



**Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)
Business Advisory Committee Meeting
April 29, 2015
Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, Suite 500
St. Louis Park, MN 55426
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM**

Meeting Summary

BAC Members/Alternates: Will Roach, Dan Duffy, Curt Rahman, Dave Pelner, Rick Weiblen, Gary Orcutt, Tony Barranco

Agency Staff and Guests: Katie Walker, Greg Hunt, Deb McMillan, Alysén Nesse, Dan Pfeiffer, Sophia Ginis, Jim Alexander, Sarah Ghandourk

1. Welcome and Introductions

BAC co-chair Roach opened the meeting with a round of introductions. No edits to the March 25 meeting summary were noted.

2. Community Works Update

Katie Walker (Hennepin County) presented on the Southwest LRT Community Works “Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy”, the housing strategy workplan was endorsed by the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee in May 2012 and implemented through the Housing Workgroup. The Housing Inventory, up to 2 miles out from stations but focused on the ½ mile radius, was completed March 2013. The Gaps Analysis, housing existing today compared to future need and market feasibility, was completed September 2014. The draft Corridor-Wide Strategy, marrying of market feasibility and housing policy goals, was completed in the first quarter of 2015 with the final anticipated for third quarter 2015. Rick Weiblen asked if there was any feedback from the cities, Katie Walker noted that the cities had received presentation on the inventory and gaps analysis. Alysén Nesse (City of Eden Prairie) noted that the strategy has not been brought to the council but they will be providing feedback. Greg Hunt (St. Louis Park) noted that the St. Louis Park council is putting together a new housing policy. Tony Barranco noted that many of the small area plans look the same and suggested concentration to create neighborhood nodes.

3. Alignment Visualization

Dan Pfeiffer presented the draft visualization. Dave Pelner asked if Metro Transit was thinking about wi-fi on the system, Mark Fuhrmann responded that Northstar does have wi-fi and that it is being explored for use on the light rail vehicles.

4. St. Louis Park Activities Update

Greg Hunt (City of St. Louis Park), provided an update on the projects that have occurred or are in the planning process in the City of St. Louis Park including redevelopment and infrastructure focusing on the station areas and the West End area. Dan Duffy noted that there are a lot of apartments and asked whether anyone is going back to look at vacancy rates. Greg Hunt noted the city has asked for market feasibility and they have found there is still room for expansion.

5. Project Update

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, began the project update with a recap of the project since entry into project development in 2011, discussing the design adjustments which necessitate the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The additional design and field work was used to update the cost of the project. Craig Lamothe, Southwest LRT Project Director, provided an update on the project's budget and schedule; updated cost estimate above \$1.653 billion to \$1.994 billion and updated revenue service beyond 2019 to 2020. Craig Lamothe started by providing context; very serious challenge, the strong purpose and need has not changed for this corridor and metro, there are six other projects in same New Starts status around the county and both in Maryland went through the same situation. The Craig Lamothe spoke to the primary reasons for the cost estimate increase; taking the Draft Environmental Impact Statement design, approximately 1% of engineering to 15% engineering in 2013, this began with survey and book research of the corridor. Beginning in 2014 the survey and soil testing work expanded in late fall and continued through the winter. The additional data indentified; additional property acquisitions and relocations, additional retaining walls, bridges, and connecting roads, mitigation for contaminated soils, and additional operational and system requirements. Tony Barranco asked about the contingency usage on the Hiawatha and Central Corridor projects. Mark Fuhrmann responded that Hiawatha had approximately 4%, which was used, and Central Corridor had 20% and that it is anticipated to finish with a small balance. Rick Weiblen asked whether the project was required to continue to carry 27% contingency. Craig Lamothe responded that when the project moves into engineering the FTA will complete a risk assessment and set the percentage. Tony Barranco asked if the funding would still be 50% federal, Craig Lamothe responded that the funding break down is still 50% federal and noted that having secured commitments for 75% of the local funding helped the project rating. Dan Duffy asked if there were other sources of money for soil mitigation or the tunnel, Craig Lamothe responded that at this stage all options are on the table. Curt Rahman asked about tracking the cost per passenger mile, Mark Fuhrmann responded that the Federal Transit Administration no longer tracks and now tracks cost effectiveness as number of passengers divided by annualized capital cost plus annualized operating cost. Gary Orcutt asked about the chances of the project ending at City West or Golden Triangle stations, Mark Fuhrmann responded that this is a big task and need to look at everything. Dan Duffy noted in construction costs go up and costs go down throughout a project.

6. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum

None noted.

7. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 9:00AM.