

Metropolitan Council
Beth El Synagogue, 5224 W. 26th Street, St. Louis Park 55416

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee
December 3, 2014

Members Present	Chair Susan Haigh	Brian Lamb	Marion Greene (Alt)
	James Brimeyer	Matt Look	Jake Spano (Alt)
	Dan Duffy	Scott McBride	Peter Wagenius (Alt)
	Jason Gadd	Terry Schneider	
	James Hovland	Nancy Tyra-Lukens	

Members Absent	Keith Bogut	Linda Higgins	Peter McLaughlin
	Jan Callison	Jeff Jacobs	Will Roach
	Betsy Hodges	Bill James	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Susan Haigh called the December 3, 2014 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:05 a.m. at the Beth El Synagogue. Chair Haigh announced that she will be finishing her term as Met Council Chair, and mentioned she really enjoyed working with the CMC and has learned a lot about these cities and the project. She will continue as Chair until the Governor appoints her replacement.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Haigh presented the November 5, 2014 SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Mayor Tyra-Lukens made a motion to accept the minutes, Councilmember Gadd seconded it, and the motion was then unanimously approved.

Mayor Schneider made a motion and read the resolution thanking Chair Haigh for her service to the SWLRT Corridor Management Committee. Mayor Tyra-Lukens seconded the motion for the resolution, and all approved. Chair Haigh thanked the CMC for this resolution and stated she enjoyed working with this group and getting to know these cities and communities better.

3. KENILWORTH CHANNEL BRIDGE DESIGN CONCEPTS/Section 106 Process

Ms. Nani Jacobson, Assistant Director of Environment and Agreements covered the Section 106 Process. This is a federal law requiring federal agencies to take into account the effects of their project on historic properties. This process is separate from 4(f). MnDOT acts on behalf of FTA for portions of the Section 106 process; defines the areas of potential effect; and determines whether historic properties are subject to potential adverse effect. The Metropolitan Council's role is the local project sponsor, the federal grantee, and is responsible for certain parts of the Section 106 process. The consulting parties' roles are to provide input to FTA and MnDOT. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) represents interests of the state in consulting with federal agencies about the effect of their undertakings of historic properties. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) oversees the work of federal agencies in carrying out their responsibilities under Section 106. The goal of the consultation is to identify historic properties and seek ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects. The consulting parties to Section 106 include: the cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), Kenwood Isles Area Association, Three Rivers Park District, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. Two consultation meetings have been held so far in 2014.

Kenilworth Channel Bridge Design Concepts

Mr. Ryan Kronzer, Design Manager, went over the existing bridges on the SWLRT corridor and explained the new Kenilworth Channel bridge concepts. The bridge designs highlight input received from the consulting parties including: maximize natural light between the bridges; consider the importance of the channel embankments; create more space for skiers and kayakers; use natural materials and dark colors; reinterpret the existing bridge design using modern construction techniques. Of the comments received, the designers developed three bridge design concepts, which were then shown.

The functional requirements includes two bridges – one for freight rail and one for the LRT and trail, with the track alignments maintained as designed in preliminary engineering. The vertical clearance will be a minimum of 14 feet from the water to the bottom of bridge beam, with the horizontal clearance of 20 – 25 feet from pier to pier.

Photos of the existing conditions were shown along with images of the three design concepts. The first concept is the arched pier, which is a cast concrete steel design with steel railings on the sides and concrete arches. The second concept is a thin deck, which is concrete with steel railings. This concept includes dark tinted concrete, and the deck is thinned so that the piers exhibit a more elongated proportion. The third concept is the steel pier, which is made of steel railings and piers. The design contemplates using natural weathering steel for both the railings and the piers.

Mayor Schneider asked if the weathering steel is intended to be a traditional core-ten steel that weathers naturally and doesn't require a lot of maintenance. Mr. Kronzer said that is correct. If the steel pier concept is advanced SPO will need to evaluate how the cor-ten material would respond to continual long term exposure to water in the channel. There may be a veneer step involved.

Mayor Schneider asked about the comparisons of the life span of these designs. Mr. Kronzer said a comparison of the materials has not yet been completed and will be part of the next design phase.

Mr. Peter Wagenius asked about the MPRB's role in developing the design options. Mr. Kronzer said Park Board staff provided input and requested 14 foot vertical clearance from the water to the bottom of the bridge beam, and also the horizontal clearance of 20 – 25 feet from pier to pier. Ms. Jacobson said that as a consulting party, the Park Board has the role of providing ongoing input on the concepts.

Ms. Jacobson said a consultation package was provided to the consulting parties in mid-November, who now have 30 days for review and comment. The comments are due December 12, which SPO will take into consideration as we continue to refine the bridge design concepts. SPO is also looking to do public involvement for the Section 106 process, which is currently expected to occur in Q2 of 2015.

Mayor Hovland asked that as a consulting party, has the MPRB been helping with the bridge design concepts, or are the designs just coming out of SPO. Ms. Jacobson stated SPO held a meeting last April with the consulting parties and asked them what they are looking for in the bridges. From this, SPO took back their feedback and between April and November developed the three bridge concepts. Mayor Hovland said the MPRB, independently from the consulting parties, has hired a consultant to look at design alternatives to see whether they are feasible and prudent. If they find a design feasible and prudent, and the cost is more than our original cost, is the MPRB going to pay for this? Mr. Craig Lamothe, Project Director, stated that our approved project scope and budget focuses on replacing the bridge with an at-grade crossing. The Section 106 process is focusing on what the new bridge could look like. MPRB is looking at other options to cross the channel that are prudent and feasible, such as under the channel, which is not part of the approved project scope and budget.

Mr. Wagenius asked how many times has the Park Board been met with since April on the bridge design. Ms. Jacobson said there were no formal Section 106 consultation meetings since April. From April to November, the designers used the input from the April meeting to develop the design concepts.

Mayor Tyra-Lukens asked if all the bridge designs are Section 106 compliant, since they came through the 106 process. Ms. Jacobson said the concept designs are developed as part of the Section 106 process, with the end product being amenable to SHPO, minimizing impacts that the project would have. Mayor Tyra-Lukens asked if the costs for these designs are within the budget. Ms. Jacobson responded yes, the design concepts are all within the current budget. Mayor Tyra-Lukens asked if the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board wants a different design, would the MPRB pay for them. Ms. Jacobson said the outcome of the Section 106 process is between FTA and SHPO, who make the final determination whether there is an adverse impact. SPO works collectively on this process, and should there be another alternative that comes out of the MPRB's consultant, the project office will work through this as well as part of the 4(f) process. SPO would have to determine if any enhancement offered by the MPRB would fit into the budget.

Mayor Schneider said he hopes the Park Board, Kenilworth Corridor Association and Minneapolis would engage proactively in reviewing these designs that are presented, rather than just focusing on new ideas. Ms. Jacobson said SPO agrees, and the consulting parties will have additional opportunities to review and comment on the designs.

Mr. Dan Duffy asked if the channel is historic and the bridges are not historic. Ms. Jacobson said that is correct, the channel in the lagoon is the historic feature. The two bridges were studied and are not historic. We would look at the impact of replacing the bridges over the lagoon, and the historic setting. Mr. Duffy asked if there is going to be another historic review committee looking at the bridge design. Nani said we will use the 106 process and public involvement for the historic process of the bridge design.

Mayor Hovland asked how the Section 106 process interfaces with the 4(f) process that MPRB is taking. Nani said Section 4(f) is a federal law focusing on the protection of park and recreation areas and historic properties. This piece comes in under historic properties. If there is an adverse impact, we have to look at it under Section 4(f). We will be doing this for the lagoon. Section 4(f) looks at feasible and prudent alternatives. For Section 106, we are looking solely at potential impacts to the channel.

4. STATION DESIGN OVERVIEW

Mr. Ryan Kronzer reported that SPO gave TPAC a Station Design 101 presentation which was followed by a tour of the Green Line stations in September of 2014. SPO has been meeting to discuss station design with city and county staff and receiving initial input. SPO is looking for station consistency with the Green Line Extension. The station design goals include: tie SWLRT corridor together with a corridor-wide design approach; control construction and maintenance costs and learn from past projects; and acknowledge the different communities and station sites along the SWLRT corridor. SPO developed four types of stations for the different areas along the line, which are: landscape station, neighborhood station, town square station, and landmark station. Images of these station prototypes were shown. The station elements include: canopy, structure, platform, railings, and materials and color. Mr. Kronzer reviewed the different elements in the four prototypes.

Mr. Kronzer said the station types will be consistent, but can be adjusted based on site conditions. The flexibility of design can be based on use of additional wayfinding, color, texture and patterns, along with integrated public art. The next step is to adjust the station prototypes based on city and county staff input. We will also seek public input on the station types in Q2 of 2015 and then start the integrated public art process.

Mr. Kronzer provided an overview of the integrated public art process. Opportunities for art include the railing infill, structure infill, the underside of the canopy and the concrete platform surface. The next steps include advertising the RFP in December of 2014 and issuing a notice to proceed in Q2 of 2015. There will be 6 – 8 artists for the artwork at the 17 stations and the OMF. SPO will be forming a station art committee which will include one member per city to provide input in Q2 of 2015.

Mayor Hovland noted that these prototypes only show a wall on one side and don't seem very large for people to gather, especially during windy and rainy days. He suggested having the ends open, with protection on each side and expand the size for people to gather. Mr. Kronzer said these are standard enclosures, consistent with the Green Line, but they are looking at other options for blocking the winds.

Mr. Brian Lamb highlighted the fact that the Green Line has mostly split platforms along University Avenue. These serve a single direction. The design of the shelters are to support the flow of that direction. With center platforms, you can design it so it provides shelter for customers to stand on either side to be protected.

Councilmember Jake Spano mentioned that at one of the stations in St. Louis Park, there is a senior living area located nearby, and he would suggest benches there rather than the leaning posts. Councilmember Spano also asked if the TSAAP process for station design was used. How far out from the station will the designs go? Mr. Kronzer said they have heard there is a request for more benches and less leaning rails and SPO will consider this in the design. The SPO and County continue to coordinate through the TSAAP process with focus on the footprint of the project. TSAAP covers a much broader area.

Mayor Schneider agrees that the ability to weather winter winds and cold temperatures is critical to have the passengers comfortable. He feels more thought should be put into this area, such as having a larger shelter on either end with a removable panel for the summer time.

Mayor Tyra-Lukens asked how much flexibility is there for design on the individual stations. If there is a variation to the station, would it be a LRCI (Locally Requested Capital Investment)? Mr. Kronzer said all the items shown are within the budget. There is flexibility to add some different elements, such as with wayfinding signage, or raising or lowering the roofline. Out of scope items would be to use different materials like stone or something above the budgeted items. Mayor Tyra-Lukens asked for an example on the Green Line where the station used a different look from the others. Mr. Jim Alexander reported that the University of Minnesota had requested and paid for a different canopy at the East Bank station. The University also paid for design variations for the Stadium Village station. Significant design variations to those developed for the base project would need to be paid for by the city making the request.

Councilmember Gadd asked about the public art process. Mr. Kronzer reported some discussions have begun with city staff on this. An artist selection committee will be assembled early in 2015, which will include one member from each city and the county. The Integrated Public Art RFP will cover both on and off platform opportunities.

Mr. Peter Wagenius noted that there is a tradeoff between variation and operation and maintenance costs. For the Blue Line stations, they are very individualized and expensive to maintain because of this. To have the stations more standard, it helps keep the costs down. The public art at the stations is a less expensive way to achieve station differentiation, instead of totally different shelters. Mr. Wagenius noted that the presence of the heaters in the stations matters, along with the height of them. On the Blue Line, people stand on the benches to get at the heat, which is too high.

Commissioner Matt Look noted that if you build the shelters consistent with each other, this can maximize their ability to build them efficiently. Commissioner Look recalls on the Transportation Advisory Board that it recently approved heated stations for bus lines, and asked why aren't these stations going to be enclosed and heated similar to the bus lines? This is something that should be looked at first, rather than have change orders come through for areas that need them, such as where senior citizens are living nearby. He would advocate to design them all similarly and feels that using art to individual them that may be the best way to do this.

5. EXECUTIVE CHANGE CONTROL BOARD

Mr. Craig Lamothe reported that five board members have been selected for the Executive Change Control Board (ECCB), which includes 1 Met Council member, 3 CTIB and 1 HCRRRA member. Each of the cities who have non voting membership are also in the process of selecting their members. The first meeting of the ECCB will be on December 18 from 11:30 – 1:00 at the SPO, which will be a grounding meeting to go over the bylaws and the meeting structure. Also, SPO staff will review contingency the list of LRCIs. Moving forward, we are looking to hold technical advisory group meetings in early January, followed by the second meeting of the ECCB. More details on these meetings will follow once set.

Councilmember Spano asked if the material will be sent out in advance of the meeting so they can be reviewed. Mr. Lamothe said the agenda will be posted prior to the meeting and the material will be presented at the time of the meeting. Once these meetings occur regularly, they will be held at the same time and date each month.

6. LOCALLY REQUESTED CAPITAL INVESTMENTS (LRCIs)

Mr. Lamothe thanked the project partners for reviewing and refining the list of LRCIs. SPO is working hard to meet the deadlines identified for the board commitments to approve funding for LRCIs that are moving forward with design and environmental work. SPO is on track to have master funding agreements and subordinate funding agreement approvals in December/early January timeframe. We want to incorporate these LRCIs into the project timeframe and are working with the city and county staff on this timing.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary