



Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT) Community Advisory Committee Meeting
August 9, 2012
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
St Louis Park City Hall, Council Chambers
5005 Minnetonka Blvd, St Louis Park, MN 55416

CAC Members and Alternates: Ann Beuch, Stacy Bettison, Bill Jams, Bill Neuendorf, Bob Tift, David Green, Derek Gunderson, Donald Eyberg, Elizabeth Ryan, Co-Chair Jeanette Colby, Co-Chair Jennifer Munt, Joe Mulford, John Erickson, Kelly Nelson, Kim Kang, Linnea Sodergren, Lisa Walker, Matt Flory, Matthew Fyten, Meg Forney, Mohamed Aden, Neil Trembley, Patrick Bernal, Steve Cramer, Tom Jenny, Vida Ditter, Celia Cervantes, Jami LaPray, Julie Williams, Kathryn Kottke, Rolf Peterson, Ann Iverson and Vicki Moore.

Agency Staff and Guests: Katie Walker, Mark Fuhrmann, Laura Baenen, Susan Hoyt, Kathryn Hansen, Robin Caufman, Sam O'Connell, Adele Hall, Abdi Ahmed, Kerri Pierce-Ruch, Meg McMonigal, Jim Alexander, Ed Ferlauto, Ashley James, George Puzak, Anne Mavity and Asad Aliweyd.

1. Welcome and Introductions: Co-Chairs Colby and Munt

Co-Chairs Colby and Munt called the SWLRT Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Co-Chair Munt asked if there are any comments or changes to the June meeting minutes.

Jami LaPray said she submitted comments via e-mail to SWLRT Project Office (SPO) staff. Co-Chair Munt asked her to share her comments. Ms. LaPray suggested adding and editing the following text:

- Add: Alternates were asked to no longer take an active part in the CAC meetings because of time constraints. It was then pointed out that the CAC charter, which had been adopted by the CAC, allowed alternates to take part. Discussion followed about the role of alternates on the CAC. Some felt that alternates should only be allowed to caucus with the member and speak during the open forum. Others believed that the committee should be open to all members and alternates present. The discussion was at times heated and emotional.
- Delete: CAC members and alternates engaged in robust discussion about the roles of the primary CAC member and their alternate. The CAC voted on modifying the language within the charter to clarify the roles of the CAC members and their alternates. Language was included to further encourage CAC members and alternates to caucus for CAC decision-making.

Ms. LaPray made the motion to amend the minutes. Vicki Moore seconded the motion. The CAC voted to approve the minutes as amended.

2. Project Updates: Mark Fuhrmann and Katie Walker

Mark Fuhrmann provided a project update including the Met Council's action to cancel the request for proposals for engineering services. SPO staff is working to divide the contract into several smaller contracts. A recommendation to award engineering services contracts is anticipated for early 2013.

David Greene asked what the net cost impacts will be to the project. Mr. Fuhrmann responded the only addition is the peer review contract, which will be in the few million dollar range. Neil Trembley asked to clarify the impact to the schedule. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that SPO staff is looking at other engineering and project delivery methods to expedite the process and if there is an opportunity to conduct work concurrently with other activities.

Bob Tift asked if the Met Council received lots of proposals during the initial procurement. Mr. Fuhrmann responded the Met Council only received two proposals, but each of those proposals includes double digit numbers of subcontractors. Vicki Moore asked what is design/build? Mr. Fuhrmann explained that design/build means that once 30% engineering is complete, an engineering and construction team is hired to start construction work while the remaining engineering work is completed. Matt Flory asked what is included in 30% engineering. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that thirty percent preliminary engineering (PE) means that the horizontal and vertical alignment (bridges, at grade crossings, etc..) of the track is decided, stations are located within 100 feet and the freight rail service location decision is determined.

David Greene asked how will the project make up for lost time and inflation costs? Mr. Fuhrmann responded SPO staff is sharpening their pencils to review the project schedule and will not know the cost of the work until proposals are submitted. Co-Chair Colby asked if the engineering schedule will affect the environmental process. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process will proceed. The public input received on the DEIS will feed into the engineering process. Mr. Fuhrmann asked Katie Walker to respond to the environmental process question during her presentation later on the agenda. Vida Ditter asked if the freight rail service question would be answered in two years and when would the cost estimates of each alternative be known? Mr. Fuhrmann responded that the 30% design detail will lead to the municipal consent process the cost estimate will be done as part of the PE process.

Katie Walker provided an update on Community Works (CW) initiatives. Transitional Station Area Action Plan (TSAAP) work will begin in next couple of months. The TSAAP will look at land uses within ½ mile of each station. It is anticipated that TSAAP will be a 9-12 month process that will provide input into the engineering process. Hennepin County Community Works will also start a housing study as well as prepare profiles for each station area. Neil Trembley asked how much interaction the county will have with each of the neighborhoods; he is concerned that this will be top down approach. Ms. Walker replied CW will be working through the cities and also seeking input from the CAC members. Matt Flory suggested that the CAC be used to engage the public. Co-Chair Munt asked how many people would be willing by a show of hands to use their communities' communication tools. Most CAC members raised their hands.

