



Meeting Minutes

Southwest Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

February 23, 2011, 6:00 to 7:30 PM

Wolfe Lake Professional Center

Meeting Attendees

CAC Members and Alternates

Denny Spalla
Barry Schade
Bill James
Paul Nelson
Art Higinbotham
Jeanette Colby
Bob Tift
Rick Weiblen
Vicki Moore
Vida Ditter
Frank Powell

Southwest Staff & Consultant Team

Katie Walker (Hennepin County)
Adele Hall (Hennepin County)
Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting)

Other Attendees

Susan Hoyt (Metropolitan Council)
Jeff Peltola (West Calhoun Neighborhood Council)
Reed Holiman (Jones Lang LaSalle)

I. Updates

SW CAC members provided updates:

- Bill James reported on the kick off meeting of the newly formed Southwest Corridor Management Committee (CMC), which Bill attends on behalf of the CAC. The next meeting will be on March 2, and on the 4th Wed of the month thereafter. Bill offered to copy CAC members on materials distributed to the CMC and provide regular updates on their proceedings.
- Bob Tift indicated that there is considerable community concern in St. Louis Park about the possible relocation of freight rail service from the Kenilworth corridor
- Barry Schade reported that there was no new news from Bryn Mawr
- Denny Spalla reported that United Health is building another site 2 blocks east of the planned Opus station. As a result of existing activity and future construction, there will be a significant massing of jobs in this area
- Reed Holiman, Jones Lange LaSalle, sat in
- Jeannette Colby reported on the Minneapolis Station Area Planning process, the work of the Minneapolis Park & Rec Community Advisory Committee, joint action of 3 neighborhoods to combine their comments regarding mitigation, further efforts to build upon the work started at the charrette convened by the Cedar Lake Park Assn, and the interests of the Kenwood neighborhood in the freight rail relocation issue



- Rick Weiblen reported that Eden Prairie is working with a Humphrey capstone class to look at development potential around the proposed Golden Triangle station
- Vicki Moore said she was tracking the freight relocation issue to get a better perspective; she also reported on the Minneapolis Park Board process, saying their focus was on identifying issues and not necessarily mitigation recommendations
- Barry Schade indicated a positive experience with the Minneapolis Station Area planning process; he also mentioned current discussions about the location of a train layover facility
- Vida Ditter reported on concerns of the Bassett Creek Valley ROC about issues arising from a recent report on the Interchange project as regards the proposed Van White station, including major changes that are being categorized as refinements and the bike trail alignment. She also indicated that the funds for the Van White Bridge now seem uncertain.
- Frank Powell reported that there is an open question about the future of a proposed Eden Prairie Town Center, and other concerns as to how the proposed stations in Eden Prairie will serve proposed new growth – is proposed new residential too far away from the proposed station such that developers may lose interest?
- Jeff Peltola reported that his neighborhood group, West Calhoun, is exploring opportunities that might be afforded as a result of Phase 1 NRP funds that are available. He also reported that his neighborhood would be working with a Humphrey capstone class.
- Art Higinbotham reported on a resolution being developed to forward comments regarding desired mitigation for the Kenilworth area. They are waiting to review the DEIS before this is finalized.
- Paul Nelson indicated that he is a member of the Edina Transportation Commission and has a keen interest in the freight relocation issues being discussed by St. Louis Park; MnDOT staff have indicated that there might be impacts on Edina under some scenarios

Katie Walker, SW Project Manager, responded to some of the issues raised by members, and also indicated that additional information would be provided at the next SW CAC meeting to respond to points raised concerning the Van White bridge and the Eden Prairie Town center station location.

Ms. Walker provided a verbal report on the Southwest LRT project status. The SW Corridor Management Committee (CMC) will have representation from both the SW CAC and the to-be-formed Southwest Business Advisory Committee. While Chair Peter Bell initiated the SW CMC, the new Met Council chair, Susan Haigh, will chair the SW CMC in the future. She also indicated that the LRT project is now under Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit director for New Starts projects, and Chris Weyer, the Metro Transit Southwest project director. The DEIS document is still under review by the Federal Transit Administration and it will likely be another two months before the FTA review is complete and the document can be released for public comment. It is hoped that the project will be given approval to enter the preliminary engineering phase soon. This approval has been held up by a pre-engineering risk assessment process that is now being required for all projects that exceed \$1 billion in capital costs.

Ms. Walker reviewed a handout that is being distributed to legislators to emphasize the importance of a SW LRT line to connect major job centers. Hennepin County is asking for \$5 million in state bond funds as a partial contribution project funding. Vicki Moore suggested some additions to this piece.

Frank Powell asked what would happen if state and federal funding is not received? Ms. Walker responded that the SW project has \$30 million committed at this time, which will allow preliminary engineering to begin. The total cost for preliminary engineering is estimated at \$90 million, so it is important to continue to work with state and federal partners to make sure the project stays on



course. The group discussed the various funding sources and understood that there are no firm answers at this time as to how the needed funding package will be assembled.

III. HUD Sustainable Communities Public Outreach

Susan Hoyt, Metropolitan Council, presented an overview of the Sustainable Communities initiative, which brings together the U.S. EPA, FTA, and HUD to work jointly on efforts to build more sustainable communities. The Twin Cities metro area is one of 35 communities around the country to receive a Sustainable Communities grant. We are receiving \$5 million, in large part due to having developed flagship projects in our region. We have also received a Living Cities grant (\$16 million, mainly in loans) and there is an oversight committee, which is administering both of these grants. Ms. Hoyt provided more details about the Sustainable Communities grant and how it will be executed. The outreach component will focus on underserved communities, and is not intended to supplement current activities but rather to explore new ways of conducting outreach. \$800,000 has been allocated for the SW LRT project, and the Met Council is working with the community works initiative to determine how best to use these funds. They recently met with city staff to review where underserved communities exist. Vida Ditter asked about how 'under-represented' is being defined, and Vicki Moore talked about neighborhoods near the proposed Bottineau line between Broadway and Plymouth. Ms. Hoyt said that they would be looking for novel ways to make connections between jobs and housing. Katie Walker elaborated that there will be ongoing work to fully engage communities along the corridor that will go well beyond the grant period, and that it is hoped that initial public investments will help spur private investment to strengthen jobs and housing opportunities along the corridor.

Bill James stated that it will be increasingly important to get businesses along the corridor more involved, including United Health, Travelers Insurance, SuperValu, and Cargill. Katie Walker agreed and offered to report at the next CAC meeting on the Southwest Alliance (composed of the four chambers along the corridor), and the impending formation of a Business Advisory Committee.

Frank Powell observed that the CAC does not appear to have active representation from all proposed station areas. Ms. Walker responded that the CAC membership is being refreshed to take on an expanded role, advising on community issues for both the LRT project and the County-sponsored Community Works initiative. We will be looking at expanding the diversity of the CAC membership.

VI. Open Forum

There were no requests from non-members for time to make comments.