

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee
September 7, 2011

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Jan Callison called the September 7th, 2011 meeting of the Southwest LRT Management Committee to order at 10:08am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Callison presented the August 3, 2011 Southwest Management Committee meeting minutes for approval. The motion for approval passed.

3. PROJECT STATUS UPDATES

Mark Fuhrmann started his presentation by announcing the Southwest Light Rail has received the letter from FTA granting permission to enter into PE. With the receipt of the letter, one of the next steps is to embark upon the procurement for the Engineering Services Consultant who will lead the project office through PE and Final Design. The next step will be to hire a Management Team and technical experts for the project. The other step is to find a permanent Project Office. The Project Office staff has been meeting with the cities to keep them involved in the process of the search.

In regards to the third bullet in the letter granting permission to enter into PE, it was asked if the Southwest LRT Project Office is responsible for analyzing the technical and financial as well as the scoping issues relative to relocating the freight rail line as it relates to mitigation. Mr. Fuhrmann replied that the Project Office staff has not yet met with FTA, however that question amongst others will be asked during their first sit down. Mark will follow up during the October meeting after meeting with the FTA in September.

It was asked how the SWLRT project rating of “medium” holds up to other projects. Mr. Fuhrmann noted there are 4 project currently ranked “medium high”, 7 are ranked “medium”, and the Pawtucket, RI program is not rated as it is below the dollar threshold rating.

Patrick Connoy, Senior Admin Manager of Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit gave a presentation on Southwest Community Works (SWCW). Mr. Connoy briefed the Management Committee on the mission, principles and current Community Work Projects. Mr. Connoy also explained the action plans

currently in place as part of the Southwest Community Works Work plan. He noted that \$5 million has been awarded by HUD, and \$800 thousand was allocated to the SWCW Project.

4. PREVIOUS MEETING FOLLOW-UP

Mr. Fuhrmann updated the committee on the 2012 Legislative Bonding Tour. Mr. Fuhrmann has been working with the Minnesota Chamber, Downtown Council, and Twin West Chamber. The tour is expected to take place prior to mid-November. It was suggested that they speak with the Edina and Eden Prairie Chambers as well due to the 5 stations in Eden Prairie.

Mr. Fuhrmann explained the role of the Management Committee in regards to taking a position on the Freight Rail issue. Mr. Fuhrmann stated the role of the Management Committee is to advise the Council in design and construction of the LRT project, specifically on the Environmental Review, Preliminary Design, Preliminary Engineering, Final Design, Implementation Method and Construction.

Phil Eckert gave a history of the Freight Rail in the corridor centered on the severing of the rail line at Hiawatha Avenue and 29th Street for the construction of the Trunk Highway 55, the inability to implement the MN&S re-route at the time of the severing due to the previously unknown contamination of the Golden Auto site, and the resulting temporary relocation of TC&W in the Kenilworth Corridor. Mr. Eckert provided the committee with a map of the 6 alternatives that were explored. After discussions with MnDOT and the freight rail, it was believed that a number of those alternatives would not be feasible. In conclusion, it was determined the most viable and therefore preferred route for freight rail is the MN&S line in St. Louis Park and the preferred location for LRT is in the Kenilworth corridor along with the Kenilworth Bike Trail – absent the freight rail. Councilmember Ann Mavity from St. Louis Park noted that should the reroute occur, mitigation is very robust.

It was asked if the county, MnDOT, the Met Council and the City of St. Louis Park are willing to sit down to discuss mitigation as it relates to the SWLRT and the Freight Rail issue. Commissioner Gail Dorfman stated that Commissioner Peter McLaughlin and she sent the city of St. Louis Park a letter to make that offer, however, before they received a response, the city council of St. Louis Park took legal action to appeal the Freight Rail Relocation EAW. Because that is currently on the table, they are unable to meet due to a court of appeals case open. Councilmember Mavity replied that they had a small window to put in an appeal and they had to act quickly. However they are open to sitting down at any point to discuss options.

5. FUNDING PARTNER COMMITMENTS

Mr. Fuhrmann provided the committee with the status of local funding commitments as well as overall project funding. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that all local funding commitments must be secured prior to receiving entry into Final Design, and that is not negotiable.

6. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Mr. Fuhrmann briefed the committee on the SWLRT advisory and policy input committees as well as identification of stakeholders and their issues.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32am.

Respectfully submitted, Debra Sisneros