

Metropolitan Council

St. Louis Park City Hall, 5005 Minnetonka Blvd., St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

June 28, 2017

Members Present	Chair Adam Duinick Steve Elkins Jason Gadd James Hovland	Peter McLaughlin Jennifer Munt Will Roach Terry Schneider	Jake Spano Nancy Tyra-Lukens Peter Wagenius (Alt)
Members Absent	Russ Adams Asad Aliweyd Keith Bogut Jan Callison	Molly Cummings Marion Greene Betsy Hodges Brian Lamb	Matt Look Scott McBride

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Adam Duinick called the June 28, 2017 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:10 a.m. at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Duinick presented the March 1, 2017 SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Mayor Jake Spano made a motion to approve, Mayor Jim Hovland seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

3. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Chair Duinick introduced Alene Tchourumoff to the CMC. Ms. Tchourumoff will be the new Met Council Chair starting July 31, 2017, and is well suited to step in. Ms. Tchourumoff provided brief remarks and said Chair Duinick has done a tremendous job with the Council and has been very successful in developing relationships and working with the communities. She looks forward to working with this group and congratulated Chair Duinick on his new opportunity.

Chair Duinick thanked CMC for those that advocated for SWLRT and for transit in general during the legislative session. We were able to get freight language approved in this session that was helpful. The next steps are to continue negotiations with the freight companies of TCWR and BNSF. Chair Duinick thanked Commissioners McLaughlin, Callison and Hennepin County staff for helping get the Council to the point they are with the freight rails companies.

Chair Duinick reported he and staff have been out to Washington D.C. along with Commissioner McLaughlin, to meet with the congressional delegation who have strong support for the grant program. There was an FFGA agreement signed in California about 6 weeks ago, which indicates that the federal money may be there for SWLRT. Also noted was that FTA has been approving LONPs on other projects, showing indications that projects are advancing at the federal level.

Commissioner McLaughlin reported that we do need to continue to lobby in Washington, and continue to make the calls and contacts with house members and senators. We also need the business support to continue. Commissioner McLaughlin reported that after the CTIB dissolution on Oct. 1 there will be no more CTIB tax, but instead will come from Hennepin County. The pie chart was presented for the new funding breakdown for SWLRT.

Mayor Spano asked about the FFGA, and if Congress is interested in funding, isn't it the administration that signs? Chair Duinick responded that there is a Congressional review period, where Congress can comment for 30 days, although it is an act of the executive branch, with the Secretary and President's signature. Chair Duinick stated that the Governor is planning to visit Secretary Chao in the near future and will make an appeal for this project. Commissioner McLaughlin said \$10M was approved federally for SWLRT in 2017, so we do have our project in the pipeline.

Mark Fuhrmann showed the map that lists the various projects around the country that are seeking FFGAs. Two of the five projects currently in the Engineering phase are from Minnesota, which are SWLRT and BLRT. Mr. Fuhrmann noted that SWLRT has received appropriations of \$5M in 2016 and \$10M in 2017. There are 11 FFGAs on the map, including Caltrain, which was recently signed by the Trump Administration. Suburban Maryland has \$12M in the President's proposed 2018 budget.

The President's budget proposes to only fund those projects that have an existing FFGA, with the exception of Caltrain and Maryland. The other 10 projects are existing FFGAs preceding 2018. SWLRT will be submitting the financial management plan to FTA on June 30. It typically takes about 90 days for the FTA to review and approve this document, which is required before the project can submit an application for the FFGA. Mr. Fuhrmann reported that Seattle's Linwood Extension project has now received a Letter of No Prejudice, which is also a good sign for funding and to advance these projects forward.

Mr. Peter Wagenius asked if those projects in Arizona, Indiana and North Carolina, which are states with republican US senators, have the support from their senators and representatives? Mr. Fuhrmann responded that this was discussed at the recent APTA meeting, and while he can't speak for individual senators and representatives, the respective agencies believe that they are worthy programs. Mr. Fuhrmann said there are also 35 Small Starts projects around the country, with one in the Twin Cities, the Orange Line. Many of the Small Starts projects reside in Texas and Florida.

4. CONSTRUCTION READINESS

Mr. Fuhrmann introduced Mr. Brian Runzel, who is the new Director of Construction for SWLRT. Mr. Runzel went over the construction contract schedule. The Civil construction contract has now been advertised for bids, with the deadline for bids on August 15. We plan to award this contract in November, with a limited notice to proceed in December, which would then start the construction efforts.

The Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) and Systems contracts will follow. The schedule is to have the OMF advertised for bid in July 2017, with a limited notice to proceed in November 2017; and Systems to be advertised in August 2017, with the limited notice to proceed in January 2018.

There was a Civil pre-bid and DBE meet and greet meeting held on March 3, which was well attended. This session was to give the bidders background knowledge of the project, along with allowing the DBE vendors to become familiar with the prime contractors. It was held at Minnetonka City Hall, with about 225 in attendance. There were five joint ventures in attendance, along with over 20 DBE vendors.

Mr. Runzel highlighted the scope of the Operations and Maintenance Facility contract. There will be demolition of six existing buildings, soil improvement, yard track work with an access road and the OMF building. There will also be utility work and urban design and landscaping work completed.

The pre- and post construction inspection will be performed by the civil construction contractor, which will assist the contractor to document what there is when construction is started, along with being instrumental in helping resolve any issues. The noise and vibration plan will be developed by the contractor based on requirements in the specifications; the contractor is required to hire a specialist for this work. The Council sets the requirements and limits for noise and vibration, and the contractor then develops the plan and identifies the mitigation measures to limit noise and vibration to within acceptable levels. During construction, there will be monitoring of vibration and noise at sensitive sites, with a baseline performed first.

The claims process identified for the civil construction was reviewed. If the property owner notices an issue, there is a 24-hour hotline they can call, or call/email the project outreach coordinator. SPO will then forward the item to the contractor's claims representative, who then follows up with the property owner, investigates the claim. The contractor is required to keep project staff notified on all the steps. SPO will meet regularly with Council risk staff to review any claims.

Mayor Tyra-Lukens asked what kind of agreement there is with the contractor for how timely they are at attending to the claims/complaints on noise and vibrations. Mr. Runzel said timing will be dependent on the type of claim. If it's a simple claim, it could be resolved quickly, but if complicated, the claim response will be longer. That's why we inserted ourselves in the process so we can monitor and make sure they are resolved in a reasonable timeframe. Mayor Schneider said staff need to act as problem solvers and take the concerns to the contractor. Mr. Runzel said he and his staff will be ready to address concerns.

Mayor Spano mentioned that during recent construction in his neighborhood, there was agreed upon set of parameters with the construction, such as when the pile driving will take place. There should be agreed upon standards by the Met Council and the cities affected which goes a long way for mitigating items. He feels the hotlines also work very well, although the first phone call most likely will come in to the cities. There should be a point person at each city to be made aware of the process. Mayor Spano mentioned that we also need to have the contractors and sub-contractors aware of the checklist items that need special attention. Commissioner McLaughlin agrees there needs to be a point person at each city so the line of communication remains open. The city staff will need to think about how coordinate with the project office.

For communication and outreach, Mr. Runzel mentioned there will be a one page outreach sheet shared with the property owners that identifies the strategies to minimize impacts and the process for filing for a claim.

Council Member Steve Elkins mentioned in his experience with construction projects, if the cities along the way have an existing noise ordinance, we need to make sure they are communicated to all, including the construction companies, so the activities are within the prescribed hours. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that with the Green Line, there were the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis along with the University of Minnesota and the State Capitol Building. We gave direction to the contractor for the low impact activities for work in these areas, such as during the legislative session, and around the U of M laboratories when the researchers were working with their sensitive equipment, heavy construction couldn't happen during certain hours.

Mr. Peter Wagenius said the city's experience with the Green Line was positive and the project office was very responsive. The work though is dependent on the contractor.

Council Member Munt stated that the Community Advisory Committee asked for four items, which this plan is responsive to. The four items include: 30-day notice before streets are torn up; a sense of what to expect with construction in their area; relationships with the staff to be involved, which they already have relationships with SPO staff; and to be involved in the construction working groups so neighbors in each geographic area can get the word back to their neighborhood. They are also excited about the app for their cell phones, which will get the word out quickly.

Mr. Runzel explained we have coordinated with the cities on local ordinances and they have been included in the specifications. We are also actively coordinating with city officials to identify all the other construction projects going on along the corridor. The construction staffing org chart was reviewed and Mr. Runzel mentioned the construction department is ramping up and is on schedule for the hiring construction staff.

5. WORKFORCE OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Mr. Gary Courtney, Workforce Administrator for the Metropolitan Council reported on recent workforce outreach activities. Mr. Courtney thanked Chair Duinick for his support and leadership for the workforce program, which he feels is very innovative and has been successful.

The LRT Build program is a multi-partnership workforce development program that includes both soft and hard skills. It is a 10-week program, specifically targeting individuals that are underemployed or underrepresented. The program exposes and trains individuals into the industry to prepare them for employment.

The LRT Build program is a three-phase program. Phase 1 was the outreach portion with a recruiting goal of 100 applicants to the workforce program. Phase II was job readiness, with 40 individuals selected to enter the program. Phase III was to have individuals attend customized classes with hands on training, with 20 individuals completing this phase. The breakdown of the current cohort was shown, including gender, ethnicity and attrition.

The students received 80 hours classroom training at North Hennepin Community College, along with 15 hours of construction site tours at various job sites, and 60 hours of hands on training at various union JATCs.

A video was presented on the LRT Jobseekers Program. Mr. Courtney invited CMC members to attend the upcoming LRT Build completion ceremony, which will be held on June 30 at North Hennepin Community College. The Construction Job Seeker website was created to serve as a connection between the contractors and the DBE vendors. The goal is for this website to go live in July, and linked from the SWLRT website.

Other upcoming outreach workforce activities include a construction training fair to be held later this Fall, which will be for unskilled individuals looking for an opportunity to be trained to gain the skills they need to participate in the construction project.

Council Member Munt appreciates the work done with the building trades to do this training, and feels it is important for the building trades to have these types of programs in the inner-city, which will help bring a more diverse workforce. Chair Duinck mentioned he had conversations with some of these leaders and knows this is on contractors' minds as well as the building trades. He agrees you do need contractor and union leadership buy in for these programs. Mr. Courtney also mentioned to be competitive and diverse with our workforce, we need to go where the individuals are. He is optimistic that the unions and trades are adopting that notion as well.

6. ANIMATION

Ms. Sam O'Connell introduced and presented the two latest animation videos. The videos are based on the 90% plan, so it is very close to what the experience will be for the transit rider, but not include local work that is funded by the cities but will be constructed with the project. The animations of both St. Louis Park and Minnetonka were shown.

Mayor Spano noted that at Wooddale and Louisiana Station, the pedestrian underpasses are now part of the project and are a huge safety upgrade. He thanked those that helped support those investments. At the Wooddale Station there was a mixed use, multi income artist space designed with LRT in mind recently approved by the City of St. Louis Park, and they are working through their final financing.

Commissioner McLaughlin mentioned the new development on the original Blue Line. There is also a new \$60M development announced this past week on the SWLRT line in Eden Prairie. Mr. Fuhrmann said this will be a \$60M project that will be at the SW Station and replace the former Vision Bank and Ruby Tuesdays and be mixed use development.

7. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary