

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

May 4, 2016

Members Present	Chair Adam Duininck	James Hovland	Terry Schneider
	Russ Adams	Brian Lamb	Marion Greene (Alt)
	Jan Callison	Scott McBride	Peter Wagenius (Alt)
	Jason Gadd	Peter McLaughlin	
	Linda Higgins	Jake Spano	
Members Absent	Asad Aliweyd	Betsy Hodges	Denetrick Powers
	Keith Bogut	Matt Look	Will Roach
	Steve Elkins	Jennifer Munt	Nancy Tyra-Lukens

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Adam Duininck called the May 4, 2016 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:05 a.m. at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Duininck presented the February 3, 2016 SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Mayor Terry Schneider made a motion to accept the minutes, Mayor James Hovland seconded it, and the motion was then unanimously approved.

3. CHAIR UPDATE

Chair Duininck provided an update on the current legislative session, which adjourns on May 23. The bonding bill and transportation bill seem to be dependent upon each other. The Senate plan is a ¾% sales tax in the Twin Cities region where a portion goes to CTIB and the remainder goes to Met Council. The Governor's position is a ½% sales tax in the 7 county area. These are on top of the ¼% that is already imposed by CTIB.

Chair Duininck said there has been a lot of communications from the business community supporting transit. Commissioner McLaughlin also mentioned there was a letter signed by the 45 local Chambers from around the state that shows support of roads, bridges and transit. This letter will be shared with CMC members. Mayor Jake Spano mentioned there was also a letter signed from the Minnesota Mayor's Association that was advocating for comprehensive funding for transportation that included transit in their language. Commissioner McLaughlin urged CMC members to work with the associations they are involved in with the message showing our support for transit.

Chair Duininck reported there is a Lieutenant Governor's roundtable event scheduled for May 9 that is hosted by the Eden Prairie Chamber that will focus on SWLRT. The invitation will be also be sent around to CMC members.

Chair Duininck mentioned that today is Craig Lamothe's last day as the SWLRT Project Office Director. Craig has led the project through some of its largest challenges, and his great leadership has been shown and the Chair thanked Craig for his hard work. Craig will stay at Metro Transit in Service Development and will continue to support the project as needed.

4. NEW STARTS UPDATE

Mr. Mark Fuhrmann provided an update on the New Starts rating. The SWLRT overall rating continues to be medium-high. Currently, there are 15 other peer projects that are in the running for federal money. Two of the projects are from Minnesota, SWLRT and BLRT. The President's recommendation showed 7 of the 15 projects to be recommended for federal funding for a FFGA, and SWLRT is one of these projects. The authorization level of money that was authorized for New Starts/Small Starts increases to \$2.3B/year, which is a 20.7% increase over the prior MAP 21 level. This money is allocated consistently across time for the five years, 2016 – 2020.

Mayor Hovland asked if the state's 10% funding doesn't come through, would this affect our chances with the competition; and would we need to look for an alternative source of funding. Chair Duinink mentioned that the FTA refers to the nonfederal share as not being differentiated between where the money comes from, whether city, county, state or other. It needs to be up to us as to the commitment level. Commissioner McLaughlin also mentioned that though it doesn't differentiate where the money comes from, FTA is aware that our model calls for a 10% state contribution.

Commissioner McLaughlin said it is important that we don't miss a year with the state funding. These projects that get multiyear funding and are missing even one year, makes a large effect on the project. We need to act now so we can compete as strongly as possible.

5. STATION DESIGN UPDATE

Mr. Ryan Kronzer, Assistant Director of Land Use, Stations and OMF, reviewed the station panel designs. Every station will have panels except for Southwest Station, which is embedded into a parking structure. The size and number of panels are dependent on the station type. The pylons are 28' tall and the wickets are 16' to 18' tall, with the materials made of either stainless steel mesh or a cut metal panel. Each station will be assigned a theme to help inform what the imagery will be. The Hennepin County Station Area planning work helped with the themes, along with open houses and community and committee events. Examples of the materials were shown, along with different colors and patterns that may be used. Two examples of the panel concepts were shown; one of West Lake Street, which theme is the chain of lakes; the other example was Bryn Mawr, which will have a theme of prairie landscape. The next step is to bring the final design back to the BAC and CAC.

Mr. Kronzer introduced Sarah Ghandour, Design Lead for Stations and Streetscape, who has been leading the station design process. Ms. Ghandour reviewed the recent workshop that was held with the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC). The purpose of the workshop was to engage TAAC members and get feedback on the platform features. At the workshop, a mockup of a station platform was shown. The platform mock up was used to show how two wheelchairs can pass each other safely and how people can use the enclosures with wheelchairs and access the benches. Also shown was how people can access the platforms and get on the train safely. This was a very productive session and staff received good feedback from TAAC, including how people felt they can comfortably use the enclosures, even with two benches and the wheelchairs in the enclosures. TAAC members also felt the sides of the shelters provide good wind coverage. Other comments were that TAAC wasn't in favor the leaning rails. A few more benches were requested rather than the leaning rails. Commissioner Higgins mentioned that she also does not favor the leaning rails, as she feels they are not as functional as benches. It was noted that no leaning rails will be used in the design.

6. CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Chair Duinink mentioned the Met Council recently put out a news release about the development that has occurred around transitways. Currently over \$4B in investments have been reached on the Green

Line for development. With the numbers along Bottineau and Southwest added it would then be over \$5B in investments along these lines. This is an important component to understand going forward. Commissioner McLaughlin suggested that Hiawatha development also be included in future presentations. There are more housing units already up and occupied than were predicted to be built on Hiawatha by 2020.

Ms. Kathryn Hansen, Manager of TOD and Land Use at the project offices provided an update on the corridor development. One reason that this region is unique and so successful in terms of real estate development is due to the efforts by the cities and county along the alignment.

Ms. Hansen reported that the SWLRT overall project rating remains at medium high. The cities and county worked with the project office closely on two elements of the justification for this, which are land use and economic development. Economic development entails transit supportive plans and policies; performance and impacts of the policies; and tools to maintain/increase the share of affordable housing.

Ms. Hansen reviewed the supportive TOD plans and policies that the cities have put together, along with the grants that are supporting TOD from the period of 2011 – 2015. There is a total of 17 Met Council grants totaling \$5.4M. These grants are the LCA TOD grants, which cities can apply for. The Hennepin County's TOD funds also have five grants at an amount of \$2.2M. There is investment of over \$6M by Hennepin County Community Works as well.

Commissioner McLaughlin mentioned that at the May 3 Hennepin County HRA meeting additional grants were approved, including two for the Blue Line Extension, a TOD grant along SWLRT and one along the Green Line. This is the next round of grants that are not yet reflected in the reporting above. Commissioner Callison handed out a sheet that talks about Community Works with an explanation of the \$6M that has been awarded by the TOD program to various projects along the SWLRT Corridor.

Ms. Hansen reported that the City of Hopkins has eight grants, of which three are for the Artery Project, which will link the downtown Hopkins Station to the historic main street in Hopkins. The cities and county have worked together to come up with the housing inventory, a gaps analysis and a strategic plan. This is how the group looks at providing housing and choices for all along the alignment.

The next steps for TOD will be to update the New Starts application by pulling all this good news together to present to FTA. We continue to show our support to the communities as they seek additional TOD funding opportunities.

Ms. Hansen introduced the video that Eden Prairie recently produced, which shows their support of the SWLRT project. This is the second of the city videos, with Hopkins having the first video completed. The link to this video will be sent to CMC members. Commissioner McLaughlin suggested members to forward this link to their networks of businesses and others to help pass this along.

7. NEXT STEPS

Mr. Fuhrmann reported that the project office plans to discuss final scope and cost estimate following the Legislative session where \$135M for this project will hopefully be identified. The final environmental work is projected to conclude in the July/August timeframe, which then sets the project to make the request to FTA to make formal application to move into engineering and then apply for the FFGA.

8. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Russ Adams reported that there was a joint BAC/CAC meeting on 4/26/16. At that meeting, Mr. Will Roach also made the business case presentation for SWLRT, along with the presentations that were presented today were shown. The business case presentation was very well received. At the meeting, there also was communication on the leaning rails, where the committees were in agreement not to have these. There were conversations about how this project could create equitable opportunities and access to educational and social opportunities. Meadowbrook was discussed and how the corridor wide housing strategy is even more important now in light of the properties converting to market rate. Commissioner Callison mentioned Hennepin County is looking into the leverage fund, which would be intended to permit us to save properties like Meadowbrook.

Chair Duininck mentioned that we will email out to CMC members the information from today's presentation on the Eden Prairie Chamber event; the letter from the Chambers; and the link to the Eden Prairie video. Commissioner McLaughlin urged CMC members to make efforts to get word out to support the project prior to the end of the Legislative session.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Duininck mentioned that the next meeting is scheduled for June 1 at 10:00, at St. Louis Park City Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary