	Brian Lamb	Lisa Weik	Terry Schneider
	Cheryl Youakim	Gail Dorfman	Peter Wagenius
	Peter McLaughlin	Jake Spano	Bill James
	Scott McBride	Jim Brimeyer	Kathy Nelson
	Tom Harmening		
Members Absent	Mayor Rybak	Nancy Tyra-Lukens	
	Keith Bogut	Jeff Jacobs	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Susan Haigh called the August 7, 2013 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 8:35am at the City of St. Louis Park Chambers. The purpose of today’s meeting is to ask for feedback and questions that you would like the staff to answer at the next meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Susan Haigh presented the July 10, 2013 Southwest Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. The motion for approval was granted with an action added, “The SDEIS Notice of Intent was published on July 22, 2013”.

3. SWLRT PROJECT SCOPE AND COSTS PRESENTATION

Mr. Craig Lamothe presented information on Ridership. Our ridership is trending upward and there are a couple of reasons for this change in ridership trend. When a project refines its operational and physical end to end run time characteristics, we have a better understanding as we move into the design process. This includes the speeds we will be able to operate the trains at on certain segments, as well as intersection delay we may encounter by any at-grade intersections. We know more about where the stations and Park & Rides will be located and what sizes they will be. Another factor is when the ridership regional travel demand model tool evolves to better account for changes in neutral travel behavior patterns. It also takes into account any changes to the underlying data sets for the base year condition and future condition, as it relates to demographics and socio-economic data. We had a perfect score, but all these changed since we had the LPA on this project. Our original FTA approved ridership forecast was 29,660 based on the year 2000 census data. The FTA is currently reviewing our new forecast of 34,000-36,000 based on 2010 census data, which has the current local comprehensive plans for those 2030 demographic and socio-economic forecasts. We will have more detail on ridership at a later date.

Commissioner Peter McLaughlin asked if a Federal model will be applied to ridership in the future. Mr. Lamothe said there is a National Regional Travel Demand Model being developed that they will likely ask

future projects across the country to use. We are currently using our local Travel Demand Model for SWLRT ridership data, which has local conditions integrated into it.

Mr. Chris Weyer gave an overview of the Project Scope and Cost Estimate. We have received input via the following: over 900 public comments on the DEIS, over 100 Issue Resolution Team (IRT) meetings with city/stakeholders, BAC/CAC/SWCMC meetings, 15 public open houses and over 155 community meetings, as well as Hennepin County's TSAAP activities and outreach. We are following the guiding principles for major scoping decisions and also establishing the scope allowing us to move into Municipal Consent later this year.

The Project Scope and Cost rollout consists of design adjustments and cost estimates for Technical Issues (TI's) #2 through #20, #22, #24, and #25. Also included are the Big Three TI's: #23 – Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF), #1 – Eden Prairie Alignment, and #21 – Freight Rail Co-location/Relocation. The total project costs, based on 2013 costs, include capital improvements, right of way (ROW), acquisition, contingency, and design related costs. Chair Haigh asked Mr. Weyer to explain contingency. Mr. Weyer responded that when we entered into Preliminary Engineering we carried about 30% contingency, per FTA's requirement. As we refine our numbers moving forward, the FTA allows us to reduce our contingency, but that would be in our final design timeframe. As we refine our scope and reduce our risk we are able to reduce our contingency. Chair Haigh asked when the contingency number will shift. Mr. Weyer said we would request it when we make the next application to FTA for final design, now called Engineering and with our current schedule, the application would be in the May-June 2014 timeframe.

Mr. Jim Alexander gave an overview of Technical Issues #2 - 20, 22, 24, and 25 and presented aerial maps.

