



## Southwest Transitway Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Wednesday, August 22, 2007, 6:30 to 8:00 PM

St. Louis Park City Hall  
(5005 Minnetonka Boulevard)

### Agenda

- |      |   |                 |
|------|---|-----------------|
| I.   | Introductions   | 6:30 to 6:45 PM |
| II.  | Southwest Transitway Project Update   | 6:45 to 7:00 PM |
| III. | Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview of Recommended LRT Routes</li><li>• Overview of the EIS Process</li></ul> | 7:00 to 7:30 PM |
| IV.  | Q/A for Southwest CAC Members   | 7:35 to 7:45 PM |
| V.   | Open Forum for Non-members  | 7:45 to 8:00 PM |

The next meeting of the Southwest Transitway Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is scheduled for Wednesday, September 26th from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the St. Louis Park City Hall.

**Southwest Transitway**  
Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting Summary  
July 25, 2007  
St. Louis Park City Hall

**Attendees**

SW CAC Members and Alternates

Sandy Grassy	Eden Prairie	Art Higinbotham	Minneapolis
Rick Wieblen	Eden Prairie	Eric Lind	Minneapolis
Gina Bystedt	Eden Prairie	Barry Schade/Bruce Monson	Minneapolis
Frank Powell	Eden Prairie	Vida Ditter	Minneapolis
John Brill	Eden Prairie	John Wheaton	Minneapolis
Sally Velick	Minnetonka	John Slack	Minneapolis
Dennis Spalla	Minnetonka	Ross D'Emanuele	Minneapolis
Maria Klein	Minnetonka	Alex Bauman	Minneapolis
Mindy Paulson	Hopkins	Nels Sandberg	Minneapolis
Bob Tift	St. Louis Park		
Paul Nelson	Edina		

**Other Attendees**

Steve Simon	State Representative
Jeanette Colby	Kenwood Resident
Cecilia Michel	Citizen
Don Ostrom	Cedar Isles Dean
Dick Heglund	Bassett Creek ROC

**Staff and Presenters**

Commissioner Gail Dorfman, Chair, SW Policy Advisory Committee  
Katie Walker, Hennepin County Study Manager  
Kathie Doty, KLD Consulting  
Rachel Hefte, U of MN Extension Facilitator  
Elise Durbin, City of Minnetonka  
Adam Fulton, City of St. Louis Park

1) Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Gail Dorfman convened the first meeting of the Southwest Transitway Community Advisory Committee (SW CAC), welcoming community representatives. She indicated that studies conducted over the past five years have included significant efforts to reach out to and engage the public, and that the formation of the SW CAC represents the next logical phase of outreach. With the start of the environmental study phase, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the time has come to establish a formal community group to take a more detailed look at transitway alternatives from a community perspective.

Commissioner Dorfman asked attendees to introduce themselves and then asked Katie Walker, Southwest Study Manager, to provide an overview of the Southwest Transitway study history.

2) Update on Southwest Transitway Study

Katie Walker described the recent Alternatives Analysis (AA) study, which is a federally required study in which a broad range of transit alternatives are evaluated to determine the one that

best meets the travel needs of the study area. After comparing the benefits, cost and impacts of 11 transit alternatives, three light rail transit alternatives were recommended to be retained for further study in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). During the Draft EIS process the three light rail transit alternatives will be narrowed to one, which will then become the locally preferred alternative for which federal funding will be pursued. She also outlined a timeline for planning and development of the Southwest Transitway which shows the Transitway being operational in 2015. Ms. Walker stressed that, in order to achieve completion of the project by 2015, there will need to be consensus on the locally preferred alternative to be pursued, as well as funding support from the County, the State, and the Federal Transit Administration New Starts program.

Ms. Walker described the role of the SW CAC, indicating that members will be responsible for providing input regarding community concerns and issues. Members should also communicate with their communities, and advise on ways to increase community input. The SW CAC will also report on a quarterly basis to the SW Policy Advisory Committee.

