



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

**January 24, 2017**

**Southwest Project Office  
6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 500  
St. Louis Park, MN 55426  
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

**Meeting Summary**

**In Attendance:**

*CAC Members/Alternates:* Co-chairs Jennifer Munt, Russ Adams; Brian Kirk, Doug Peterson, Jeff Strate, Christopher Bates, Andrew Pieper, Sara Maaske, Brian Kirk, Jamil Ford

*Agency Staff and Guests:* Sam O'Connell, Dan Pfeiffer, Andrew Larson, James Mockovciak, Sophia Ginis, BRCC's Ann Beuch, Eden Prairie's David Lindahl; BAC's Curt Rahman, CIDNA's Rosanne Halloran, Michael Wilson, Janet Colby

**I. Welcome and Review of Meeting Summary**

CAC Co-chair Munt opened the meeting. Minutes from October 25, 2016 were approved.

**II. Project Readiness Update**

- a. *Video Rendering of the LRT in Hopkins* - The Committee was shown a new video rendering of two LRT stations in Hopkins. Sam O'Connell announced SPO was creating similar videos for each City along the alignment. She anticipated they would be completed in around three months. St. Louis Park would feature the Louisiana and Wooddale Stations; Minneapolis, the Kenilworth Tunnel and West Lake Stations; and, the Eden Prairie video would show the Southwest Station. Ms. O'Connell explained the goal was to educate stakeholders on what station facilities would offer and what they would look like when complete.
- b. *Project Readiness Update.* Dan Pfeiffer provided a summary of the Contractor Open House in December, the major Project Milestones achieved in 2016, and upcoming Project Milestones in 2017. Janet Colby asked what the Civil Contract included. Mr. Pfeiffer explained it includes everything but the electrical system; bridges, track, etc. Jeff Strate asked where the private utilities would be moved. Mr. Pfeiffer replied they would be relocated away from the project to avoid disruptions. Doug Peterson wondered what would happen to the project if SPO lost the lawsuit scheduled to be heard next September. Mr. Pfeiffer replied that the policy of the Met Council is not to comment on ongoing lawsuits. Ms. O'Connell added that SPO will continue moving forward until directed otherwise. Roseanne Halloran asked how the community will know when construction begins? Dan Pfeiffer explained the process: the bids go out, come back and the Met Council will award the contracts. Then a Notice to Proceed will be issued to the

contractor providing guidelines for when they can begin. A public notification period (minimally 30 days) is required before construction. SPO will start this process as soon as permissible.

### III. Construction Outreach and Communications Overview

- a. *DBE and Workforce Goals Update* - Andrew Larson provided a summary of the recently held *Great Minds* event downtown. He also updated attendees on the Council's DBE and Workforce planning. Co-chair Munt asked what the Council's DBE and Workforce goals are for SWLRT. Mr. Larson replied that while SWLRT DBE goals are not yet public approximately 17 percent (around 20 million dollars) of project spending to-date during the design and engineering phase has gone towards DBE contractors. Co-chair Munt then asked what the project DBE goals are. Mr. Larson explained the goals would be like those on the Central Corridor Project -around 15 percent of all spending. Someone asked what the workforce goals were. Mr. Larson stated that they are consistent with goals set by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, and Hennepin Counties workforce goals at 32 percent minority and 6 percent women. Someone asked how DBE subcontractors go about connecting with large contractors. Mr. Larson listed events like the recent Contractor Kick-off/Meet-and-Greet, the Pre-Bid meeting in March as opportunities to network. Doug Peterson questioned how effective the Met Council has been in creating construction job opportunities for low-wealth workers in North Minneapolis. Co-chair Munt mentioned Summit Academy and other organizations providing construction training and certification for underemployed workers. And the success of the Met Council in managing DBE and Workforce goals on the public Viking Stadium Project.

Jamil Ford described his experience as a DBE owner. He pointed out how difficult it is to get public jobs. Because, often, large contractors have an experienced team of subcontractors they've worked with on previous projects. They arrive at 'mixer' events predetermining to use the same subcontractors on future projects. Mr. Ford suggested finding a way to allow different DBE firms onto these teams, and how helpful it would be to firms like his. He mentioned how hard it is to get interviews and the experience to understand the hiring systems of large firms. He also pointed out the short-term nature of public projects. When the job is over many workers don't know where to look for work. They get discouraged and find non-construction work. This pattern precludes the development of a larger, permanent pool of skilled minority construction workers. He suggested speaking to unions to help DBE workers stay working. And finding additional means to offer certification programs. Mr. Ford challenged the Council to consider if there was more it could be doing to prepare minorities and women wanting higher paid jobs with unions. He suggested that perhaps the Council broaden its outreach and inquiry into the "root causes" underlying these issues. Mr. Larson empathized with Mr. Ford's concerns given the cyclical nature of the construction industry and the infrequency of large public projects like SWLRT. He emphasized that the Council is listening and looking for additional ways to address these issues. He mentioned the recent hiring of an experienced workforce expert to partner with community members to develop the networks Mr. Ford was recommending as an example of Met Council action.

Mr. Peterson agreed with Mr. Ford that not enough is done by the Council with its significant resources to sufficiently redress these issues. He suggested the Council listen and consult with DBE contractors like Mr. Ford for insight and ideas. Co-chair Adams agreed it was a good idea to look back at previous Met Council projects and evaluate the make-up of contractor teams to verify Mr. Ford's concerns. He also suggested finding ways to track how job information is disseminated in low wealth communities. Co-chair Munt admitted that the Met Council is not perfect. But that it remains committed to working through the Office of Diversity to work with

community groups/organizations to move past existing barriers. She addressed Mr. Peterson's concerns, stating that the Central Corridor project spent \$256 million dollars. One third of that money went to minority and women workers. The SWLRT anticipates engaging 7500 workers, spending 350 million dollars, 1/3 of that money paid out to minorities and women.