- TI #2 – 9 Mile Creek Crossing: There is a revised design and cost estimate of \$33 million, which is \$17 million more than the LPA.
- TI #3 – Golden Triangle Station: This design would be adjusted to allow for a park and ride of 275 surface spaces. This station cost is revised to \$15 million, which is \$3 million more than the LPA.
- TI #4 – Shady Oak Road and Trunk Highway 212 Crossings: These have been combined into a single bridge.
- TI #5 – City West Station and Trunk Highway 62 Crossing: This would include a park and ride with 190 surface spaces. We have been coordinating with MnDOT, Eden Prairie, and Minnetonka on how to accomplish construction. The revised design and cost estimate is \$94 million, which is a reduction of \$2 million for both TI #4 & #5.
- TI #6 – Opus Station: This would include a park and ride with 90 surface spaces.
- TI #7 – Opus Hill and Minnetonka/Hopkins Bridge: Design adjustments were made to the track alignment to avoid a wetland. The revised design and cost estimate is \$74 million, which is a reduction of \$13 million from the LPA.
- TI #8 – Shady Oak Station: This would include a park and ride with 500 surface spaces. We are suggesting that 17th Avenue be extended down Excelsior to access the station. The revised design and cost estimate is \$49 million, which is a reduction of \$6 million from the LPA.
- TI #9 – PEC East and West Interface: No design adjustments suggested.
- TI #10 – Downtown Hopkins Station: Some design adjustments with bus facilities are being proposed, as well as preserving space for a civic plaza.
- TI #11 – Excelsior Boulevard Crossing: We are looking at a design adjustment to the location of freight rail tracks and LRT tracks.
- TI #12 – Blake Station: We are looking at a design adjustment to the location of freight rail tracks and LRT tracks. A park and ride would also be included with 445 structured spaces. The revised design cost for TI #10, #11, and #12 is \$85 million, which is \$22 million more than the LPA. The primary cost drivers are right of way acquisition and a longer bridge over Excelsior Boulevard.
- TI #13 – Louisiana Station: We are looking at a design adjustment to the location of freight rail tracks and LRT tracks. A park and ride would also be included with 225 surface spaces. As we look at doing

anything with the freight, relocating them, the freight company has to make a request by filing an application to the Service Transportation Board (STB). STB will need to approve that request.

