



Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Business Advisory Committee Meeting
October 10, 2012
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
Southwest LRT Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, St Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members and Alternates: Brad Bakken, Daniel Duffy, Dave Pelner, Duane Peterson, Duane Spiegle, Marc Bogursky, Mark Gustafson, Michelle Swanson, Rick Weibien, Scott Gill, Stephanie Peterson, Steve Faber, Will Roach, Pat MulQueeney.

Staff and other attendees: Chris Weyer, Katie Walker, Mark Fuhrmann, Jim Alexander, Craig Lamothe, Nani Jacobson, Robin Caufman, Sam O'Connell, Kerri Pearce Ruch.

Welcome, Introductions and Approval of the September Meeting Minutes

BAC Chair Will Roach called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM. Chair Roach welcomed BAC members and guests and called for the approval of the September minutes, motion was made to approve minutes. Chair Roach voiced excitement about the Central Corridor LRT/Green Line BAC tour. Chair Roach asked BAC members for their thoughts on the tour and feedback. Members commented that it was good to see Central Corridor construction first hand and learn how it may be used as a perspective on SWLRT moving forward.

SWLRT "101"- Craig Lamothe

Craig Lamothe gave a SWLRT "101" presentation covering areas of project development, New Starts funding and process, the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), ridership projections for 2030, and fares. SWLRT is a capital investment of \$1.25 billion with many sources of funding. The project budget is fully funded by local partners through the design phase; Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides funding through a full funding grant agreement which is executed around the time construction starts.

The Federal New Starts process is a competitive process scrutinized by the FTA to ensure the project is delivered on time and within budget. Once a FTA project rating is received for preliminary engineering, another submittal will be developed for entry into final design. Approval is needed by FTA to move into next phase of project development. The project office will focus on refining the scope, schedule and budget for project during PE. The project will need to be at 30% design level to identifying key features of alignment, station and track locations, park and ride locations and size, and bus facilities to transfer passengers to LRT along with other features.

Question: When you say 30% do you mean 30% funding? Answer: 30% design level.

Question: Are trails/bike paths part of the engineering? Answer: Yes, trails/bike paths are a part of engineering and will remain however; existing trails may shift within the corridor to accommodate LRT.

Project Update - Jim Alexander

Engineering consultants are currently being procured. Engineering consultants will design the project up to 30% level of completion to support the project through the approval process with cities and the county. One contract is Civil West (CW) which will cover Eden Prairie, Minnetonka and a short section of Hopkins. The second contract, Civil East (CE), will cover rest of Hopkins, St Louis Park and Minneapolis & Interchange. Proposals received on CW include AECOM and URS; CE includes proposals from Kimley Horn, Parsons Brinkerhoff and URS. The proposal evaluation team is made up of Met Council staff as well as staff from cities and the county.

Craig Lamothe discussed the various committees created to advise the SWLRT project and shared their functions. Craig underscored the need to have all project stakeholders engaged on such a large, complex project.

Question: What are next major milestones that need to be achieved to obtain the 2018 target?

Answer: Design, municipal consent, environmental documentation and funding.

Question: The investment partnership with Louis Smith, how does it fit into this process?

Katie Walker answered: Louis Smith was hired by Hennepin County to organize CEOs into a business investment partnership. Their purpose is to grow business along SWLRT for businesses. A meeting is scheduled for 10/11/12 at Methodist hospital to kick off quarterly meetings.

Question: Will their information be presented back to BAC?

Answer: Yes there will be reporting. Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman is serving on the committee and the intent is this investment group will have a connection to the BAC so both groups can be tied into what each other are doing.

Question: New starts project ratings; is there a way to bring it up?

Answer: Increase ridership or refine scope to reduce cost to increase cost effectiveness rating to high.

Question: Is relocation of the rail line part of the project cost structure?

Answer: Relocation and co-location is included in PE.

Question: How is the selection between the two handled? Answer: In terms of freight rail issue, it will be part of environmental and engineering process; the Met Council will make the ultimate decision.

Question: Does the White House announcement increase the rating for SWLRT?

Answer: Doesn't necessarily impact rating but there are elements that still need to be figured out. It more or less focuses on and streamlines the environmental process.