- b. *Construction Communication* - Sam O'Connell described the Construction Outreach and Communication Plan including lessons learned from previous projects and best practices from other state and national public work projects. She emphasized the goal of providing clear, consistent project information throughout construction, described techniques to inform the public; and, mentioned the use of metrics and evaluation methods to verify results. Ms. Colby asked how long the corridor between West Lake Street to Downtown would take to complete. Ms. O'Connell stated it would take 3.5 years. But work would be staggered and not continuous. She explained she couldn't be more specific at this point until the contract is awarded and contractors can provide their input. Once they do, the Public Involvement team will be prepared to more accurately inform the public.

Ms. Colby asked what the impact of any failure in the tunnel system would be on the project. She asked if it would require a rerouting of the alignment? Ms. O'Connell reiterated her confidence in the engineering of the tunnel. She added that in every project there is risk, and the project has met every environmental and regulatory requirement to identify and propose mitigation to the risks associated with the [Kenilworth] Tunnel. Doug Peterson asked if the SPO would have to seek Minneapolis City approval again if there was a tunnel failure. Ms. O'Connell replied that if there was a systemic failure anywhere along the corridor SPO would follow all steps required by federal and state law.

- c. *Construction Outreach* - Dan Pfeiffer described features, tools and goals of the Construction Outreach Communication Plan. He described website features, methods of collecting, searching and disseminating information; the frequency and focus of construction updates; traffic mitigation measures, property and business owner meetings, construction workgroups; how the 24--hr. construction hotline will operate, the role of social media and signage minimizing traffic disruptions. Sarah Maaske asked if SPO had considered using a widget or plugin to city websites to link information from SWLRT's webpage. She suggested that most community members were more inclined to navigate city websites for construction updates. Sam O'Connell expressed SPO's hope to have a SWLRT station icon on city pages to accomplish that goal to preclude placing responsibility for daily project updates on City staff. Co-chair Adams asked about web accessibility for people who are sight-impaired. Mr. Pfeiffer emphasized the State's high standards for accessibility. He explained that all data will have the same source but will be presented in both a visual and audible format to accommodate user's different needs. Co-chair Munt asked if there will be communication for bikers. Mr. Pfeiffer referred to SPO meetings seeking input with Three Rivers Park District and other stakeholders representing the bike community. He stated SPO will provide clear signage with information identifying detours, dangers and their durations. Mr. Pfeiffer emphasized that there will be a lot of regular communication. Stakeholders will be able to search for specific information pertaining to any disruptions in the city and road segments impacting their transportation. Jeff Strate asked if SPO will be communicating through community newspapers and whether they expected to pay for space. Ms. O'Connell stated that SPO would utilize these resources along with a wide range of communication methods to keep the public informed.

- d. Next Steps* - Dan Pfeiffer announced the transition from the CAC/BAC groups to smaller community information work groups once the construction phase begins. These groups would consist of around 10 local business and community members to give feedback and process project information (complaints, traffic, noise, etc.) related to specific segments of the corridor. Jeff Strate asked what the process will be for stakeholders suffering damages resulting from construction. Sam O'Connell described the development of a simple, clear 'construction survival guide' outlining contact information and important resources. She added the construction spec's will include a stronger role for SPO staff in communications between contractors, residents and the Met Council. Janet Colby asked if this information was already available? Ms. O'Connell reiterated that it will become available once contracts are awarded. Co-chair Munt asked a hypothetical question about how a power outage would be rectified. Mr. Pfeiffer explained the process of using the construction hotline. It is being designed, he said, to be a 'one-stop shop' for emergencies, complaints and concerns 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Mr. Peterson asked if there will be an opportunity for community members to provide input into this system. Ms. O'Connell said there would be. This opportunity will materialize once the community information work groups are formulated.

## **VI. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum**

Co-chair Adams asked if there were additional reports or updates members would like to discuss. Janet Colby mentioned the TPSS station nearby the Kenilworth Tunnel. She stated her neighborhood had only just been made aware of it. She observed it was very large and poorly placed. She emphasized that CIDNA had not heard about it at any open house, or seen it in the FEIS. Ms. Colby added it will be problematic and asked where to take her concerns. Sophia Ginis responded that the existence and location of the station was discussed last year at open houses at the Blake School. Ms. Colby reiterated they had not seen it.

Jeff Strate reported the City of Eden Prairie had approved all the proposed SWLRT Locally Requested Capital Improvements (\*LRCI's). Doug Peterson reiterated the importance of a future discussion about improving the Met Council's effectiveness in dealing with the DBE issue. And considering hiring Jamil Ford. Co-chair Adams reminded the committee it's function isn't to recommend job candidates and cautioned them to not instruct SPO to hire someone. Mr. Peterson responded he was only interested in continuing the DBE and Workforce discussion and receive a report about Met Council's efforts to do a better job in this area.

Rosanne Halloran asked if any land transfers had occurred? Dan Pfeiffer said HCCRA had voted to approve them. But there were no transfers executed to his knowledge. Co-chair Munt added that the Met Council will own the land and will be responsible for the operation of the LRT. She confirmed that land transfers were still in process. Janet Colby asked if there were any liability issues crafted? Co-chair Munt replied the Council is still till working on that issue.

## **VII. Meeting Adjourned**