

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee

August 28, 2013

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Susan Haigh called the August 28, 2013 meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 9:32am at the City of St. Louis Park Chambers.

Chair Haigh gave some opening comments. As all of you know, there are a lot of challenges with the design of this line, but believe they are challenges that we can solve. We are also looking at regional issues and regional balance and how this fits in to the broader system, how the costs fit into the broader system, and how this project is important to the region as a whole. Many people have been working on this project for well over a decade. The question has come up several times, asking why we are not looking at alternatives of a route along highway 100, a route along Midtown Greenway corridor, or Nicollet Avenue. All of those alternatives were looked at previously and were eliminated in the locally preferred alternatives (LPA) analysis process. The reasons we are not looking at those are the same today as when they were eliminated. There were concerns about inadequate right of way to build the line, significant impact to historic resources, and serious disruption to a major business district. To all those who have submitted comments, please know that they have been read and appreciated and were sent onto the Southwest LRT Project Office to be recorded. Chair Haigh said she has been so struck by the care, concern, and love that people have for their community and neighborhood. People share their concerns, but say that they support the Southwest Light Rail project.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No Minutes to approve.

3. RESPONSES TO 8/7 AND 8/14 SWCMC QUESTIONS

Mr. Jim Alexander presented responses to questions and showed aerial and rendering maps. In June we unveiled 8 options for freight rail and have narrowed it down to 3 options: Brunswick Central for relocation, Shallow tunnel and Deep Bore tunnel for the co-location.

- Kenilworth Shallow LRT Tunnel:

We are suggesting that 21st Street station not be an option for the Kenilworth Shallow LRT tunnel. Mr. Alexander presented dimensions for the Kenilworth Shallow LRT tunnel. Chair Haigh asked if the 1,088 feet daylight section over the channel includes the north and south transition zone. Mr. Alexander said yes. Mayor Jim Hovland asked why it was chosen to start where it is for the south channel opposed to coming out of the West Lake station and going on a gradual decent. Mr. Alexander said it has to do with the existing West Lake Street bridge. That bridge structure is supported on driven piles and some go down at an angle, so we need to be clear of that to avoid impact to those piles. Mayor Hovland asked, once the tunnel is started, how long does it take to get to where the tunnel intersects with the Kenilworth trail and are you suggesting that the trail be on top? Mr. Alexander said we have room for the Kenilworth trail as it links into the Cedar Lake LRT trail and once we are down fully under the ground the LRT tunnel, we envision that trail would be going up on top of that as soon as we have it far enough in depth. Commissioner Jan Callison asked if there will be retaining walls or crash walls. Mr. Alexander said there will be a crash wall on the townhome side near the bridge and also one on that same side just south of the channel.

Metro Transit is working on an Alternatives Analysis for the Midtown Corridor. Mr. Alexander presented a transitways map to show how the proposed Midtown Corridor could link to LRT. The SWLRT design accommodates Midtown Corridor if the identified preferred alternative is streetcar. Commissioner Peter McLaughlin asked if any incremental costs have been identified for the SWLRT project to accommodate the Midtown Corridor, and will those costs be attributed to the streetcar project. Mr. Alexander said we presume that any right of way that needs to be done to accommodate the station and trail, would be Midtown Corridor. We have accounted for our costs for SWLRT to accommodate it. There are not significant costs for SWLRT to provide for the accommodation. Mr. Peter Wagenius said Mayor R.T. Rybak seeks to know what the frequency limitation would be to get a 94 foot vehicle in and out of this station. Mr. Alexander said in discussions with the city staff and our rail operations, we have confirmed that we can handle this streetcar with that side of the train for a 7.5 minute headway. The AE team is looking into the minimum headway that is physically possible. Mr. Wagenius said Mayor Rybak shares Chair Haigh's desire to not revive the Midtown-Nicollet alignment of LRT. The Mayor's reason is that we have a better way to serve these communities that need to be served, not that the alignment was flawed. This corridor particularly between West Lake and Nicollet is booming now and becoming ridiculously congested and already seeing this sort of development without transit that we want to see along the transit corridors for development. The Mayor wants to know we are going to serve you and connect you to the network in year 10 and 20.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if the Deep Bore tunnel would create a more expensive connection cost for the Midtown streetcar than the Shallow tunnel. Mr. Alexander said that is correct in terms of additional trackage that would be needed to link up to the SWLRT.

Mayor Hovland asked how you handle the passage either under or at grade at Cedar Lake Parkway. Mr. Alexander said that would be below grade. Mayor Hovland said north of the channel bridge on the east side for about 250 yards, where you get to the Burnham Road bridge, there are about 5 houses in there. How do we mitigate impacts for those folks that are in that approximate 250 yard segment. Mr. Alexander said we first need to understand what needs to be mitigated, if anything, so that is being worked on right now and we are looking at noise and vibration conditions from what the train and freight would exhibit on those. Within that stretch there are about 4 homes within about 100 feet of the tracks and an additional 27 or so within 300 feet. Part of our noise and vibration analysis is to be looking at what impacts would be had to those homes with LRT and freight coming through. Commissioner Gail Dorfman asked how long does it take for LRT to come up out of the tunnels and over the 1,088 feet and what is the frequency at peak verses the rest of the day. Mr. Alexander said as we travel on LRT, we anticipate speeds of about 45 miles per hour, running about 200 trains per day, taking about 20 seconds to get through there. Commissioner Dorfman asked if they will be blowing

whistles. Mr. Alexander said we are in discussions with our rail operations folks and understand there is some flexibility of not needing to blow the horn as they transition in and out of the portals. We are continuing to work with them on this as we understand it is a concern. Mayor Hovland asked why a north shallow tunnel is being suggested. Mr. Alexander said it is in response to the concerns that were raised, primarily with the city, and other entities that a tunnel is desired through this segment. We are trying to maximize as much as possible where we can get the LRT under the ground surface.

Mr. Wagenius indicated we are not looking at the tunnels because it is desired by the city. For the record, Mayor Rybak has not drawn a sharp line between deep and shallow tunnel. We are doing it in an attempt to replicate what people were expecting if promises had been fulfilled with the freight going away. That is what we are attempting to do. It is not about the city's desire, it is about coming up with something that is closer to what people were expecting and what is still the city's preference, which is that freight goes away in this area and dealing with a single train, not two trains. To that point, when are we going to get the results of the noise and vibration analysis? Ms. Nani Jacobson, Assistant Director of Environmental and Agreements, indicated we are undergoing and completing our noise and vibration assessments of the entire corridor. We have done the monitoring of the entire corridor and completed that in mid-August. We are now in the process of doing the noise and vibration assessments. We are inputting all the various assumptions that Mr. Alexander and his team have given us and we hope to have the analysis completed in the next week or two and will share it with the SWCMC. Mr. Wagenius wants to be clear in asking the question and how the city is approaching the noise question. There is a difference in how the Minneapolis Park Board, which is an independent entity, is approaching this question and how the city is approaching this question. The Minneapolis Park Board is assessing the question on noise relative to current conditions, a park-like setting, and that is not the city's position. The city's position is that we were expecting an LRT train to come through here and the community has been expecting for 20 years, that an LRT train was going to be coming through here. To be clear, we do not share the position that we are comparing it to a park-like setting. There was supposed to be an LRT train coming through here. What we are looking at from a city perspective, is the places where it is different and potentially worse, because of the potential existence of two trains. Specifically we are looking at the four portal zones. I assume your noise analysis is taking into account the possibility of what I've been told by our folks that there is possibility that in those spaces, the noise could actually be worse than an LRT train because of the potential for sound to bounce off of the walls and reverberate. We have a lot of experience with sound walls in the City of Minneapolis and we have more expertise than we would like. I-35W, I-94, and most recently MnDOT built a sound wall along I-94 that made sound worse for a huge number of folks because they did not calculate the bounce back effect. They protected people from sound on one side and made it dramatically worse for folks on the other side. To their credit, they are now working to remediate that. We are talking about sound walls that are also concrete crash walls in some cases and we are not going to have the opportunity to get it right a second time. I want to make sure in stating the city's position for the record. We are not comparing it to park-like settings, we think that is an unreasonable expectation based on the city's preference for an LRT train to go through here without freight. I want to make sure your noise analysis is taking into account that this could be perceived in the community as picking winners and losers. Some people will get substantially less noise because the train is on the ground, but in certain zones they could get potentially more than in a relocation scenario. Is your analysis taking that into account, including the potential bouncing and sound off of retaining and/or crash walls? Ms. Jacobson said yes, our analysis is factoring in the entry and exit portals, factoring in crash walls, any reverberations that may or may not occur specific to freight rail vehicles and LRT vehicles. We are going to see substantial differences than what you would see on a highway barrier, because you have cars verses the vehicles we are looking at. We are taking into account all of those assumptions.