- TI #14 – Wooddale Station: We are looking at a design adjustment to the location of freight rail tracks and LRT tracks. There is also a desire to bring the trail under Wooddale. Commissioner Gail Dorfman asked Council Member Jake Spano, alternate to Mayor Jeff Jacobs with City of St. Louis Park, if the station is to move east as the City of St. Louis Park is requesting to be considered, does it limit access to the new transit oriented development senior housing building? Council Member Spano said that city staff has been working with SPO, but the city feels it will improve circulation, access, and safety in that area. Mr. Alexander said SPO is working with the city on station location and are in the process of developing costs for other scenarios. Commissioner Peter McLaughlin asked if either option has significant ridership implications. Mr. Alexander said based on the work done on Louisiana, the delta is negligible.
- TI #15 – Trunk Highway 100 Crossing: We are looking at a design adjustment to the location of freight rail tracks and LRT tracks. The revised design cost for TI #13, #14, and #15 is \$63 million, which is \$18 million more than the LPA. The primary cost drivers are right of way acquisition and park and ride facility at Louisiana Station.
- TI #16 – Beltline Station: We are looking at a design adjustment to the location of freight rail tracks and LRT tracks. This station has a strong demand for a park and ride and it would include 545 surface spaces. A change in trail alignment has also been suggested. The revised design cost is \$29 million, which is \$15 million more than the LPA. Right of way acquisition and a park and ride facility are the main cost drivers.
- TI #17 – West Lake Station: This design would be adjusted for bus connections. Mr. Peter Wagenius asked if we can have a double track connection from midtown rail to SWLRT rail. Mr. Alexander said we envision a separate station platform for midtown on a double track, but would have a single track when we go under the bridge, and then go back to double track. Freight and LRT would be at grade under the bridge. However, there are pinch points throughout the alignment where we may not have the opportunity to have a double track. We have had discussions with our rail operations folks about that configuration and they believe it can work for that type of line segment. We have also had discussions with the midtown corridor folks also and we can bring that configuration to the next SWCMC meeting if that helps. Mr. Wagenius said that would help. The city's concern is with the current design in terms of vertical circulation and in the event the 21st street station goes away, that would be amplified. What does that do to the expectations of ridership at this station? Mr. Craig Lamothe replied that we do not have those numbers at this time, but will be providing them at the next SWCMC meeting. Commissioner Jan Callison asked for clarification on the midtown corridor. Mr. Alexander said it is a project that could be a BRT, trolley, or LRT-type configuration that will potentially come from West Lake area going to Lake Street where Hiawatha is, with stations along the midtown corridor. There is a possibility of linking midtown corridor up with SWLRT. A concern is if we have this line going through the midtown corridor, where would those vehicles be stored and maintained, in which the question has not yet been answered, as they are still in the Alternatives Analysis process. The OMF is not designed to accommodate midtown corridor's vehicles. We are trying to come up with a design that does not preclude opportunities for midtown corridor.
- TI #18 – Kenilworth Corridor (Cedar Lake Parkway Crossing and 21st Street Station): We are looking at a design adjustment to the LRT and trail bridge crossing over Cedar Lake Parkway to the underpass. The design adjustment suggested at the 21st Street Station is to eliminate a park and ride. The revised design and cost estimate is \$48 million, which is a reduction of \$4 million for both TI #17 & #18.
- TI #19 – Bassett Creek Valley Corridor (Penn and Van White Station): The design adjustments suggested at Penn Station are the station location and trail alignment. The design adjustments for Van White Station are the same with the addition of pedestrian vertical circulation.
- TI #20 – Royalston Station: We are looking at a design adjustment to the LRT alignment and station location, as well as a bridge structure over North 7th Street. The revised design cost for TI #19 and #20

is \$96 million, which is \$1 million more than the LPA. The main cost drivers are vertical circulation at Van White and Penn Stations, along with the North 7th Street bridge structure.

Mr. Alexander gave an overview of the “Big Three” TIs.

- TI #23 – Operations and Maintenance Facility: Mr. Alexander presented aerial maps of sites 3/4 in Eden Prairie and 9A in Hopkins. Some of the cost drivers for these sites are site demolition, yard tracks on the structure, and site grading/earthwork. The cost estimate for the 2 OMF sites are \$95-\$100 million for 3/4 in Eden Prairie and \$100-\$105 million for 9A in Hopkins. We would need 6 additional operators to operate out of Eden Prairie, as there is a longer run time between the most western terminus location of the OMF in Eden Prairie and the OMF in Central Corridor. That equates to over \$500,000 a year in operational costs for those additional full time employees. In terms of service, there is not much difference in costs between the 2 sites. Council Member Cheryl Youakim asked if the 9A Hopkins site include costs for land acquisition for the current 6 buildings that are there, as well as other land acquisition that will be needed. Mr. Alexander said yes it includes right of way acquisition that is required for the facility. However we are still looking at that design to see if we can scoot things to the west to avoid some other properties that were on the property border.
- TI #1 – Eden Prairie Alignment: Aerial maps were presented of the three alignment adjustment finalists: Mitchell Station and Comp Plan Station via Technology Drive, Mitchell Station and Singletree Station via Technology Drive, and Mitchell Station and Singletree Station via Trunk Highway 212 frontage. The primary cost drivers are: right of way acquisition, bridge structure over Prairie Center Drive, Increased length of the corridor by 1/3 to 1/2 mile. Council Member Kathy Nelson, alternate to Mayor Tyra-Lukens with City of Eden Prairie, indicated the City of Eden Prairie has a strong preference for the Comp Plan and the other 2 options are going to have definite problems with businesses and future traffic. The Comp Plan does allow for redevelopment in that major center area without impacting business. Commissioner Callison asked what the fate would be for Southwest Transit. Mr. Alexander said with our cost estimates, we have been considering co-habituating with Southwest Transit. We may need to provide additional parking for LRT riders and will come back to the SWCMC with what the cost delta would be. Commissioner McLaughlin asked what the actions were from Chaska and Chanhassen. Mr. Robert Ellis of Eden Prairie said Southwest Transit asked Chaska, Chanhassen, and Eden Prairie to issue a resolution of support for co-location of LRT and Southwest Transit bus service. They also outlined some concerns such as branding, understanding the parking numbers, and conditions on future service. Chair Haigh asked for copies to be provided to the SWCMC.

The revised design cost estimates are as follows: TIs #1-20, and 22-25 are \$885-\$915 million, vehicles are \$115-\$125 million, and design related costs are \$350-\$360 million. The total revised costs are \$1.35 billion versus the LPA cost of \$1.25 billion. The cost drivers for LRT are: OMF, Eden Prairie alignment adjustments, going from surface to structured parking, private land acquisition, and additional bridge and tunnel structures.

- TI #21 – Freight Rail: Mr. Alexander presented the three freight rail options: Brunswick Central Freight Rail Relocation, Kenilworth Deep Bore LRT Tunnel, and Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnel. The primary cost drivers for Brunswick Central is acquisition of homes and businesses, 2,300 feet of freight rail bridge structures, pedestrian underpasses, lowering trunk highway 7, and reconfiguring existing streets.

Cost drivers for the Kenilworth Deep Bore LRT Tunnel co-location are: tunnel boring machine, access pits, operations and ground settlement control, subway tunnel station and vertical circulation at West Lake station, ventilation systems, reconstruction of West Lake Street bridge, and ground water management systems. Commissioner Dorfman asked how long it would take to do this work. Mr. Alexander said about 2 to 3 years, including the acquisition of the tunnel boring machine. Mr.

McLaughlin asked how deep the tunnel would be at Lake Street station. Mr. Alexander said the top of the bore would be 30 feet below ground surface, so essentially 50 feet down to the station platform. Mr. Wagenius asked if the water impacts on the lakes are different for deep tunnel verses shallow tunnel. Mr. Alexander said the soil is a sandy material and that would cause the water to flow fairly free around those structures. Both lakes are essentially the same elevation, validated by the water channel that goes between the two. We do not see that there is any particular groundwater head to cause that differential and because of the sandy material, it is not going to be a factor. We would look to discharge any water that would come into either tunnel option to an appropriate system that would accommodate that flow. We do not see the flow being very significant, but we are doing some estimates for both scenarios. Commissioner McLaughlin said the deep bore tunnel platform at West Lake Station is a pretty heavy ridership station. So you are adding 3 minutes for the vertical circulation and adding 3 minutes to the ride time would cut down on ridership modeling? Mr. Fuhrmann said the level of specificity of the ridership model will probably not pick that up. The ridership model will pick up the ride time on the train for transfers from bus to rail and street car to light rail, as that would then be part of the vertical connection of A to Z travel time. Chair Haigh asked if the travel time impact is only for transfer riders in the model and not for non-transfer riders. Mr. Fuhrmann said yes. Commissioner Dorfman asked does that mean underground station impacts cost due to more security and maintenance to serve an underground station. Mr. Alexander said the worst it would come down to is ventilation systems at grade and the ground water management system in place. We are also putting some costs together.

