

Metropolitan Council

St. Louis Park City Chambers, 5005 Minnetonka Blvd, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

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Meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee

April 27, 2011

Members Present	Susan Haigh, Chair	Terry Schneider	Brian Lamb
	Jeff Jacobs	Peter Wagenius	Gail Dorfman
	Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Bill James	Peter McLaughlin
	Scott McBride	Dave Nuckols <i>(alt. for Jan Callison)</i>	James Hovland
	Jim Brimeyer		
Members Absent	Keith Bogut	Jan Callison	Jennifer Munt
	Cheryl Youakim	Matt Look	

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum was present when Chair Susan Haigh called the April 27, 2011 meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee to order at 1:00pm at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

**2. INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Haigh welcomed all and introductions were made.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the March 2, 2011 Southwest LRT Management Committee were approved.

**4. PE/DEIS UPDATE**

Program Director Mark Fuhrmann differentiated the Southwest Transitway and the Interchange projects. He presented one map of the Target Field Station area in which the SWLRT Project will connect to the Central Corridor. He presented another map of the Target Field Station in the same vicinity in which the anticipated Interchange Project will occur. Mark pointed out that although the Southwest will end at the Target Field Station, it does not rely on the Interchange Project, nor does the Interchange Project rely on the Southwest Project. Simply, both are separate, with their own project independent utility.

Mr. Fuhrmann continued by explaining that although the current SWLRT PE Scope tracks hooking up with Target Field Station, the FTA still had concerns regarding the two projects. In response, Hennepin County as well as MetroTransit sent the FTA letters stating that the Interchange can exist alone. Consequently, the Southwest Project can also exist without the Interchange Project. However, it was stressed that special event ridership for the Hiawatha line was under estimated and that currently the Target Field platform area is already over populated. To minimize disruptions to rail operations, it is desired that the Interchange Project be completed on or before the start of revenue operations for Central Corridor LRT. By doing so, this will provide more safety and efficiency for the passengers. Therefore, it will be a benefit for when the Southwest connects to the Central Corridor in that location carrying even more passengers.

It was questioned whether or not the Interchange will affect station planning and re-engineering signage. Mark explained that there would not be a change to actual structure because it is at the same elevation, but that the signage would have to be redone.

Members stressed the need to create clearer signage within Target Field Ballpark to help better direct fans to the LRT platform area.

Peter McLaughlin asked if the Interchange was dependent on any specific project. General Manager Brian Lamb responded by explaining the current Hiawatha and future Central Corridor's success will rely heavily on the Interchange project due to over-crowding and safety concerns. Mr. Lamb explained the Interchange will provide quicker, safer pedestrian movement around the platform as well as when crossing the tracks.

## **5. ENGINEERING SERVICES CONTRACT**

Project Director Chris Weyer walked the Committee members through the major elements of the Engineering Services Contract. These include:

- Project Management Support
  - o Scheduling
  - o Preparing FTA documents and reports
  - o Review Risk Assessments
- Preliminary Engineering
  - o Utility and Soil investigations
  - o Surveys
  - o Resolving key technical issues
  - o FEIS process completed with consultant
  - o Assessing other possible risks and issues
- Final Design
  - o Project Office will review contract packages
  - o Fine tune specifications
  - o Gather bids
- Design Support During Construction
  - o Request of submittal reviews

General Manager Brian Lamb asked if it is possible to switch consultants if their work on a previous element fell short of expectations. Mr. Weyer explained that you cannot move through one gate until everything is intact. Therefore, you are able to make changes prior to moving to the next step. Mr. Weyer believes with the magnitude of work involved in the Southwest Project, only strong, confident, and reliable firms will participate in the proposed process.

## **6. PARK & RIDE GUIDELINES**

Senior Project Manager Craig Lamothe began by stressing that park-and-ride facilities will be critically important to the success of the proposed LRT line. Mr. Lamothe briefly reviewed the anticipated collaborative approach that the SWPO and the SWLRT CW Project are expected to take in regards to locating and sizing park-and-ride facilities along the alignment. He followed with a brief review of the Regional Travel Demand Model and the park-and-ride facility locations and sizes as currently proposed by said model. He stated that all but two stations were currently planned for park-and-ride facilities and those facilities ranged from 100 spaces to 800 spaces with

a total of 3,500 spaces for the entire alignment. Mr. Lamothe then provided an overview of the Regional Park-and-Ride Plan and the park-and-ride demand model as an alternative micro-scale tool to the macro-scale Regional Travel Demand Model. He concluded with a trio of lessons learned that will be of value to future discussions regarding the provision of park-and-ride spaces at stations along the alignment.

During his presentation, Mr. Lamothe stressed the following points:

- Park-and-ride facilities do not necessarily have to be located immediately adjacent to LRT platforms
- The byproduct of under sizing park-and-ride facilities can have negative impacts on adjacent land uses
- Not providing park-and-ride spaces doesn't mean the demand goes away
- Acknowledging there will be demand is step one. Step two is adequately planning for and properly managing the demand whether that be off-street or on-street

A committee member asked what is the cost per parking space. Mr. Lamothe responded that the cost per space differs as follows:

- \$3,500 per surface parking lot space
- \$15,000 per above ground parking ramp space
- \$30-\$32,000 per underground parking ramp space

Commissioner Gail Dorfman asked if property has been acquired for the park-and-ride facilities at each of the stations. Mr. Lamothe responded that some of the stations have publicly held property that could be used for park-and-ride purposes.

The committee agreed that communication at this stage is key. Issues such as green space, value of property, safety, and other concerns should be discussed now rather than later to help move the project along and to reduce future issues with neighboring businesses and residents.

## **7. CASH FLOW NEEDS FOR PROJECT OFFICE STARTUP**

Due to time restraints, although this topic was not fully covered, it was questioned by the committee on why there was a jump from \$500,000 to \$3,000,000 a month during the second half of 2011. Mark Fuhrmann explained this \$2.5M jump is due to the anticipated hiring of personnel for Engineering Services, Environmental Service activities as well as the establishment of a permanent project office. This number would balance out during the first half of 2012 while engineering and environmental services and activities continue. The committee members better understood and felt more comfortable with the increase presented.

The meeting adjourned at 2:36pm.

Respectfully submitted, Debra Sisneros