

Metropolitan Council

City of St. Louis Park Chambers, 5005 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park 55416

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee
November 7, 2012

Members Present	Susan Haigh, Chair	Jim Brimeyer	Cheryl Youakim
	Scott McBride	Brian Lamb	Bill James
	Gail Dorfman	James Hovland	
	Jan Callison	Peter Wagenius	
Members Absent	Lisa Weik	Peter McLaughlin	Keith Bogut
	Mayor Rybak	Jeff Jacobs	Tom Harmening
	Terry Schneider	Nancy Tyra-Lukens	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Susan Haigh called the November 7, 2012 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:06am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Susan Haigh presented the September 5, 2012, Southwest Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. The motion for approval was granted.

3. ELECTION DAY UPDATE

Chair Haigh gave an update on the election results. The SWLRT project is seeing a lot of changes along the corridor. Many of the people elected are informed and involved with the project. This will be the first time in 20+ years where there has been one party, either party, in control of the governor's office and the two houses in the legislature. It will be a great opportunity for us in transit funding going forward with some strong advocates being elected for transportation. Locally, congratulations to Commissioner Callison and Mayor Hovland on their re-elections. The other key for us when we look at financing, will be the tax committee chairs, as tax reform and tax revenues is a component for transit funding. Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Sorel has stepped down and moved on to other endeavors, Bernie Arseneau has been appointed as Acting Commissioner effective December 1, 2012.

4. 10/1/12 SWLRT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

Chair Haigh gave an overview of the announcement from the White House. We were very excited about the announcement from the White House in October to have a SWLRT project to be designated as one of two projects nationally for an expedited process. With the idea that this gets elevated to the Secretary of Transportation's level and the White House level is really significant for us long-term for this project. That was some extraordinary news for the project.

Mr. Mark Fuhrmann commented on the process. As one of the few designees of special import by the White House, that is really going to help coordinate the federal environmental review and ultimately the permitting. Our Environmental & Agreements Asst. Director, Nani Jacobson, is tracking the fall of 2014 for us. It's timely, as you are going to get an update today on the DEIS and the public hearings that are beginning next week. That will be the beginning point in our engagement with FTA and go through the DEIS review, then we will shift into the FEIS review. This will be a big focus in 2013 and early 2014, with the permitting and Record of Decision to conclude the environmental process in about 2 years.

Councilmember Jim Brimeyer asked if we know why these two projects were picked. Mr. Fuhrmann said we have a track record of success with new start projects in this region. There was Hiawatha, Northstar, and now Central Corridor well on its way to an on schedule, on budget delivery in 2 years. The FTA wants to highlight and choose winners and we have been successful here. In our conversations each month with the FTA, we show them what we have and how we are proceeding. They have confidence in the region and with all our project partners that we will deliver a successful Southwest, and they want to help promote that success. Councilmember Brimeyer asked if Cleveland, Ohio has the same type of track record. Mr. Fuhrmann said they have not done as many new starts, but have done the most successful BRT, the small start Euclid Corridor BRT, connecting the Cleveland hospitals with downtown. It is probably the poster project for BRT in this country and they are using that recognition and momentum to their advantage.

Chair Haigh presented some photos from the October 10, 2012 new LRV Rollout event. She gave many thanks to those who were able to participate. There was a great show of support from the congressional delegation with Senator Klobuchar, Congresswoman McCollum, and Commissioner McDonough in attendance. It was really exciting to see the new rail car and they are very nice, quiet, and with great accessibility for people getting on and off the train. Mr. Bill James asked if the new LRV was Bombardier or Siemens. Mr. Fuhrman said the pictures are of the new Siemens light rail vehicle and it is the first 1 of 59 that we will receive and have reserved as options for Southwest. Mr. Brian Lamb commented by saying that we are in the process of rebranding the whole system, so the rail cars will have the same color scheme on both the Type 1 Bombardier and Type 2 Siemens vehicles.

