



**Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)
Business Advisory Committee Meeting**

May 25, 2016

**Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM**

Meeting Summary

In Attendance:

BAC Members/Alternates: Dan Duffy, Curt Rahman, Dave Pelner, Stuart Ackerberg, Duane Spiegle, Gary Orcutt, Rick Weiblen, and Joan Suko

Agency Staff and Guests: Jim Alexander, Nani Jacobson, John Welbes, Dan Pfeiffer, Sophia Ginis, James Mockovciak, Nkongo Cigolo, Janet Jeremiah (Eden Prairie), Greg Hunt (St. Louis Park)

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by BAC co- Chair Dan Duffy.

II. Legislative Update

Co-Chair Duffy provided a summary of LRT-related business in the 2016 Minnesota Legislative Session. He highlighted the work of business chambers and the efforts of corridor stakeholders to communicate their support for the SWLRT project to legislators, and, disappointment with the failure to secure the remaining 10% of local funding required for the federal match, jeopardizing the future of the project. Mr. Duffy also expressed dissatisfaction that more legislative leaders did not attend the Business Round Table or the Lt. Governor's Round Table events to better gauge local support. Jim Alexander affirmed Co-chair Duffy's assessment and explained the various options SPO partners are pursuing to secure the remaining funds. He emphasized that the project is "not dead". The SPO would continue to move forward, he said, and wait to see the results of alternative funding strategies.

Questions/Comments:

1. Rick Weiblen – *Why weren't there more consistent public responses countering questionable, negative statements made by legislators about the SWLRT during the session? Why weren't there a list of succinct bullet points countering questionable statements made about the project?*

Answer: There are lobbyists who track and respond to these statements. Co-Chair Duffy mentioned the recent article by journalist Tom Hauser exploring the veracity of the Speaker's statements that implied little support for the SWLRT in the southwest corridor.

2. Joan Suko: *Did the lawsuits against the SWLRT project have any impact on the outcome?*

Answer: No

3. Curt Rahman: *Does the federal government care where the local funding derives from?*

Answer: No. As long as the funding sources can be substantiated and meet the 50% local



requirement the SWLRT is eligible for the federal match. The traditional (30% CTIB, 10% HCRA, 10% State) funding formula in Minnesota could be adjusted.

4. Stuart Ackerberg: *Is there a strategy to reach out and “flip” politicians opposing the funding, or a special session scheduled?*

Answer: No. The governor alone decides if there will be a special session. Thus far he has not indicated he would ask for one.

5. Dan Duffy: *If there were no local funding solutions this year, and the composition of the legislature changed significantly in the upcoming election cycle, would it be too late to apply for federal funding after the next (2017) State legislative session?*

Answer: Any significant delay would invariably raise the budget due to costs associated with delaying construction.

6. Dave Pelner: *Would any delay jeopardize the projects place in the federal funding cue?*

Answer: There are several competitive projects that continue to advance. The SPO presented an update on the Peer New Starts project at the CMC meeting earlier this month (see the presentation here: <http://metro council.org/getdoc/e044d68a-9b73-47ea-a3cd-0fcc3d23e39a/Presentation.aspx>)

III. FEIS Update

Nani Jacobson provided a high level overview of the purpose, history, and content of the recently published FEIS.

Questions/Comments:

1. *If the local funding is delayed does the FEIS need to be resubmitted to the FTA?*

Answer: No. This is an administrative clarification rather than an impact requiring public comment.

2. *Are there wheel skirts on all trains?*

Answer: Yes

3. *What are the costs for the resilient rail fasteners?*

Answer: We do not know that figure off hand. But it has been budgeted for.

IV. Station Design Update

Sarah Ghandour provided an update on the design panels for each station along the SWLRT alignment. Members applauded the designs, image and material choices made.

V. May 9, 2016 Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce Meeting with Lt. Gov. Tina Smith

Co-Chair Duffy highlighted the good turnout, positive arguments made and the general support for the SWLRT in his brief summary of the event.

VI. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum

Co-Chair Duffy indicated that the Business Chambers were digesting the results of the Legislative Session, regrouping and planning on next steps to contribute to efforts to secure the remaining local funding necessary to advance the SWLRT project.

VII. Meeting Adjourned