

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

January 4, 2017

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Adam Duininck called the January 4, 2017 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:02 a.m. at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Duininck presented the November 2, 2016 SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes and the motion was then unanimously approved.

3. CHAIR UPDATE

Chair Duininck reported on the Contractor Open House. Over 250 people attended.

Chair Duininck has been involved with the 3rd party agreements with the rail companies and SouthWest Transit. He thanked Major Tyra-Lukens for her work on the SouthWest Transit agreement. Both SouthWest Transit and Met Council still need to take action but we are heading in the right direction. One freight rail agreement is done with two left to be completed. We feel good about the progress that has been made and are diligently working to complete the other two freight agreements.

Chair Duininck said that we have agreed with HCRRA on the transfer of property.

4. PROJECT READINESS UPDATE

Mr. Jim Alexander gave a recap of major project milestones in the last half of 2016. In July we received the Record of Decision from the FTA. In August we secured the local funding commitment and the Met Council determined the Final EIS was adequate. We applied for Entry into Engineering and received that in December. The next step is to apply for the Full Funding Grant Agreement. We have awarded a contract with Siemens to deliver 27 LRVs for the project. We gave them a Limited Notice to Proceed in December.

We began a major hiring initiative in September and are now filling open positions. The Director and Assistant Director of Construction positions will be filled in January.

Mr. Alexander discussed 2017 major project milestones. We will complete the Civil Construction package this month and Systems and OMF will follow in March and May. We are anticipating starting construction in Q3 2017. We are currently looking at mid-2017 to secure the Full Funding Grant Agreement from FTA. We will be applying for that in the near term, pending agreements. For freight, one important piece is the land transfer with HCRRA. The second is with Canadian Pacific - we are prepared to go to the Transportation committee next week to get approval for Purchase and Sale of the Bass Lake Spur. The third piece is Twin Cities & Western Operations and Maintenance Agreement. We are also working with BNSF on a Purchase and Sales Agreement.

Heavy construction will be 2017 – 2020 and we continue to forecast revenue service in 2021.

Mr. Andrew Larson from the Met Council’s Office of Equal Opportunities discussed the Great Minds Workshop. It will be on January 10 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the McKnight Board Room. It is a way to get some of our main stakeholders involved with Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and workforce issues. There will be representatives from each city along the line, contracting associations, building trades and local unions. Membership will be identified for our DBE Workforce Oversight Committee, which will meet monthly throughout the course of the project. The committee will be kicked off in the next 1-2 months, with focus on DBE-Small Business and workforce. We hired a Workforce Specialist – Jon Vang will be working in the project office. We also plan to hold a workforce recruitment event in the next 2-3 months.

Major Jake Spano said that he works in the Secretary of State’s office and they have been working on a voluntary questionnaire – they are asking all businesses registered with the State of Minnesota a series of questions where they can self-identify as a veteran-owned, minority-owned, or woman-owned business. We will be able to pull that data. Jon Vang will connect with Mayor Spano and he can walk him through that.

Major Tyra-Lukens asked for an explanation of the practicalities of how the DBE program works on the project – she assumes it comes down to low bid on different aspects of the project. How do you make those decisions? Mr. Larson responded that it is left up to the bidder and it is a low bid environment. The bidders are required to make a reasonable, good-faith effort to include small businesses and this will be confirmed by the Met Council.

Mayor Molly Cummings asked if, with Bottineau being built at the same, will there be enough workers to keep the project on time and in budget? Mr. Larson responded that in terms of availability of workers, it will be a challenge. Mr. Alexander acknowledged that there will be a lot of demand on the workforce and materials. There will be outreach done to generate interest in working on the project. Chair Duinick added that in the mid 2000’s before the economy went down a lot of the trade unions had anywhere from 13,000 – 15,000 members and some decreased down to 8,000 – 10,000 members. The construction industry and trades are mindful of that – it will take a focused effort to bring new people into the industry and will be an all hands on deck approach to make sure that it’s still cost competitive.

Mayor Schneider asked if there is any ability to time and coordinate the labor force between the two projects. Mr. Mark Fuhrmann responded that we have consciously set up the construction timeframes for the two projects to lag by a year. The SWLRT schedule would call for heavy construction to start the last half of 2017. The BLRT project time lags by 9-12 months. By providing for that stagger they can mobilize the labor pool for SWLRT and shift their labor force to BLRT.

Mayor Tyra-Lukens said she appreciates Mayor Schneider’s question and Mr. Fuhrmann’s answer because one of the selling points with the public was the payroll the project would bring to the State of Minnesota. If we are recruiting workers from out of state we’re not meeting that goal of economic development. She is glad to hear that the timeframe is staggered and an effort is being made in that regard

5. CONSTRUCTION OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

Ms. Sam O’Connell gave an overview of the Construction Outreach and Communication Plan that is being developed. It includes feedback and lessons learned from the Blue Line and Green Line. Things have changed since 2004 and 2014 when these lines were put into service and we want to pull in some new techniques and strategies. It also incorporates some best practices from some of our sister transit agencies in the east and west coast and locally. US Bank Stadium provided Lessons Learned regarding how you create excitement and how people can follow progress on the project. The St. Croix Bridge also provided valuable information. We are developing the plan in conjunction with the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Business Advisory Committee (BAC) and they have provided a really good base of information and feedback. The plan ensures clear and consistent project information. It describes the methods and techniques we are going to employ, and includes some metrics and evaluations so we know we are hitting the mark.

Ms. O'Connell discussed Best Practices, which includes outreach coordinators, construction information workgroups, 24-hour construction hotline, property/business owners meetings, public open houses/meetings, construction tours, neighborhood updates, social media, weekly construction updates and signage.

Ms. O'Connell discussed New Tools. We are using the construction cameras used by US Bank Stadium. Other tools are construction tours, social media, and mobile-friendly web tool.

Mr. Dan Pfeiffer gave an overview of the construction web tool. It will be embedded in the website and is a GIS based system. It will identify the location and impact of construction. It is broken down into 3 categories: construction activities, partial closures, and full closures. On the website it will be displayed in text format and map-based format and will be mobile responsive.

Chair Duininck asked how we are communicating with MnDOT and Hennepin County. Mr. Alexander said we have been doing that through design and will continue to do so during construction. In our contract specifications we identify other work that we know about so our bidders can be aware of work that will be adjacent. Glenwood Ave. is one project the County will be undertaking so we want to be sure that is well coordinated. We have had continued dialogue and many meetings with the cities and County. Chair Duininck asked if there is a way to communicate that to the public. Mr. Alexander said that is a very good idea and we can have links to that information on our website.

Council Member Jennifer Munt asked about utility relocation and who notifies the public about that, since it is done by private utility companies. Mr. Alexander responded that we will be coordinating with the utility companies and will identify that on our website.

Ms. O'Connell discussed Next Steps. We will go to cities and share more in depth information on how we will be providing construction communications and outreach, hopefully in Q1. We would like to take the web app to a focus group in Q1 and get feedback. Our plan is to have everything in place for our strategies and communication methods as soon as utilities start construction. This is an opt-in campaign so we have to let people know they have to sign up. Another step is holding some large open houses with the communities. We will go live with some of our web tools prior to utility construction. When we get into heavier civil construction we will re-launch the campaign. We look forward to sharing this information with city councils in February and March.

Mayor Cummings asked about the status of the video. Ms. O'Connell said we have received some additional internal feedback to address on the first video of Downtown Hopkins and Blake Road. We will refine the voiceover and expect that will be done in the next couple weeks, and then we will launch it and share that information once it's posted on our website.

Mayor Spano said St. Louis Park has a leader in almost every neighborhood who is responsible for communicating with their neighbors. They meet annually in January or early February. That would be a great opportunity to communicate with them. Ms. O'Connell said we would be happy to be there. Chair Duininck added that if there are specific events or people we should be communicating with to let Mr. Pfeiffer or Ms. O'Connell know.

Ms. O'Connell drew attention to the 2017 CMC Meeting Schedule. The next meeting is March 1, 2017.

6. ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debby Loring, Recording Secretary