

Metropolitan Council

Meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee
February 3, 2021

Members/Alternates Present	Chair Charlie Zelle Mike Barnes Molly Cummings Dan Duffy Christopher Ferguson Irene Fernando	Jason Gadd Debbie Goettel James Hovland Chris LaTondresse Wes Kooistra Will Roach	Jake Spano Kathy Nelson (Alt) Rebecca Schack (Alt) Abdi Sallah (Alt)
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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Charlie Zelle called the February 3, 2021, meeting of the Southwest Corridor Management Committee to order at 10:00 a.m. Introductions were made as CMC hasn't met in a while and there are many new members.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Zelle presented the December 4, 2019, SWLRT Corridor Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. Council Member Cummings made a motion to approve, Commissioner Fernando seconded the motion. After a roll call, the minutes were approved.

3. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Chair Zelle welcomed the group. There has been a lot of progress to date on this project that the Chair and staff are excited to share. Chair Zelle suggested that going forward, this group meet quarterly to be provided updates on the progress.

4. PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Jim Alexander, SWLRT Project Director, provided project highlights from 2020, some of which include: receiving the Full Funding Grant Agreement on September 14; civil construction at 35% completion, with 94% of the private utilities complete and 65% of the public utilities complete. All 15 building demolitions are complete; Systems has mobilized and is in design and initiating procurement of materials; Franklin O&M Facility modifications are 40% complete; and 11 of the 27 light rail vehicles have been delivered.

Mr. Alexander explained two of the construction challenges the project is currently facing. One is the need for an additional layer of protection between the BNSF freight and our LRT trains by extending a corridor protection wall by approximately one mile. This was added as a requirement from BNSF. Images of the corridor protection wall were shown, along with a map showing the location. A change order is currently being negotiated with the contractor for this work.

The second challenge is in the Kenilworth area. Soil settlement was observed in some areas during installation of metal sheeting (known as sheet piles) that will be used to support the excavation for the tunnel construction. Out of an abundance of caution to protect the foundations of immediately adjacent buildings, the project office determined that an alternative construction method is needed along an approximately 500-foot segment of the tunnel. The method is called secant wall construction. A map of where the secant wall will be built was shown, along with an example of what the wall will look like.

Both of these elements will have a significant impact to the project's overall schedule due to their scope and complexity. Commissioner Goettel asked if there are any other possibilities besides the secant wall? Mr. Alexander said due to the confined space in this area and limited right of way, no other options have been identified. Vibrating sheets was not allowed due to concerns for potential impacts to nearby buildings.

Mayor Hovland asked if the secant wall was used elsewhere in Minnesota. Mr. Alexander stated that yes, an example of which is in the nearby Uptown neighborhood in Minneapolis. Secant wall construction is a

common practice but is more expensive than sheet piling. The secant wall construction will require resequencing the tunnel work, which will impact the project schedule.

5. CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

Mr. Alexander went through the progress of the construction. The following questions and comments were made.

Mayor Spano asked about the status of the South Cedar Lake bike trail; he would like to see the bike trail open up. Mr. Alexander said he understands the need for the trails to open as soon as possible and noted that there are alternative routes for the closed trails. We do know that the South Cedar Lake Trail will not be open by the end of 2021 as originally planned but staff will work with the contractor to see if there are any opportunities to open segments earlier.

Mayor Gadd concurred with Mayor Spano on the bike trails and would like the trails open as soon as possible. A major concern in Hopkins is Shady Oak Station and the park and ride facility. Mayor Gadd appreciates the continuation of this discussion for options in this area. Mr. Alexander mentioned the parking lot at the south end will be deferred at this time.

Mayor Hovland asked if the trail underpass at Wooddale Station is the only underpass or will there be others? Mr. Alexander stated there is an underpass under the freight tracks at Louisiana Station and under Blake Road. The project also includes pedestrian tunnels near Opus station.

Mr. Alexander discussed the planned improvements at the Franklin Operations and Maintenance Facility. West runner tracks will be added next the building to provide storage for the new vehicles. Mr. Alexander stated this work is well underway and is scheduled to be completed later this year.

6. LIGHT RAIL VEHICLE UPDATE

Mr. Alexander reported there will be a total of 27 vehicles for the project, of which 11 have been delivered. Photos were shown of the vehicle production in Sacramento. The new LRVs include a wider aisleway in the center of the vehicle to accommodate wheelchair access.

7. DBE AND WORKFORCE UPDATE

Mr. Jon Tao, DBE Specialist for the project provided an update on the DBE and Workforce activity. Staff are monitoring DBE participation and meet with DBE subcontractors regularly. The Civil construction contract includes a DBE goal of 16% and participation is currently approximately 20%. The Systems construction contract has a DBE goal of 12% and participation is currently 10.7% and is expected to increase with increased field work activities. The Franklin O&M contract has a 15% DBE goal and participation is currently 9.6%; with only a third of the work completed at this time participation is expected to increase.

Mr. Tao went through the Workforce Participation. The goal is 20% for women and 32% for POCI for each of the construction contracts. For the Civil contract, women are at 8%; POCI at 21%. We do see increases in these numbers as the project moves forward. We continue to work closely with the Dept. of Human Rights, who does this counting.

Participation on the Franklin contract is 8% for women and 28% for POCI. Systems was not shown at this time, due to only 230 hours of work.

Chair Zelle asked for the disaggregated data for the DBE that was spent to date. Mr. Tao will share this data with CMC in a follow-up email on February 4, 2021 from Dawn Hoffner.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Sophia Ginis, Manager of Outreach, provided an update on outreach activities. Ms. Ginis mentioned we have a great outreach team and remain committed to keeping the community involved and informed.

Outreach includes weekly construction updates that are emailed along with timely updates on our website. We continue to have a 24-hour hotline, which in 2020 had 270 calls. Our outreach staff are very well known in the corridor and answer many questions and address concerns as they come up. Regular meetings with Community Information Workgroups consisting of citizens along the corridor are held for each city and will continue into 2021. Also, virtual Town Halls will continue into 2021. Staff are working on some exciting videos that will be shared as soon as they are ready.

Chair Zelle commended the outreach team and looks forward to in person meetings in the future, when safe to do so.

9. ADJOURN

Chair Zelle thanked all for participating today. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Hoffner, Recording Secretary