5. SWLRT DEIS UPDATE

Ms. Katie Walker gave an update on the SWLRT DEIS. A listing was presented for the established Public Hearing dates and locations for the DEIS to receive public input and comment. People are also emailing comments in and writing comments in, for inclusion in the comment record. November 13, 2012, there will be a Public Open House at the Hennepin County Government Center and at 4:30pm the Formal Public Hearing will start. November 14, 2012, another one will be held at the St. Louis Park City Hall and the final one will be at the Eden Prairie City Hall on November 29, 2012. The DEIS document is available electronically at www.southwesttransitway.org or go to the Hennepin County website or www.swlrt.org website, where both websites will take you to the document. All the cities have also put links on their websites directing you to the document. A hard copy format is available for viewing at all six City Halls, as well as area libraries.

Comment Guides are available to help the public understand the document, the purpose, and how best to provide comments that will be of importance and usefulness as the project progresses. A Comment Guide was put out by the Environmental Quality Board that deals with the Minnesota rules and a Comment Guide also put out by the CEQ on the federal rules. The Met Council Staff, lead by Nani Jacobson, prepared a Comment Guide specific to the Southwest LRT project, which subsequently was translated into Somali, Hmong, and Spanish. The next steps are that Hennepin County will collect all the comments, and to date, we have received approximately forty comments. The vast majority of them have come through email. We expect that the bulk of the comments will come in through the Public Hearing process and later in the review and comment timeframe. Upon closing of the Comment Period on December 11, 2012, Hennepin County will turn over all comments received to the Met Council Staff, who will then share them with the Federal Transit Administration.

Met Council and FTA will respond to those comments during the Preliminary Engineering process and the Final Environmental Impact Statement process.

Mr. Bill James said according to some CAC feedback, there are a number of neighborhood associations that are planning a march particularly to the November 14th Open House and Public Hearing. As it relates to security and safety, who is going to assist on insuring the access to the building and a place for those folks to freely congregate? Ms. Walker said Hennepin County is working with the city partners and Met Council staff to work on those issues of the logistics and security, prior to and during those Public Hearings. Councilmember Jim Brimeyer asked if the comments that come to Met Council staff are summarized, categorized, or in raw form. Ms. Walker said, when Hennepin County collects them and provides them to Met Council, they will be in their raw form. Nani Jacobson has been working on developing a database of comments, where as they are getting transmitted, they will be put into that electronic database with the ability to sort by issue. It will identify where the comment came in, the author of the comment, along with some other categories.

Chair Haigh asked for members of the SWCMC to forward all public comment emails, even if it does not state that it is a public comment, to www.swcorridor@co.hennepin.mn.us for the formal record.

6. PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS PROCUREMENT UPDATE

Mr. Jim Alexander gave an update on the Preliminary Engineering Consultants Procurement. The work is set up in two portions, the West portion and the East portion, with the divider at approximately 11th Avenue in Hopkins. The proposals received for PEC West were from AECOM and URS. The PEC East proposals received were from Kimley-Horn, Parsons Brinckerhoff, and URS. We are currently in the process of evaluating proposals and therefore unable to talk about any of the details. Interviews with all the proposers were held last week and are we looking to enter into some negotiations later this month. It is intended to award the Contract/Notice to Proceed in December 2012/January 2013. There is a strong push to try to get this awarded in the month of December.

Commissioner Dorfman asked, once the decisions are made and the Met Council approves, how long will it take for the consultants to start the Preliminary Engineering work? Mr. Alexander said it will be a big push to get the consultants into the SPO as soon as possible. For example, if awarded December 19th as per the Council's tentative timeframe, we would likely bring the consultants into the SPO during the first week of January 2013.

7. PEER REVIEW CONSULTANT PROCUREMENT

Mr. Jim Alexander gave an overview of the Peer Review Consultant Procurement (PRC). The intent is to have an independent consultant looking at the designs being done by the two PECs. They will take a look at the plans, specifications, and design of those work products to be sure the PECs are adhering to our design criteria. The Scope of Work calls for reviews at 30%, 60%, and 90% stages. Spot reports will also be conducted starting prior to 30% completion. We are hoping to advertise the RFP in the fourth quarter of 2012. We are in the process of formulating the Scope of Work and MnDOT is helping us with the review. We intend to have the contract award/Issue Notice to Proceed in the first quarter of 2013. The PECs will be kept separate from the PRC and also, the PRC may not apply for the FEIS work.

