

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee

December 7, 2011

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Susan Haigh called the December 7, 2011 meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee to order at 10:06am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Haigh presented the October 5, 2011 Southwest LRT Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. The motion for approval passed.

3. ENGINEERING SERVICES PROCUREMENT

Chris Weyer gave a project update. The Engineering Services Consultant RFP went out for advertisement in October. On November 8th, staff had a Pre-Proposal Conference where those interested in working on the project as a Prime Proposer or Sub-Consultant to one of the teams could get additional information. 37 different individuals representing 30 firms attended this meeting. A majority of those firms are expected to team up with a handful of Prime Proposers. Immediately following the Pre-Proposal Conference, the Met Council's Office of Diversity had a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Meet & Greet. With the anticipation of FTA Funding, the Met Council has assigned a 17% DBE participation goal. Potential Primes were offered to have a table where they could meet potential DBE members that would help them support the project. Two potential Prime Proposers had tables with 40 different DBE firms in attendance.

Chair Haigh asked a question as to whether the firms that attended the Meet and Greet were the same as those currently working on Central Corridor. Mr. Weyer stated that there were several DBE firms that attended the Meet & Greet, with several that already had established relationships with some of those Primes and probably didn't feel the need to attend. The purpose of the meeting was more about firms that didn't have existing relationships, but there are some who already do and are planning to team. The question and answer period closed on November 23rd, with 31 questions which were responded to on November 23rd. Proposals are due on December 16th.

Mayor Nancy Tyra-Lukens asked if the 17% is part of the contract or part of the dollars spent. Mr. Weyer indicated that 17% is the goal of what is expected for participation by DBE firms as part of the overall contract

value. Chair Haigh asked if we stay on track with this schedule, will the Engineering Firm be selected by March. Mr. Weyer indicated that this is the goal. Commissioner Jan Callison asked if the questions received appeared to reflect any sense of concerns about the project. Mr. Weyer responded that while some technical questions were asked, nothing appeared out of the ordinary.

4. PERMANENT PROJECT OFFICE

Mark Fuhrman gave an overview of the Southwest Project Office (SPO). Mr. Fuhrman provided a summary of the successful approach to using project offices on past and present rail projects and the real time coordination and collaboration that collocation of the various staff provides. The project team is looking for locations in each host city. The specifications are generally similar to the Central Corridor Project Office located in the Griggs-Midway Building in St. Paul. Approximately 25,000 SF of floor plate, preferably one floor but may look at two floors and splitting it up. The office suites will be in the back office and the front of the office will be where we can host public meetings, public get-togethers, such as Community. The Met Council has contracted with CresaPartners to support the search and negotiations. They are a national organization with a very good presence here in the Twin Cities. They exhibit a lot of knowledge about the submarket in the west and southwest metro here in their proposal presentations.

CresaPartners has contacted staff in each of the cities for possible sites and tours have been scheduled for six potential locations. Mayor Terry Schneider noted that ample parking should be an important criteria. Bill James also noted that his business takes advantage of video conferencing. Mr. Fuhrmann noted that the Met Council has also begun using this technology to save on time and travel costs.

5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM RECRUITMENT

Mr. Fuhrmann then introduced new members of the Project Management Team. He noted that the FTA requires that we assemble a very comprehensive project management plan (PMP). The core foundation of that is the organization, the people residing in that organization, and how we interact with our project partner agencies. The project program office is directed by Mark Fuhrman with responsibility for Central and Southwest at the policy level. Mr. Weyer was introduced a year ago and he is the Project Director reporting to Mr. Fuhrmann. New staff has also been added.

Craig Lamothe introduced himself in his new position as Deputy Project Director. Mr. Lamothe gave a summary of his previous experience including his recent role in the Urban Partnership Agreements project which brought \$108 Million worth of projects to the region. In his new role Mr. Lamothe will be responsible for managing and coordinating most of the non-hard engineering aspects of this new starts project including Project Controls, Budget and Grants, Right of Way and Permits, Environmental, and Agreements. Close communication with Community Works is also important as they will have a huge stationary planning effort above and beyond what we have seen in either of the LRT lines, creating very detailed level action plans.

Jim Alexander introduced himself as the Director of Design and Engineering and provided a brief overview of his experience including his former role as the Design Manager for Central Corridor from PE to Construction. Mr. Alexander will be the Project Manager for the Engineering Services Contract. He will be managing the completion of preliminary engineering, advance preliminary engineering, and final design. Once final design is complete, the Met Council will go out for bid for various contracts for construction and the engineering consultant will be supporting the project with design support during construction. The design team will be responsible for addressing questions and submittals from contractors as we go through the construction phase.

Bill James asked a question related to what analysis the engineering consultant will provide on freight rail. Mr. Alexander indicated that the team will be looking at the freight rail aspect through the PE phase, getting information and coordinating efforts with the environmental process. This is a process similar to what was deployed on Central Corridor.

Robin Caufman introduced herself as the new Assistant Director of Administration, Public Involvement, and Communications for both SPO and the Central Corridor LRT project. Prior to this, Ms. Caufman had been working as the Manager of Public Involvement for Central Corridor for the past 5 years. In her new role, Ms. Caufman will be preparing, implementing, and maintaining the Public Involvement and Communication Strategic Plan for SWLRT. Currently there is a draft and it is hoped that it will be finalized by early this spring with implementation to follow. Ms. Caufman noted that she will be working with each of the agencies and their staff over the next few months getting the Communications Steering Committee established and started. She will also be overseeing the administration functions of the SPO and Central Corridor offices as well as working closely with Hennepin County and Katie Walker on the Community Advisory Committee and Community Works.

Commissioner Gail Dorfman asked how the office will be working with the outreach for the Corridors of Opportunity, who are looking at the history of minority populations and other communities? Ms. Caufman responded that the office will be communicating regularly with their staff and that she is setting up a meeting to talk about that public involvement element and getting connected to these groups.

Katie Walker introduced herself and provided background on her experience working at Hennepin County and on the Southwest LRT project during the early phases of the project. Ms. Walker worked on the feasibility stages, the alternatives analysis, and through the draft environmental impact statement phase. Her role in the Project Office moving forward will be a bridge to the LRT engineering and land use planning to insure that it is integrated and incorporated into the design and development of the line and to insure implementation of the Corridors of Opportunity initiative. Ms. Walker will act as the principal liaison in many meetings with the design and engineering staff as well as the Community Works staff from Hennepin County and city partners to ensure dialog is occurring early on and very frequently. Commissioner Callison asked Ms. Walker where her office will be located. Ms. Walker indicated that she will hold offices at SPO as well as at Hennepin County.

6. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) RECONSTITUTION

Robin Caufman gave an update on the development of a reconstituted Community Advisory Committee (CAC). CAC will have a dual role providing advice on the design and engineering of the SWLRT project and also have components and questions of the Community Works and Land Use. Eventually, there will also be a Business Advisory Committee (BAC) later on in the year. Ms. Caufman and Ms. Walker have been working on the CAC roster and we are looking to expand the membership to 32 - 35 members. Some additional groups for membership include the City of Edina, the ADA community, transit users, active living/complete streets, under-represented groups, housing interests, biking/trail interests, youth groups, senior groups, and educational institutions. The hope is to send out invitations by the end of the year to identify the new members, notify them in February, and hold the first meeting in the Spring of 2012.

Chair Haigh mentioned an initiative called Eds and Meds trying to link the use of transit by people going to work in the healthcare institutions and companies. Commissioner Callison noted that 32 - 35 is a large group to manage and for people to feel like it is meaningful and engaged and asked about the experience on Central Corridor. Ms. Caufman responded that on that project some different strategies were used to make sure everyone had an opportunity for engagement. These same strategies will be considered on Southwest. Councilmember Jim Brimeyer asked who appoints this group. Ms. Caufman responded that the invitations will go out under Chair Haigh's and Commissioner Dorfman's signature. Chair Haigh affirmed that the Met Council and Hennepin County will appoint. Ms. Caufman fielded various questions regarding the distribution of the membership and the role of the CAC and the BAC.

Chair Haigh mentioned that the Met Council had asked the Governor to include SWLRT in the Bonding Bill for this legislative session. The Governor will probably make his recommendations in a couple of weeks, probably before the end of December so we don't know how that will fare in the competitive process. Chair Haigh noted the Minneapolis Chamber, St. Paul Chamber, and Twin West Chamber are hosting a tour of Central Corridor

LRT and the entire Southwest Corridor as well as the Interchange project in downtown Minneapolis next to Target Center for speaker Zellers and Representative Holberg who Chairs the Appropriations Committee or Bonding Committee in the House.

Councilmember Brimeyer asked about whether there are concerns with staff working on Central Corridor coming on to the Southwest Project and how their roles on the other project will be addressed. Mr. Fuhrmann gave an example of whether we are ready to bring some of the construction folks, construction managers, construction inspectors from Central to Southwest to help us develop those construction packages for Southwest at this time? The answer would be no, we are not ready. Many of the roles needed for the early development of Southwest are wrapping up for Central Corridor. Also, there are those functions that support the overall new starts program so those are program positions that Mr. Fuhrmann and Ms. Cauffman will be responsible for on both projects.

Commissioner Dorfman asked about responsibility of the environmental process. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that Hennepin County has taken responsibility to develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, including the amended scope to include the freight rail relocation issue, and will continue in that role until it is published. The Met Council will be responsible for development of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Gail Dorfman asked about the timing of the DEIS publication. Mr. Fuhrmann confirmed after releasing the document there will be a 45 day or so public comment period. Rather than a formal report, upon completion of the review process, there will be a slate of comments that the project office will organize into approximately 10-12 sub-theme areas that feed into the design team's work in the engineering process.

Chair Haigh noted that putting this into a political context, it is important to get that input and have that be included in the land use planning and in the design to get that community input substantively. From a political standpoint, keeping this on track is equally important because we are going to the legislature asking for bonding authority saying this is going to be an immediate job creator. If we slip by 6 months and we can't create jobs in the timetable we said we are it makes our request much less competitive. This is a really important issue not only from gaining really important perspective of a community that gets developed and processed, but it's also important for us to keep it on track to garner the political support we need to garner to make this project successful and to keep it on schedule.

The meeting adjourned at 11:24am.

Respectfully submitted, Lynne Hahne