



**Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)
Business Advisory Committee Meeting
February 21, 2017
Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM**

Meeting Summary

In Attendance:

BAC Members/Alternates: Co-chair Dan Duffy, Co-chair Will Roach, Lou Wack, Rick Weiblen, Gary Orcutt, Dave Pelner

Staff and Guests: Jim Alexander, Sam O’Connell, Dan Pfeiffer, James Mockovciak, Nkongo Cigolo; Guests; QAL’s Millard Raph

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by BAC Co-chair Duffy. October 26, 2016 meeting summary approved.

II. Project Update

Jim Alexander provided a high-level project update. He began by addressing the Legislative resolution sponsored by Senator Osmeck from Mound requesting that federal money allocated for SWLRT be diverted to fund road and bridge projects in Minnesota. Mr. Alexander explained why it wasn’t a viable proposal. He also updated committee members on the process underway to dissolve CTIB, and recreating SWLRT local funding streams with a tax in Hennepin County. Mr. Alexander emphasized the importance of this occurring quickly. SPO cannot apply for FFGA until it is resolved and the project office can demonstrate that the [50%] local money is accounted for. Finally, Mr. Alexander expressed confidence in the projects momentum and position with FTA, and the significant interest in the project now that the Civil Bid was released. There are at least four joint ventures competing to be the prime civil contractor on this project. He added SPO anticipates awarding the contract this summer and construction beginning in Q3. Dan Pfeiffer added that if CTIB disbands, Hennepin County expects to implement the one quarter percent tax as early as July.

Rick Weiblen mentioned he reviewed a list of the Presidents top 100 infrastructure projects in the nation. He asked why SWLRT was not listed. Mr. Alexander replied that he did not know how projects were selected for the list and the project was included in previous administrations request. Gary Orcutt asked how much money the project has spent to date: Mr. Alexander said around 159 million dollars. Co-chair Duffy asked to be kept updated on any movement related to Senator Osmeck’s resolution. Mr. Alexander expressed his confidence that the Governor backs this project.



Drawing attention to the presentation, Mr. Alexander summarized the 2016 major Project milestones achieved, and listed those remaining for 2017. Co-chair Roach asked what is included in the Civil Package. Mr. Alexander replied it included the roadways, bridges, walls, earthworks, and track. Mr. Weiblen asked if 5 months is a realistic timeframe between submitting and receiving the FFGA. Mr. Alexander replied it could take 5 months, or sometimes longer. Once the project financials are set they are reviewed by a financial management oversight group. Then FTA staff review all documents. A 30-day Congressional Review follows. SPO has been told the review process will take 5 months.

Dave Pelner asked what the value of the civil package was. Mr. Alexander replied it represented nearly a billion dollars of construction. Someone asked what LONP money would be used for. Mr. Alexander replied around 90 million would go towards work on the critical path elements of the alignment; work around Excelsior Blvd and Louisiana Station; dealing with challenging soils, moving freight over the channel, and beginning tunnel work. Mr. Pelner asked if this will consume local funding. Mr. Alexander replied the project budget is front loaded with local funding. Mr. Weiblen asked if there was a construction schedule. Mr. Alexander replied it was preliminary pending input from the contractor. He also added that contractors must account for all the constraints laid out in the contract specifications.

Co-chair Duffy asked if there would be freight rail disruptions in the Kenilworth Corridor. Mr. Alexander stated there would be up to a dozen outages. But SPO was trying to combine them and reduce that number. Co-Chair Duffy then asked if rail operators have contributed input in the phasing planning? Mr. Alexander replied that they had. He added that an additional challenge was a requirement the contractor would have to take over maintenance of the freight line until their work is completed.

III. Construction Outreach and Communications

Sam O'Connell presented the Construction Outreach and Communication Plan. She outlined past methods, lessons learned on other projects; a list of best practices, typical LRT construction sequences and new tools. Ms. O'Connell emphasized SPO's goal to create a 'one-stop shop' for project construction communications.

Dan Pfeiffer continued the presentation with an overview of the Construction Web Tool under development. Rick Weiblen asked if there was an option for a 'hybrid' screen on the map. Mr. Pfeiffer replied our base map currently didn't allow for that. Ms. O'Connell added that users can focus on sections of the alignment that concern them. Mr. Weiblen asked if we would be coordinating our project with MnDOT. Mr. Alexander replied that we have been planning together to minimize unnecessary disruptions. Mr. Pfeiffer went on to explain the transition from the committees (BAC/CAC) formed during the Design and Engineering phase, to new Construction Information Workgroups (CIWs). Their purpose, he said, will be to ensure construction communications are being coordinated and shared in a timely and user-friendly manner. Membership will consist of former BAC/CAC members, community and neighborhood groups, and, city, project and construction staff.



Dave Pelner asked if we will give a preference to a Minnesota company when awarding the contract. Jim Alexander replied that is not allowed under federal rules. He added that most of the workforce will be from Minnesota and nearby states. SPO will chart workforce participation [and suppliers] by county and state. Mr. Pelner asked if there were any requirements to hire union or nonunion? Mr. Alexander replied there are DBE and workforce goals. Bidders have the option to hire either union or nonunion. Mr. Alexander added that the nature of construction workforce in Minnesota suggests most workers will be union.

Mr. Pelner asked if the Civil Award will go to one Prime: Mr. Alexander replied it would. Given the magnitude of the project and the labor requirements, he added, it makes sense to have one contract while avoiding potential competition within the labor pool, suppliers, etc. Someone asked how many Prime contractors competing for this bid were involved on the Green Line Project? Mr. Alexander replied there were at least 2.

IV. Business Advisory Committee Recap

Dan Pfeiffer listed the accomplishments of the BAC since its inception in 2012. A discussion followed about how frequently the BAC should continue to meet. Members suggested 1 or 2 times a year, or, quarterly. Dave Pelner recommended meeting around upcoming milestones, to create an opportunity for BAC input. Mr. Pfeiffer asked committee members to let the Outreach Coordinator in their city know if they are interested in joining a CIW later this year.

Co-chair Duffy asked if there was an advocacy role for BAC members this legislative session. He recommended holding off on it until it became necessary. Dave Pelner suggested that committee members could help resolve budget issues if that became a problem this year. Jim Alexander suggested BAC input could be helpful as we get into construction. Rick Weiblen recommended SPO send out 'talking points' to pass on to the public and within members work circles.

Someone asked if the new video featuring the Hopkins stations would be available for other cities. Ms. O'Connell stated SPO was working on similar videos in St. Louis Park; Opus, Shady Oak and the OMF; Bryn Mawr and Bassett Creek Valley stations; Eden Prairie; and the Kenilworth area.

Co-chair Duffy asked if SWLRT would be doing anything different with fare collection. Mr. Alexander stated the process will remain the same, adding that the contract does not need to be finalized until 2019.

V. Meeting Adjourned