

Metropolitan Council

St. Louis Park City Hall, 5005 Minnetonka Blvd., St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

March 1, 2017

Members Present	Chair Adam Duininck Molly Cummings Jason Gadd James Hovland	Jennifer Munt Will Roach Terry Schneider	Victoria Nill (Alt) Linda Higgins (Alt) Peter Wagenius (Alt)
Members Absent	Russ Adams Jan Callison Asad Aliweyd Keith Bogut Steve Elkins	Marion Greene Betsy Hodges Matt Look Brian Lamb Peter McLaughlin	Scott McBride Jake Spano Denetrick Powers Nancy Tyra-Lukens

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Adam Duininck called the March 1, 2017 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:05 a.m. at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Duininck presented the January 4, 2017 SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Mayor Terry Schneider made a motion to approve, Mr. Will Roach seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

3. CHAIR'S LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Chair Duininck reported there are some governance bills coming up in the Legislature about the Met Council, along with a resolution to HF 1479 about SWLRT. Chair Duininck stated that he and Mark Fuhrmann recently spoke with the FTA Executive Director about this HF resolution and what they were hearing. FTA was very clear that during projects such as this one, a lot of communication and media arise the closer the project gets to a Full Funding Grant Agreement. The FTA communicates mainly with the project sponsors, and since we are the agency and entity as the project sponsor, the FTA continues to work and rely on us for information.

Chair Duininck stated that this resolution to HF 1479 has a lot of inaccuracies and misinformation. It would take a federal law change to have any unused New Starts money go to Highway or anywhere other than New Starts projects. Chair Duininck went through some of the themes of the resolution and the misrepresentation of them. He stated we continue to need assistance at the state and federal level, along with the continued support of our local partners. The president's budget will be announced in March/April, followed by the congressional appropriations. This is good timing for us to advocate for funding this project to our legislators.

Mayor Schneider asked if this resolution to the house file is one that needs action by the Governor to approve it. Chair Duininck believes this is not something that needs action, but that it is a resolution that will be read and voted on the floor and then sent to congressional members.

Mayor Hovland mentioned the Legislature asked us to find our money locally, which we have done. He feels this is an irresponsible resolution. Mayor Hovland suggested that we should give consideration as Mayors and City Councils to have local resolutions, perhaps rebutting all these positions they have taken and affirming our position with SWLRT.

Will Roach stated that the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) has in the past provided a letter that went to both the Governor's office and the State Legislators. The BAC is again in the process of crafting a letter showing their support and the need for better transit that supports job growth among the region.

Mayor Schneider suggested rather than city resolutions, we create a joint op ed piece from the Mayors along the SWLRT line. This approach was agreed to by the CMC. It was mentioned that this would have more impact than resolutions from the city. Chair Duininck stated the Met Council will offer their support for this op ed piece as needed.

Mr. Wagenius mentioned that the house bill sponsors have come together in the past on ideas, which there was no evidence that they are in support of any form of transit.

Chair Duininck asked CMC members to contact members of Congress, Representatives Ellison, Paulson, and McCollum who is on the Appropriations Committee along with the U.S. Senators. We need to communicate the importance of this project and make sure they are raising it as an important item. Chair Duininck mentioned the final funding agreement for SWLRT only needs to be approved by the FTA Administration, not the members of Congress. There is a congressional review time, but no approval process.

Councilmember Gadd agrees with using the op ed piece, and also to focus just on the facts of countering what was said on SWLRT. He also suggests we reiterate how SWLRT will benefit the entire system in the region, not just the cities along the line.

Councilmember Munt reported the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met on March 1, where it was mentioned that we really need to assert that construction begins this summer and people will be riding the trains in 2021. It is important for the public to know this project is going full speed ahead. People are hearing that we could take LRT funding and invest it in roads; also, hearing we will have greater Minnesota pay for our metro light rail. Both are false, but are continued to be heard. We need one Minnesota plan for transportation that includes transit, roads and bridges.

Chair Duininck reported there has been over \$515 million in development either planned or underway along the SWLRT line. A chart showing some of these development locations was shown.

4. CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Jim Alexander reported on the major project milestones. The Invitation for Bids for the Civil package was issued on February 14. There will be a pre-bid meeting held on March 3, which will include a DBE mixer. The bids are currently due May 2. To date there are 136 plan holders who have expressed interest. Of those, 20 are listed as prime bidders, and we are aware of at least 4 entities that are forming joint ventures for this contract. The Systems and OMF packages are currently being finalized and are scheduled to go out for bid in May and June. Construction is anticipated to start later in 2017 for all three of these contracts.

