Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)
Joint Business Advisory Committee & Community Advisory Committee Meeting
June 6, 2013
Benilde - St. Margaret's School
2501 Minnesota Hwy 100, St. Louis Park, MN 55426
6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

BAC & CAC Members and Alternates: Art Higinbotham, B Aaron Parker, Jay Peterson, Bill James, Bob Aderhold, Bob Tift, David Greene, Derek Gunderson, Elizabeth Ryan, John Erickson, Linnea Sodergren, Maria Klein, Matt Flory, Meg Forney, Neil Trembley, Rolf Peterson, Tom Jenny, Vicki Moore, Brian Willette, Claudia Johnston-Madison, Thom Miller, Kathryn Kottke, Kathy Cobb, Timothy Brausen, Brad Bakken, Curt Rahman, Daniel Duffy, Dave Pelner, Jennifer Munt, Jeanette Colby.

Agency Staff and Guests: Sam O'Connell, Sophia Ginis, Daren Nyquist, Dan Pfeiffer, Chris Weyer, Ryan Kronzer, Sarah Ghandour, Tom Domres, Jim Alexander, Mark Fuhrmann, Craig Lamothe, Paul Danielson, Mark Bishop, Robin Caufman

1. **Welcome, Introductions: CAC Co-Chairs Munt & Colby, BAC Co-Chairs Roach & Duffy**
   Co-Chair Munt opened the meeting by thanking Bob Tift and Benilde-St. Margaret's School for hosting the joint Business and Community Advisory Committee meeting followed by an introduction of BAC and CAC members.

2. **Technical Issues Discussion: Jim Alexander, SPO**
   Jim Alexander started with an overview of the twenty-five technical issues.
   a. **Freight Rail: Co-location and Relocation**
      Overview of the background to issue number twenty-one; as the Metropolitan Council gained entrance into preliminary engineering of the Southwest Light Rail Transit Project the Federal Transit Administration required that the project office resolve whether freight rail would be co-located with LRT and the regional trail through the Kenilworth Corridor in Minneapolis or would be relocated to Canadian Pacific's (CP) MN&S Spur in St. Louis Park. This analysis is part of the Metropolitan Council's due diligence and responsibility as the project sponsor. The SPO has reviewed the comments to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and provided them to our designers as we've started to evaluate the technical issues.

      Review of existing information: Technical issue twenty-one encompasses an area west of Louisiana Avenue to Penn Avenue. The Southwest LRT will be co-located in either scenario from approximately TH 169 to just west of Louisiana Avenue and co-located as the line proceeds east of Penn Station into downtown Minneapolis. The freight rail lines involved

are; (1) CP's Bass Lake Spur operated by Twin Cities &Western (TC&W) running east-west through Hopkins and St. Louis Park. (2) Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority's Kenilworth Corridor operated by TC&W running east-west from the end of the Bass Lake Spur to BNSF's Wayzata Subdivision in Minneapolis, CP's MN&S Spur operated by CP and TC&W running north-south through St. Louis Park. (3) Burlington Northern Santa Fe's (BNSF) Wayzata Subdivision operated by BNSF running east-west through Minneapolis along I-394. Existing train volumes based on recent input provided by the railroads: (1) TC&W on the Bass Lake Spur and Kenilworth Corridor operates an average of fourteen weekly trains composed of sixty-five to seventy-five cars of Agri-goods and five to six weekly unit trains (where TC&W operates another companies trains on the line) composed of eighty to one hundred twenty cars of Ethanol, Grain and Coal. (2) CP on the MN&S line operates an average ten weekly trains composed of ten to twenty-five cars for local services. (3) BNSF on the Wayzata Subdivision operates an average of ninety-one weekly trains composed of eighty to one hundred twenty –five cars carrying a wide variety of goods. These are averages from the railroad and can fluctuate week to week due to a variety of factors.

Technical issue overview: The DEIS design had intended for the freight rail from the Bass Lake Spur/Kenilworth Corridor to extend off of the Bass Lake Spur and connect to the MN&S line (approximately 23 feet higher than the Bass Lake Spur). The freight would continue north on the MN&S line to a new track connection to the BNSF Wayzata Subdivision (the track connection of MN&S to the Wayzata Subdivision was previously removed). The connection would run along a siding track before connecting into the Wayzata Subdivision mainline.

Through our meetings with the railroads (BNSF, CP and TC&W), we have gained an understanding of the existing conditions along the Kenilworth Corridor and the TC&W's comments to the DEIS related to relocation. The tracks through the Kenilworth Corridor have a maximum curvature of six degrees, maximum grade is just over one percent and a maximum compensated grade is 1.18 percent. Maximum compensated grade takes into account both horizontal and vertical curves. The maximum compensated grade is important to the railroads because as the number gets higher, even above one percent, it poses problems for the railroad to move multiple car trains effectively. The DEIS relocation design has a maximum curvature of eight degrees and a maximum compensated grade of 1.82 percent, which TC&W has raised concern.

Freight Rail Co-location/Relocation Options: Jim Alexander presented aerial and technical design maps of freight rail co-location design options. These options are as follows: All modes at-grade (proposed sections A-A to D-D), Trail relocated (Midtown Greenway to Cedar Lake Parkway), Trail elevated (West Lake Station to North side of Burnham Bridge), LRT elevated (Lake Street Bridge to North side of Burnham Bridge), and LRT shallow (Lake Street Bridge to North of Cedar Lake Parkway) and deep twin bore (West of West Lake Station to South of 21st Street Station) tunnels.

Jim Alexander presented aerial and technical design maps of the freight rail relocation design options: Brunswick West (proposed section A-A to C-C) and Brunswick Central (proposed section A-A to E-E). The sections that are common to both Brunswick West and Central options were also shown (proposed section F-F to I-I).

Questions:

1. Neil Trembley: Under co-locate, is there no taking of park board land?
    i. Jim Alexander: In the area north of 21st Street, there is parkland north or west of the freight tracks, and we believe we can stay within HCRRA property through most of that stretch.
2. Kathryn Kottke: Two bridges crossing TH 7? Follow-up, we heard a lot of bridges not in DEIS, how it is going to get paid for.
    i. Jim Alexander: There are two bridges over TH 7, one for the connection between the Bass Lake Spur and the MN&S and one for the new connection to the MN&S Spur. SPO will be developing costs for each of the options presented; we are looking at everything along the alignment to understand what the project can afford.
3. Jeanette Colby: Timeframe on cost estimates?
    i. Jim Alexander: We are looking to have cost estimates in the July timeframe.
4. Question: How long of a stretch for co-locate/relocate sections?
    i. Jim Alexander: The approximate length of the co-location area through the Kenilworth Corridor is under two miles and the relocation length is on the order of a couple miles
5. Thom Miller: Cross section B-B how did width change from what the County measured
    i. Jim Alexander: I do not have a reference for this information and can only note that SPO has conducted surveys in the field to verify the HCRRA right-of-way.
6. Bill James: Did you keep the south side fixed?
    i. Jim Alexander: We kept the right-of-way line on the south or east side of the corridor constant. We did look at keeping the north or west side constant and also splitting the difference and encroach beyond the ROW to the south and north. We found it was less impactful if we kept the south ROW line constant because of the additional BNSF property on the north (between Cedar Lake Parkway and 21st Street), which would require an acquisition, but there are no buildings on the site.
7. John Erickson: What type of properties are impacted in St. Louis Park?
    i. Bill James: Both, commercial and residential.
    ii. Second question: Are there any other possible connections to BNSF west of the area?
    iii. Jim Alexander: SPO reviewed existing studies that evaluated other rail routes. Based on conversations with TC&W we understand that they currently have to wait to get permission to access the BNSF Wayzata Subdivision, any other routes where TC&W would access another company's lines would expose them to more challenges in getting this access.
8. Rolf Peterson: The 10,000 ft siding in relocation, is there a siding in co-location?

i. Jim Alexander: We do not have a siding in any of the co-location options; the reason we have siding in relocation options is that the railroads have indicated it would be needed to store trains before gaining access to the BNSF Wayzata Sub-division.

