

Metropolitan Council

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

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Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

March 6, 2013

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Chair Jim Brimeyer called the March 6, 2013 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:06am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Acting Chair Jim Brimeyer presented the February 6, 2013, Southwest Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. The motion for approval was granted.

**3. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Mr. Pat Born gave a Legislative Update. The governor's bill that proposes an expansion to the transit tax was introduced on February 20, 2013 to the House and February 21, 2013 to the Senate. No hearings have been held yet, but should be scheduled soon. For the Southwest Corridor, Senator Franzen has proposed a bonding bill of \$118 million and \$37 million, representing all or a portion of the State's share of Southwest. Senator Latz has done the same for the entire state remaining share of \$119 million. Those bills were heard in the Senate Transportation Finance Committee meeting on February 27, 2013. In the House, similar bill introductions of \$118 million and \$37 million representing all or a portion of the State's share by Rosenthal and will be heard in the House Transportation Finance Committee next week.

Acting Chair Jim Brimeyer asked if the transit tax increase passes, will the bonding bill requests go away. Mr. Born said presumably if the tax is authorized at the level that the governor proposes, they will, as it would no longer be necessary. Often, bills like this get combined into a bigger bonding bill along with others.

**4. PRINCIPLES FOR SOUTHWEST LRT MAJOR SCOPING DECISIONS**

Mr. Jim Alexander presented the Principles for Southwest LRT Major Scoping Decisions. We are looking to establish a set of decision-making scoping principles that are clear and transparent. The scoping principles are being established to address any concerns raised in the DEIS public comment process and develop a consistent approach as we evaluate alternatives. In 2013, we are looking to understand what the footprint is going to be like for the LRT. The principles apply to locations of the following project elements: LRT track, freight rail

track, stations and station access, park and ride facilities, pedestrian and bike trails, roadway features, operations and maintenance facility, and identifying LRT system elements.

Mr. Alexander presented the Draft SWLRT Guiding/Scoping Principles that were also presented to the Technical Project Advisory Committee (TPAC) on 2/14/13 and a joint Business Advisory Committee (BAC)/Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting on 2/21/13. We will be looking to use these guiding principles on issues and how to evaluate alternate one versus two. Some of the guiding principles include: complying with federal and state laws, following SWLRT design criteria, to positively impact ridership, to positively impact environmental benefits, and to be conscience of other modes of travel such as bus, light rail, trails, sidewalks, pedestrians, etc.

Commissioner Peter McLaughlin stated that we will need to be focused on making the project as competitive as possible to get federal funds. Acting Chair Jim Brimeyer asked if there is a scoring or ranking for the scoping principles. Mr. Alexander said we will evaluate the alternatives against these principles. Mr. Bill James stated the CAC's primary interest is access to low income housing, jobs, and economic development in and around the station area. The CAC has seven zones/cities of interest and we need to provide in greater detail what is most important within those zones and rank according to importance by city. Mayor Terry Schneider said the principles will shift depending on the issue and anytime you can agree ahead of time on the principles per issue, it will be easier to come up with a result rather than figure out the result then apply the principles to it. Mr. Alexander indicated that was correct.

## **5. TECHNICAL ISSUE #1 – EDEN PRAIRIE ALIGNMENT**

Mr. Jim Alexander gave an overview of Technical Issue (TI) #1 – Eden Prairie Alignment. Mr. Alexander presented a technical issue map showing the issues according to comments received on the DEIS and some stakeholder input, such as issue #20 regarding access issues to Royalston. We will also be looking at Minnetonka's idea of possibly running the LRT under Highway 62 rather than over, as it is in the LPA. The input/feedback process for typical technical issues will funnel through as follows: starting with weekly Issue Resolution Team (IRT) meetings, TPAC (city, county, MnDOT, Three Rivers, and Rail Operations), BAC/CAC, SWCMC, and ultimately take the recommendation to the Transportation Committee/Met Council for a decision. Community Engagement will occur throughout this process. We presented a large map of technical issue #1 to the TPAC on 2/14/13 and to the BAC/CAC joint meeting on 2/21/13.

