



**Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)
Community Advisory Committee Meeting
September 27, 2016
Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM**

Meeting Summary

In Attendance:

CAC Members/Alternates: Co-chairs Jennifer Munt, Russ Adams; Vida Ditter, Matthew Hollinshead, Vicky Moore, Amanda Knappes, Andrew Peiper, Bill James, Jody Strakosch

Agency Staff and Guests: Aaron Tag, Sam O’Connell, Dan Pfeiffer, Jim Alexander, James Mockovciak; HNA’s Vicky Moore, David Pellinan, BRCC’s Ann Beuch, Eden Prairie’s Julie Klima

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by CAC Co-chair Munt. Minutes from May 24, 2016 were approved.

II. Project Readiness

Jim Alexander provided a summary of SWLRT Project Readiness including a funding update and project milestones achieved. Co-chair Adams commented on the absence of news coverage explaining that a part of the COP funding solution was that 5 million dollars would come from the Metro Transit operating budget. Jody Strakosch asked how much the financing cost was represented in the budget, and the interest rates of the COP. Jim Alexander replied that the finance costs included in the project are only related to the federal portion of the budget. SPO won’t know the interest rates of the COP until issued in July 2017. Ms. Strakosch asked about the status of pending lawsuits and their impact on the project. Jim Alexander stated that there is one pending lawsuit. Lawsuits, he said, have occurred on the two previous LRT projects. Vicky Moore added that those lawsuits slowed down the projects, but they were all resolved. Matthew Hollinshead asked what kind of trial the lawsuit would be. Mr. Alexander thought it is scheduled as a jury trial next year. Amanda Knappes asked about the Claremont property. It was noted the Opus Woods suit was dismissed.

Vida Ditter asked about the impact of Dakota County leaving the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB). Co-chair Munt stated it will not impact SWLRT. But it could make the future full build-out of the transit system more difficult. Co-chair Russ Adams asked how remnant parcels of public land will be used after construction. Co-chair Munt pointed members to the Metro Transit webpage

(<http://www.metrotransit.org/transit-oriented-development>) listing TOD opportunities for interested developers and cities.

Jim Alexander continued the presentation with a look ahead at remaining milestones, and a high level overview of the 5 construction contracts. Vida Ditter asked about the procurement rules and DBE specifications. Mr. Alexander stated SPO has set a DBE hiring goal of 16 percent on the civil contract. Co-chair Munt added that 7500 living wage jobs represented by the project, a payroll of 350 million dollars and a workforce goal of 32 percent was significant, keeping project money at home in local pockets. Matthew Hollinshead asked if bids are higher than anticipated how that will impact the contingency. Jim Alexander noted the project contingency could be used. Vida Ditter asked about the safety of pedestrian tunnels constructed. Jim Alexander explained SPO has safety staff who are looking at lightings, cameras and other security measures. Another question was asked about the overall impact of project construction and other road work projects. Mr. Alexander reassured that SPO is working closely with MnDOT and the cities to develop a Maintenance of Traffic plan to minimize disruptions to drivers. There was a brief conversation of member's views about coordinating work to leverage public resources to benefit the community. Vida Ditter wondered if SPO could configure pedestrian paths to make it easier to get to the impound lot near Van White Station.

Ms. Vitter also asked if the LRT vehicles would be made in America. Mr. Alexander mentioned Buy America requirements. Someone asked if the new LRT vehicles would be compatible throughout the current system. Jim Alexander replied that they would be mechanically compatible with Type I LRVs and mechanically and electrically compatible with Type II LRVs.

III. Right-of-Way Acquisition Process Overview

Aaron Tag provided a high level overview of the Right-of-Way process. He mentioned the relatively short [9-month/October 16'-July 17'] timeframe to complete the offer process, and the number of affected properties (153) including temporary easements, partial and full acquisitions. Mr. Tag also presented the list of critical acquisitions that will be processed first, and the three possible outcomes after offers are made: offers are accepted, negotiated, or condemnation. A question was asked if SPO will use the condemnation process if property owners reject an offer. Mr. Tag replied that it's highly likely we'll start the process on some properties, but they will not necessarily end up in court as negotiations continue. He added that in past projects properties have gone to court. But many are negotiated settlements. In fact, he said, there are some cases from the Central Corridor LRT project that remain unsettled. Bill James asked how many properties were affected. Mr. Tag said there were over 150 properties. A few of these were full acquisitions, others were partial permanent or temporary easements. Ms. Vitter asked how communication takes place with affected property owners. Mr. Tag explained the initial meeting is a field title review, where legal ownership is verified, and stakeholders are given information of the acquisition process to follow. An appraiser is assigned and an offer made in person. If that offer is not accepted negotiations begin.

Amanda Knappes asked what percentage of properties in past projects went into condemnation. Mr. Alexander said 30 %. Ms. Vitter asked if condemnation is more expensive than a negotiated settlement. Mr. Alexander said that's hard to determine. He added there are no residential acquisitions' on this project. The properties affected are mostly commercial. If there is a relocation required, a specialist/MnDOT consultant is hired to meet in person with tenants and explain the relocation process.

Someone asked if tenants stay in the same area. Mr. Alexander replied that it depends on the business. Offers will be staggered based on the critical path of the project and available resources. Dan Pfeiffer mentioned that at this point SPO has met with most property owners and informed them of the process. Only a few field title meetings remain.

IV. Construction Outreach and Communication

Sam O'Connell presented an overview of the upcoming SPO Career Fair on October 18, the communication and outreach plan during construction, and a list of outreach best practices learned from previous projects. She mentioned SPO will be hiring between 60-70 employees and asked members to spread the word about the Career Fair. She also advised members that SPO will be soliciting additional input from members on the outreach and communication plan being developed.

V. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum

Co-chair Munt asked if any members had anything else to present or share. Jody Strakosch asked how much additional noise would be generated by the LRT bells in the Kenilworth corridor. And if there were any mitigation measures. Vida Ditter said she understood that at a certain speed the bells weren't necessary. Jim Alexander explained planned mitigation measures are identified in the FEIS and affirmed that the bell is required at-grade crossings and when the train arrives and departs stations. He described a separate wayside device that will be installed to further mitigate noise. Vida Ditter asked what the hours would be for construction work. Mr. Alexander replied it depended on the city but was typically 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM. Any work before or beyond stated hours requires the contractor to follow city prescribed process for approving additional hours.

Co-chair Adams announced the next meeting on October 25 for members to offer input on the November 2 CMC meeting.

V. Meeting Adjourned