



Southwest Light Rail (SWLRT) Business Advisory Committee Meeting
October 1, 2013
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, St Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members and Alternates: Co-Chair Will Roach, Co-Chair Daniel K. Duffy, Curt Rahman, Brad Bakken, Marc Bogursky, Rick Weiblen, Dave Pelner

Staff and other attendees: Sam O'Connell, Daren Nyquist, Dan Pfeiffer, Sophia Ginis, Craig Lamothe, Tania Mahtani, Greg Hunt, Chris Weyer

1. Welcome, Introductions and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Co-Chair Will Roach called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM. Dan Duffy motioned to approve the meeting minutes for the June 26 BAC meeting and the July 25 joint BAC/CAC meeting. Curt Rahman seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

2. Hennepin County Community Works Update

Hennepin County was scheduled to provide an update on the Southwest Corridor housing strategy, but staff were unable to attend the meeting.

3. Project Development Updates

Craig Lamothe provided an update on the Southwest LRT ridership numbers. Mr. Lamothe explained that these numbers were presented at the July 25 joint BAC/CAC meeting, but they were explained very quickly. Mr. Lamothe described that due to new Census data and changes to the project occurring during the project development phase, ridership forecasts were updated from the original forecasts outlined in the LPA. This update resulted in an increase of projected daily riders in 2030 from 29,660 to 34,000-36,000. Mr. Lamothe also explained that this change in ridership is subject to FTA review and concurrence. The FTA uses a national demand model to calculate ridership and the Southwest LRT demand model is a different methodology that is more localized, therefore, the FTA needs to review the numbers. Mr. Lamothe ended his presentation by saying that ridership updates will occur as stations, park and rides, and operational characteristics receive more detail.

A question was asked about the error rate between the FTA demand model and the Met Council model. Mr. Lamothe answered that consultants will also be running the national demand model to compare the two. At this point, it looks like the national model would be lower because it strips out local travel patterns, only focusing on large categories like jobs and housing.

A question was asked how ridership affects the ranking of the project with FTA. Mr. Lamothe answered that Southwest LRT will be re-ranked with the updated forecast. The new MAP-21 process places a premium on transit dependent households and is a significant change away from the old ranking methodology.

A question was asked about the other projects that Southwest LRT is competing against for Federal funding and where they are at in their respective processes. Mr. Lamothe answered that there are five project nationally that are in the same stage, all of which are more expensive, and there are 10 projects in the next phase of development.

Mr. Lamothe began the next section of project updates by discussing the outcomes from the Corridor Management Committee meetings. Mr. Lamothe explained three primary recommendations coming out of those meetings:

supporting the Comp Plan alignment through Eden Prairie; voting to remove the deep bore tunnel option for further consideration; and recommending the operations and maintenance facility be located on site 9A in Hopkins.

A question was asked about the process of property acquisition - what it looks like and how it's conducted. Mr. Lamothe answered that the project will follow the MN-DOT right of way acquisition process that includes negotiating and working with property owners to buy land and/or re-locate them to new sites. Mr. Lamothe also explained that the project is working with the City of Hopkins to try and keep businesses affected by the OMF location to stay in the city and that the design of the OMF has changed to save as many current businesses as possible.

Co-Chair Will Roach announced to the group that the next day, October 2, there will be another CMC meeting. Sam O'Connell explained that at this meeting project staff will present the full scope and budget.

A question was asked if an increased budget is presented to FTA, will their funding for the project increase as well. Mr. Lamothe answered that once the project is through municipal consent, the numbers won't change. That budget will be submitted to FTA. Once the project enters the next development phase, the contingency can be lowered, and once that happens, the project budget is locked in.

A question was asked about municipal consent and if substantial changes have to be approved, what the latest possible time line looks like. Sam O'Connell explained that plans will be submitted to the cities and Hennepin County for consent. Conversations will continue with the railroads. However, municipal consent is important because the project scope needs to be completed before the environmental work can begin. The project is aiming to enter the engineering phase in May/June of 2014.

4. Success Measures Update

Co-Chair Will Roach led a discussion with the group to review and approve a document outlining the scope and measures of success for the BAC.

The group discussed expectations for attendance at the meetings. Some members felt that if folks weren't showing up at this point, there is no expectation that they will show up to future meetings. Sam O'Connell suggested that the Co-Chairs send out a letter of encouragement to BAC members.

Co-Chair Will Roach reviewed the long-term and short-term goals outlined in the document. A suggestion was made to invite businesses affected by the construction to be on the BAC or at least hold an informative meeting about the construction process with them. There was group support for this idea.

Dan Duffy motioned to approve the success measures document. Brad Bakken seconded the motion and the document was approved.

5. Meeting Schedule

Co-Chair Will Roach reviewed the remaining meeting scheduled for 2013. The group decided to cancel the December 18 meeting and to keep the remaining dates, October 30 and November 27, as is. A suggestion was made to move the meeting to a 7:30 AM start time. A survey will be sent out to the BAC membership to assess this idea.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 AM. The next meeting is scheduled for October 30.