



Southwest Light Rail (SWLRT) Business Advisory Committee Meeting
June 26, 2013
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
Southwest Project Office
6465 Wayzata Blvd, St Louis Park, MN 55426

BAC Members and Alternates: Co-Chair Will Roach, Co-Chair Daniel K. Duffy, Curt Rahman, Duane Spiegle, Scott Gill, Stephanie Peterson, Pat MulQueeny

Staff and other attendees: Robin Caufman, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Sam O'Connell, Jim Alexander, Ryan Kronzer, Daren Nyquist, Kim Proia, Paul Danielson, Kathy Doty, Nani Jacobson, Elise Durbin, Tom Radio, Jim Arneson, Ryan Kelley

1. Welcome, Introductions and Approval of the May 29, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Co-Chair Dan Duffy called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM. The approval of minutes was postponed until later in the meeting to allow for several late arrivals. The NEPA update was moved to later in the meeting as well.

2. Hennepin County Community Works Update

Kathy Doty introduced Ryan Kelley, St. Louis Park Associate Planner, to review MindMixer. MindMixer is an online crowd sourcing tool that TSAAP is using to gain input general public. People can log on to the site and be able to comment about current station areas and suggest their own ideas.

Dan Duffy asked if anybody from the public can use MindMixer. Mr. Kelley responded that anybody can use the tool by registering on the website. City staff from each city on the corridor will be monitoring online conversations and reviewing the site on a regular basis.

Another question was asked regarding focus – with so many people adding comments, how will conversations be constructive? Kathy Doty responded that the goal is not to have total control of online conversations, but we will be able to direct people to other resources if the scope of the conversations gets too broad and off-topic from TSAAP concerns.

3. Technical Issues

Jim Alexander led the group in a discussion regarding Technical Issues:

- Minnetonka/Hopkins Bridge
 - Mr. Alexander reviewed preliminary designs for a 3,000 foot land bridge that would cross from Smetana Road to the Minnesota River Bluffs Trail corridor. Three different design options were shared: concrete box girder bridge; pre-stressed concrete beam bridge; and a pre-stressed concrete beam bridge with less distance between supports. Mr. Alexander said that the concrete box girder design is typical option for LRT, but the pre-stressed concrete bride could be less expensive and have a lower support depth.

A question was asked if Minnetonka and Hopkins were concerned about the aesthetics regarding such a long expanse. Mr. Alexander responded that cities were concerned about how the bridge would fit with the cities and with the wetland it is crossing, adding that the project office will continue to work closely with cities.

- Operations Maintenance Facility (OMF)
Mr. Alexander discussed the OMF selection process on narrowing from seven candidate sites to two. The final seven sites were: City Grage West/East (Eden Prairie); Mitchell East (Eden Prairie); Shady

Oak/Flying Cloud (Eden Prairie); K-Tel (Minnetonka); K-Tel East (Minnetonka); Eleventh Avenue West (Hopkins); and Excelsior West/East (Hopkings/St. Louis Park). Mr. Alexander said that for layouts were developed for each site, three open houses were held in affiliated communities, and input was requested from cities. The evaluation process for each site included 13 different variables consisting of cost, zoning, development plans, environmental considerations, and economic considerations.

Mr. Alexander reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of the seven candidate sites and explained that two final candidate OMF sites were City Garage West/East and K-Tel East. Through June and July the project office will continue to refine the design and environmental impacts, present to the CMC on August 7, with a final Met Council recommendation coming in August.

A question was asked about the Eden Prairie site and the viability of Technology drive alignment. Mr. Alexander explained that there is a possibility that the SWLRT could end at South West Station. The project office is compiling final cost estimates for different alignment scenarios.

A question was asked about how many parking spots would be included if an OMF was joined with a station on the City Garage West/East site. Mr. Alexander responded that approximately 1,200 hundred spots would be needed.

Regarding the K-Tel East site, a question was asked if there was anything that would eliminate this site from consideration. Mr. Alexander responded that there is still a need for geotechnical analysis in this area, but nothing is presenting itself as a fatal flaw.

- **Freight Rail Open Houses**

Sam O'Connell reviewed the feedback received from the two open freight rail open houses held on June 13 in St. Louis Park. Over 300 attendees came to these meetings and submitted over 350 comments. Ms. O'Connell explained that the comments submitted through the open houses see a tunnel option as a benefit to both communities for a co-location scenario. Under relocation scenario, comments looked at minimizing impacts to schools and businesses and viewed increased elevation of trains as a concerning safety issue, as well as a physical division of the neighborhoods.

A question was asked if the project office was receiving feedback from the Twin West Chamber of Commerce. As a Twin West representative, Co-Chair Dan Duffy answered this question by saying that conversation have been had, but the Chamber is waiting to see a list of final costs.

4. National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) Process

Nani Jacobson, Assistant Director of Environment and Agreements, updated the BAC on the NEPA process. FTA and Met Council intend to develop a Supplemental DEIS (SDEIS) to evaluate potential new environmental impacts that may result from adjustments to the SWLRT alignment. The notice of intent will be published in the Federal Register and the State of Minnesota EQB Monitor. Ms. Jacobson also commented that the final EIS will incorporate responses to comments received from both the DEIS and SDEIS.

A question was asked if the through the SDEIS the Locally Preferred Alternative will get a formal update. Ms. Jacobson responded that the SDEIS is looking at adjustments to the route, not at making a new LPA.

5. Minutes Approval

The meeting minutes from the May 29 BAC meeting were re-visited. Will Roach moved to approve. The motion was seconded by Scott Gill. The minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

6. Mid-Year Check-in

Co-chairs Will Roach and Dan Duffy led the group in mid-year evaluation of the BAC meeting thus far. Mr. Roach asked the group for general feedback. There was a concern displayed about BAC members disengaging from the group because of a perceived lack of activity with the project. Jim Alexander responded to that by saying that this attitude will change in early 2014 when construction schedules begin to be developed and BAC members will be necessary in how to help mitigate impacts.

Mr. Roach asked if meeting once per month was acceptable. The group agreed that this schedule was fine.

Mr. Roach asked about meeting format and agenda. The group agreed that break-out groups were better at gaining deeper insight into an issue. A comment was made about developing an agenda item to discuss municipal consent. To which another member asked the chairs if they could get feedback from BAC member regarding items they wished to discuss from time to time. The chairs agreed to this idea.

7. Success Measures Update

Co-chair Will Roach presented an outline on success measures that the BAC could use to evaluate performance. The measures were a mix of long and short-term goals aimed at improving economic development, increasing transit ridership, and supporting the advancement of SWLRT.

A comment was made that broader impacts like negative construction impacts and aesthetics should be considered.

The group agreed to fine tune language regarding supporting the transit system as the project advances.

The group also agreed that a primary duty of the BAC will be to develop a plan for businesses to make it through the construction phase.

8. Member Reports

Sam O'Connell announced the dates for July's CAC and BAC meetings, which will be July 25 and July 31, respectively.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 AM. Next meeting is scheduled for July 31, 2013.