SW CAC meeting attendees asked a range of questions and made comments reflecting their interests, including:

- Why does the Met Council show the SW Transitway as a post-2020 project?  
Ms. Walker explained that within the current funding stream for transit projects the Metropolitan Council expects to receive funding to construct and operate the Hiawatha LRT line, the Northstar Commuter Rail line and the Central LRT line by 2014. After those three rail lines are operating, all of the Metropolitan Council annual revenues will be spent on operating the bus and rail systems and there will not be enough money until after 2020 to construct the Southwest Transitway. The SW Policy Advisory Committee is working to find ways to move the SW Transitway up in the region's time table. This will depend on funding and political support.
- Will the ridership estimates include developments being planned, but not yet built (e.g. the Bassett Creek redevelopment project)?  
Ms. Walker responded that the most recent study (AA) does not include recently planned projects such as the Bassett Creek project because the current ridership forecasting model only includes development assumed in the approved comprehensive plans of the cities. The ridership forecast conducted for the Southwest DEIS will include the updated local comprehensive plans due to the Metropolitan Council in 2008. Therefore, future ridership estimates will be able to take such planned development into account.
- Will funding for the SW Transitway DEIS be an issue?  
Ms. Walker responded that there was a request for \$1 million in State bonding for the next study phase (a Draft Environmental Impact Statement – DEIS), but this was part of a vetoed bill. The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) has appropriated funds to begin the DEIS, and there will be another request for State bonding funds in the '08 session. Ms. Walker also indicated that the portion funded by the HCRRA will be 'credited' to the County as a 'local match' when determining how the total project will be funded.
- With Metro Transit's recent history of cutting bus service when revenues decline, who would be responsible for delivering services as outlined in the enhanced bus alternative?  
Ms. Walker responded that the assumption is that Metro Transit would be responsible for operating the Southwest LRT line and that Metro Transit and Southwest Metro Transit would be responsible for operating the feeder bus system.

- What is the timing for key decisions?  
Ms. Walker outlined milestones in the process, and agreed to prepare a more detailed chart showing when various decisions would be made and by whom. She indicated that the decision process for the present recommended alternatives went through the SW PAC, then to the public by way of open houses and a formal public hearing, then to the HCRRA. The HCRRA is presently working with the Metropolitan Council to include the recommended alternative, light rail, in their update of the 2030 Transit Plan. They are also asking the FTA for permission to enter into the DEIS study phase. She also indicated as a reference point, that the Central Corridor light rail project is just entering the Preliminary Engineering phase, and the NorthStar Commuter rail project is in the Final Design phase.

A key milestone for the SW Transitway will be the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative, which should occur within the next 18 to 24 months.

- Why did the AA study result in a recommendation to pursue LRT and not BRT?  
Ms. Walker explained that BRT has both capacity issues and did not perform well on the CEI, a key measure of cost effectiveness for transit alternatives. In terms of capacity, during the am and pm peak, the BRT would need to either operate at a two to three minute frequency or have three to four articulated buses operating in tandem on a 7.5 minute frequency. Both of these options have operational issues associated with them. In terms of the CEI, the goal is to have a CEI under \$29 at this point, and the BRT alternatives studied in the AA had CEIs in the \$55 - \$75 zone. The CEI factors in annualize capital and operating costs and the travel time savings attributed to the LRT line. The main reasons for the high BRT CEIs was a combination of relatively low ridership or travel time savings which could not offset the annualized capital and operating costs. Ms. Walker indicated that BRT alternatives typically perform better when they are adjacent to existing roadways.
- How is the SW Transitway study process interfacing with Minneapolis' current transportation study (known as Access Mpls)?  
Ms. Walker indicated that she is a member of the Access Mpls study group, and regularly communicates with City staff about the impact of recommendations coming out of this study. She said that there are conflicts between some of the SW options and what is being recommended by Access Mpls. The DEIS process will include working these conflicts out through the scoping process where all viable alternatives are put on the table, then an agreed upon list of what should be studied further is developed. The scoping hearing, a formal meeting with agency and public involvement, will occur after the FTA gives the County the OK to proceed with the DEIS, and after a 30-day notice period. Ms. Walker said the earliest the scoping hearing is likely to occur is October 2007.

### 3) Introduction of Facilitator

Katie Walker introduced Rachel Hefte, University Extension, a professional facilitator with significant experience in leadership training and community process facilitation. Ms. Hefte talked about her background and use of "technology of engagement" or TOP methods. She asked the group to review the list of expectations for the SW CAC, and to come to the next meeting ready to comment on or add to this list. A key goal for the facilitator will be to identify common values and vision, and to help keep this out front as we address individual concerns.

### 4) Open Forum

MS. Walker indicated that each SW CAC meeting will include time at the end of the meeting to receive comments and input from the public. The following comments were offered:

- Jeanette Colby said that she understands that people want to move quickly on advancing a SW Transitway, but she cautioned that there are many thorny issues to be worked out and asked for the group to respect concerns of community members who have issues they want to see addressed  
Ms. Walker responded that she appreciates the interest in continuing to move the project forward, but at the same time sufficient time and effort will be given to involving the community in the process for determining which is the preferred routing in Minneapolis. To do this the initial focus of the DEIS is intended to deal with determining the best route for the Mpls portion of the Transitway
- Ms. Colby further asked if looking at development is part of the DEIS process?  
Ms. Walker responded that the FTA does look at land use when they rank a project for funding. She explained that the FTA considers three factors in their ranking: 1) the cost effectiveness of a project (measured by the CEI); 2) viability of funding as outlined in a proposed project's 20-yr funding plan; and 3) land use impacts. She noted that the Hiawatha light rail line ranked well on the land use criteria due in part to their station area planning work.
- Barry Schade asked if Mpls City staff should be part of the SW CAC.  
Ms. Walker explained that Mpls and other city staff have been participating in the last two studies as part of a standing Technical Advisory Committee, and that city officials also serve on the Policy Advisory Committee. Both the SW PAC and TAC members are copied on SW CAC activities, and are welcome to attend SW CAC meetings.
- Cecilia Michel remarked that there seem to be more issues on the north end of the corridor where areas are more residential than commercial/industrial. She thanked the members for serving on the SW CAC, given the importance of the community concerns.

Other comments:

- It was remarked that outside factors could get in the way of the SW Transitway timetable, e.g. the timing of the widening of the bridge of Hwy 100. Ms. Walker indicated that railroad re-routing is a complex issue that will require further attention to address properly.
- Are there other transitway projects in competition with the SW Transitway? Ms. Walker described the Met Council 2030 Transit map that shows an array of planned transitways. NorthStar commuter rail and Central Corridor light rail are both moving forward and are ahead of Southwest. As part of the update of the 2030 Transit plan, the Met Council will consider how the region should proceed to further develop a regional system of transitways. State funding is limited, so it will continue to be important to prioritize.

5) Closing

Member requests and suggestions:

- Better maps are needed that show more detail for the station areas, including what neighborhoods exist around the station areas
- It would be helpful for members to tour the corridor – via bike, bus, or simulation
- The Lowry Hill East neighborhood in Mpls should be invited to participate

Ms. Walker asked the group if they were interested in meeting every month for the first few months and then revert to the every other month schedule later in 2008. The group concurred that this is a good idea. Meetings will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month, and the next meeting will be on August 22 at St. Louis Park City Hall from 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM.

Meeting was adjourned.

*If you have corrections or comments regarding this meeting summary, please contact Kathie Doty at [kdoty@umn.edu](mailto:kdoty@umn.edu). We will revise the meeting summary with any comments received by the Monday before the monthly SW CAC meeting.*

**SW Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Member List**  
August 2007

<b>City</b>	<b>Station Location</b>	<b>Members Appointed to Date</b>
Eden Prairie	<u>LRT 1 routing</u> TH 5/Mitchell Road TH 62  <u>LRT 3 routing</u> Southwest Eden Prairie Town Center Golden Triangle City West	Sandy Grassy
		Rick Wieblen
		Gina Bystedt
		Frank Powell
		John Brill
		TBA
Minnetonka	<u>LRT 1 routing</u> Rowland Road  <u>LRT 3 routing</u> Shady Oak Road Opus	Sally Velick
		Dennis Spalla
		Maria Klein
Hopkins	<u>LRT 1 &amp; 3 routing</u> Shady Oak Road Downtown Hopkins Blake Road	Mindy Paulson
		TBA
		<u>TBA</u>
St. Louis Park	<u>LRT 1 &amp; 3 routing</u> Louisiana Wooddale Beltline	Bob Tift
		<u>TBA</u>
		<u>TBA</u>
Edina	<u>LRT 1 &amp; 3 routing</u> At-large	Paul Nelson
Minneapolis	<u>LRT A</u>	
• CIDNA	West Lake	Art Higinbotham
• Kenwood Isles	21 <sup>st</sup>	Eric Lind
• Bryn Mawr	Penn	Barry Schade Bruce Monson
• Basset Creek ROC	Van White	Vida Ditter
• North Loop	Royalston	John Slack
	<u>LRT C</u>	
• East Isles	Hennepin	Ross D' Emanuele
• Whittier	Lyndale	Alex Bauman
• Stevens Square	Franklin	Nels Sandberg
• Downtown Council	Downtown Stations	John Wheaton

