



Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Business Advisory Committee Meeting
August 8, 2012
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
Southwest LRT Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, St Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members and Alternates: Brad Bakken, Curt Rahman, Daniel Duffy, Dave Pelner, Duane Peterson, Duane Spiegle, Jackie Cherryhomes-Tyler, Marc Bogursky, Mark Gustafson, Michelle Swanson, Raed Kakish, Scott Gill, Stephanie Peterson, Steve Chelesnik, Will Roach, Pat MulQueeney

Project staff and other attendees: Chair Susan Haigh, Commissioner Gail Dorfman, Abdi Ahmed, Chris Weyer, Katie Walker, Mark Fuhrmann, Robin Caufman, Sam O'Connell, Kathryn Hansen, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Meg McMonigal, James Martin, Nani Jacobson

1. Welcome & Introductions

Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh and Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman welcomed attendees and opened the meeting at 8:07 AM. Chair Haigh shared the importance of project and its ability to connect people to jobs. The Southwest LRT (SWLRT) corridor will make the region top notch and rich with jobs and growth opportunities. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is a 50% funding partner, and gave the project a green light for project development in 2011. Approval from FTA indicates the project is cost effective and sound. Today, 210,000 jobs exists in the corridor, the corridor is diverse in its business needs.

Commissioner Gail Dorfman provided project background and noted much of alignment was influenced by business communities especially in Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. Commission Dorfman noted that travel isn't all about downtown but also reverse commuting. The SWLRT will provide better transportation connections to jobs, in the I-494/Hwy. 212/Hwy. 62 area. Hennepin County will also look at housing and job growth on corridor within ½ mile of stations. This planning effort is just starting and we would like the BAC to part of the planning process.

Chair Haigh mentioned the Green Line will be a one seat ride not only to Minneapolis but to the University of Minnesota and to St. Paul.

2. Southwest LRT Overview

Sam O'Connell provided an overview of the SWLRT project through a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation shared the 2030 regional transit system vision and SWLRT project to attendees. Ms. O'Connell asked attendees to think about:

- How can we work together to identify development and business expansion opportunities?
- How can we support transit users, customers and employees in getting to their destination using multimodal options?
- How do we take advantage of opportunities to reach out to the public and businesses?
- How can we increase ridership?

At a future meeting, Southwest Project Office (SPO) staff will share detailed project information to the BAC. Ms. O'Connell shared high level demographics and provided an overview of the swlrt.org website and showed the SWLRT locally preferred alternative (LPA) video to group. Ms. O'Connell noted the video is a good tool for explaining the project alignment to customers, public, etc.

3. BAC Charter, Ground Rules and Committee Communication

Acting Chair Will Roach provided an overview of the expectations of advisory committee. Mr. Roach stressed the importance of providing input and involved in the project's journey. The charter, ground rules and communications will help set the foundation and leverage greater participation among group members. The goal is to have everyone active in the process, share wisdom and experience. Meetings will be structured so discussions are productive. Mr. Roach noted the BAC is not a voting committee, but one to understand project engineering, background and share facts with the broader community.

Ms. O'Connell asked if the members would like to share their e-mail addresses with rest of BAC members please indicate on the sign-in sheet. Ms. O'Connell discussed the charter, ground rules and committee functions. If BAC members wish to make comments on any of the foundation documents, they can send an e-mail to Ms. O'Connell. Ms. O'Connell described what members will receive as communication and information from SPO staff, outlined the contents in meeting packets and the noted the project's website will be a resource for committee information.

Mr. Roach asked attendees if the process made sense and are willing to move forward. Attendees responded in the affirmative.

4. Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS) Process Overview and Outreach

Katie Walker provided a general description of DEIS process, background, and elements of the DEIS document through a PowerPoint presentation. The DEIS is a requirement of state and federal laws. The primary purpose of the DEIS is to inform the public and policy makers on how the project will impact community and natural resources. The public and resource agencies are encouraged to comment on the DEIS. Hard copies of the DEIS will be available at select Hennepin County libraries and other locations. Public hearings will be held as part of the formal comment period. Notification of the public comment period will be noticed in the Federal Register, Minneapolis Finance and Commerce Journal, local newspapers, etc. The BAC is encouraged to let SPO staff know if other media outlets should be utilized. The DEIS will also be posted on Hennepin County's website. A DEIS summary document will be produced and translated in different languages. The public will have 45 days to submit their comments.

5. Next Steps and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

Nani Jacobson provided a general overview of the FEIS process, its requirements, and an anticipated timeline through a PowerPoint presentation.

Duane Spiegle asked if the same documents are available for Central Corridor and what can be learned with issues and concerns?

Ms. Jacobson answered yes documents are available but issues will be different than Central Corridor. Robin Caufman shared information about the centralcorridor.org website link which contains the Central Corridor DEIS and FEIS.

Pat Mulqueeny asked when does the project anticipate asking for municipal consent? Mark Fuhrmann answered that Minnesota statutory policy states consent is required when a project is within 30% of design which will occur in 2013.

Dan Duffy asked are the numbers and location of the stations set at this time or can they be modified, will stations and route change due to comments on DEIS? Mr. Fuhrmann answered the LPA contains 17 stations is 15 miles long. However, this is not set in concrete. Through engineering and the environmental documentation phase we will learn more about elements that might modify the project.

Marc Bogursky asked if a city doesn't provide municipal consent, does the project occur? Mr. Fuhrmann stated that the state law requires cities and project sponsor to work through issues and concerns raised by the cities. It has been the region's experience that typically more discussion occur and design adjustments are made, however, in the end the project moves forward.

Dave Pelner asked when is the decision made about project structures? Bridges, tunnels, crossings, etc.? Mr. Fuhrmann answered greater definition about project structures (horizontal and vertical alignments) is a component of the preliminary engineering (PE) and FEIS.

Duane Peterson asked if environmental work is occurring right now? Mr. Peterson mentioned he saw a letter regarding right of entry permit for access to property. Ms. Jacobson explained the right of entry permit seeks permission to perform survey work that identifies areas of archaeological potential. Such survey work includes performing ground surveys, shovel tests, x-rays of the ground for artifacts. Survey activities will wrap up this summer and a report should be in the DEIS and as well as later on when the next environmental phase is completed.

Brad Bakken asked if there is any kind of process in determining the negative project impacts and to begin establishing the position for mitigation; were there lessons learned from businesses on Central Corridor LRT? Mr. Fuhrmann answered by recommending the Chair and Committee members discuss this topic at future BAC meeting. No literature nationally was found to answer questions of this type. However, a comprehensive mitigation program was created for Central Corridor that Met Council funded.

Pat Mulqueeny asked what does 30% design comprise of for municipal consent? Mr. Fuhrmann answered that along the entire alignment, 30% design identifies station location within 100 feet as well as horizontal and vertical alignments.

Mr. Roach suggested with Central Corridor nearing completion if BAC members are interested in meeting in St Paul for a tour. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that Central Corridor Project Office is willing to host the tour and is able to make arrangements for a bus. BAC members responded in the affirmative.

6. Adjourn

Acting Chair Roach adjourned the meeting at 9:30 AM.