

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

December 9, 2015

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Adam Duininck called the December 9, 2015 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:35 a.m. at the St. Louis Park City Hall. Chair Duininck congratulated Mayor Elect Cummings and Mayor Elect Spano on the recent election.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Duininck presented the September 2, 2015 SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Mr. Will Roach made a motion to accept the minutes, Council Member Jennifer Munt seconded it, and the motion was then unanimously approved.

Chair Duininck reported on the regional transitway system and reminded members we are trying to accomplish regional connectivity. A map of the transitway system was shown, with recently completed projects and new projects shown. The two projects that need to have legislative action taken are SWLRT and the Orange Line, which is an important bus rapid transit (BRT) project that runs along the 35W corridor. The Green Line, which has been in operation for a little over a year, has been exceeding 40,000 average weekday rides for 10 straight weeks. There is a lot of good development happening along the Green Line.

Commissioner Peter McLaughlin mentioned that the Blue Line has also been very successful. Hennepin County just closed on a TOD site along the Blue Line at Hiawatha and Lake. There will be a human services hub built at this location, combined with retail and the first phase of housing development. Of the 17 Fortune 500 companies located in Minnesota, 16 are in the Twin Cities, and 11 will be on existing or planned regional transitways. Sport and entertainment venues along these lines include Target Field, Target Center, US Bank, TCF, the new soccer stadium, Xcel Energy Center and CHS Field. We need to keep the message that this is about building out a full system, not just an individual line.

Mayor Schneider stated this is a good message to have. Along with the mention of the Fortune 500 companies, the number of employees that are served now and will be served with the future line will carry an even stronger message.

3. UPDATE ON PROJECT PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. Craig Lamothe stated that the project office has been moving the project forward on many fronts, and this is from the continued engagement and support from the project partners. Mr. Lamothe thanked all the dedication from the staff from the project partners.

The 60% design milestone has now been completed. The project office made two formal critical submittals to the FTA this fall, one being a full New Starts application, which reflects the scope recommended by CMC and approved by the Council in July. The other is a submittal for the notice of intent to seek entry into the engineering phase.

Since the Met Council action on the scope in July, Hennepin County has made a pledge to a future in-kind land transfer, valued at \$30M. Following that, project partners, including the county and corridor cities, have been making pledges to future funding, as well as potential future in-kind land transfers. The in-kind land transfers would require adjustments to the project cost estimate. Some project partners have requested to include a small number of items in the project scope, with a firm financial commitment from those requesting partners. Those items were shown on a map, which include: a trail tunnel under the freight railroad corridor to the Louisiana Station; three grade separated regional trail crossings at Wooddale, Blake and Beltline; and an extension of Lynn Avenue near Beltline Station.

Mayor Elect Jake Spano mentioned the importance of the Lynn Avenue extension to the City. The Lynn Avenue extension will support transit oriented development at that site and should increase ridership at that station.

Mr. Lamothe said the total of these items is approximately \$16.2M in scope, of which half will be funded by federal funds, and half paid for by the requested partner. These cost estimates would bring the project cost estimate to approximately \$1.79B. With these increases, there would be no increase in CTIB, HCRRA or state funding. With these elements, the local funding commitment would be \$745.3M.

4. NEXT STEPS

Mr. Jim Alexander went over the next steps, which include: Q1 of 2016, the FTA will be reviewing the appraisals of the in-kind land transfers; Q2 2016 the FTA and Met Council will complete the environmental review process. For the major contract packages, it is anticipated that there will be one civil; one systems; and one OMF package; along with the light rail vehicle contract. In Q1/Q2 2016 Met Council will conduct the project risk assessment.

The in-kind land transfers were shown on the map. These appraisals must go through FTA review. The reach of the land transfer from Hennepin County is from Shady Oak Station to Van White Station. In St. Louis Park, the land parcels are at the Beltline park and ride and the other one near the water tower just east of Hwy. 100; in Hopkins, the land parcel is at the downtown Hopkins station; in Minnetonka, it is around the Opus Station, and in Eden Prairie it is at the City West Station area.

Mr. Alexander went through the major project milestones. The 90% design plans for the proposed alignment are scheduled for completion in winter of 2016. The plans would then be 100% complete in the spring of 2016. The Record of Decision is anticipated in the summer of 2016, which leads into the request for engineering with FTA. The start for civil construction would be the fall of 2016; with systems starting in the winter 2016; and OMF construction in spring of 2017. Heavy construction would be 2017 – 2019, with revenue service still scheduled for 2020.

Mr. Alexander reviewed some of the activities that will be included in the 2016 design activities. Design renderings were shown of some stations and the OMF.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if Three Rivers Park District is making a contribution on the bike trails. Mr. Lamothe stated that they are providing a portion of the local funding, which is being passed through the county, for the three grade separated trail crossings.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if we feel our Federal ranking of medium high will be maintained. Mr. Lamothe said our submittal in August is under active review. We will know when the funding recommendation comes out in February. We believe we still have a strong project and will be able to maintain the rating that we had. Commissioner McLaughlin also thanked the elected officials for coming forward to make this project happen.

Mayor Schneider asked when the land acquisitions get factored in. Mr. Lamothe indicated that this would be in the spring timeframe.

Commissioner Greene asked for some discussion on the noise mitigation and how the communities will be involved. Mr. Lamothe stated we are at the point where we are working through the environmental and design processes, and proposed noise mitigation plans will be reflected in the 90% design plans. They will also be identified in the FEIS, which will be out this spring.

5. 10/27 CAC AND BAC CONSTRUCTION OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Sam O'Connell reported that on October 27, there was a joint meeting of the BAC and CAC to start discussions and to identify outreach and communication techniques for the upcoming construction. Also discussed were the upcoming community events and discussion about creative ways for the project to move through construction with as little disruption as possible to the communities. The committees came up with some good ideas, which include; develop a SWLRT construction kit which provides a big picture overview of the construction; use high and low technology for the information; to have advance notices as much as possible; to involve locally elected officials and staff; and to provide resources in multiple languages. Other ideas include: coordinate with MnDOT for road closures; provide clear signage; coordinate for transit route changes; conduct on site tours; attend community meetings; and meet with neighborhood associations and property managers.

Mayor Elect Spano mentioned for the Green Line that Met Council was very flexible with signage, which should also be done within our areas to make sure that people can find the businesses along the line during construction.

Councilmember Jennifer Munt mentioned that the CAC also thought a good idea would be to create an app to help people during construction. Example of having a company send out a link to their employees so they could monitor if an area they travel is going to be under construction. This would also be a good way to get rapid information to people. Mr. Will Roach mentioned the business community will be looking for consistent and appropriate communication and coordination.

Mr. Scott McBride mentioned MnDOT will continue to coordinate all their construction projects on the west side with SWLRT.

6. 10/21 CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR KICK-OFF EVENT

Ms. O'Connell reported there were approximately 190 people in attendance at the October 21 construction kick off mixer. The purpose of this mixer was to introduce the project to contractors that may not be aware of the project, and to explain the corridor using the roll plots. Representatives from the procurement, contracts and DBE divisions were also there to discuss the processes of their areas and go over workforce and DBE. The full list of the attendees along with the presentation is available on the SWLRT website.

7. DBE AND WORKFORCE OVERVIEW

Ms. Wanda Kirkpatrick, Director of Office of Equal Opportunity provided an overview of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and the workforce program. The DBE program is set by the federal government for agencies that get more than \$250,000 federal money. The program is only on

subcontracting opportunities, and is meant to increase the amount of small women and minority businesses inclusion on the project. DBE vendors do have to be certified. To become certified, the DBE vendors must apply and be owned and controlled by either a woman or minority.

The goals for the DBE program must be narrowly tailored and be reflective of the local market. Oversight activities conducted by the Met Council include conducting pre-bid information sessions; conducting bid evaluations and reference checks; and conducting field verification interviews. There are monthly oversight committee meetings, along with many meet and greets held in advance of major procurements. There are also annual DBE roundtable sessions held, which is for community members, where DBEs and prime contractors to get together and provide information. A post project audit is then conducted, which is required by the federal government.

On CCLRT, there was \$125.3M that went into the DBE community from CCLRT work. A breakdown of the DBE work was shown. The chart for SWLRT DBE firms working on the project to date was shown, along with their goals and the amount billed to date for each DBE firm.

Chair Duininck asked if the DBE goals for civil, systems and OMF construction all will be the same or will they be the different. Ms. Kirkpatrick said this will be based on what the scope of the work will entail and then see what DBEs are available for that type of work. A goal will then be set.

Ms. Kirkpatrick said the DBE program is for businesses, and the Workforce program is for the people who work on the project. The workforce goals have been set by the Department of Human Rights for the State of Minnesota. For SWLRT, there will be a 6% women goal for all trades and a 32% minority goal for all trades. For CCLRT, the workforce goal was met. The US Bank Stadium is also meeting these goals. We are in close contact with them and will develop a tracking system so the employees working on their project will have an opportunity to work on the SWLRT project.

Ms. Kirkpatrick introduced Andrew Larson, who is the DBE project manager and will be working directly with the DBEs and prime contractors and staff to ensure the DBE and workforce programs are achieved.

Commissioner Callison asked what the consequences are if the DBE goals fall short after the project is complete. Ms. Kirkpatrick stated there are consequences in the contractor's contract for the DBE goals. We will be monitoring the goals and ensuring the contractors are doing what they are supposed to be doing to meet the goals. If at the end, they didn't meet the goals or didn't make a good faith effort to meet the goal, we will then look at what needs to be done from what the contract standpoint.

Commissioner Callison asked what the Federal Government does to the Met Council if the goals are not met. Ms. Kirkpatrick said the Federal government will audit what we have, and check to see where we fell short. They will then provide us with some strong guidance so it doesn't happen again.

Ms. Kirkpatrick stated that for the Workforce goals, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights has the authority from the legislature to stop the project until the contractor provides something saying they will do a better job to meet the goal. Met Council, Department of Human Rights, and the contractor will be working together to ensure the goals are met.

Councilmember Munt said one of the strongest talking points legislatively for SWLRT is the workforce and the payroll. CCLRT's payroll was \$256M, which much of which was paid to construction workers working on the project representing over 60 counties in Minnesota.

Mayor Elect Spano asked for some talking points in the future for the project partners to help spread the word on advancing the project's goals for these. Ms. Kirkpatrick said there will be a website and we will use what worked well for CCLRT in this area.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Duininck mentioned that the next meeting will be January 6 at 10:00, at St. Louis Park City Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary