



**Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)
Community Advisory Committee Meeting**

June 9, 2015

**Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Meeting Summary

CAC Members/Alternates: Council Member Jennifer Munt (co-chair), Russ Adams (co-chair), Shirajoy Abry, Kathryn Campbell, Vida Ditter, Melissa Everett, David Greene, Mathews Hollinshead, Amanda Kappes, Sara Maaske, Andrew Pieper, Jody Strakosch, Jeff Strate, Charles Weber, Craig Westgate.

Agency Staff and Guests: Jim Alexander, Laura Baenen, Ann Beuch, Nkongo Cigolo, Mark Fuhrmann, Julie Kline, Craig Lamothe, James Mockovciak, Sam O'Connell, Dan Pfeiffer, Kerri Pearce Ruch, La Shella Simu.

1. Welcome and Review of Meeting Summary

Co-Chair Russ Adams called the meeting to order and reviewed meeting summaries for the April 28 and May 26 meetings. Craig Westgate and Jody Strakosch requested clarifications on contingency fund use to mitigate new soil contamination discoveries that would occur later in the course of the project. Mark Furhmann, Deputy Project Director, confirmed as stated in the 5/26 meeting summaries that new soil contamination discoveries would be mitigated by the use of contingency fund.

2. Equity Definition

Co-Chair Adams reported that at the last Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, members had expressed their interest in reviewing the Metropolitan Council's definition of equity as published on page 24 of the [Thrive MSP 2040 Plan](#) and craft a new definition of equity as it relates to cost reduction options to trim the current METRO Green Line Extension budget.

Ms. Strakosch stated she believed the Council's definition was good but it needed to include environmental impact component, which should focus on minimizing negative impacts.

Sarah Maaske stated that she prefers a definition that takes into account the impact on people.

Dave Green added that he believed the Council's definition was passive and wanted to see something more proactive with emphasis on power and decision making.

Jeff Strate stated that he believed the environmental concerns raised are covered in other place and not just in a paragraph and saw no need to include environmental concerns in the definition.

Vida Ditter stated that there was a need to be explicit and was in favor of including the environmental impacts in a new definition.

Jeff Strate wondered whether the definition being crafted by the CAC is just for the group or for the entire region. Co-Chair Adams stated that the definition will be taken into account when CAC recommendation will be forwarded to the Corridor Management Committee (CMC).

Andrews Pieper stated that he did not quite get the need of redefining equity and believed that the purpose of today's meeting was to look at cost reduction options and craft recommendation to be made to the CMC.

Kathryn Campbell stated that the group needed to focus and examine potential cuts. Ms. Campbell stated that adding environmental impacts to the definition is a good idea but the group must move on to making cost reduction choices.

Co-Chair Adams informed members that no decisions needed to be made and that after the review of cost reduction scenarios members can come to a consensus and then a recommendation to the CMC can be crafted at the upcoming CAC meeting.

Mr. Greene reported that at one of the previous CAC meetings, members did not vote but came to a consensus. Co-Chair Jennifer Munt agrees with a recommendation that the chair would read to the CMC.

Co-Chair Munt stated that the discussion of cost reduction scenarios might be looked at from an equity viewpoint and ask how the scenarios would impact both the community and ridership. At the June 3 CMC meeting members examined cost reduction scenarios under three premises; 1. Make cut to trim the budget to 1.65 billion, 2. Maintain ridership between 29,000 and 30,000 and 3. Recognize that this process requires shared sacrifice.

Co-Chair Munt further summarized that CMC members were more in favor of scenarios C and D, respectively looking at ending at Town Center Station with western end at the proposed Town Center Station and ending the alignment at Town Center Station but moving the western end at Flying Cloud Drive. Members were in agreement to not cut the Royalston Station; the Mayor of Eden Prairie had no objection to cutting the Mitchell Station. Examined cutting operating expenses by reducing the proposed fleet of train vehicles, cutting bridges and defer park and rides with options to add them at a later time.

Vida Ditter mentioned that differed cost implies paying more at a later time. Also emphasized that the Van White Station should not be cut.

Mathews Hollinshead commented that he did not think it was CAC members' job to recommend cuts, that the Twin Cities spends more in one year on motor vehicles than the entire budget of the SWLRT, and that perspective should be kept in mind in responding to the suggested cuts.

Craig Lamothe, Project Director, responded that the goal is to reduce the budget while maintaining the ridership between 29,000 and 30,000 daily riders.

3. Potential Cost Reduction

Jim Alexander, Manager of Design and Engineering, presented the four cost reduction scenarios. Mr. Alexander reported to CAC members that project staff had several meetings with project partners in an attempt to package options that will help reduce cost back to 1.65 billion. Various options were taken into account while they examined deleting park and rides and shifting the terminus of the alignment. Several scenarios were put together,

- Scenario A: suggests ending the alignment at the proposed Southwest Station with all potential cost reductions, park and rides, three stations in Eden Prairie and three stations in Minneapolis. This scenario is short 32 million to reach the needed 341 million budget reductions.
- Scenario B: suggests ending the alignment at the proposed Golden Triangle Station. This scenario exceeds the needed 341 million budget reductions by 52 million. It does not geographically distribute cost reductions.
- Scenario C: suggests ending the alignment at the proposed Town Center Station with western end at the proposed Town Center Station. Scenario is short 108 million to achieve the needed 341 million cost reductions.
- Scenario D: suggests ending the alignment at the proposed Town Center Station with the western end moved to Flying Cloud Drive. Scenario is short 68 million to achieve the needed 341 million cost reductions.

Mr. Alexander also went over the list of stakeholder options that are reflected in the [presentation](#).

Mr. Lamothe added that an additional 10 million savings in finance charges should be credited to each scenario.

Ms. Ditter stated that the Mitchell Station was an add-on while the county was doing alternative analysis.

Ms. Ditter also wondered who was demanding the cost reduction cuts; Mr. Lamothe responded Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA).

Mr. Hollinshead commented that stopping the line short of Eden Prairie stations would condemn reverse commuters to critical delays on the last legs of their commutes to jobs in Eden Prairie and wondered how it would impact the ranking of the project for New Starts. Mr. Lamothe responded that congestion relief is one of the six FTA rating criteria.

Jeff Strate stated that he was unhappy with the public's discussion of potential cuts; Mr. Strate argued that the question ought to be "how do we get this money?" Also pointed out that there were 5,000 jobs in the Mitchell Station area that was being penalized.

Mr. Hollinshead stated that he agreed with Mr. Strate and that the CAC's role is not to ask for advance cuts.

Mr. Greene wondered whether all of the examined options included contingency funds. Mr. Alexander answered yes.

Ms. Ditter wondered what was the point of cutting the three stations in Minneapolis when the workforce going to the west comes from Minneapolis. Mr. Alexander responded that the project office is not making recommendation to cut these stations, but it will be the decision making body that will make the call.

Ms. Ditter wondered why not leave these stations to reduce vehicle emission. Mr. Lamothe stated that was a good point as the FTA cares about emissions, which is one of the six light rail project rating criteria.

Mr. Greene wondered how many potential job losses (transit dependent) per station would be affected by each station deletion. Mr. Lamothe responded that the project can run the model to determine access to job loss and ridership loss.

Co-Chair Adams warned members that giving a person a ride to the job site does not mean they get the job.

Craig Westgate wondered whether reducing the light rail vehicle fleet to 27 vehicles implied a reduction in the footprint of the Operations and Maintenance Facility. Mr. Alexander responded that only 5 bays would be constructed instead of 6, which also yields additional cost savings.

Charles Weber stated that it was not the citizens' role to pull the 341 cuts but to ask policy makers to find the money. Mr. Weber asked why examine options to cut four stations that serve minorities while cutting stations in Eden Prairie does not help traffic congestion.

Kathryn Campbell wondered what it would imply to add deleted stations at the western end. Mr. Lamothe responded that the design would need to be done again and the environmental process also has a shelf life; the process would have to start over.

Amanda Kappes stated that if Mitchell were cut, there would be a great need for better transit. Ms. Kappes wondered how much affordable housing was available at the proposed stations to be cut as the cuts may affect people who need transit.

Mr. Hollinshead wondered what the Federal government's definition of job access was and whether it included opportunity cost of losing Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Mr. Lamothe responded that the model captures transit depend folks.

Mr. Greene wondered whether the push to cut 341 million is a necessity as the project would otherwise become not fundable by the FTA. The local funding partners, CTIB and HCRRA not the FTA, requested that the project get back to the \$1.65 billion project budget.

Co-Chair Adam asked whether a map that shows affordable housing around the stations that are proposed to be cut could be shared with CAC members. Ms. Lamothe responded that staff will compile.

Co-Chair Munt asked Kerri Pearce Ruch with Hennepin County whether she could provide a map showing potential housing development around stations.

Ms. Ditter wondered whether it would be possible for both the CAC and the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) to work together to compile their recommendation to the CMC. Mr. Fuhrmann

responded that at the last BAC meeting, members reported that they wanted to compile their own recommendation.

Mr. Strate wondered whether the project has looked at how highway work would affect the light rail project. Mr. Alexander responded that the project will look at traffic mitigation.

Mr. Hollinshead wondered why can't a middle station be cut in Eden Prairie. Mr. Alexander responded that a middle station would not yield as much of a cost savings. Mr. Lamothe added deleting a station at the end of the alignment had infrastructure savings that could amount to 120 million.

4. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum

Members agreed to compile their list of recommendations and send them to project staff before the June 30 meeting for staff combine all of them before the upcoming CAC meeting.

5. Adjourn

Next meeting scheduled for June 30, at 6 PM.