Mr. Alexander indicated we are working with MnDOT's Cultural Resources staff on the historic channel crossing for the shallow tunnel. Mr. Alexander presented a rendering showing what a "living wall"

concept might look like and we are just exploring it at this point and showing it as an option. It is a two foot wide segment that is filled with soil and it allows you to grow vegetation on the wall. During the summer, it would be green. Commissioner McLaughlin asked if the function of the wall is for noise or for protection of the portal. Mr. Alexander said through the noise and vibration analysis, we find we might need some mitigation, this might be one avenue to accomplish that or if you need to do some type of sound wall treatment at the property line. It is also in response to questions or concerns about having the LRT exposed on that 1,088 foot gap and seeing the trains, so this would mask the LRVs. We are working with our operations folks on what type of barrier are needed, which could be some type of fencing or a living wall. Council Member Cheryl Youakim asked if there was still a solid wall underneath the green treatment. Mr. Alexander said there would be material within that green wall. Mayor Hovland asked when you go about a process of looking at the type of car you select, the type of rail bed you put in, the type of rail you use are all of those factors in potentially reducing noise and vibration. Mr. Alexander said we have fenders that go on the outside of the wheels. Some properties do not have that and we have those to keep the noise level down and within the car itself. All these are factors that we are looking at. Commissioner Dorfman said there is freight going through this corridor today and there are noise and vibrations that exist today in current condition. Do we have to correct the current condition to do light rail and freight rail? Noise and vibration is caused more by freight rail than it is by light rail. Mr. Alexander indicated we would consider that an existing condition with the freight rail since it is coming up through here. Commissioner Dorfman said when looking at these walls, are we mitigating for freight? Mr. Alexander said one of the concerns is what happens when there is a wall there now and noise comes off the locomotive and cars, bounces off that wall, and bounces it the other way. Based on our analysis to date, we essentially have the locomotive and cars are tall enough compared to an automobile that, that noise goes off the crash wall and back into the car so it does not go elsewhere. This is a change that we would need to evaluate, but we feel comfortable based on the analysis that that would be mitigated by the locomotive itself running through there. Commissioner Dorfman said so we are mitigating for the retaining walls and the crash walls, since those are potentially the new elements, but what about the green wall? Mr. Alexander said the green wall is a suggestion that if we get to the conclusion that we need to do some mitigation or noise and possibly visual, then this might be an option to deal with that.

Mr. Alexander indicated we are working with the city and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to develop a temporary trail detour plan during construction. Mr. Alexander said there has been concern about what happens to the lakes during construction. We have developed a construction scenario where we are looking to contain the area that is constructed so we can contain water that would flow from any region around these excavations. We limit the amount of water we take out of the ground. We have done 40 geotechnical explorations along the shallow tunnel stretch, so we know it is primarily alluvial sands which would allow the water to flow freely. There are some layers of clay or swamp material that may stop the flow of water and we will need to look into that. Commissioner McLaughlin asked who is doing the hydrogeological work. Mr. Alexander said American Engineering Testing, Inc. (AET) is doing the soil exploration and modeling as part of the design process. We are also working with both DNR and the Minnehaha Watershed District. Commissioner Dorfman asked when they will see what the scope of the SDEIS is. Ms. Nani Jacobson said we released the scope of the SDEIS in the notice of intent, and beyond that the FTA will be leading that development of the document. We hope to share when that will be released in the coming future.

Mr. Alexander presented information on permanent water control. There is going to be surface water coming into the portals in areas, so we need to account for that. We need to allow for some seepage that would come into the tunnel, so we would add waterproofing of the sheet piles and joints to restrict this leakage. A chief concern with the city is that we do not discharge warmer water into frozen lakes, so we are developing mechanisms to deal with that. One option would be to use an infiltration system that would bring the water to a temperature that is closer to the lakes water prior to discharging it into the

lakes. We are also in the process of doing a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment to determine what type of contaminants might be out there. If it is highly contaminated it may end up going to the sanitary sewer instead of the lakes. Commissioner McLaughlin asked are you doing an evaluation on what happens if we have extreme draught or flood conditions. Mr. Alexander said we are looking at a 100 year flood and other conditions to understand the maximum flow potentially coming into the tunnel and making sure there is capacity to accommodate those flows and if we need to discharge it into storm or sanitary. Mayor Terry Schneider said it looks like progress was made on the potential mitigation of the portion of the line where the line going on grade adjacent to the railroad tracks. Mayor Schneider asked project staff to look at the feasibility of going underneath the creek. Mr. Alexander said the Mayor asked if we could we go deeper under the channel and the configurations the Mayor provided have the concept in hand but we need to go deeper than what was depicted in the configuration, as we have a buoyancy effect to contend with. We need to go down a minimum of 60 feet below for the excavation to keep from floating up.

We are working with the city and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to identify the type and quantity of trees that will be impacted and come up with a landscaping plan to replace those trees. Mr. Wagenius asked when the committee will be provided the number of trees that will be impacted by relocation and with freight and LRT. Mr. Alexander said for the shallow tunnel there is upwards of 1,000 impacted and for relocation scenario it is in the 600 range. We would need to work with city staff to create a map. The tree impacts would be on Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority right of way and BNSF parcels.