Jamie LaPray asked if the CW project would also apply to the freight rail corridor in St. Louis Park. Ms. Walker responded that CW will take a look at the potential mitigation impacts on communities as part of the PE process. Matt Flory noted that the SLP high school may be located just outside of the ½ mile walk-shed but should be considered.

3. CAC Issue Survey Results: Sam O’Connell

Sam O’Connell shared the outcome of the survey that was taken by CAC members in June/July determine topics of most interest. The top three topics were:

- Trails, parks and bike impacts
- Station location and station area plans/transit oriented development
- Bus and other transit connections

There were 7 topics tied for 4th place:

- Environmental justice
- Environmental sensitivities
- Housing
- Freight rail location
- Lessons learned from HLRT and CCLRT
- Safety
- Station and platform design

Vicki Moore asked what we will be doing with these topics. Co-Chair Munt reminded people that there were 17 issues identified as community concerns through the alternatives analysis public input process and this listing will guide future meeting topics and discussions. David Greene clarified that outreach to traditionally underserved members is more than environmental justice. Vida Ditter asked what do environmental sensitivities mean? Co-Chair Munt responded that it includes all of the environmental impacts ranging from historical, social, natural resources etc...

Elizabeth Ryan asked if trails, parks and bike impacts are just about construction impacts and transit connections is about the trail connections to the stations? Ms. O’Connell responded the top topic is both impacts as part of construction but also design impacts. The CAC had a discussion about the difference between these two items. Vicki Moore said she interpreted as preservation of existing trails, parks and bikeways and Neil Trembley concurred that he interpreted it as impacts. Bob Tift said his interpretation was that transit and connections talks about multimodal connections to the stations and station areas. Vida Ditter asked whether the environmental process will be considered for the entire alignment, including historical. Mr. Fuhrmann responded in the positive and that archaeological work is being conducted and due to wrap-up by end of summer.

Jami LaPray asked if the individual surveys could be shared; she would like to know how the representatives of the city voted. Ms. O’Connell indicated at the beginning of the survey process, we agreed to share the survey results in aggregate. Bob Tift said that the three St. Louis Park CAC members

had shared the information with the St. Louis Park alternates and would be happy to do so with LaPray after the meeting.

4. SWLRT DEIS Process Overview and Outreach: Katie Walker

Katie Walker provided an overview of the DEIS and highlighted outreach activities via a PowerPoint presentation. Vida Ditter asked if people should submit comments to the Met Council or Hennepin County? Ms. Walker stated comments on the DEIS need to be submitted to Hennepin County. David Greene asked if we know the month of the public hearings? Ms. Walker stated the County is targeting October. David Greene also asked county staff to locate the public hearings in areas and at times that are accessible via transit. He noted that it would be a challenge for people to get downtown during the day or to do multiple transfers to attend a meeting in the evening outside of the downtown area. John Erickson asked how large the DEIS document will be? Ms. Walker responded the document will be around 1000 pages.

Jamie LaPray asked how the comments will be documented? Mr. Fuhrmann responded that the body of public comments is not public to all during the development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). However, if a commenter wants to validate that their comment was received in its entirety, Southwest Project Office staff will work with the individual to review the comment log and confirm.

Vicki Moore also expressed concern about not having an opportunity to comment in Minneapolis in the evening. It would take 3 buses to get from north Minneapolis to St. Louis Park City Hall. Bill Neuendorf asked how the project will sift through the comments and decide what gets addressed in the FEIS. Mr. Fuhrmann stated his presentation will address this question.

Mark Fuhrmann reviewed the FEIS and next steps via a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Fuhrmann stressed that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process does NOT require another round of public hearing process for the FEIS. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the final authority on whether it is sufficient and then passes to the EPA who issues the Record of Decision (ROD). John Erickson clarified that while there is a 30 day waiting period; there is no public comment period. Mr. Fuhrmann answered in the affirmative.

Vida Ditter asked for clarification on the DEIS commenting period and whether it means that after the DEIS public hearing is it the last time for public input. Mr. Fuhrmann commented that SPO staff will review all the DEIS comments and work on resolution via engineering. However, input is still sought on the development of mitigation and further design. For example, the engineers may identify 2 or 3 options for a solution and those ideas would be shared with the public for feedback.

Matt Flory asked what happens after the 30% design; who will do that work? Mr. Fuhrmann answered the Met Council would issue another RFP for Advanced PE and Final Design work at the end of next year. John Erickson asked when is the FTA funding decision made? Mr. Fuhrmann responded the Met Council will submit an application for the Full Funding Grant Agreement about the time the ROD is issue.

