

Metropolitan Council

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee
August 3, 2022, 10:00 a.m., St. Louis Park City Hall

Members/Alternates
Present

Chair Charlie Zelle
Molly Cummings
Debbie Goettel
Patrick Hanlon

James Hovland
Chris LaTondresse
John Pacheco
Brad Wiersum

Tim Brausen (Alt)
Sarah Ghandour (Alt)
Kathy Nelson (Alt)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Charlie Zelle called the August 3, 2022, meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed attendees.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Zelle presented the May 4, 2022, SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Mayor Wiersum made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Goettel seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Jim Alexander, Green Line Extension Project Director, provided an update on the project. The Civil construction schedule has now been updated as part of the settlement agreement with the Civil contractor, LMJV, and we are negotiating the construction schedule for the Systems work. Both are key, as they help define the opening service date. Commissioner Goettel asked if there is any estimate for dollar amount for the agreement with the systems contractor? Jim mentioned we do have a rough estimate but have not begun negotiations.

Jim shared some of photos of development along the along the Green Line Extension corridor.

Jim provided an update on ped/bike trails. There has been a lot of interest in opening trails along the project corridor and we have been working with the Civil contractor to open segments this summer. We will continue to look for opportunities to open segments as construction activities allow and it is safe to do so. We will also continue to work with the cities, Three Rivers Park District, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Hennepin County on this topic. Recently there was a community bike tour held along the project, and we plan to hold more like this.

Mayor Hanlon thanked staff for the trail adjustments made. Trails are a jewel, and it is nice to have at least portions of them opened up. Jim stated there has been a lot of interest in opening the trail segment in the Glenwood Avenue area. Unfortunately, there is currently no room to safely open the trail through this area due to the confined area and the extent of construction.

Jim reported that LMJV reached substantial completion on three of the sixteen track segments, which were then turned over to the Systems contractor, APJV. Photos were shown of the Civil work.

Mayor Hovland asked for an update on the CICA area and the Kenilworth tunnel work. Jim explained that in January, there was some cracking and separation observed in the CICA tower. The secant wall work was suspended, and staff engaged experts to review the situation which led to augmenting the monitoring system. The secant wall work has since recommenced. Chair Zelle acknowledged that this was disruptive for these residents. The Chair noted that we have a mediator involved in our discussions with CICA representatives.

Jim reported Cedar Lake Parkway is now closed in Minneapolis for tunnel construction. Ped/bike access will be maintained during the closure. For this, we have a temporary bridge that spans over the tunnel construction. Jim said this temporary bridge is a great location to view the tunnel construction.

Mayor Hovland asked what the status of the secant wall work. Jim reported that the secant wall is approximately 40% complete.

Council Member Nelson said the number one question she is asked is when will the line open. Jim reported we continue to hold 2027 for revenue service.

Council Member Cummings asked if there has been any vandalism at the the stations as they are nearing completion? Jim stated we work to protect these assets and so far, no significant vandalism has occurred at the stations. The station areas are currently under the control of the Civil contractor, LMJV. Once civil and architectural elements are complete the control will be turned over to the Systems contractor, APJV, to complete systems work. Once construction is fully complete, the Council will take over the control of the station areas.

Commissioner LaTondresse asked what the percentage of Civil work is complete, outside of the tunnel portion. Jim responded that we are currently at approximately 60% complete overall. We will have a better estimate following this construction season. Commissioner LaTondresse asked what large pieces of work remain. Jim went over the remaining major portions of work: Southwest Station Ramp; Minnetonka/Hopkins Bridge; the segment from Shady Oak to 11th Avenue; Excelsior Bridge; the freight rail shift at Excelsior; Louisiana Park/Ride and station work; the Kenilworth tunnel work; the Glenwood and Royalston area; the 5th/7th Street Bridge; station areas in Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis, and track work.

Jim shared photos of the Systems work. The Traction Power Substations are being placed in storage until they are ready to be installed on the line. Chair Zelle said with the supply chain disruptions, this was a good idea and good investment to proceed with manufacturing equipment and placing in storage.

Commissioner Goettel asked how many total people are employed with the project? Jim responded that 65 of 87 Minnesota counties have paychecks being brought home from work on our project. Jim said staff will provide updated numbers at the next meeting.

Mayor Hovland said the stations look really good. The economic development impact on the line is great and we need to keep getting this information out there. Mayor Wiersum also stated that Minnetonka continues to get proposals of more development, which is all driven by light rail. The benefits we are receiving with the LRT are significant. Chair Zelle said that \$2B is the current number for development already built, being occupied or in the plans along the corridor. Mayor Hovland suggested a Project Update be given at an upcoming TAB meeting.

Public Involvement

David Davies, Public Involvement Supervisor, provided an update on the public involvement for the project. So far in 2022, there have been over 165 meetings with stakeholders. We also continue to provide weekly updates which reach over 17,800 email subscribers. The public construction walking tours have been very successful, and we plan to do another round in the upcoming months. We also offer tours for groups that request them.

Recently staff held Rail Safety Pop Ups held in coordination with BNSF, which were to help communicate and encourage safe crossing over the railroad tracks.

David went over some of the comments heard to date. People are encouraged by our progress, especially on the western half. There is frustration over the extended closure of trails, but overall excitement on the trail improvements that will be made. Businesses affected by road closures are thankful, but weary after years of impacts. Staff continue to be out and active during the construction season.

David asked CMC members to let staff know of any upcoming opportunities to present more information and we will set something up. Mayor Hovland would like the Edina residents to know about these walking tours.

David mentioned these tours do fill up fast, but we can also arrange additional tours as our time allows.

Mayor Wiersum asked if we could target special groups in our community for a tour, such as the Rotary Club. By getting community specific tours, it would be good for communications on the project. Mayor Hanlon also suggested providing informal meetings in informal spaces, such as brewery clubs or to bike groups. David Davies will follow up on these ideas. Council Member Cummings thanked the staff for this great outreach work. The Outreach team is quick to respond, with many challenging issues being addressed. People are grateful for this information.

4. DBE/WORKFORCE UPDATE

Jon Tao from the Office of Equity and Equal Opportunities reviewed the DBE achievements as of May 31, 2022. The numbers for DBE participation are being exceeded from what was set as the goal. Mayor Hovland asked if any new opportunities for DBE companies exist? Jon responded that the prime contractor has opportunities to bring on new DBE subcontractors as change orders come in.

The DBE contractors and suppliers that are bringing material to the DBE companies are mostly from Minnesota. The DBE participation from Minnesota firms is 85.2 %.

Jon shared a breakdown of the contract's disaggregated numbers with the DBE businesses. The amounts shown are combined for Civil, Systems, Franklin O&M, and the OMF Demolition. Commissioner Goettel asked to see number of employees in each ethnic group categories, or even ranges in each category. Jon said we will work with the MN Dept. of Human Rights, who is the lead in tracking this information, to provide the requested data.

Jon then reviewed workforce numbers for the Civil, Systems and Franklin construction contracts for women and people of color/indigenous. In comparing other contracts within our region, the Civil contract is on par.

Jon reported on an opportunity the Council supported which was called Building Strong Communities. This was a partnership with North Hennepin Technical College, the Union Trades and Met Council. There were 35 individuals that graduated from this great program in May. The Civil contractor mentored some of these graduates and provided a tour. From this, some graduates entered into our project.

5. ADJOURN

Chair Zelle thanked all for participating today. The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 5. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary