



## Meeting Minutes

Southwest Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

January 27, 2010, 6:00 to 7:30 PM

Wolfe Lake Professional Center

### Meeting Attendees

#### CAC Members and Alternates

Frank Powell  
Paul Nelson  
Barry Schade  
Vicki Moore  
Ross D'Emanuele  
John Wheaton  
Art Higinbotham  
Rick Wieblen  
Vida Ditter  
Bill James  
Jerry Krause

#### Southwest Staff & Consultant Team

Katie Walker (Hennepin County)  
Adele Hall (Hennepin County)  
Scott Reed (HDR Engineering)  
Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting)  
Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting)  
Dennis Gimmestad (Mn/DOT)

#### Other Attendees

Cheryl Boldon (Southwest Station)  
Rhea Sullivan (West Calhoun Neighborhood Association)  
Charles Marks  
Brian Willette (PAC, Cedar Lake Park Association)

## I. Updates

### Project Schedule

Katie Walker introduced Ann Wolff from the Project Team who will be taking a more active role in helping to manage CAC meetings, including sending out CAC materials. Ms. Walker then distributed a draft of the 2010 Work Plan to give an idea of the activities and schedule planned for the project in the coming year. The Metropolitan Council process for amending the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) to include the Southwest locally preferred alternative (LPA) was discussed and a detailed Metropolitan Council schedule will be emailed to CAC members. At their January 20 meeting Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County staff briefed the Metropolitan Council on the history of the project. The Council will meet again on February 24, when they will select the LPA for the purpose of amending the TPP, set the Public Hearing for April 12, and open the comment period. On May 12 the Metropolitan Council will meet to take final action to amend the TPP. It is expected that the New Starts Application will be submitted this summer after the TPP is amended. The TPP must be amended before the Federal Transit Authority would consider the application.

**Q:** Could you explain the changes we've been hearing about regarding how the FTA will be evaluating projects for New Starts funding?

**A:** During the Bush Administration, the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI) was treated as a pass/fail measure to evaluate projects. The Obama Administration has decided it will no longer be



used as a pass/fail measure even though it will continue to be a factor in project rating. There has been misinformation reported that the CEI is gone, which is not true. This summer there will be a period of "rule making" during which specific modifications will be made to the evaluation process. Since rules will not be completed before the Southwest project submits its application to enter Preliminary Engineering (PE), this submittal will be made under the existing guidelines.

**Q:** Does the new policy change the HDR recommendation of LRT 3A as the LPA?

**A:** No, LRT 3A was the recommended LPA based on multiple evaluation measures, not just the CEI.

**Q:** At the PAC meeting, there was not a request for the PAC to continue to endorse staying with the current LPA recommendation. Why not?

**A:** At the discretion of the PAC they could revisit their action on an LPA recommendation, however no motion was made to do so. As a point of clarification, the CEI will still be included in evaluation of projects along with other criteria, there is just more flexibility now in the level the CEI would need to be at.

Discussion continued regarding the 2010 project schedule handout. Ms. Walker explained that all four alternatives will be included in the DEIS, which is expected to wrap up in late summer 2010. When the DEIS is released, there will be a comment period during which comments are officially recorded. While all comments to date have been compiled, those received during the official comment period put the FTA on notice that the public wants those comments addressed.

**Q:** Will the FTA do their own fact finding mission or do they rely on Hennepin County?

**A:** They have tours and come to town periodically. In addition, they rely on local partners such as Hennepin County and the Met Council.

**Q:** Will the CAC have input in the process?

**A:** All public outreach including input from the CAC will be documented in the DEIS report. In addition, CAC members will be invited along with the general public to provide comment during the 45-day comment period.

**Q:** Regarding the Cedar Lake Parkway water table, will someone actually measure this or simply take Hennepin County's word for it?

**A:** HDR has already looked at soil borings, and there will be multiple resources used including the geological tables. This information will be part of the DEIS report which will be available to the general public, CAC, TAC, PAC, and open for public comment.

**Q:** Is there any opportunity for CAC involvement in station area planning?

**A:** Adele Hall on the project team and Amanda Arnold with the City of Minneapolis are working on this and we are discussing how Minneapolis wants to structure community involvement. Also, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has established Southwest as a Community Works Project—similar to Midtown Greenway, Lowry Ave., etc—which is focused on economic development, building the tax base, and place-making at stations. We are still in the process of developing the organizational structure, but there will be opportunities for public participation through the Community Works process as well.

#### Legislative Update

Southwest is in the Governor's bonding proposal for \$7 million which is what was needed to move ahead to the next phase of project development.



### Member Updates

Art Higinbotham discussed the Minneapolis City Council's resolution to support the LPA with three conditional clauses. The three clauses are: 1. That mitigation be included in the base cost of the project and not part of contingency; 2. That impacts to parks be minimized to the greatest extent possible; and 3. That there is no significant disruption to the neighborhoods during construction. In addition, Art indicated that neighborhoods will be working together to create a joint position on the project plans.

### **II. 106 Review—Dennis Gimmestad, Mn/DOT**

Dennis Gimmestad with the State Historic Preservation Office will serve as lead staff for Mn/DOT through the 106 process whereby Mn/DOT is working on FTA's behalf. The purpose of the 106 review is to find out if there are architectural or archeological sites affected by the project and what needs to be done if such sites are found. Mr. Gimmestad distributed a handout with a flow chart to describe the 106 process. This handout will also be emailed to CAC members.

It was clarified that the 106 process is separate from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, under which the DEIS is being conducted. Although the NEPA documentation will discuss the 106 process, the 106 items are resolved in a separate document. As part of the 106 review anyone can ask to become a "consulting party" and be brought more closely into the process. Usually it is more helpful to have organizations/neighborhood groups request to become a consulting party than an individual as the federal agency will see that as more productive. The consulting parties will also help in discussions of mitigation.

Mr. Gimmestad discussed the survey method and boundaries, called the Area of Potential Effect, which is generally defined as ¼ mile of the stations and 300 feet of the line. Historical buildings will be documented with a focus on those buildings 45 years or older.

**Q:** When I-394 was built Mn/DOT did a similar study. Do you do it again or can that data be used?

**A:** We use that data to review, but we will update with new properties and standards. For many reasons, the data goes out of date and needs to be reviewed.

**Q:** Do cities need to provide data?

**A:** Any information that cities or groups have should be shared. Special attention is paid to formal historical preservation commissions.

**Q:** What are the mechanics of the survey? Is it boots on the ground with crews?

**A:** Maps and data are analyzed and some crews will be on site taking pictures of all pre-1965 buildings.

**Q:** What if something significant is identified?

**A:** First we will determine what the impacts are. If the impacts are adverse then the consulting parties will meet with us to consult and determine how best to deal with the issue. Sometimes that may mean moving the project, changing the design, reducing the effects, or determining best mitigation efforts. There will be detailed data on all archeological sites, as well. The goal is to include in the DEIS those properties that have been identified as possible additions to the historical property register at that time in the process. Public input is very important to the 106 process.

**Q:** Even though the capital costs of some elements (relocation of freight lines) are not in the CEI, would historical properties in the area of freight relocation be considered in the CEI?

**A:** If the freight relocation was part of the scope, perhaps, but in this case the freight relocation is a separate issue apart from this project. Ms. Walker added that Mn/DOT and Hennepin County in a separate study will be looking into the freight line relocation issue; this issue is not part of the Southwest DEIS. Mn/DOT will have to determine which federal agency



will be overseeing that process, likely the Federal Railroad Administration.

**Q:** What is the timeline of that freight rail study?

**A:** The County Board authorized staff on Tuesday to issue a Request for Proposals and work with Mn/DOT, HCRRA, and St. Louis Park.

**Q:** Do Preliminary Engineering funds for the LRT project depend on the approval of the relocation? Do they have to be done sequentially/in parallel?

**A:** Moving the freight rail line is a separate project entirely.

Due to time constraints, it was determined by the CAC members that they would like to discuss the station area planning and reschedule the discussion of the DEIS Methodology Sections for the next meeting.

### **III. Station Area Plans—Suburban Stations**

Adele Hall presented information on the suburban station conceptual plans. She noted that the plans are on the Southwest Transitway website and the link will be sent to the members. Ms. Hall gave an overview of the station area planning process which began with visioning sessions in the fall of 2008. Consultants from Hay Dobbs took notes and created a conceptual plan. Stakeholders gave comments and the plans were refined. Consultants then presented information about the suburban stations at two public open houses in each city over the course of the summer. The plans will be used in several ways: as part of the New Starts Application; to engage the public; and to help cities plan and change zoning codes and comprehensive plans. A suggestion was made by a CAC member to make sure that it is clearly stated that these plans are conceptual ideas and not blueprints.

**Q:** Does funding now make Southwest opening date in 2015 or earlier?

**A:** The likely projected opening date is now 2017, with PE starting in 2010 though 2012.

Current exploration is underway regarding various project delivery methods—design/bid like Hiawatha or design/bid/build like Central Corridor.

### **IV. DEIS Methodology Sections**

The methodology memos were distributed and will also be emailed out to CAC members. Southwest staff will ask CAC members to respond with their top three issues, then proceed with scheduling experts at future meetings to elaborate on the areas that are of greatest interest to CAC members.

### **V. Meeting Schedule**

A revised meeting schedule with a rescheduled November date will be emailed out.

### **VI. Open Forum**

Cedar Lake Park was represented and stated their desire to work with other neighborhood groups to plan for the LRT.

**Q:** When will the Community Works process/structure be determined?

**A:** County staff will send out the Board Resolution which allows for a ninety day period to draft organizational structure, workplan, and budget.

### **VII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.