



Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Business Advisory Committee Meeting

September, 2012

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Central Corridor LRT Project Office

540 Fairview Avenue N.

St. Paul, MN

BAC Members and Alternates: Curt Rahman, Daniel Duffy, Dave Pelner, Duane Peterson, Duane Spiegler, Marc Bogursky, Michelle Swanson, Raed Kakish, Rick Weibien, Timothy Penn for Scott Gill, Stephanie Peterson, Will Roach, Pat MulQueeny

Project staff and other attendees: Mark Fuhrmann, Robin Caufman, Sam O'Connell, Rich Rovang, Judd Fenlon, Greg Hunt, Tim Sullivan

1. Welcome & Introductions

BAC Acting Chair Will Roach called the meeting to order at 8:04 AM. Chair Roach shared a summary report from the SWLRT Corridor Management Committee held on September 9. Rich Rovang, from the Central Corridor Project Office, welcomed the BAC to the project office. Rich shared information about the office, its function and Central Corridor's history working with the business community. Central Corridor was the first project to have a separate business advisory group. The St. Paul Chamber is active in the development of the Central Corridor and worked with the legislature to secure funding for small business support during construction. The business community was active in dealing with storm water issues along the corridor as well. Rich asked BAC members to keep in mind what you will see on the tour did not happen overnight but is a result of lots of hard work, good partnerships and creative solutions. Rich asked BAC members to keep in mind the final destination as SWLRT moves forward.

Duane Spiegler asked about business impacts along the corridor. Rich Rovang responded there are 1400 businesses on the corridor and even during heavy construction there have been more businesses move in than out. Providing better communications with the business community was learned on Central Corridor and will carry forward with SWLRT.

2. Central Corridor “101”

Mark Fuhrmann, Program Director, welcomed the BAC to the project offices for which has been in operation for five years. Mark shared background information on Hiawatha LRT development and highlighted the success in ridership. The Central Corridor will have 18 new stations on 10 miles of rail connecting downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul. The Central Corridor will be the region's busiest transit line with 47,000 daily trips provided by 2030. Central Corridor is on schedule and is anticipated to open in 2014. Mark introduced Robin Caufman who will share additional information about Central Corridor.

Robin shared information on the corridor's business profile and project development timing in detail. In addition, Robin highlighted the issues that were the most concern to the business community: parking, access and construction. In addition, project sponsors and the business

community have been working together to promote corridor businesses during construction through a marketing campaign.

Pat MulQueeney asked if businesses will be assessed for the improvements. Robin responded not from the Met Council. However, cities may re-coup some of their investments like Minneapolis did with the Lake Street improvements.

Robin covered some of the financial programs available to businesses during construction. Pat MulQueeney asked why businesses wait to apply for assistance. Robin responded businesses are required to submit proof of impacts to sales so most businesses wait until the end of the year to do so. Robin reported that since heavy construction, 72 businesses have opened, 63 have closed and 20 have extended their existing leases.

3. Business Perspective

Judd Fenlon from Wellington Management was invited to speak with the BAC regarding his experience with Central Corridor. Judd shared there is a lot to learn as these projects are big and sophisticated and suggested to members to prioritize what is most important to a business. First, there is a ton of acronyms associated with the project. Second, it is impossible attend every single meeting on every single issue so it's best to stay with the issues you can give your time and energy. Judd shared his perspective that businesses must think about short-term and long-term impacts. Most likely a business will experience some impacts and will need to plan of those impacts. Judd suggested to BAC members to stay involved, stay informed and think ahead and have a plan. Judd was asked several questions about important issues to his business during project development. He responded by sharing the following: learn about construction and when and where it will happen; articulate what your business needs in terms of signage and access; learn how to support your renters; and get to know your project outreach coordinator as well your chamber representatives.

4. Bus Tour of Central Corridor

BAC members boarded a Metro Transit coach bus and travelled east to see construction of the Central Corridor to Hwy 280. BAC members then travelled to downtown St. Paul and started the mobile tour at Union Station. The tour travelled west to the Central Corridor Project Office along University Avenue. During the tour, Robin Caufman shared construction highlights as well as project facts on sustainability, public art at stations and pointed out development/redevelopment projects along the corridor.

5. Adjourn

Acting Chair Roach adjourned the meeting/tour at 10:00 AM.