



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

March 28, 2013

Southwest Project Office

6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 500, St. Louis Park, MN 55426

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

CAC Members and Alternates: Ann Beuch, Art Higinbotham, Asad Aliweyd, Barry Schade, Donald Eyberg, Elizabeth Ryan, Jeanette Colby, Jennifer Munt, John Erickson, Kandi Arries, Kelly Nelson, Linnea Sodergren, Steve Cramer, Vicki Moore, Ed Ferlauto, Jami LaPray, Kathryn Kottke, Kathy Cobb, Brian Willette.

Agency Staff and Guests: Robin Kaufman, Sam O'Connell, Jim Alexander, Mark Fuhrmann, Dan Pfeiffer, Sophia Ginis, Daren Nyquist, Kim Proia, Paul Danielson, Katie Walker, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Mark Koegler, Michael Quadrozi, Mark Reuter, Jeffrey Peltola.

1. Welcome, Introductions and Approval of the Jan. 10, 2013 Meeting Minutes and Feb. 21, 2013 Joint BAC/CAC Meeting Summary: Jennifer Munt & Jeanette Colby, CAC Co-Chairs

Co-Chairs Colby and Munt called the SWLRT Community Advisory Committee meeting to order at 6:03 PM. Followed by attendee introduction and approval of January 10, 2013 and February 21, 2013 meeting minutes.

2. Station Area Action Plans (TSAAP) Overview: Katie Walker, Hennepin County & Mark Koegler, HKGi

Katie Walker provided an update on the TSAAP technical design charrette. TSAAP open houses will occur mid-April to mid-May. Mark Koegler presented an overview of TSAAP and is working closely with the preliminary engineering teams. Katie Walker distributed Community Work's "Station Profiles" booklet.

- Anne Beusch: Can you explain the differences between TSAAP and the joint open houses?
- Mark Koegler: This first round of open houses is focused on TSAAP but engineering is involved. The joint open houses will be more balanced between TSAAP and preliminary engineering.
- Kathryn Kottke: Does the Metropolitan Council need municipal consent?
- Mark Fuhrman: The municipal consent statute applies for the five cities and Hennepin County. Under the law, the Metropolitan Council as the project sponsor is required to go before all those six jurisdictions with the request for municipal consent and a number of steps that can proceed from there. One is that the cities and counties grant municipal consent. Another track is that the cities and/or county deny consent the first time through then there's a number of cycles for comments why municipal consent was not granted, the Metropolitan Council takes those into

consideration and brings those back to the city, back and forth to seek to resolve municipal consent and receive municipal consent from the cities and the county.

- Kathryn Kottke: Ultimately can the Metropolitan Council proceed even though a city says no, because what my efforts are going towards is to get my city council to say no, so is that a wasted effort?
- Mark Fuhrmann: The history of municipal consent for all the prior New Starts projects, the Metropolitan Council has sought and has received municipal consent; there has never been any precedent since the creation of that law in 1998 whereby the Metropolitan Council does not receive municipal consent. As we look at that and are committed to that municipal consent law, we want to go to the five cities and Hennepin County to seek and receive that municipal consent. I cannot speculate as to what happens if we do not receive municipal consent because we do not have that prior precedent or prior experience in this region.
- Jeanette Colby: Would you like help from committee members to identify public forums or gatherings to help identify outreach events?
- Mark Koegler: Yes.

3. Eden Prairie Alignment Workshop Summary: Jennifer Munt & Jeanette Colby, CAC Co-Chairs

Co-chair Munt recapped the Eden Prairie Alignment workshop, which occurred at the February joint Business and Community Advisory Committees. The three big technical issues: Eden Prairie alignment, freight rail location, and the operations and maintenance facility will come before this committee multiple times. The process to resolve these issues includes staff will layout existing conditions, describe choices, and receive input from the committee members to help resolve these issues. There will be tough decisions that will need to be made and committee member input will help guide those decisions.

4. Technical Issues Discussion: Operations and Maintenance Facility: Jim Alexander

Jim Alexander presented information on the Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) identified four sites. Based on the DEIS comments, the preliminary engineering teams are identifying locations. Currently the project has identified 18 locations based on site size, site is flat/rectangular, efficient LRT train movements to/from, good roadway access to site, and compatible with adjacent land uses. The Hiawatha LRT OMF is approximately 15 acres, located near the mid-point. The Central Corridor LRT OMF is approximately eight acres located at the eastern terminus in downtown St. Paul. We will refine the candidate list of 18 sites to 5 or 6 for further study then narrow down to 1 or 2 and ultimately determine the preferred site.

- Are there noise factors that should be taken into consideration around these facilities?
- Jim Alexander: Yes, noise is a factor we need to be aware of and consider.
- What about paint fumes?
- Jim Alexander: We don't anticipate painting at the SWLRT OMF. Painting is currently done at the Hiawatha facility.
- How specific are you already in locating the OMF?
- Jim Alexander: We have parcels identified on the large maps on the table.
- When does preliminary engineering start on OMF?
- Jim Alexander: Once we determine a location then preliminary engineering plan work will be done for the municipal consent process.

5. Technical Issues Discussion: Freight Rail Co-location/Relocation: Jim Alexander, SPO & Paul Danielson, Kimley-Horn and Associates

Jim Alexander presented background to the freight rail technical issue. The project office is looking at co-location and relocation per direction from the Federal Transit Administration. This issue will be presented to the committee multiple times. Existing freight rail conditions and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) design were presented. Whether or not we have co-locate or relocated freight through the Kenilworth Corridor we will have LRT co-located with freight from approximately HWY 169 to Louisiana Avenue. Existing characteristics on the Kenilworth Corridor; there are some pinch points, fairly tight corridor in Minneapolis, there is a 6 degree curve, and there is a maximum compensated grade of slightly over 1.

Paul Danielson presented the DEIS proposed design. The DEIS relocation has to tie into the MN&S which is currently vertically separated by about 23 feet. The DEIS proposed a maximum curve of 8 degree, one of the DEIS hold points was the existing bridge over HWY 7 which we are reviewing, along with reverse curves. The DEIS held the Minnetonka bridge as a hold point which affects the profile and we will review that to try to flatten the profile. The east leg of the “y” at the iron triangle would need to be re-established. BNSF would like to have a siding so trains from MN&S to the BNSF Wayzata subdivision would not affect their operations and could be brought onto the BNSF track as capacity becomes available.

- Art Higinbotham: I think your data on TC&W trains is wrong.
- Jim Alexander: This data has been confirmed with the railroads and based on what the railroads have told us as recently as a few weeks ago.
- Jami LaPray: That maybe what the railroads have currently, but the TC&W has opened two new loading facilities, but Art makes a point that we need to look at what the volume might be in the future and the fact that it's not going to stay static. CP's ten trains on the MN&S only run during the day.
- Kandi Arries: I think that would be a great column to add to this information, what are the hours of operation.
- Are any of those lines co-located with Northstar? Northstar does run along BNSF track.
- How much weight does the railroad carry in the decision?
- Jim Alexander: It is the railroads track, we would need to have an agreement for their land, and the Surface Transportation Board (STB) is involved.
- Does the STB make the decision if there is a conflict?
- Mark Fuhrmann: We know that the STB has some jurisdiction here, we are working through the process and learning their process.
- Art Higinbotham: At the West Lake Street station, in a co-locate scenario you will have two tracks of light rail, one track of freight rail and a trolley car eventually coming in from Uptown. I believe that trolley car of the future has to be accommodated in the station design.
- Jim Alexander: There is a midtown greenway alternatives study that's being studied. We've looked at how that would impact the station, however we cannot design or build other components of projects in the future but we also don't want to preclude anything that might happen in the future.

- Kathryn Kottke: As the trains go north on the MN&S the grade is above the houses and a derailment would go into the houses.
- Kandi Arries: Part of the project is to increase the speed, currently they go 10 mph and they want to increase to 25 mph.
- Jami LaPray: When the areas are looked at both areas have the same start and end points, in the DEIS these were different.
- Paul Danielson: We are starting both co-locate and relocate at a point around 5th Avenue and on the other end Cedar Lake Junction for comparison.
- Art Higinbotham: I would like to suggest that co-locate may not get municipal consent from the city of Minneapolis, and St. Louis Park has its issues with relocation and the railroads have their own technical issues with relocation. We are proposing an alternative set of routes and Mark Fuhrmann has said they will require re-opening the DEIS but for this group I would like to point those out. We would suggest that just west of the Penn station the LRT follow the BNSF line down to HWY 100, there is an open arch underneath at the Cedar Lake Parkway crossing, there is an open arch underneath HWY 100. On the west side of HWY 100 you would have to take out the Abra Autobody, it would go through the two parking lots of the car dealerships. There is a small business there but that's a small price to pay. There are two apartment buildings that are fairly close. Then proceed down the west side of HWY 100, there is an arch under Minnetonka Blvd which will be rebuilt in 2014 and under HWY 7 there is an arch that can be used under the rebuilt HWY 7 bridge, it would then curve around and rejoin the LRT route as proposed. We have until next year to get this option back on the table, it may take conversations with the FTA to do that, and if the co-location and relocation are not feasible then we need to think about how we can keep LRT going. Another option would be to come west of the Cedar Lake Parkway bridge and there is a green corridor going down to France Avenue. At 22nd Street there's an uphill slope and you can start a tunnel there goes down to Lake Street and you can tunnel underneath Lake Street and through the bridge that separates the Lake Street from the Bass Lake Spur. You could at the same time extend France Avenue across the Bass Lake Spur and provide a continuous traffic route north and south on France Avenue which does not exist today and MnDOT has said would be a good idea sometime in the future.
- Kathryn Kottke: I don't think St. Louis Park was able to vote properly because when the locally preferred option was selected we were told, we asked about the reroute issue and we were told that we couldn't talk about it, and so I don't think we voted accurately. We didn't have all the information on the table, so I personally would love to see this proposal opened up as a possibility. I think that would give St. Louis Park the opportunity to actually have an intelligent vote about the LPA.
- Vicki Moore: You said a favorite route, favored by whom?
- Art Higinbotham: We have it in front of the CIDNA board at the present time and it's been discussed with Peter Wagenius of the city of Minneapolis with a favorable response. And it's been discussed with Mayor Jeff Jacobs of St. Louis Park and although he is not going to be an active proponent, he'd be willing to talk to the city of Minneapolis about agreeing on the idea.
- Vicki Moore: So it's a CIDNA proposal?
- Art Higinbotham: It's essentially a CIDNA proposal but also something that's been discussed at the neighborhood alliance, it solves the problem for freight rail, it solves the problem for St.

Louis Park and solves the problem for southwest Minneapolis. It maintains the service from Penn Avenue eastward.

Additional comments from the CAC were captured through workshop process and are included in the meeting minutes.

6. Member and Committee Reports

No member or committee reports

7. Public Forum

No public forum comments.

8. Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

SWLRT CAC Comments

Technical Issue No. 21 & 23 Workshop: Freight Rail Co-location/Relocation Alternatives & Operations and Maintenance Facility Location

March 28, 2013

Freight Rail Comments:

- **General**
 - Either co-locate or re-locate seems to be a very complicated decision. Whichever is selected, proper and sufficient mitigation needs to be provided for the communities impacted.
- **Co-location**
 - Community is very thankful that tunnel options would be explored.
 - Some in the Kenilworth corridor would prefer freight to light-rail.
 - The community would not tolerate the relocation of the bike trails to city streets or other options. Trails need to be preserved in a similar condition as they are now.
 - It would be ok to have funky trails, whether they were elevated or shared part of the street for a distance.
 - Even if we made a tunnel in Kenilworth there would still be vibration, both during construction and when the line is operating.
- **Relocation**
 - You should not put freight carrying combustible material over a major highway (HWY 7)
 - There are 6 intersections that will be blocked simultaneously with the reroute. Based on the length & speed of the trains intersections could be blocked for up to 18 minutes.
 - Relocation means greater noise & vibration impacts that have not been appropriately studied. This will need to happen and robustly mitigated for before a relocation occurs.
 - Derailments at all curves.
 - Relocating traffic this close to a high school is so unsafe. In addition, there are 5 schools within ½ mile of the relocated train that makes this decision fundamentally unsafe.
 - Derailment solution when raised right-of-way some sort of cement spaced structure to prevent roll into people's backyards with public art. Think how fed buildings are protected.
 - I would like the "locally preferred option" to be re-considered. St. Louis Park did not get to truly vote for the LPA because we were told that we could not discuss relocation. Art Higinbotham's idea about locating LRT along HWY 100 would be good to discuss/consider.
 - Noise of locomotives of re-routed trains making grades at Hwy 7 and iron triangle must be taken into account.
 - Derailment studies.
 - New noise vibration studies.
- **Questions**
 - Have 4F concerns been thoroughly considered in this area (post-it note near Iron Triangle (northern connection to BNSF mainline).
 - How many businesses and homes would need to be taken to flatten inter-connect curve?

- How will information be weighted to make sure R-O-W.
- To get rid of tight curves, how many homes and businesses will be taken to remove the curve that crosses library lane.

