



**Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)  
Business Advisory Committee Meeting  
March 27, 2013  
Southwest LRT Project Office  
6465 Wayzata Blvd, St. Louis Park 55426  
Suite 500  
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM**

BAC Members and Alternates: Brad Bakken, Curt Rahman, Daniel K. Duffy, Duane Peterson, Duane Spiegle, Kyle Allison, Mark Gustafson, Michelle Swanson, Scott Gill, Stephanie Peterson, Steve Faber, Pat MulQueeney, Will Roach.

Agency Staff and Guests: Robin Kaufman, Sam O'Connell, Jim Alexander, Mark Fuhrmann, Dan Pfeiffer, Sophia Ginis, Daren Nyquist, Kim Proia, Katie Walker, Mark Kogler, Robert Ellis, Thomas Radio, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Greg Hunt, Nani Jacobson, Tats Tanaka, Jay Cowles, Tania Mahtani, Nelrae Succio, Bob Sulco, Craig Lamothe, Tom Domres, Ryan Kronzer.

**1. Welcome, introductions and approval of the Jan. 9, 2013 meeting minutes and Feb. 22, 2013 Joint BAC/CAC Meeting Summary**

Co-Chair Will Roach called the Business Advisory Committee to order at 8:03 AM. Co-Chair Roach updated the group on developments from the March 6 Corridor Management Committee and their interest in a BAC sub-committee that is working to define metrics of success for the group. This sub-committee met on March 15 and is looking at both short and long-term goals for the BAC. Co-Chair Roach indicated that these definitions will be brought before the BAC for review.

Co-Chair Roach asked for approval of the Jan. 9 and Feb. 22 minutes. The minutes were approved with a unanimous voice vote.

**2. Transit Return on Investment Report Overview**

Jay Cowles, Co-Chair of the Itasca Project Transportation Committee, presented the results of a recent return on investment (ROI) study commissioned by the Itasca Project. The study, conducted by Cambridge Systematics, specifically analyzed the economic impacts of transit investment in the Metro Area and sought to answer 3 questions:

1. What would a built-out transit system cost?
2. Would accelerating build out change return on investment?
3. Would the potential for growth around transit stations change the return on investment?

Mr. Cowles outlined the calculated economic returns based on three scenarios:

1. Following the 2030 Regional Plan, investment in transit would have a 7.8% to 14.8% ROI
2. Accelerating the 2030 Regional plan, investment in transit would have a 11.2% to 18% ROI
3. Planning for growth around stations, investment in transit would have a 13% to 20.9% ROI

Mr. Cowles stated that investment in building out the regional transit system could have a positive net economic impact of \$6 to \$16 billion for the Metropolitan Area.

### **3. Station Area Action Plans (TSAAP) Overview**

Katie Walker introduced Mark Koegler of HKGI. Mr. Koegler provided an overview of station outreach activities being implemented for the TSAAP process. Mr. Koegler described how the TSAAP process will include community engagement, which will improve the project outcomes. This engagement will occur on a city by city approach by attending community events, utilizing media and websites, and possibly online videos. Mr. Koegler stressed the need to coordinate TSAAP, Preliminary Engineering (PE), and city engagement with the public so that comments and ideas from the community are captured. Open houses are scheduled for each city and will happen between Mid-April through Mid-May, dates and times for these events will be posted on the Community Works website and the SWLRT website.

Mr. Koegler was asked about storm water management around stations and how green concepts were being utilized. He explained that TSAAP is working directly with Watershed Districts to identify areas compatible with development and in terms of green concepts, a best practices approach is being used, where the best ideas may be applied to other stations along the line. Mr. Koegler was also asked how the adjustments to the Eden Prairie alignment will affect the TSAAP process in that community. Mr. Koegler responded that the alignment discussion is a continuing process, but station planning will continue.

### **4. Technical Issues Discussion: Operations and Maintenance Facility**

Jim Alexander began the discussion by describing the purpose for an operation maintenance facility (OMF) and the criteria for site selection. Mr. Alexander described an OMF as the place where light rail vehicles go for cleaning and maintenance. The facilities typically employ 150-180 people. Potential OMF sites are based on size, shape, access to roads, and land use compatibility. OMFs need about 10 to 15 acres to fit comfortably. There are 18 locations along the corridor that are candidates for an OMF. Mr. Alexander explained that these sites need to be analyzed to narrow down the list and pick the best 5-6 options through April and May. Open houses will be held in the cities where the final potential sites are located.

Mr. Alexander was asked if a park and ride could be combined with an OMF. He responded that this was technically possible and is being considered for a site in Eden Prairie, a traffic analysis is being conducted to understand the implications of such a structure.

A question was asked in relation to a site located near Eaton Corp. about the noise, vibration, and light rail traffic related to the OMF. Mr. Alexander responded that trains move into and out of the OMF all day, however, given that this facility is enclosed, it will be mostly quiet. Comments received during the workshop are included with the minutes.

### **5. Technical Issues Discussion: Freight Rail Co-location/Relocation**

Jim Alexander introduced Technical Issue #21, which is the co-location or relocation of freight rail. Mr. Alexander pointed out that this analysis is required by the FTA and is a part of the Metropolitan Council's due diligence as a project lead. Mr. Alexander provided an overview of the existing train volumes, track characteristics, challenges, and opportunities along the corridor. The primary concerns, if relocation occurs are the curvature of the track, maximum grade, and compensated grade. These concerns present challenges that need to be overcome in order to provide maximum safety. If co-location occurs, Mr. Alexander stated that space is a primary concern and options for stacking rail are being considered. Co-locate/relocate design workshops will be conducted with the BAC, CAC, and CMC and public open houses will be conducted in June/July.

Mr. Alexander was asked what the minimum distance between freight and light rail is. He responded that 25 feet is minimum distance recommended by industry standards as stated by AREMA. A BAC member asked if co-location occurred, would eliminating the bike path provide enough room through the corridor. Mr. Alexander responded that it would open up some space, but doesn't gain much when moving through the tightest spots between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles. Comments received during the workshop are included with the minutes.

**6. Adjourn:** At 9:37 AM, Co-Chair Roach made an announcement that with respect to the members' time and schedules, the meeting was adjourned but members could stick around to ask further questions.

**Note: Committee Member Reports and Public Forum**

Committee Member Reports and Public Forum did not occur. Meeting adjourned at 9:37 AM

## SWLRT BAC Comments

### Technical Issues Workshop: Operation Maintenance Facility Location and Freight Co-location and Relocation

March 27, 2013

#### General Comments/Questions:

- How would the Mitchell Road park and ride affect traffic?
- How big does the site need to be?
- What are the issues associated with placing the OMF on the Hopkins landfill?
- Is it possible to combine the park and ride and OMF?
- Why can't you have one big OMF for all of the lines?
- How many of the DEIS sites in Eden Prairie will still be feasible with new options being explored?
- Could the roads in Eden Prairie accommodate 180 employees coming to these sites?

#### OMF Specific Comments:

- Site #12 is great:
  - Single owner, central to the rail line, big enough, all in one city, already industrial site
- The location of OMF should take into consideration whether it negatively impacts or impedes other planned redevelopment on the considered area.
- Traffic analysis should be a part of the evaluation criteria as well.
- The City of Eden Prairie does not want an OMF, but should one be built in the area, the city would prefer to move its own building instead of a business.
- Site #6 looks good – it's big and open, could be a combo station and OMF.
- Eaton – Mitchell Road: Station location with coordination of OMF facility will cause large business and safety interruptions for Eaton Corp. We have a testing plot where location #4 is drawn as well as wetland. We have approximately 50 semi-trucks in/out each day off of Technology Drive. Our employees walk between the four locations and if the train has to go through our campus we lose that ability, along with parking. Also, on the far west end of our property, off of Wallace, we have a sound chamber that would be affected by noise and vibration from the line. Options 1-5 will have a significant impact to Eaton.

#### Technical Issue No. 21 Workshop: Freight Rail

##### General Comments/Questions:

- How would the lines connect coming out of the Kenilworth Corridor?
- If the bike path was removed from the co-location area, can LRT and Freight fit?
- What's the preferred right of way with the bike path, freight, and LRT?

##### Freight Rail Specific Comments:

- Relocate the bike path – appears to be the only and most cost effective option
- Minneapolis neighborhoods are OK with freight today, so moving the bike trail and co-locating could work.
  - There are 20 commercial buildings and 40 businesses as close as SLP High School is. You will spend \$40 million buying and relocating businesses, this is ignored by Kimley-Horn.
  - Running 20+ trains a week in a residential neighborhood in SLP does not make sense.