9. Bill James: Under either tunnel scenario, in order to construct, will you need the townhomes?
   i. Jim Alexander: Based on our current understanding of the ROW available at this time and to allow for 25 feet clearance between the centerline of the freight tracks and the ROW line, some townhomes would be impacted.
10. Art Higinbotham: Back to the question of how many freight trains- TC&W has the right to operate as many trains as they wish.
    i. Jim Alexander: The numbers we are presenting have come from the railroads, as the economy rises and falls there may be different numbers of trains.
11. Neil Trembley: With the co-location scenario at Penn there is a pedestrian bridge but under re-location there isn't a bridge. Why is there an overpass only with freight rail there
    i. Jim Alexander: We are suggesting that with co-location, the trail needs to be grade separated from the two modes, freight and LRT. Under relocation with only LRT we are suggesting that the trail be at-grade.

b. SWLRT Stations: Louisiana, Beltline, West Lake and 21st Street

Jim Alexander presented aerial and technical design of the Louisiana, Beltline, West Lake and 21st Street stations under co-locate and relocate scenarios. These options are as follows: Louisiana Station (2A Co-location, 2B Relocation, 2C Co-location, 2C Relocation, 4 Co-location, 4 Relocation), Beltline Station (1 Co-location, 1 Relocation, 2 Co-location, 2 Relocation), West Lake Station (1C Co-location, 1C Relocation) and 21st Street Station (Co-locate with Center Platform, Relocate with Center Platform, Co-locate with South Side Platforms, Relocate with South Side Platforms).

Questions:

1. Under the reroute option is the crossing at-grade at Wooddale?
   i. Jim Alexander: Under relocation and co-location scenarios with have LRT at-grade. We understand that there is interest from the City and Three Rivers Park District for a grade separated trail crossing at Wooddale, and we're suggesting that an underpass may be possible, but we have not identified this as a project cost. Based on our traffic analysis we do not see that LRT needs to be grade separated at that location, as there is an issue with this area today.
2. Neil Trembley: At the 21st Station with South Side platforms, I would think that when a train pulls in and stops at the platform it would be blocking the road.
   i. Jim Alexander: When the train is approaching from the north it would be crossing 21st Street at grade. The train would not stop in 21st Street, but would move passed the roadway and stop at the platform.
3. Neil Trembley: One thing that has been brought up before is the split platform –one on north/one on south side of 21st, wouldn't that be safer?
   i. Jim Alexander: We did look at a split side platform configuration for 21st Street. We do not believe that this configuration is appropriate for this location. Generally, split

side platforms are used when there is limited ROW available. On Central Corridor, for example, we have split platforms to accommodate left turn moves by cars on University Avenue.

c. TH 100 and Cedar Lake Parkway

Jim Alexander presented aerial and technical design of the Trunk Highway (TH) 100 and the Cedar Lake Parkway crossings under co-locate and relocate scenarios. These options are as follows: TH 100 Crossing (MnDOT TH 100 Project overview, TH 100 Bridge Exhibit Co-location, TH 100 Bridge Exhibit Relocation) and Cedar Lake Parkway Crossing (At-Grade Co-location, At-Grade Relocation, and Grade Separated Relocation).

Questions:

1. Kathryn Kottke: In the relocation design over highway 100 you have an LRT bridge and a pedestrian bridge; did the railroads agree to give up the siding?
   i. Jim Alexander: There are a number of storage tracks along the Bass Lake corridor and we've been in discussions with CP (Owner) and TC&W (operator) about these tracks. Under our design we are suggesting the storage tracks would be removed under both co-locate and relocate designs.
2. Bob Tift: One of things that MnDOT has talked about with the TH 100 project is the cost of the freight bridge and the cost of the LRT is less.
   i. Jim Alexander: There is a difference in cost due to differences in structural loads. But there is a scenario that if MnDOT rebuilds the freight bridge over TH 100 and we need to place LRT on the south side we would look to reuse the freight bridge by moving it north. We are trying to stay in front of the issue and have ongoing coordination with MnDOT.
3. Claudia Johnston-Madison: Are we talking about a lot of businesses that would need to be purchased for parking at Wooddale and Beltline.
   i. Jim Alexander: We didn't show Wooddale tonight, that was a couple of months ago, but we didn't suggest any park and ride facilities at that station. At Beltline we have suggested options for park and ride facilities that are located on properties that would need to be acquired.
4. Art Higinbotham: How can you make a decision on municipal consent without knowing the costs? We need to see a schedule and cost in order to make those decisions.
   i. Jim Alexander: We discussed this with Corridor Management Committee yesterday and plan to have costs available in late July.

3. Adjourn

Co-Chair Munt ended the presentation and moved the meeting into work at the tables. Members were free to leave at anytime.