Mark Fuhrmann commented: Two very important highlights have benefited the SWLRT project; the White House designated the SWLRT project as a national and regional significance giving project a higher level of attention and priority on the metro radar. SPO will continue to work on PE, Nani Jacobson, Assistant Project Director for Environmental and Agreements, will work closely with the FTA in Washington as well as the Environmental Protection Agency in advancing FEIS. This announcement is an important signal that the feds are strongly supportive of the SWLRT project and want to advance the project. Governor Dayton awarded \$2 million of DEED funding to SWLRT indicating the state is supportive of the project as well.

LRT “101” – Jim Alexander

A presentation was given about LRT components and operations. Highlights include locations power substations, station design, platforms, safety features, pedestrian access, ADA facilities, kiosks, smart card validators, ticket vending machines along with variable message signs and lighting. Jim Alexander provided an overview of the various track designs, signal and electrical systems, safety features such as shielding and fencing, operation and maintenance facility (OMF) functions.

Question: Do OMFs tend to be on the far east or far west end or can they be anywhere? Answer: There are two camps where they should be located. Depends on the area and what property is available. The project will try to minimize the impact to the community and to project budget.

Question: Where are those locations identified in DEIS?

Answer: There are four locations, three in Eden Prairie and one in Minneapolis.

Question: Will the Minneapolis station be able to accommodate the other future lines? Can one OMF facility be built to use for two LRT's?

Answer: Usually facilities are unique per line.

Mark Fuhrmann commented: FTA does not allow for SWLRT to over build or bank capacity for future lines.

Question: Will SWLRT be WIFI capable?

Answer: Not known at this time if new trains will have this technology.

Robin Kaufman commented that there will be unveiling of the LRT vehicles 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

Question: Is this information linked so we can share with other people.

Answer: This and all BAC presentations are posted to swlrt.org website

Guides To Commenting on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Katie Walker and Nani Jacobson presenting the public commenting process for DEIS. The comment period is sixty days and the DEIS document will be available 10/12/12. The public and agencies can comment by e-mail, US mail or provide testimony at a public hearing scheduled for 11/13/12, 11/14/12 and 11/29/12. Documents will be available at libraries, SPO and will be available on Hennepin County's website. A guide to commenting will be available on project websites and Sam O'Connell will e-mail an electronic copy to the BAC. FTA and Met Council will consider and analyze all comments submitted and will respond.

Question: Any anticipation on how long comments responses will take once they are received?

Answer: Will be looking at each comment individually from an environmental as well as engineering team perspective. SPO will have every comment responded to by summer of 2014.

Chair Roach shared with the BAC it will not meet during the sixty day DEIS comment period.

Topics of Interest/Future Meeting Input Discussion

Sam O'Connell shared with the BAC the CAC topics interests that have been identified.

Question: Concerning semantics observation, when does BAC, advising start?

Answer: That question speaks to Jim's presentation as we are in a holding pattern and waiting for engineering consultant selection. Once on board, the hope is to identify issues and ideas and seek BAC feedback. SPO is using this time to understand the key areas BAC members are interested in so as soon as we get our engineers on board, we will have more focused discussions at future meetings. For example, we would like the BAC to discuss the placement of the OMF and to provide information to the Corridor Management Committee who will ultimately make the placement decision.

Question: Putting it in a different context, how does this committee define success? What is our role? Would like to see more information about financials and risks? Answer: This would make a good discussion item at future meeting.

Comment: How do we understand the economic developing tool around SWLRT? Important to understand the broader and bigger picture of employment need so we can start addressing these issues.

Comment: How does a business address and express their community needs around what is needed? Understanding the economic development opportunity that surrounds the SWLRT corridor, funding the political interactions around the liability of supporting this project? Would like to see the bigger economic picture, employment needs, etc. for the project.

Comments: Would like to see a lot more about the financials, business disruption and loss of jobs because of construction issues? Need information on how impact will be mitigated and issues of sound from train going by businesses?

Member and Committee Reports: No reports from members or other committee reports.

Public Forum: No comments received from the public.

Adjourn: Chair Will Roach adjourned the meeting at 9:38 AM. Next meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2012.