

Metropolitan Council

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Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee  
June 2, 2021

Members/Alternates Present	Chair Charlie Zelle Asad Aliweyd Mike Barnes Molly Cummings Dan Duffy Irene Fernando	Jason Gadd Debbie Goettel James Hovland Chris LaTondresse Will Roach Jake Spano	Brad Wiersum Kathy Nelson (Alt) Brett Hjelle (Alt)
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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Charlie Zelle called the June 2, 2021, meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:00 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Zelle presented the February 3, 2021, SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Commissioner Goettel made a motion to approve the minutes. Council Member Cummings seconded the motion. After a roll call, the minutes were approved.

**3. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

Chair Zelle welcomed today's attendees and introduced Jim Alexander for the Project update.

**4. PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr. Jim Alexander, SWLRT Project Director, provided project highlights. There are two main challenges on the project, both of which involve the civil construction contract and also affect the follow-on systems construction contract and the revenue service date; the corridor protection wall and the secant wall. Mr. Alexander provided an update on these issues. There is now a signed change order for the corridor protection wall and work is underway. The technical details for the secant wall are being worked out after which a change order will be issued. These two items impact both the civil and systems schedules. It was asked if we are getting closer to knowing the revised schedule dates. Mr. Alexander said we continue negotiations with the civil contractor and the systems contractor and look to have dates identified later this year, which will then lead to a revised revenue service date.

Photos of the progress on the Civil construction along the corridor were shown. Mr. Alexander also showed photos of the Franklin O&M Facility and the Systems work.

Mr. Alexander provided an update on the light rail vehicle procurement and shared some photos. The new vehicles have a wider aisle within the middle segment that better accommodates wheelchairs. Photos of the new vehicle interior were shown. Council Member Cummings appreciated the accessibility access and asked if this changes the number of seats. Mr. Alexander responded that the vehicles on Metro Transit's existing fleet have 68 seats, and the new vehicles have 60 seats with the modifications to the aisles.

**7. DBE AND WORKFORCE UPDATE**

Mr. Alexander reviewed the DBE achievement slides and then Mr. Jon Tao, DBE Specialist for the project joined in and provided an update on the DBE and Workforce activity. Mr. Tao reminded members that there is a handout on the disaggregated data that was emailed out earlier. Commissioner LaTondresse request that this information be added to future presentations, along with information on racial disparities. Mr. Tao will add this to the presentation for the next meeting.

Commissioner Fernando asked for recommendations on how these disparities can be corrected for this project and future projects. Chair Zelle said the Met Council has an Equity Committee that works on this,

including goal setting and strategies to get to these goals. Commissioner Fernando requested a follow up meeting that she would participate in or a memo on how we plan to get to these goals.

Mr. Tao said one strategy would be to break the contract into smaller pieces. Unfortunately, this would be challenging for this project as the contracts are already in place. It would be good to look into for BLRT or future projects that are in the design stages.

Mr. Tao and staff meet with the prime contractors and Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) monthly to work on ways to increase workforce participation.

RailWorks and other Civil construction subcontractors with a large amount of projected workforce hours were brought into DBE/Workforce Advisory Committee to share how they are bringing in more diversity in the workforce. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) suggested that we tap into the American Rescue Fund to support training efforts. The Building Strong Communities program is a great model of collaboration between the unions, government, CBOs, and higher education, that can help with workforce recruitment. The contractors are working with these entities and engaging their subcontractors to hire from this program. There is discussion of how to make this part of best practices for future projects. Currently there are seven students that have been placed into the trades and the program has 18 more searching for placement with contractors.

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

Sophia Ginis, Manager of Outreach, provided an update on outreach activities. The Outreach team is very active throughout the corridor. We continue weekly construction update emails, with over 17,000 subscribers and over 46% open rate of the emails. We are also very active on social media sharing recent construction photos. Outreach holds individual meetings with each city, along with property owner meetings to keep everyone informed of the progress.

The Outreach team has scheduled construction tours with the public for June in each of the cities along the corridor, which filled up very fast. There will be a tour later this summer for CMC members. Commissioner Fernando asked for a coordinated CMC tour, perhaps align a tour with a meeting date. Commissioner Goettel also requested a tour sooner as she wants to observe the construction.

## **9. ADJOURN**

Chair Zelle thanked all for participating today. The next quarterly CMC meeting will be September 1. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary