

Metropolitan Council

City of St. Louis Park Chambers, 5005 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park 55416

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Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee  
February 1, 2012

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Acting Chair Jan Callison called the February 1, 2012 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:07am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Acting Chair Jan Callison presented the December 7, 2011 Southwest Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. The motion for approval was granted.

**3. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT and COMMUNICATIONS**

Robin Caufman gave an overview on Public Involvement and Communications, highlighting that there is a new PowerPoint format. We are in the process of drafting the Outreach and Communications Plan and the purpose is to develop and maintain broad public understanding and support, build mutual trust, encourage public input by engaging the community, maintain ongoing communication with project partners, consistent with key messages, and informing elected officials and funding partners.

Ms. Caufman provided a draft copy of the Southwest Communications and Public Involvement Plan to the SWCMC Members. Some SWLRT key messages are to provide fast and safe transportation, be part of a growing system, provide access to key destinations, and provide opportunities to share ideas and identify issues to resolve. Some demographics within a ½ mile of the stations are 210,000 existing jobs, 31,000 households of 60,000 people, 16,000 minorities, and 3,600 incomes below poverty level. A lot of this information is taken from the New Starts application, so it's important that these numbers are consistent. This plan is also part of the official submission that goes to the FTA.

The cities and counties in the corridor helped to identify four key stakeholders and they are corridor specific business groups, a broader regional community, agencies and project partners, and target audiences such as youth, seniors, trail users, transit users, and CoO CET grant recipients. The planned Advisory Committees consist of the SWCMC that is already in place, the CAC which is in the process of being established, the BAC of which will follow the model that CCPO uses, the CSC which had their first meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the

LUCC which is also in the process of being established, and other committees efforts as it relates to Community Works.

Commissioner Gail Dorfman asked Ms. Caufman to set up a time to brief SWCMC on the intention of the TIC vs. LUCC to help avoid duplication of Committees. Councilmember Cheryl Youakim asked Ms. Caufman to provide to SWCMC, at the next meeting, a flow chart of all the Committees.

The purpose of the Advisory Committees is to serve as a voice for the community and stakeholders, advise SWCMC on light rail topics, and advise SWCWSC on land use issues. The purpose of the Communications Steering Committee is to coordinate external communications and public involvement efforts such as timing of public hearings, to ensure consistent key messages using social media/local cable access, to identify opportunities leveraging existing communication tools, and to participate in assessments of communications by providing feedback. The members include: Met Council/Metro Transit, Hennepin County, MnDOT, CTIB, Three Rivers Park District and Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, and the alignment cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Edina, Hopkins, St. Louis Park, & Minneapolis.

An overview of the CAC is to focus on community based issues as it relates to traffic, access, safety, housing, land use, transit oriented development, and park & trail impacts. Invitation letters and nomination forms were sent out on January 31<sup>st</sup> to 25 groups and the deadline is March 5<sup>th</sup>. The first meeting is to be held in April and monthly meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 6pm. The co-chairs have been identified as Jennifer Munt and Jeanette Colby. We are looking to expand the existing membership and add some stakeholder groups such as residents, minorities, immigrants, low income, trail users, transit users, and ADA.

Councilmember Jim Brimeyer asked how big the committees will be. Ms. Caufman said CSC of ~15, CAC of ~40, BAC of ~15-20, and Land Use of ~10-12. Acting Chair Callison asked if a non-nominated person can be on the CAC. Ms. Caufman said on an "as requested" basis. Mayor Terry Schneider asked if more than one can be nominated. Ms. Caufman replied, yes. Gail Dorfman asked if someone from CAC could be switched to BAC. Ms. Caufman said, yes.

The BAC will meet monthly and will focus on business issues of access, construction impacts, and right of way acquisition. The BAC invitation letters and nomination form are being drafted and co-chairs are being identified. We are looking to hold the first meeting in Spring of 2012. Some of the members are small businesses, minority and immigrant businesses, corporate headquarters, Chambers of Commerce, developers, and property owners.

The Land Use Coordinating Committee would be including the project partner's executive level community development staff to support New Starts application in regards to land use. Katie Walker said the LUCC and TIC Principals Group (consisting of community development directors from the cities) could have possible crossover in membership. The intention is to have a more streamlined LUCC membership separate from TIC, which is a much broader membership, but still have some integration and crossover. We will need to have a discussion with the city staff to determine if that would be feasible. Mayor Schneider encourages the crossover to eliminate the redoing of efforts. He also asked for a preliminary list of BAC members to be sent to the SWCMC.

Acting Chair Callison is concerned about duplication of committee meetings and asked for the cities to send Ms. Caufman any information related to meetings that will be held within their cities community.

Some of the communication tools include our website ([www.swlirt.org](http://www.swlirt.org)), a newsletter, community events, speaker requests, tours, informational posters/kiosks, and social media. Acting Chair Callison asked for the cities to provide to Ms. Caufman a list of events scheduled to take place within their cities community. Bill James encourages the cities to cross link [www.swlirt.org](http://www.swlirt.org) to their cities websites.

We are engaging public involvement through public meetings, forums and hearings, and advisory committees.

#### **4. SWLRT PROJECT OFFICE UPDATE**

Mark Fuhrmann gave an update on the Southwest Project Office. We went out to the corridor and toured 7 sites, asked for proposals, and narrowed that down to four finalist sites. The future Southwest Project Office will be located at Park Place West in St. Louis Park, occupying the entire 5<sup>th</sup> floor plate of approximately 20,000 SF in a Phase I build-out. Phase II is currently slated for 2014, allowing expansion of another approximately 8,000 SF. Met Council did authorize execution of the lease and it is in the process of being finalized with expected execution in the first half of February 2012.

#### **5. STAFFING UPDATE**

Mark Fuhrmann gave an update on SPO Staffing. We were authorized in 2010 to hire 7 positions of which 6 are currently filled and 1 in recruitment. We have begun the second wave of hiring, which includes 38 positions that will be advertised soon. Thirteen of those positions will support Robin with Administration, Community Outreach and Communications. Design and Engineering is slated for 8 positions, Project Controls/Budget-Grants/Right-of-Way has 11 positions, Environmental/Agreements includes 4 positions helping to support DEIS & EIS, and Community Works 2 positions.

Commissioner Peter McLaughlin asked if there will be any transition from CCPO to SPO. Mr. Fuhrmann said yes, there will be 18 program positions such as his and Ms. Kaufman's, as well as approximately 24 construction folks who will be transferring to SPO in a couple of years when they finish at CCPO.

#### **6. ENGINEERING SERVICES PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

Jim Alexander gave an update to the Engineering Services Procurement. We received Proposals in December, convened with our Evaluation Panel, and had a couple of Proposer Interviews in January. The Evaluation Panel has landed on a recommendation which is currently being formulated in a memo to be routed for review. We are looking to begin negotiations in February and will be working diligently with that selected Consultant to help us with the Engineering Services on this project. We are looking to award the contract and sign the initial Limited Notice-to-Proceed for work to begin in March.

Councilmember Brimeyer asked if we hire only one consultant for all the services. Mr. Alexander indicated they are under separate contracts. The Engineering Services Consultant will be handling PE, Final Design, and design support. Environmental Service Consultant will have separate contracts taking Hennepin County DEIS and formulate into a final EIS is done by a separate body keeping independent but has a lot of correlation between those two entities of EIS and PE process. Also under a separate contract is the Phase I Environment Site Assessment. We are out on the street with Phase I of the Archaeological Survey and anticipating proposals later this month with an in depth Phase II to follow.

Commissioner Dorfman asked with all the numerous contracts, do you need to avoid potential conflict? Mr. Alexander said there could be a conflict with the Engineering Services Consultant in planning, for example, as it relates to demarcation around a station where all independent parties will need to marry up to that line.

Mr. Alexander presented a 2-page list of industry acronyms and Acting Chair Callison asked for it to be posted on the [www.swlrt.org](http://www.swlrt.org) website. Mr. James requested a brief DEIS update. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that the county hired HDR to revise the DEIS to incorporate the freight rail co-location and relocation components. The FTA asked the county and the projects to submit chapter-by-chapter, as it is completed, for review and to provide comments. Last week, chapter 1 of 13 was submitted and the remaining chapters to be completed on a weekly basis through mid-March. The goal is to publish the DEIS for comment in May.

Acting Chair Callison asked if waiting until May for this document will affect Engineering. Mr. Fuhrmann said the timing works well to receive those comments through the DEIS outreach process to help inform the PE. It could be affected if DEIS gets pushed beyond May, as that could cause delay in our PE work and the need to revisit issues.

Mayor James Hovland was at several meetings with Representative Beard who's sending the message of constant refrain, doesn't like rail, and wants to park it. Mayor Hovland is concerned about the \$25 Million bonding bill for PE and more significantly about the long-term operational funding that Mr. Beard is reluctant to commit to. What kind of strategy are we looking at? Brian Lamb said the governor did approve \$25 Million in his bonding bill and the key is to keep the business voice very active throughout the legislative process. It resonated really clear at the Chair's State of the Region, as there was very strong support expressed by the chambers. For certain members, it would help to convey the importance that the business community is seeing. For other members, they are not going to be supportive in transit investments and specifically Southwest LRT. It will come down to the headcount and global agreement at the end of the day. An encouraging thing is to continue to be sure the governor is aware of how the business community is very supportive of this. On 2/2/12, the governor is meeting with UnitedHealth Group representatives to understand from their perspective, how they see the linkage of this line with the overall development of this system for their continued growth. Also, making sure the governor really sees this as a priority is one of the key strategies. There is a need for all levels of government through this corridor to continue to be on the same message point, conveying from a local as well as a global perspective on why this is important.

Acting Chair Callison stated we need to turn a couple of Republican legislators in Eden Prairie and Edina to have them speak in support of this, as they currently are not. Look at the job growth in Eden Prairie and all the congestion it will put on the roads. What roads will be built to accommodate 60,000 projected jobs at UHG? There is a strong self interest for this area to have alternative transportation. Strong focus is needed on those Republican legislators that represent this district that are looking at a \$1.2 Billion investment and saying we don't want it enough to vote against it.

Mayor Schneider said Senator David Hann may be feeling pressure from the business community and it might help to re-pitch the positives to him.

Mr. James said we should remind them about the previous investments the business community has made in LRT. These are investments that enhance the cities, counties, communities, and states presence making it attractive to C-level suites of corporations.

Mr. Lamb will work with our legislative liaison and public relations staff and get key talking points to the SWCMC to ensure consistency in what we are promoting and to make appropriate contacts at the local level as well.

Acting Chair Callison would like to have the following included in the MPR report. What is our response going to be when someone says the light rail is wasteful, we cannot manage it well in this region, and it is going to cost too much? Mr. Fuhrmann stated the MPR report was published approximately 1 week ago and it was a look back to 2011 on Central LRT construction. Their premise was what did not work well and that was the headline and the first paragraph. When talking with the reporter, we found that there were many actions taken on Met Council's part in overseeing the contractor and Walsh Construction Co that improved progress and minimized impact. Also, what actions are we going to implement in 2012 to continue to lessen the impact and allow for construction to continue on schedule and on budget through the eastern half of University Avenue.

Acting Chair Callison asked for additional detail on MPR and talking points to be provided to the SWCMC. Our next meeting is March 7<sup>th</sup> and we have some items from today for that agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35am.

Respectfully submitted, Lynne Hahne