Cost drivers for the Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnel co-location are: cut and cover excavation, restricted construction area, and ground stabilization. Council Member Youakim asked how much ridership will be lost if 21st Street station goes away? Mr. Alexander said we are looking at those numbers and will bring to the next SWCMC meeting. Mr. Wagenius asked if it is possible that there are other primary cost drivers that we are not currently aware of that may be necessary in order to address some of those concerns? Mr. Alexander said we do not see ground water management being a significant cost driver, we are in the early stages of looking at the treatment over the bridge, but do not see that as a significant cost driver, there is a concern regarding the bridge due to the history of the corridor and we will need to look at this further and give the SWCMC a report out at the next meeting. We are looking at where the trail is going to be located during construction, but we do not see that as a major cost driver. Mr. Wagenius asked how long it will take to get complete and full answers to all these questions and be viewed with confidence by the public. Mr. Alexander said in discussions with City of Minneapolis staff, we were looking to target to get all these questions answered in early September before the plans get out. We are still working through the noise and vibration with our consultant, CH2M Hill to understand the timing on that and will get back with the SWCMC. We are aggressively working the issues, we meet with city staff weekly and they have a lot of questions we are looking to put together a basis of design to address issues the city has raised. Commissioner Dorfman asked how high the catenary wires are where SPO is proposing treatment structure. Mr. Alexander said the catenary poles will be a maximum of 21 to 22 feet above the ground surface. We are looking to mask the vehicle and also looking at the OCS distribution (wires that put power to the trains) for where those poles can be located. Council Member Jim Brimeyer asked does the shallow tunnel have to come all the way out of the ground over the channel to get to that 21 foot level. Mr. Alexander said we desire to have a 14 foot height between the high water level and the bottom structure. We need to get our rails equivalent to the freight rail height.

Mr. Fuhrmann clarified that for Central Corridor, in 2008 the University and Met Council agreed the green line would be at grade through the University and that was captured in the municipal consent plans. It went forward to the City of Minneapolis and the Board of Regence for their approval of those municipal consent plans. The Central Corridor tunnel history was prior to municipal consent and went back to LPA discussions. That was ultimately in the final design and constructed. SWLRT is now at

this same point. Mr. Bill James stated there is still an option on the table that would involve a lot of property acquisition and would have significant impacts to St. Louis Park.

The cost for freight rail common elements is \$85-\$90 million. The primary cost drivers are: freight rail track, bridges over Minnehaha Creek and Louisiana Avenue, Canadian Pacific Railroad right of way swap, and the southerly connection from Bass Lake Spur to the MN&S Spur. Commissioner Dorfman asked what the cost is to the Southerly connection. Mr. Alexander said he will need to provide the cost at the next meeting.

Freight rail cost estimates are \$190-\$200 million for Brunswick Central, \$320-\$330 million for Kenilworth Deep Bore LRT Tunnel, and \$150-\$160 million for Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnel. The \$85-\$90 million for common elements would be added to any of the three freight rail options.

The total project cost estimate for LRT and freight rail combined is \$1.585-\$1.820 billion. This would include \$1.35-\$1.40 billion for LRT, \$85-\$90 million for common elements, and \$150-\$330 million for freight rail.

Mayor Hovland asked Council Member Nelson, if one of the three Eden Prairie alignments will work for the City of Eden Prairie. Council Member Nelson said there are pros and cons to all three options, but the Comp Plan provides the least disruption to businesses during construction and operation of the LRT. Mayor Hovland asked Council Member Nelson if she foresees any problem coming up with an alignment that will align with the desires of the project office. Ms. Nelson said all three alignments have similar costs, but the alignment that allows for business growth and development with less business disruption. Mayor Hovland asked Council Member Nelson if she thinks any issues that arise can be worked out and that municipal consent will not be denied. Council Member Nelson said that is her understanding in talking with Eden Prairie staff.

Mayor Hovland asked Council Member Cheryl Youakim her thoughts on the OMF at site 9A in Hopkins. Council Member Youakim said Hopkins wants to be a team player. If the OMF would be placed in Hopkins, we would need to look at getting some money back on our tax base. Hopkins is the smallest city, with the smallest tax base, has the smallest land mass and is built out. We will need to meet with city staff and the mayor.

