



Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)
Business Advisory Committee Meeting
January 27, 2016
Southwest Project Office
Park Place West Building, Suite 500
6465 Wayzata Boulevard
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Meeting Attendees

BAC/Alternatives in Attendance: Co-Chair's Will Roach and Dan Duffy, (BAC) Dave Perner, Gary Orcutt, Rick Weiblen, Curt Rahman, Duane Spiegle; (Guests) Eden Prairie's Alysen Nesse, Community Work's Kerri Pearce Ruch, (SPO) Robin Caufman, Dan Pfeifer, Sophia Ginis, Nkongo Cigolo, James Mockovciak

1. Welcome and Meeting Purpose

Co-Chairs Will Roach and Dan Duffy provided a welcome and overview of the meeting. Minutes were approved for the August 26th BAC meeting and October 27th Joint BAC/CAC Meeting. Mr. Duffy presented an overview of an upcoming meeting with a few State legislators and three local business Chambers on Feb 9th from 11:30-1:30 PM. The purpose of the meeting, he stated, is to create a venue for the business community to express why they support the SWLRT. To share business perspectives about the importance of the LRT to attract young professionals to the region. To say the LRT is a transit system that adds real value to the region. The Chambers' goal is to try to influence the direction of the upcoming legislative session and a positive vote on LRT funding. A question was asked if there were other things the business community could do, such as writing letters in support of the SWLRT. The Co-Chairs affirmed the idea while stating that the opportunity to do this would be when the legislative session begins. The Co-Chairs noted that emails are also an effective advocacy tool.

2. 2016 Look Ahead

Robin Caufman presented a high level overview of SWLRT activities this year. These included major project milestones, activities scheduled for completion through the end of the year. There were several questions:

Q: Will there be multiple bidders for the civil contracts?

A: Most likely. The SPO has received interest from local, regional and national companies. There has been effective outreach to get the word out, she continued. SWLRT design staff have attended national conferences, and the SPO held a successful construction 'mixer' in October

that attracted a lot of interest. She also explained the process of evaluating bids into two parts; a review of a company's capacity and the request for bid after qualification.

Q: Will the SPO incorporate lower, fluctuating commodity prices in the bid evaluations?

A: The SPO is aware bids could be low if prices rise between the time of the bid and construction. To plan effectively the SPO is conducting comparable cost analysis with other projects that have experienced these changes.

Q: Will federal or local project funds be covered using LONP's?

A: The SPO is using local funds first, and federal funds in the later years of the project. LONP's will cover costs assigned to local funding at the front end of construction.

Q: Is there any risk the project could be pulled at a later date having already spent all that local money?

A: The LONP is important because the FTA and local funding partner signs off. This strategy was utilized on the Central Corridor LRT project. All LONP's were covered after the FTA provided the Full Funding Grant Agreement.

Q: How can the BAC align our initiatives and priorities to support the Project Office?

A: Through letters and emails supporting the SWLRT during the legislative session. And, by helping to plan and maintain access, and mitigate impacts to local businesses during the construction phase. After the Record of Decision (ROD) the SPO can begin acquiring property. The SPO could use assistance in finding new locations for businesses facing relocation.

Q: Are the LRT vehicles being purchased from local or international companies?

A: International companies can make proposals. But there is a Buy America requirement to all federal projects. Sixty percent of the contract needs to be manufactured in America.

3. Southwest Community Works: Corridor Housing Strategy Update

Kerri Pearce Ruch continued the presentation with an overview of housing strategies in the LRT corridor. She outlined SCW's vision, goals and a description of stakeholder outreach activities. She described SCW's work as "beyond the rails" to encourage land use development in ways that "attract investment around the corridor". Mr. Ruch presented an outline of BAC feedback from a meeting last year, the strategies developed from SCW's outreach, and, ways it may be implemented. She concluded with a list of 'next steps for the upcoming year. There was one question:

Q: Was there a particular goal shaping how many housing units would be 'affordable' properties?

Ms. Ruch responded there were currently 11 thousand units and the demand is over 13 thousand units. She added that SCW was engaging regulatory agencies and other policy makers to relook at regulations developers see as obstacles to making investments and taking the risks to develop more affordable housing. Ms. Ruch concluded her presentation by encouraging developers to share their questions and concerns with the SCW. She stated the importance of hearing directly from them about the obstacles they perceive to development, and SCW's commitment to find ways to work effectively together.