Mr. Alexander indicated that there are two types of ventilation: normal and emergency. We need to design for an emergency in the event it is needed. We are not planning to have grates for ventilation, but will have fans near the portal areas. However, we are still designing this.

- Kenilworth Deep Bore LRT Tunnel:

The twin bore tunnels are 5,900 feet in length and the South cut and cover tunnel section is 1,000 feet. The pit would be 77 feet wide and 55 feet deep. The property impact with the portal north of West Lake Street would impact 11 townhomes, as the freight rail needs to remain operational during construction. The right of way costs would be approximately \$20 million.

The total cost for a shallow tunnel is \$150-\$160 million and a deep bore tunnel is \$320-\$330 million.

Mr. Alexander provided a cost comparison of the deep bore with Hiawatha and if we bring Hiawatha up to 2013 dollars, the total costs would be \$285 million and \$320-330 million respectively.

Other Technical Issue updates for TI #1, #7, #13, #16, and #17:

- TI #1 – Southwest Transit Commission has concerns on how they will accommodate the LRT riders and parking. We would need to build 480 parking stalls to accommodate LRT riders and the parking would also be allowed for existing businesses. We would have a 900 stall ramp at Mitchell to accommodate LRT. The travel time between Mitchell Road station and Golden Triangle station is between 11 and 12 minutes.
- TI #7 – Clarification: the betterment for a pedestrian/bike trail under the bridge was requested by the City of Minnetonka, not Hopkins.
- TI #13 – St. Louis Park has an interest in getting the station closer to Methodist Hospital and housing.
- TI #16 – We have been working with St. Louis Park city staff and have a new location for 540 surface space park and ride just north of the station. We are also working with the Hennepin County staff to determine how folks would get in and out of the area.
- TI #17 – We are proposing to have a vertical connection to the West Lake Street bridge.

Mayor Hovland asked how much room is needed for co-locating horizontally at grade for freight, LRT, and the trail. Mr. Alexander said 81 feet. Mayor Hovland asked what the width of the HCRRRA right of way is north of the shallow tunnel. Mr. Alexander said it varies and he will need to provide it at a later time. Mayor Hovland asked if anyone has seen a copy of any agreement between St. Louis Park and Hennepin County and/or the State of Minnesota that provides for the cleanup funds being given to St. Louis Park for the Golden Auto site, being contingent upon St. Louis Park accepting freight rail relocation. Chair Haigh said we will provide copies of all the letters that we do have to the SWCMC. Mr. Wagenius said the City of Minneapolis' position is that we oppose co-location at grade, but Mayor Rybak is willing to consider giving the fullest possible consideration to both the tunnel options, as they are potentially real paths forward. Also, St. Louis Park should either pay the money back for the Golden Auto site or it should be factored into the betterments.

Council Member Youakim asked to have ceiling dollars provided at the next meeting of what would be accepted by CTIB and what the legislature is willing to fund in the bonds. Commissioner Lisa Weik said the total project cost could differ from the grant amount that is requested from CTIB, so will we know next week what the grant amount will be. Chair Haigh said she does not think we will have that level of detail, but will have the relative portions of cost sharing that we have had on other projects and information that we already have approval from CTIB so far.

4. SCHEDULE UPDATE

Mr. Alexander said we are proposed to bring the draft recommended scope to the SWCMC on September 4th. On September 11, we would bring an information item to the Met Council and the CTIB Board on September 18th. Ultimately, we would bring the recommendation to the Transportation Committee and Met Council later in September. We are looking to complete the municipal consent approval process in the 4th quarter of this year and finalize 30% design plans and specs in the 1st quarter of 2014.

Commissioner Dorfman said this group is an advisory to the Met Council on this project. Do you envision that we will actually be taking a vote of this group next week. Chair Haigh said our experience with the other Corridor Management Committees as we have done this work, as opposed to voting like on a county board or on a city council. You are here as individuals representing the perspectives of your communities, you bring those discussions forth and hopefully we will have that by head nodding. It is important to understand that this is a body that we created to get your input on a regular basis and to go back and forth at the elected level so you have information that you can share with your colleagues. We understand that when you are here and give us your advice as an individual as well as representing your entity. I do not want to get into a situation where we vote and you go back to your municipal body or county board and they say you did not have the authority to vote for this or that. Commissioner McLaughlin said the history is that votes were taken at both Hiawatha and Central. Mayor Schneider and Mayor Hovland agree that we need to vote. Mayor Nancy Tyra-Lukens said it needs to be clear what we are voting on.

Commissioner Jan Callison indicated the next meeting is 1.5 hours and feels more time is needed with a short presentation and more time for discussion. Chair Haigh asked to extend the September 4th meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Hahne, Recording Secretary