Mayor Hovland asked Council Member Spano if there is any freight relocation plan that the city council has approved or would approve through St. Louis Park. Council Member Spano said the berms that run next to the community center and elementary school actually touch school property. There is also a large increase of right of way acquisition for the new line and 55% is now going to be running in places where it never had freight rail before. The St. Louis Park school district has also sent a letter to Chair Haigh outlining their concerns around effectiveness of education, safety, costs, and impacts to their transportation. We have a number of questions that were given to Mr. Alexander and we need to get answers to those questions between now and September. Council Member Spano said he does not see that anything has changed from the years of resolutions that the City of St. Louis Park has taken around these scenarios. We believe that there are viable options that exist that do not require the rerouting of freight traffic through new communities.

Mayor Hovland asked Mr. Alexander if the project team have a preference of cut and cover verses deep bore. Mr. Alexander said both options are achievable and it comes down to the cost.

Mayor Schneider said there are a number of questions that need to be firmed up before making a decision as to which of the 3 plans make the most sense.

Chair Haigh said we need to land on a cost for this project that is politically viable, reasonable, and cost effective. I would like to see us at \$1.5 billion for the total cost, with the addition of the freight rail. That is one of the goals we need to try and get to. Our timeframe for this is we want to have time to deliver a recommendation as a Corridor Management Committee to the Council. Before we do that, we need detailed plans to go back to the cities to allow for approval in the municipal consent process. In thinking where we are going to identify a total project cost, and a total federal, local, Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), and state share in advance of next legislative session is a key driver. We may need additional meetings to achieve this. We also need to keep in the back of our minds on how this fits into other regional projects and why limiting costs and being very cost efficient is important to the success of other investments for the region. Commissioner Lisa Weik said as a major funding partner, of both capital and ongoing operating cost, CTIB would be looking at different amounts for capital. Right now our assumption is 30% of the capital cost to construct. I would like additional clarification on what the funding assumption of CTIB. I believe CTIB has been using \$1.25 billion in our funding assumptions so are we not funding freight? Chair Haigh said FTA requires freight to be part of the project and there will be an opportunity for CTIB, as well as the other funding partners, to go back and look at that issue. Commissioner McLaughlin suggests going back to have a discussion about some of the other options for relocation with the railroad.

Mr. Fuhrmann indicated that staff is working on costs for betterments and reductions and plan to bring them to the August 14th meeting.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH UPDATE

Council Member Jennifer Munt, Co-Chair along with Ms. Jeanette Colby, of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) gave an update on CAC. We had 13 open houses and public meetings with over 1,000 attendees and over 1,600 comments. The key discussion items are: the members have strong support for LRT and strong feelings about freight, the SLP folks want Brunswick Central taken off the table, the Minneapolis folks oppose co-location at grade and want that taken off the table, they want a reduction in property acquisition, to protect parks, trails, waterways, schools, and neighborhoods.

Mr. Dan Duffy and Mr. Will Roach, Co-Chairs of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) gave an update on BAC. The committee had strong passionate discussions that led to 3 pages of technical input and comments. There was talk about linkages within the broader communities and there is a lot of support from the business community for this project. The next BAC meeting will be held on August 28th.

Chair Haigh stated the next meeting date is August 14, 2013 from 12:30 – 2:30pm at the St. Louis Park City Hall and there will also be a second meeting on August 28, 2013, with time and location to be determined.

Mr. Peter Wagenius asked what the expectation is for the next meeting on August 14. Chair Haigh said the expectation is that we would be making a decision to recommend to the Council. Mr. Wagenius asked if it would be a narrowing or a single option. Chair Haigh replied that it would be best to recommend a single option. Mr. Wagenius asked what would happen if there are questions that cannot be answered by that time. Chair Haigh responded that they would need to address it at that time.

Chair Haigh thanked the TPAC, BAC, and CAC committees for their work and the citizens who have participated in the process.

The meeting adjourned at 11:57am.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Hahne, Recording Secretary