4. Section 4(f) Update

***What is Section 4(f)?** *Section 4(f) refers to the original section within the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 which established the requirement for consideration of park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites in transportation project development. The law, now codified in 49 U.S.C. §303 and 23 U.S.C. §138, is implemented by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the regulation 23 CFR 774.*

Nani Jacobson continued the presentation with a description of Section 4(f). She described the process involved and pointed out the two areas requiring evaluation in Minnetonka. There was one question.

Q: *Why was this necessary?*

A: The Opus area is a large trail network located in an area largely made up of wetlands. It was originally designed in the 1970's to support PRT's (Personal Transportation vehicles). While it was primarily designed for transportation, recreational uses (i.e. bikes, walking, etc.) were also envisioned. Of the 49 acres, the project would permanently use 1 acre.

5. Station and OMF Renderings

Ryan Kronzer reviewed the 4 different station types and presented 15 renderings along the Southwest corridor. In addition, he presented several slides of the proposed OMF building, and described some of the materials to be utilized in station construction. There were several questions:

Q: *Is the SPO acquiring any property at the SouthWest Transit site?*

A: Culver's will need to be acquired. There will need to be a small section of property acquired from Ruby Tuesdays. The current parking garage and entryway will be retrofitted to accommodate the new station.

Q: *Is Culver's being relocated?*

A: Acquisition and relocation can begin after Record of Decision and Determination of Adequacy.

Q: *Are we matching existing construction elements?*

A: Yes. For example, the same brick utilized in the construction of the existing parking garage will be used in the expansion.

Q: *Is more retail space being proposed?*

A: No.

Q: *Have we studied and prepared for the "peculiar" egress challenges around the station?*

A: Yes. There will be a new access ramp and a fuller intersection allowing drivers to move from one side of the parking garage to the other. There will be no ingress from the adjacent highway, and Technology Drive will not be changed. If a traffic signal became necessary it could be added at a later date.

Q: *How many additional parking stalls are being added?*

A: 450

Q: *With most passengers arriving from the west by bus boarding from another location, are all the new parking spaces necessary?*

A: The SPO is working on assumptions that a percentage of passengers boarding will also park at the SWT station.

Q: *Will there be electronic signage monitoring incoming and outgoing trains?*

A: There will be electronic LCD screens announcing train arrivals. When not in use they can flip over to post advertising. In the future there may be weather feeds and other ways to add value.

Q: *Are the architectural details along the station platform lit?*

A: Yes.

Q: *How long does it take to process the purchase of a ticket?*

A: Around 30 seconds. It's even faster with a Go-To Card.

Q: *Are there currently any plans to develop the land around Van White Station?*

A: Currently Ryan Co. has a development option on Minneapolis' Linden Yards.

Q: *How is the SPO managing water drainage around the station platform?*

A: With interior drains and a warning system. In addition, the low slope of the roofs are effective with the right amount of detail to facilitate water run-off.

Q: *Are there any plans to expand the current bridge at the Van White Station?*

A: Minneapolis City Staff say it's a long way off.

Q: *What is the security like around the stations?*

A: It is the same security as found at stations elsewhere on the METRO System including cameras and a police patrol. Metro Transit is aware which stations have more activity and may require additional support.

Q: *Is there any attempt to tie in or include architectural elements of the stations into the OMF Site?*

A: The SPO has worked with the City of Hopkins on a design plan that they're happy with. The OMF is meant to be as unique and consistent with the City's vision

Q: *What are the parking numbers at each station?*

A: Stations with Park and Ride are listed below along with the proposed number of parking spaces.

Southwest	450
Golden Triangle	200
City West	160
Opus	80
Shady Oak	700
Blake	89
Louisiana	350
Beltline	268

6. Station Naming

Robin Kaufman introduced the process and our progress in naming stations. She presented the Met Council's guidelines, the due dates to finalize names, and an update of current station names- including both decided and undecided names. Ms. Kaufman outlined the next steps stating the SPO anticipated final station names by March. Some BAC members gave their individual views on retaining the Golden Triangle name and what the City West station should be called. There were two questions:

Q: *Is the SPO working with City staffs and boards and local stakeholders to come up with names?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Will there be an App to find your way around the SWLRT?*

A: Currently Metro Transit is working on a mobile app for the bus and rail system.

7. The Meeting was Adjourned