Nell Trembley stated that it sounds like the DEIS and municipal consent process is the critical time for public input. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that is correct under the formal NEPA process. However, the project will continue to seek public input throughout the process. Co-Chair Colby asked about the status of the document. Ms. Walker reviewed all of the internal steps that need to be completed such as final review by FTA, making edits, printing, preparing public hearings, scheduling public hearings etc...

5. Committee Reports: Co-Chair Munt

Co-Chair Munt gave a report of the CW Steering Committee. At their August meeting, the committee discussed a new grant opportunity and development of the award criteria. Committee also discussed the status of the DEED application for \$14 million for SWLRT and heard a report on the engineering consultant contract.

Co-Chair Munt indicated that Safety in the Park has offered to provide a tour. Jami LaPray extended the offer to the CAC and will send out the information to the list of people that have shared their e-mail. Vida Ditter asked if the tour would include the alternative route through the Kenilworth area. Co-Chair Munt clarified that the Met Council is not hosting or facilitating the tour but said she is willing to attend any tour that anyone else decides to give; members can use the e-mail list to invite CAC colleagues.

Co-Chair Colby asked about status of the transit oriented development (TOD) grants. Co-Chair Munt mentioned that every city along the SWLRT corridor received a grant through the Met Council's LCDA TOD grant.

Meg Forney asked if a map and criteria could be shared. Ms. Walker responded that Hennepin County staff is preparing maps and station area profiles. We'll get this information to the CAC.

Vida Ditter asked about the status and process of the DEED grant. Co-Chair Munt replied DEED staff is reviewing the 90 applications against the grant application criteria. DEED Commissioner will be sharing their recommendations to the governor in late August/early September.

Co-Chair Munt asked CAC members to go around the table and share what they are hearing.

- Jami LaPray asked if the CAC could be given notices of the CMC meetings, especially if cancelled and also if the CAC meetings could be videotaped and made available on local cable access. Sam O'Connell will look into these requests.
- A CAC member suggested adding groups represented to the e-mail list.
- Bill James shared his experience on the Charlotte, NC transit system.
- ISIAAH members toured the Van White station and are monitoring the transit service study on Central Corridor LRT to see if there are any lessons that could be learned.
- John Erickson reported on analysis of park board study on impacts of Central Corridor LRT on park properties. They are preparing to respond to the DEIS.
- Bill Neuendorf gave a plug for the new SWLRTnow.org website. Overall hears lot of excitement for the project.
- Steve Cramer suggested the Interchange as a future CAC agenda topic.

- Vicki Moore education on the development process and taken some field trips including HLRT rides. Has taken smaller groups of neighbors that have not ridden LRT to give them the experience. Helps people to understand LRT. Vicki Moore extended the offer to have people join them.
- Stacy Bettison is the new Eden Prairie member. She is following the progress of UHG development and the traffic study that is underway. She also noted environmental impacts expected from UGH expansion and is concerned about cumulative impacts.
- Joe Mulford reported on the Hennepin Technical College's interests.
- Linnea Sodergren reported that she took a tour with City of Minnetonka planning staff and identified concerns. She shared the list of CAC list of interests and topics with city leaders and council members to compare to Minnetonka's identified comments. Minnetonka's primary concern is impact to natural resources with bridge over wetlands.
- Meg Forney reported on the MPR activities to prepare for the DEIS comments process; they've hired a facilitator to help process
- Matt Flory said he is getting lots of question on the DEIS timeline. He appreciates the information shared today. Suggested some sort of communication tool that CAC members can use.
- Co-Chair Munt reported on the Thrive 2040 planning activities that are focusing on changing demographics and the impacts on land use, transportation, infrastructure, housing etc.

6. Public Comment Forum:

Co-Chair Munt invited members of the public to address the CAC:

- Kathryn Kottke asked to comment on the minutes; asked for clarification on what municipal consent is. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that Minnesota State statute requires each jurisdiction to approve the project at 30%. Follow up question is whether the city can disapprove the project; Mr. Fuhrmann replied in the affirmative. Kathryn Kottke stated she is not hearing any discussion about mitigation. Mr. Fuhrmann replied the project will solicit comments in the DEIS process and the FEIS will capture the mitigation strategies. Kathryn Kottke asked to get a list of the BAC members. Ms. O'Connell stated the BAC had their first meeting; still waiting for a few final members. A listing will be made available. A final question; is TC&W on the BAC? Ms. O'Connell replied no.
- George Puzak, CIDNA, recalls a Hennepin County effort to clean up a contaminated Superfund site in St. Louis Park, Golden Auto. What is the status? The site is near the Louisiana Station. Ms. Walker The site is cleaned up and delisted. The city holds an easement across the site that could be used if a decision is made to relocate freight rail on the TC&W rail.

7. Adjourn

Hearing no further items, Chairs Munt and Colby adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.