Mr. Alexander went through the org chart for construction. We are looking to hire about 70 additional staff for the construction portion. We currently have seven positions filled and are interviewing for several others. Mr. Alexander introduced Brian Runzel, the new Director of Construction; and Brian Connolly, the new Assistant Director of Construction. We are also looking at a consultant to help manage the construction contracts. Mr. Alexander reviewed some of the positions that will be hiring for the construction oversight work.

The local actions for funding construction amount to a total of \$32.6M. Also, there were regional solicitation grants approved by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) for public improvements that will leverage the SWLRT investment. These projects include: Town Center Station construction; Downtown Hopkins park and ride; park and ride structure at Beltline Station and grade separated trail crossings at Blake, Wooddale and Beltline stations.

We are also moving forward on the construction permits needed. To date we have the permits approved with St. Louis Park, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie, along with six permits with other permitting agencies approved. Other local action include the site plan review for the OMF, where a public hearing was held at the Hopkins Planning and Zoning Commission on December 20, 2016 and the plan was approved at the Hopkins City Council on January 3, 2017.

5. DBE/WORKFORCE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Aaron Koski, Assistant Director of Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) presented the progress of DBE and workforce inclusion on this project. Mr. Koski introduced the new staff in OEO, Gary Courtney and Jon Vang who will be helping with the SWRLT project. Mr. Koski updated the CMC on the following activities in OEO:

OEO recently started a group called the Great Minds, which consists of 15 key stakeholders representing small businesses and small women and minority owned businesses. Their first meeting was on January 10, where they addressed and identified key DBE and Workforce challenges where they will focus their energy. Staff from cities along the corridor were also invited to this meeting.

On February 21, there was a DBE Workshop with 14 in attendance. They discussed the challenges of cashflow and retainage, and the long and complex contract language. This group will meet again in May.

On February 22, there was a Workforce Workshop with 9 in attendance. They discussed the challenges of training, transportation and child care during work. OEO is helping this group come up with ideas on providing solutions for these challenges.

On March 3, from 1:00 – 4:00, there will be a DBE Meet and Greet, which will follow the Pre-Bid meeting. This is a good opportunity for the DBE vendors to meet with the prime contractors. It is anticipated that over 200 people will be in attendance.

LRT Build Program. This is a workforce development program being worked on in OEO. An application was submitted to Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board and to the McKnight Foundation. These two organizations awarded funds to provide a program for helping individuals start a career in the trades. This program is a 10-week course which will help prepare participants to become acclimated to the construction environment, and includes classroom for basic training, and two weeks of hands on training. This training opportunity will be open to adults as well as graduating high school seniors. The goal is to enlist 10 – 20 students as a trial so both adults as well as students will be in the program. Chair Duininck mentioned the pre-apprenticeship program has been enormously successful, and this is a great way to show those interested in the field what the construction work involves.

Councilmember Munt reported that at the recent CAC meeting, the members offered suggestions for strengthening the DBE program.

Mr. Wagenius asked for an update on the Calhoun Isles high-rise communication regarding the vibration issue. Mr. Alexander reported on the Calhoun Isles building, which is a 10-story condominium that is in the Kenilworth Corridor. The Kenilworth tunnel is planned to be constructed alongside the foundations of the building. We have looked at this closely and have been communicating with the Calhoun Isles Association and the City of Minneapolis about potential vibration during construction and potential long term impacts during operations and mitigation measures to reduce these impacts to acceptable levels. We last met with Calhoun Isles representatives in January and our vibration consultant is now working on items discussed at this meeting and we plan to meet with the representatives again. Mr. Wagenius asked if the decision on whether Category 1 or Category 4 been made yet. Mr. Alexander stated that the facility is classified as a Category 1. For reference, the building categories are identified in FTA guidelines and dictate allowable vibration levels during construction based on the type of building. The guidelines identify four categories of structure, 1 – 4. Category 1 being reinforced concrete structures, which is the type of construction of the Calhoun Isles buildings and the least sensitive and Category 4 being buildings extremely sensitive to vibration damage.

Mr. Roach reported at the recent BAC meeting, the group is excited about the interest from the prime contractors and quantities, they also talked about shovel ready and discussed ways the BAC can help communicate within the business community. The BAC also discussed their letter they will be constructing and sending to the Governor's office and Legislative offices.

Councilmember Munt reported that the CAC held their final meeting on 2/28. The CAC started meeting in April of 2012 and have met 37 times since then. There were 92 participants in these meetings and they have advised the CMC on 23 technical issues. Councilmember Munt conveyed her appreciation for all those that invested their time and energy in making this project better. Many the CAC members expressed interested in participating in the upcoming construction workgroups, along with the groundbreaking activities.

6. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary