



Southwest Light Rail (SWLRT) Business Advisory Committee Meeting
March 25, 2014
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
Park Place East
5775 Wayzata Blvd, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

BAC Members and Alternates: Co-Chair Will Roach, Co-Chair Daniel K. Duffy, Curt Rahman, Duane Spiegle, Mark Gustafson, Michelle Swanson, Pat Mulqueeney

Staff and Other Attendees: Mark Fuhrmann, Craig Lamothe, Daren Nyquist, Dan Pfeiffer, Sophia Ginis, Jim Alexander, Tania Mahtani, John Welbes, Greg Hunt, Kathie Doty

1. Welcome, Introductions and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Co-Chair Will Roach called the meeting to order at 7:40AM asking for approval of the February 27, 2014 BAC meeting minutes. Duane Spiegle motioned to approve the minutes. Curt Rahman seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

2. Project Updates

a) October 2013 Corridor Management Committee Scope and Budget

Jim Alexander provided a review of the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) actions to date, which include:

- At the September 4, 2013 meeting, the CMC voted to recommend to the Council:
TI #1: Eden Prairie Alignment: Comp Plan Alignment to Southwest Station
TI #21: Removal of the Deep Bore LRT Tunnel option from further consideration
- At the September 11, 2013 meeting, the CMC voted to recommend to the Council:
TI #23: Hopkins Site 9A for the OMF location
- At the October 9, 2013 meeting, the CMC voted to recommend to the Council:
TI #21: Shallow LRT tunnels through the Kenilworth Corridor

Mr. Alexander then outlined the project budget associated with the October 2013 CMC recommendation, which was \$1.553 billion and included a 27% contingency allowance.

b) Deep Shallow Tunnel under Kenilworth Channel

Jim Alexander outlined the deep shallow tunnel concept under the Kenilworth Channel. Mr. Alexander explained that the development of this design was spurred from a resolution by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) on February 5, 2014 requesting the SPO to evaluate the concept. The MPRB wanted to see a feasibility study and a cost comparison of tunneling under the Kenilworth Channel as part of the shallow LRT tunnels option.

Mr. Alexander reviewed two tunnel options that could be implemented under the channel:

- LRT Tunnel Under Channel – Long

This option would have the tunnel start just after the West Lake Station, continue under the channel, and end after 21st Street. The tunnel length would be approximately 5,800 feet. The 21st Street Station would be eliminated under this tunnel configuration.

- o LRT Tunnel Under Channel - Short

This tunnel would begin just after the West Lake Station, continue under the channel, and end before 21st Street. The tunnel length would be approximately 3,100 feet. The 21st Street Station would be included in this design.

Mr. Alexander discussed similar tunnel projects in the United States, Canada, and Austria and explained that tunneling in the Kenilworth Corridor is a viable option. Mr. Alexander continued with a review of a the tunnel option under the channel and explained that while technically feasible; the construction impacts would be significant, adding another year of construction, as well as another \$30-\$85 million in project costs.

A question was asked if the Southwest LRT Project Office (SPO) is going to make a recommendation to the CMC on the tunneling options. Mark Fuhrmann replied that the SPO is planning on making a recommendation to the CMC in the coming week.

- c) Surface Transportation Board Staff: Meeting Recap

Mark Fuhrman recapped the meetings with the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The project office asked the STB to come talk to project partner's staff. Two sessions were held, staff only and one with policy makers. STB stated that there are two track owners, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and Canadian Pacific (CP), the overhead rights are held by TC&W. STB stated that there are two paths forward. One in which all parties, HCRRA, CP, and TC&W, are in agreement. In this case, the STB has jurisdiction and they could process a discontinuance in fifty or sixty days. The second path is one which one or more parties do not agree to the discontinuance. This scenario is called an adverse discontinuance. Mr. Fuhrmann explained that if HCRRA wanted the discontinuance, for example, and TC&W did not want the discontinuance, then it would come to the trackage rights agreement, which would need to be clarified through a state court process before the STB including shippers, impacted neighborhoods or citizens may make formal comments to the STB as to their concerns. This process could take two years or more to reach a resolution.

A question was asked if the STB has ever ruled in favor of an adverse discontinuance. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that he asked this question to the STB. They responded that the bar is very high to have this happen and is very rare.

- d) BAC Recommendation to CMC Discussion

Co-Chair Will Roach began the discussion by sharing a letter by the Southwest Corridor Investment Partnership that was sent to Met Council Chair Sue Haigh. Co-Chair Roach thought it is appropriate for the BAC to send a recommendation to the CMC regarding project scope. Co-Chair Duffy introduced a draft recommendation letter to the group, which says that the evidence does not support a re-route of freight and the shallow tunnels option appears to be the best way forward.

A question was asked if input from the group was being sought in order to send the letter. Co-Chairs Roach and Duffy responded that the letter could be held open for comment by the group. The group discussed a few changes in wording and supported the overall recommendation. Curt Rahman motioned to approve the letter. Pat Mulqueeny seconded and the letter was approved.

- e) Downtown Hopkins Station CMAQ Funding Request

Craig Lamothe provided an update on the Downtown Hopkins Station Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) federal funding request. This request is part of the project's continued discussions with Hopkins to identify ways to offset the tax base loss that results at the Operations and Maintenance Facility site. The request

is for fiscal year 2017 CMAQ funding. The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) awards CMAQ grants for the region and is made up of elected and appointed officials from throughout the metro area. Total cost of land acquisition and parking structure is approximately twelve million dollars. Seeking a CMAQ grant of seven million dollars combined with the money saved from the costs at Shady Oak and Blake Stations, and twenty percent local funding from Hopkins.

f) Southwest Station Update

Craig Lamothe provided an update on the Southwest Station in Eden Prairie. The October 9, 2013 Corridor Management Resolution called on the project to design SWLRT so as not to preclude a future LRT extension from Southwest Station to Mitchell Road. The project has developed two designs, one with Southwest Station as the terminus and the other with the line continuing to Mitchell Road. The difference between the two designs is the size of the parking structure. The alignment into Southwest Station has also been refined to better incorporate the bus service and LRT at the station. There is support from the city and Southwest Transit on these designs. The businesses in the area have also stated that this design is better than previous options.

A question was added if there was increased lane capacity being added to Prairie Center Drive due to increased traffic to the station area. Jim Alexander responded that that a third lane is included in the scenario where the LRT line stops at Southwest Station.

3. Member and Committee Reports

Co-Chair Roach asked for a review of the upcoming CMC and Metropolitan Council meetings. Mark Fuhrmann outlined the meetings: 3/26 CMC, 4/2 CMC, 4/9 Metropolitan Council, municipal consent would then start after 4/9.

4. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 AM