

Metropolitan Council  
Hopkins City Chambers, 1010 1<sup>st</sup> Street South, Hopkins, MN 55343

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Meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee  
**August 3, 2011**

Members Present	Susan Haigh, Chair	Terry Schneider	Peter McLaughlin
	Jim Brimeyer	James Hovland	Cheryl Youakim
	Gail Dorfman	Bill James	Jan Callison
Members Absent	Keith Bogut	Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Peter Wagenius
		Scott McBride	Jeff Jacobs
			Brian Lamb

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Susan Haigh called the August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee to order at 10:10am at the Hopkins City Hall.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Haigh presented the April 27, 2011 Southwest Management Committee meeting minutes for approval with an attachment of the status of right-of-way acquisition for the proposed park-and-ride facilities. The motion for approval passed. Chair Haigh then presented the amended minutes from the May 25, 2011 SWLRT Management Committee meeting minutes in which Tom Harmening asked for a change to page 5, first paragraph, second sentence. The motion for approval passed.

**SELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Chair Haigh requested selection of a Vice Chair for the Southwest Management Committee. Chair Haigh recommended Commissioners Gail Dorfman and Jan Callison. Commissioner Dorfman motioned to nominate Commissioner Callison. Mayor James Hovland seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to elect Commissioner Callison as Vice Chair.

**3. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES**

Chair Haigh gave a briefing on her meeting with the FTA Administrator in Washington, D.C. At that time, the Administrator indicated strong support that SWLRT would be moving into preliminary engineering. The Administrator noted that although the FTA is fully aware and agrees that the freight rail relocation is a separate matter and not a part of the SWLRT project, the letter granting entry into preliminary engineering will mention the importance of this issue being resolved before moving into final design. The Administrator also had questions regarding the impact of the State government shutdown on the transportation budget and the ability to operate Southwest Light Rail Transit project after it is constructed. Therefore the PE Entry letter will also strongly urge us as a state and as a region to address long term operating costs for both this light rail line and the entire transit system.

Mark Fuhrmann updated the committee on the Southwest light rail project status in regards to the PE Entry and DEIS. As of this date, the project office is still awaiting permission from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to enter PE. Mr. Fuhrman also emphasized that FTA requires, prior to entry into final design, that all the local 50% funding is committed. It was asked if the Southwest Project Office could provide a rough idea on the amounts that will be necessary to proceed into final design so persons providing matching funds can start to reflect and brainstorm on those figures. Mr. Fuhrman responded that those figures will be addressed at the next SWLRT Management Committee meeting.

#### **4. SOUTHWEST LRT ROADMAP**

Mr. Fuhrmann presented the project overview for future major milestones. He stated that given the current schedule, anticipated revenue operations are expected to take place in late 2017 or early 2018. Mr. Fuhrmann presented an outline of the major milestones in the Environmental (NEPA) Process, design process, full funding grant agreement, as well as the construction process. Mr. Fuhrmann explained that Central Corridor did not receive their Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) prior to the beginning of the construction process in 2009. At the time of the FFGA signing, 9 letters of no prejudice had been secured to keep the project on track and on schedule. Prior to receiving the FFGA, Central Corridor had to find local funding commitments totaling \$160M to pay for engineering and early construction.

In regards to the bonding bill and the funding for next year, with the new bonding chair and staff, Councilmember Cheryl Youakim suggested getting on the bonding tour radar as soon as possible due to the hurdles involved.

#### **5. FREIGHT RAIL RELOCATION UPDATE**

Craig Lamothe presented the recent history and current status of the freight rail relocation. HCCRA has completed the MN&S freight rail study. The EAW and MnDOT findings are available on the MN&S freight rail website. MnDOT made the determination that there was not a need for an EIS and they issued a negative declaration order for the project. Hennepin County sent a letter to St. Louis Park offering to continue discussions regarding the freight rail relocation project and community improvements associated with that project. It was suggested that a copy of the letter sent to St. Louis Park be given to the SWLRT Committee members as well.

Mayor Hovland asked if the Management Committee was going to take a position in regards to the freight rail relocation issue. Chair Haigh said that in trying to keep it a separate issue, the committee doesn't want to burden the project with legal expense it is not legally responsible for. However, Chair Haigh did ask Mr. Fuhrman to touch base with the Met Council's legal team and ask what appropriate role the committee may take.

#### **6. ENGINEERING SERVICES PROCUREMENT PROCESS & SCHEDULE**

Chris Weyer presented the committee with the tentative Engineering Services contract procurement schedule. Mr. Weyer explained the review and selection processes for the evaluation panel and the technical advisory group. Each member of the panel will be asked to sign a confidentially agreement as well as a no conflict of interest declaration.

Mr. Weyer stated the approximately \$100M contract for an engineering consultant for the design process is scheduled for advertising in September with a 60 day period for consultants to prepare

proposals. Mr. Weyer walked the committee through the steps and responsibilities of the selection panel. The project office plans to bring the consultant selection recommendation before the Management Committee, tentatively the February 2012 meeting, prior to the recommendation going to the Council for action.

It was suggested that someone with institutional memory of the two other lines be part of that overall discussion of what worked and what didn't work. It was also recommended that someone from Hennepin County be included on the technical advisory group. Mr. Weyer replied that one of the project office individuals will be an employee from Hennepin County. Chair Haigh also suggested that the chosen firm know that the process of engaging the community is a strong value the policy holders have. It was also suggested that land use studies presented by the Humphrey students are somehow implicated in the planning stages as well.

Mr. Weyer explained to the committee the current status of the technical issues database and gave examples of technical issue themes. It was asked and recommended that community engagement, park impacts, and Corridors of Opportunity be added as themes in the technical issues database. Because the technical issue database holds issues related to the project itself, it was determined that the freight rail relocation would not be considered a technical issue. It was also determined that although the interchange will support the Southwest Project, it has independent utility and will not be included as a technical issue. Commissioner Peter McLaughlin suggested the standards for kiss and rides be revisited. The kiss and ride at 46<sup>th</sup> was an example he mentioned in which volume of use and space being devoted is an issue.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25am.

Respectfully submitted, Debra Sisneros