Mr. Alexander introduced Mr. Robert Ellis, Eden Prairie Public Works Director, to walk through technical issue #1. Mr. Ellis said the city is interested in pursuing an alignment other than what is in the LPA. We see benefit in getting closer to the Town Center, since that is where the density of housing, retail, the jobs, and the mall are and feel the LPA misses all of that. We are meeting with all the property owners that are adjacent to all the options shown on the technical issue #1 map. The general consensus of these property owners is that a station at Town Center really makes sense. By moving the station to Town Center, you have more connectivity to streets, infrastructure, and walkability.

Mr. Alexander walked through the technical issue #1 map. The green line on the map is the LPA and has three stations in the Eden Prairie area. The three stations in the LPA are: Town Center station that is slated to be in front of Costco and Emerson Process Management, Southwest station, and Mitchell Road station. The LPA runs at grade and goes underneath Prairie Center Drive in a tunnel, to Southwest station, and runs along Highway 212 with an at grade crossing at Mitchell. We have looked at a number of alternatives including 18A, which is very challenging to get through this area as it is not a grid system for the roadway with terrain issues. Mr. Alexander indicated the city has a strong desire to land a station at the west end of Eden Prairie. However to obtain ridership, we would like to see a park and ride at that site. We may have an opportunity to put a station at the Optum campus and also on Technology, but have some access challenges. If we were going to take the 2A or 1A alignment to get to Southwest station, it will be very challenging to get either over or under Prairie Center Drive. We do not want to go at grade, due to the road being very busy with a lot of impacts. The

grades are currently telling us that we probably will need to go over it. We are also looking at alignment 1B to get to the mall.

Acting Chair Jim Brimeyer asked when we did the scoping for the engineering services, did the engineering and design costs get factored into looking at issues such as this (Eden Prairie alignment)? Mr. Alexander said yes, we had this type of issue in mind and knew it would need evaluation. Commissioner Peter McLaughlin said Congressman Paulson is very aware of the routing questions in Eden Prairie and he was reassured that we are taking a hard look at this issue. We should also embrace this look as a reflection of the new federal criteria. Mr. Bill James asked how far the boundary can be moved off the LPA. Mr. Mark Fuhrmann said the alternatives are refinements to the LPA. The FTA would not consider these alternatives a cardinal or significant change, where we would be required to turn back and reopen/revisit the LPA. Ms. Kathy Nelson said we are looking at a change of only a couple of blocks. Commissioner McLaughlin asked how many jobs are in the area. Mayor Nancy Tyra-Lukens said the station area planning book has employment numbers in it for each of the station areas. Acting Chair Jim Brimeyer said the numbers will come out as part of the analysis.

Mr. Alexander indicated that as part of the process, we will discuss and evaluate the various issues at the IRT level, then TPAC, to BAC/CAC, and SWCMC, through several iterations until we have a recommendation on what the preferred alignment will be.

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH UPDATE**

Ms. Sam O'Connell gave an update on Communications and Outreach. The outreach coordinators are out in the communities and attending a lot of meet and greet meetings. On February 21, we held a joint BAC/CAC meeting in Eden Prairie. Some of the topics covered include: Mark Koegler walking through the Transitional Station Area Action Planning (TSAAP) process, introduction of the SPO community outreach coordinators, an overview of SWLRT Preliminary Engineering Technical Issue (TI) process, and a workshop on Eden Prairie Alignment – TI #1. The next BAC meeting is March 27 and CAC on March 28.

Mr. Will Roach gave an update on the Eden Prairie Alignment Workshop. We had approximately 60 attendees where we talked about four themes: to modify alignment and stations to serve the most people, be sure the job centers are served, maximize multi-modal connections on the alignment, and minimize grade crossings and traffic impacts.

Acting Chair Jim Brimeyer asked if there were any changes to the alignment map from the Eden Prairie Alignment Workshop. Mr. Alexander said there were not any changes; we mostly received input on expressing concerns about access and comments expressing concerns about view sheds. Mr. Bill James said the CAC members wrote their comments on post-it notes and pasted them to the corresponding areas of the map. Mr. Alexander said those comments were given to the engineering teams.

Some topics for our next meeting include: Jay Cowles with the Itasca Project will be presenting their return on investment, will look at some technical issues in more detail, and looking at how the BAC measures success both short and long term.

The meeting adjourned at 11:07am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynne Hahne, Recording Secretary