Mr. Bill James asked if best practices from Hiawatha and CCPO will get used with the consultants and independent review teams for SWLRT. Mr. Alexander said yes they will.

8. TECHNICAL PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TPAC)

Mr. Jim Alexander gave an overview of the Technical Project Advisory Committee (TPAC). This is a staff-bodied committee that will help us through project issues. The plan with this group is to meet monthly, starting in February 2013. We have used this committee on Hiawatha and CCLRT and have found great success. We are looking to hold many issue resolution meetings with staff, all the stakeholders, the cities, the county, Park

Board, Three Rivers Park District, Southwest Transit, and the freight rail companies. The intent is to bring resolutions of those issues to TPAC for consideration and getting some input. This committee will also advise on communications with the BAC and CAC of technical issues. We are looking for membership representation from the SPO, Metro Transit Rail Operations, City/County Staff (design and planning), MnDOT, and Three Rivers Park District.

9. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH UPDATE

Ms. Sam O'Connell gave an update on Communications and Outreach. Ms. O'Connell took part in the following community engagements: she presented to the City of Hopkins Business Forum on September 27, 2012 where there were approximately 100 attendees and presented to the St. Louis Park's Bronx Park Neighborhood Association Board Meeting on October 10, 2012 with about 40 attendees. Ms. O'Connell also attended the City of Eden Prairie's Citywide Open House on October 13, 2013, where she showed the proposed SWLRT LPA alignment video and took the SWLRT Communications Steering Committee on a tour of the Franklin Operations and Maintenance Facility on October 17, 2012.

Mr. Will Roach gave a BAC Report. At our last meeting on October 10, 2012, the topics were SWLRT 101, LRT 101, and an update on the DEIS. The focus in coming months will be on funding mechanisms, how to develop political support on a regional and statewide level, sharing the facts of jobs creation and type of economic growth, and how to measure success. In 2013, the BAC and CAC will get together to collaborate. Our next meeting will be held on December 12, 2012.

Commissioner Dorfman commented on a new independent committee that was created. Jim Campbell, the Chair of UnitedHealth Group's Board, is also the chair of the Southwest Business Investment Partnership. They have held one meeting to date, that consists of business leaders who have made major investments along the corridor and want to protect their investments as well as look at new opportunities. Chair Haigh asked to have a list of members for both the BAC and the Southwest Business Investment Partnership sent to the SWCMC.

Ms. Jennifer Munt gave a CAC Report. The topics covered at our last meeting on October 11, 2012, were Corridor of Opportunity Engagement Grants where there is an extreme desire to connect housing to jobs and transit, highlights of Eden Prairie's City West and Golden Triangle stations, and provided updates on the DEIS. The city's plan is to make the Golden Triangle station a leader in energy and environmental design. The city's Capstone project is anticipated to integrate green design, studio apartments and housing, put in a street grid, and to add bike facilities. Our next meeting will be on December 13, 2012. Commissioner Dorfman said there is an effort by most of the cities to focus on pedestrian plans and how to connect those to transit.

10. STATION AREA PROFILES

Ms. Katie Walker gave an update on the Station Area Profiles. One of the Community Works initiatives is to create a station area profile for each of the 17 stations along the SWLRT alignment with factual information about demographics, business growth, and identify character to be used as an educational and marketing tool. For today's profile, we are showing Hopkins' Main Street, with a description, maps, and how the station would support Main Street. All 17 station profiles will be done in December 2012.

Mr. Bill James noted that on November 15, 2012, there will be an Urban Land Institute Workshop at the Southwest Project Office and the Community Works Steering Committee will also be participating. Commissioner Dorfman said each of the cities selected one station to be represented and to focus on at this workshop. The stations chosen were Penn, Beltline, Blake Rd, Golden Triangle, and Mitchell. This is the first workshop and station area planning is beginning, where all stations will be looked at.

The meeting adjourned at 11:08am.

Respectfully submitted, Lynne Hahne