Operations & Maintenance Facility

- **Non-site Specific**
 - Layering parking and maintenance seems clever
 - St. Louis Park should not have any OMF if the freight is re-located from the Kenilworth corridor to the MN&S.
 - Won't you need a decision made on relocation/co-location before you can decide on OMF 15 or 14?
 - Cold storage site Hopkins- no OMF
 - Should the re-route occur- no OMF's in St. Louis Park
 - Put OMF in Eden Prairie. Ideal site near the city's existing maintenance facility. Doesn't take property off tax roles. Doesn't disturb residential area. Works with realignment to bring LRT closer to Town Center.
 - Minneapolis already has the HLRT OMF at Franklin Ave. Unfair to burden the city with another OMF.
 - Per New American Academy, Somali community would benefit from 180 living wage jobs.
 - I do believe that Maintenance facility should be placed in the west because it has more open areas "rectangular shape"; especially it should be placed either Optum land or city of Eden Prairie maintenance facility.
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- **Site 1**
- **Site 2**
- **Site 3**
 - If Eden Prairie is able to relocate current buildings/activities maybe be an appropriate site.
 - What are the negatives?
 - Offers good opportunity at the end of the line.
- **Site 4**
 - Offers good opportunity at the end of the line.
- **Site 5**
- **Site 6**
- **Site 7**
 - Good access good size
- **Site 8**
- **Site 9**
 - Good opportunity on the east next to other industrial sites.
- **Site 10**
 - If OMF is to be located in Hopkins, #10 seems most appropriate out of all other suggest sites. A lot of planning for development opportunities is happening at sites near stations & would impact quality of life in those areas.

- Difficult with bridge over CP rail. Land fill site- environmental problems- methane. Cross over track increases noise.
- **Site 11**
 - Hopkins Honda Site- multi story parking above car storage area. Share parking structure between daily parking and Hopkins Honda vehicle parking & storage for new cars. This would mitigate taking some of Hopkins Honda car storage behind their building.
- **Site 12**
 - Easy access, good size, buffer housing.
 - In the middle of a high density neighborhood may not be the best location. Consideration should be given to impacts on residents.
 - need for respect for housing- landscaping, screening, attention to noise, light pollution at night.
 - Fall next to/in middle of an environmental justice community, which needs to be considered.
 - If these sites are selected would it match with goals for Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to improve creek?
- **Site 13**
 - Fall next to/in middle of an environmental justice community, which needs to be considered.
 - If these sites are selected would it match with goals for Minnehaha Creek Watershed District to improve creek?
- **Site 14**
 - Better uses for TOD land?
 - Will have a negative impact on Methodist Hospital (traffic blocking, noise, vibrations). There should not be OMF sites on these locations.
 - How many businesses will be impacted? How will the cap on Golden site be protected during construction?
- **Site 15**
 - Better uses for TOD land?
 - Relocation issue- but Methodist hospital may want land for expansion.
 - will have a negative impact on Methodist Hospital (traffic blocking, noise, vibrations). There should not be OMF sites on these locations.
 - How many businesses will be impacted? How will the cap on Golden site be protected during construction?
- **Site 16**
 - Parcel would be much better used for transit-oriented development.
 - Must be higher and better uses for land closer into city.
 - Too small better for development
 - Would be a bad place for a maintenance facility b/c it could be developed for commercial interests in SLP. Should not be taken for a maintenance facility.
 - Would limit business development in area. Already congested- Beltline is traffic problem.
- **Site 17**
 - Not good to take park like site. Gateway for trails.

- Must be higher and better uses for land closer into city.
- Difficulty getting equipment & supplies to the site. Incompatible with area, house. May interfere with trails.
- Parking/access for employees. Very important to preserve trails and trail safety, and urban green space. Impact on residences at top of bluff? Some people see the potential of major green development in this area.
- Site may be polluted. 1394 is a gateway into Minneapolis, it needs to be scenic and peaceful not industrial. It would be putting the OMF in a park like setting. It is a bad idea. Employee access is extremely difficult.
- No access by car
- This locations makes the most sense for an OMF because it will have the least negative impacts on nearby residents and commercial interests.
- This makes sense it was built as rail yard and no businesses would be displaced.
- Opposed to both Penn & 5th Street N with the ball park and proposed as well as slowly growing economic development, a maintenance & operation site would not be a good use of this land. Noise: trains crossing from one track to another track. Prob no painting. Also there is a difficult bottle neck at pinch point.
- Is next to a major area of new development in Minneapolis. An OMF would not be consistent with existing park use or future development.
- Is currently a native wild flower field.
- **Site 18**
 - No, too much going on already

Opposed to both Penn & 5th Street N with the ball park and proposed as well as slowly growing economic development, a maintenance & operation site would not be a good use of this land. Noise: trains crossing from one track to another track. Also there is a difficult bottle neck at pinch point.