



Southwest LRT DBE and Workforce Advisory Committee

Thursday, May 20, 2021

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

AGENDA [[Handouts](#)] [[Presentation](#)]

1. **ATTENDEES** – Barry, Gilbert Odonkor, Eric Ampadu, Sheila Olson, Julie Brekke, Tony O'Brien, Mel Reeves, Maura Brown, Leslie Woyee, John O-Phalen, Mary Schmidt, Barb Lau, Christa Seaberg, Katy Maus, Chris Gannon, Mike Toney, Elaine Valadez, Brianne Lucio, Ashanti Payne, Sam O'Connell, Jon Tao, Mahad Omar, Aaron Koski, Brian Leitch, Andy Robinson, Bill Traxler, Mike Miskavige, Erin Neils, Salima Khakoo
2. **BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES UPDATE by Aaron Koski (Slides 3-9)**
 - a. Aaron notes that they are towards the end of their program and is grateful for the successful of the cohort and the contributions of DWAC members in its success.
 - b. Aaron shows the breakdown of ethnicity, gender and education of participants and the current stage of the program that participants are in. Aaron also shows pictures of Hands On trainings and activities by BSC participants
 - c. Aaron shares the apprenticeship placements of participants, which included 1 cement mason, 1 iron worker, 3 laborers and 2 operating engineers. He then shares the support activities taking place to continue assisting BSC participants.
3. **SWLRT PROJECT UPDATE by Sam O'Connell (Slides 10-17)**
 - a. Sam shares the project updates of sites Southwest Station (Eden Prairie), Eden Prairie Town Center Station, TH 62 LRT Tunnel (Minnetonka), Cantilevered Form Traveler at Excelsior Boulevard Bridge (Hopkins), West 21st Street Station (Minneapolis), Franklin OMF North Yard Apron Sub-slabs and Track, and SWLRT LRT Vehicle #301
4. **DBE ACHIEVEMENT REPORTING**
 - a. **DBE Progress Reports and Disaggregated DBE Data by Jon Tao (Slides 18-19)**
 - i. Jon shares the current DBE achievement as of March 31st, 2021. Current DBE percentage to date either meet the goals or exceed the goals. The current participations are 20.6% for LMJV, 16.1% for APJV, 20.1% for LS Black and 18.4% for closed contracts. All the contracts are doing well, according to Jon.
 - a. **Civil: LMJV DBE Activities by Christa Seaberg (Slides 20-24)**
 - i. Christa shares the current DBE participation for April & May. They've significantly increased their DBE participation.
 - ii. Christa shares some current DBE participation facts: owner change orders approved thru 4/15 sit at \$44,193,823 with DBE participation at 20.51% with the goal having been 16%. Over 64 DBEs have work being done on the project.

- iii. Christa shares LMJV's DBE highlight, E&J Rebar Inc. Their scope of work is Steel Erection. Their contract is ~\$14.5m and they have been paid ~\$4.4m to date.
- b. Systems: APJV DBE Activities by Chris Gannon (Slides 25-28)
 - i. Chris shares their project look ahead for systems, May/June/July updates which include several communications, erosion, labor work and more.
 - ii. Chris shares a purchase order made for Signal Cable for ~\$883k
 - iii. Chris shares their update on change orders, with their owner change orders approved thru 4/1/21 sitting at ~1m.
 - iv. Their DBE change order participation is at 60% and job to date participation is 16.1%.
- c. Franklin O&M: LS Black DBE Activities by Brian Leitch (Slides 29-31)
 - i. Brian shares the current update on change orders for LS Black. Their anticipated DBE participation is 20% and DBE achievement to date is 20%.
 - ii. Brian shares their current update on DBE activity, which includes ongoing participation from GoFetsch, large upcoming scope for Nakasone Painting, fabrication work from Am-Tec Designs and more.

5. WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION REPORTING by

a. Workforce Participation Reports and Disaggregated Workforce Data by Elaine Valadez (Slides 32-38)

a. Civil

- i. Elaine shares the current workforce participation percentage, hours and breakdown of workforce hours for Civil. As of March 2021, they are at 42,951 hours with the civil construction total at 1,067,995 hours.
- ii. Elaine shows the hours worked by category of ethnicity and gender.
- iii. Elaine shares trucking participation on the hours being counted: MBE is at 19,244 hours, ZTS is at 3,581 hours, and Rock-On-Trucks is at 683 hours.

b. Systems

- i. Elaine shares the current workforce participation percentage, hours, and breakdown of workforce hours for Systems. As of March 2021, they are at 0 hours since there hasn't been any new work yet.

c. Franklin

- i. Elaine shares the current workforce participation percentage, hours, and breakdown of workforce hours for Franklin O&M. As of March 2021, they are at 8,647 hours with a total of 46,628 hours.
- i. Elaine shows the hours worked by category of ethnicity and gender. Salima points out that the rate of not-specified workers is high and LS Black should figure out who these workers are so MDHR can count them towards workforce participation.

b. Civil: LMJV Workforce Activities by Christa Seaberg (Slides 39-43)

- a. Christa shares the workforce activities that took place for LMJV and are upcoming. This includes monthly GFE meetings with MDHR/Met-Council, attending a virtual career fair with TC Urban League, interviewing BSC candidates for mentoring positions, construction trades outreach planning, an upcoming Union Round Table with SWLRT contractor teams and more.
 - b. Christa shares the total new hires/transfers for LMJV. They have hired 7 white males and are currently working on recruitment efforts for experienced cement finishers for the project.
 - c. Systems: APJV Workforce Activities by Mike Toney (Slides 44-45)**
 - a. Mike shares the current systems workforce activities updates. They include APJV craft labor beginning in July 2021, a meeting introducing helmets to hardhats with local 160, meetings with BSC and more.
 - d. Franklin O&M: LS Black Workforce Activities by Brian Leitch (Slides 46-48)**
 - a. Brian shares the current workforce activities for Franklin. This includes GFE meetings with MDHR, meeting with Christa of LMJV regarding outreach opportunities, hiring a new compliance officer within LS Black and more.
 - b. (Question) Christa What is the name of your new compliance officer?
 - i. Lynda Reckow
- 6. Subcontractor Workforce Participation Discussion (Slides 49-50)**
- a. Panelists**
 - i. Standard Contracting**
 - 1. Becky Seidenkranz, President
 - ii. RailWorks/DELTA Joint venture**
 - 1. Amy , Recruiter
 - iii. Minger Construction**
 - 1. Bill Traxler, EEO Officer and Controller
 - iv. Pete's Water & Sewer**
 - 1. Tony Diehl, Estimator and Project Manager
 - v. E&J Rebar**
 - 1. Mike Miskavige
 - vi. Egan**
 - 1. Erin Niels, EEO Officer
 - b. Amy/Mike: It's challenging to get female participation for Railworks and E&J Rebar. It's challenging for E&J because they were going to start their project 3 years ago, but the project has just started to pick up pace.
 - c. Salima: Internally, what is the representation like for women and people of color?**
 - i. Erin: They have about 10% of workforce being women, and 5-6% is POCI and indigenous employees (rough number). Egan has recently engaged in outside consultants in DEI as it is a strategic goal for Egan in the next 3-4 years.

- ii. Amy: I don't have exact numbers currently, but it is similar to Egan's. We have women in leadership positions but tend to be in HR departments or in very high positions and not existent in other areas. They are encouraging women to go into field leadership positions more, but it is difficult for them as there isn't really interest there.
 - iii. Bill: Both office and field is 12% female and 8% POCI and indigenous. They have a dashboard report where they are looking at project workforce performance and have crews that maintain good representations workforce wise. Bill states that it is one of their primary objectives, and they are planning on reaching out to BSC to help them out with that.
 - iv. Mike: He states that they fluctuate a lot with employees, sometimes week-to-week. They have about 3 women and roughly 26 POCI. They have been trying hard to hire as many people as possible, and they have taken some classes to better prepare themselves.
- d. OPEN Q/A:
- i. Brian from Summit Academy: Please let me know how we can help, we can do mock interviews and a job fair, and potentially recreate this panel for our students and alumni. If there is anything Summit Academy can do to give you access to our students, please reach out.
 - ii. Sheila Olson: Echoes the same sentiments as Brian
 - iii. Julie Brekke from Hired: We should think of "What can we start doing at the CBO level, and what needs to happen at the union/job-site as well" in addition to what Brian and Sheila have already mentioned. Also asked about future hiring needs in case there is a need across multiple employers for a specific skillset.
 - iv. **Julie:** *Is it difficult to project hiring needs for projects farther out? Is it a challenge? How hard is it to predict for a certain skillset? How do you organize your projections?*
 - 1. Erin: "We're able to project what is happening throughout the summer and duration of the project. We are at 41 electricians and hit 55 at the peak, we can do that and are hopeful that the union can help supply those electricians to help us meet that goal.
 - 2. **Salima:** *"What is the process of asking for diversity within the batch of potentials when you collaborate with Unions?"*
 - a. Egan: My understanding from the Labor Manager is to shoot an email detailing the needs and goals needed to be met to the unions and let them know that they'd like to hire them.
 - 3. Barry: When we decide how many apprentices to take, we reach out to all contractors and ask them how much work they're going to have. We recruit, we train and we supply to the contractors after more

information is found and I think it's a constant effort between all unions to try and figure out how much work is coming.

4. **Christa:** "It's actually a fun and very difficult process from the contractor side. A big thing about a project is knowing how many hours it will take approximately per trade that the project will take. But you also have a lot of different teams that have their idea on hours/projections such as estimators and professionals, the prime, an agency and the actual subcontractors which may affect the entire projection that is to be decided on."
- v. **Elaine:** *When the iron workers and other unions start looking at opening apprenticeship classes, does that occur on a scheduled basis? Where do you source potential candidates?*
 1. **Barry:** We take applications all year long and do a week and a half training, so participants have some level of trade exposure and safety awareness. We hold our apprenticeship class in April and try to get them set up in May. Pre-covid, we were doing about 1 outreach event a week between the Twin Cities and Duluth. These include working with BSC, shop classes, high schools, and other locations. Now that things are opening, hopefully we can commit to more outreach/recruiting events.
 2. **Sheila:** *If I was working on light rail in an apprenticeship and the project ended, could I shift into a vertical construction project?*
 - a. **Barry:** Correct because journeyman iron workers need to be able to do everything. We train everyone to be able to do all aspects. Being able to provide all the training necessary for our participants is necessary for iron work because folks may not be able to secure jobs if they specialized in only a few specifics of iron working.
 3. **Salima:** *When you are able to bring POCI and women onto a project, what is your retention process to make sure you can convert some of those folks as permanent members of your core team?*
 - a. **Erin :** If we've got a great employee, we will do anything to be able to retain them. We will do what we can do to move them around so they remain employed in our core team.
 - b. **Bill:** We would speak with our foremen to create an inclusive environment and reach out to employees to see if the environment is favorable for them.
 4. **Mary Schmidt:** *What else can potentially happen, especially after the first year of lay offs, is it more difficult now than 5 years ago? What can we do as an industry to make it easier to hold on to those workers?*

- a. Erin: Layoffs can be inevitable, there is no way around that, but we have leadership set up to prevent as much of it and to find work for our electricians to keep them involved in projects that we have going on around the metro.
 5. Christa: I wanted to touch on one of the things that I have seen throughout the years regarding retention. It's a two-fold thing when it comes to retention: we need to better prepare individuals for financial planning due to potential winter lay-offs, and what trainings can we give individuals so they can attend trainings that can help take them to the next skill levels they'd need for employment.
 6. Tony: We are exactly positioned for that kind of winter education and I am convinced that we can work together to put this together for as many people as possible.
 7. Barry: Most of the unions have their training centers open in the winter for additional training. A lot of unions have extra dollars in the winter for training.
- vi. **Jon Tao:** *For subcontractors, have you done any hiring? What have been the responses that you have received from Unions in your hiring process since you'd hire from them?*
1. Erin: We've had some hiring, but I don't have the numbers in front of me of how much hiring we've done. The response from unions we've received is "we'll do our best" and see what we get. I can't say we always receive a POCI or women each time we hire.
- vii. **Ashanti:** *Can you talk about any programs/initiatives/efforts that have been driven by your companies vs efforts we've heard from trades to bring in more POCI and women in your industries while utilizing your resources and time to drive these programs?*
1. Erin: We have participated in career fairs, donated to scholarship fairs and I love that question because that is where Egan is planning to go. We want to make a focused and meaningful effort in everything that you've mentioned, and work with our consultants to make sure it is a possibility. I'm hoping that in a year you can ask me that question and I will have a better answer for you soon. We invite people to also look into Egan to see what we can do better, and donate our brain power to better figure out what else we can do.
- viii. **Admin:** *Have you all thought about environmental/atmosphere concerns and to address problems?*
1. Erin: In our visit to the project site, we provided our contact information to the people on-site to communicate with them if they ever feel uncomfortable or have any concerns that they want to have answered.

2. Bill: In addition to checking in regularly with our workforce, we also set expectations of work environment in our orientation that a favorable environment must be held and let them know that they can reach out to leadership about issues/concerns to keep maintaining a favorable workplace.
3. Mike: We strive to hire from the hall because the hall has a good reputation of training people. With that being said, people come to us and we shuffle our employees around to where they are needed so much and people don't stay in their environment for too long. It would nice to have a bigger job to where we can put people on for people to stay longer and we can learn from the situation to see what we can do better to assist in keeping the workplace comfortable and inclusive.

7. ADJOURN

Next Scheduled Meeting: June 17, 2021 from 2:00 - 4:00 pm