



Meeting Notes

Southwest Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

August 24, 2011, 6:00 to 7:30 PM

Wolfe Lake Professional Center

Meeting Attendees

CAC Members and Alternates

Barry Schade
Vicki Moore
Art Higinbotham
Rick Wieblen
Vida Ditter
Jeanette Colby
Dennis Spalla
Bob Tift
Lisa Miller

Southwest Staff & Consultant Team

Katie Walker (Hennepin County)
Adele Hall (Hennepin County)
Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County)
Mark Fuhrmann (Metro Transit)
Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting)
Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting)

Other Attendees

Bill Hupperman (URS)
Andrew Sinickas (Eaton)

I. Member Updates

Art Higinbotham, Cedar Isles Dean, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Civil Engineering Capstone students presented their project to the Cedar Isles Dean and West Calhoun neighborhood associations. West Lake Street and Excelsior Boulevard are currently at capacity. If the LRT station is there, something will need to be done. Katie Walker, Hennepin County, responded that Hennepin County Transportation and Housing, Community Works, and Transit Departments both have the study, and will make sure Metro Transit receives it. Mr. Higinbotham noted that the City of Minneapolis was going to put in a crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway, but no longer plan to.

Jeanette Colby, Kenwood, Minneapolis: Our neighborhood is suspicious of why the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has not been released, and is very concerned about how to have input into a \$100 million contract. Ms. Colby commented that she is also confused about the current role of the CAC and disappointed in the cancellation of recent meetings. Who is in charge of the group and who is chairing the group is unclear. Ms. Colby noted that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board community advisory committee assembled to comment on the DEIS has not recently met.

Denny Spalla, United Health Group, Eden Prairie: United Health Group plans to open a new building near the Opus station in October 2012. This addition will bring 1,500 employees within two blocks of the proposed Opus Station on Southwest LRT. At the City West site, UHG plans to start construction of a five



year project that will build 1.5 million square feet of office space for a campus with 6,600 employees. Vida Ditter, Bassett Creek Redevelopment Oversight Committee, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota students also did a capstone report on the proposed Penn Station that was well-received by the neighborhood. A Minneapolis Coalition of Corridor Neighbors has been organized. This group is concerned that the Kenilworth Trail is not affected and does not support co-location of freight rail and light rail in Kenilworth. Ms. Ditter echoed Ms. Colby's comments regarding the role of the CAC, and noted that the CAC is supposed to provide input to the CMC, but the CAC has not met as the CMC continues to meet.

Vicki Moore, Harrison, Minneapolis: Harrison is dealing with the train storage issue, and preparing to testify on the Southwest LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) by doing training sessions with neighborhood residents. Bassett Creek Valley has 252 acres of undeveloped land near downtown Minneapolis; the neighborhood is very invested in redevelopment of the Valley.

Rick Weiblen, Liberty Property Trust, Eden Prairie: Look forward to seeing the project move forward.

Barry Schade, Bryn Mawr, Minneapolis: The U of M Penn Station capstone project was well received by the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association and is posted at bmna.org. In June BMNA took a position in opposition to freight rail in Kenilworth or any changes to the Kenilworth Trail.

Bob Tift, Elmwood, St. Louis Park: The Elmwood Neighborhood is very supportive of LRT and the freight rail reroute, which would eliminate the switching wye in their neighborhood. The neighborhood urged their councilmember to stand up for LRT, and is worried that the issue will be detrimental to LRT.

Lisa Miller, Sorenson, St. Louis Park: The Sorenson Neighborhood opposes the freight rail reroute, which was echoed by the city council. The neighborhood is concerned with the lack of mitigation for the reroute.

Paul Nelson, Edina (absent, via email): Edina is beginning an access study at 50th Street at Highway 100.

Bill James, St. Louis Park (absent, via email): Katie Walker will send the group Mr. James's update.

II. LRT Project Status

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit, presented to the group on the LRT project roadmap, as well as the Preliminary Engineering procurement process. Details are in the attached presentation. Mr. Fuhrmann noted that it has been nearly one year since the Southwest LRT project submitted an application for Preliminary Engineering to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff and Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh met a month ago, and at that time, Mr. Rogoff indicated that FTA was preparing to approve Southwest into Preliminary Engineering. Since that time there has been no word from FTA, and no comment from them on the delay. CAC members discussed possible causes for the delay, including the state shut-down and the freight rail relocation project.

CAC members inquired about the role of the CAC going forward, and whether the group will be led by the Metropolitan Council or Hennepin County. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that Hennepin County is still the lead organization, but once the project progresses into PE, Chair Haigh will likely expand membership and the group will select a chair.

III. Southwest LRT Community Works Update – Transitional Station Area Action Plans

Katie Walker, Hennepin County, presented to the group on the recent activities of Southwest LRT Community Works. Community Works is a Hennepin County program that is focused on economic development and connecting to natural resources. Community Works is connected to the LRT project, and is working to further economic development along the line. Hennepin County recently released an



RFP for Transitional Station Area Action Plans (TSAAPs) that are intended to bridge the gap between conditions in the station areas today, and conditions that need to be present on opening day of the LRT by identifying infrastructure and development to support station areas, while enhancing existing businesses. Details are available in the attached presentation.

IV. Freight Rail Update

Katie Walker, Hennepin County, presented to the group on the freight rail relocation project. Trains used to run in the Midtown Corridor until the corridor was severed as part of the Highway 55 project. A superfund site did not allow for construction of a grade separation in St. Louis Park at the time, so trains were temporarily routed through the Kenilworth Corridor. They now need to be relocated to make room for LRT. Ms. Walker provided information on the six studies have been completed on the freight rail reroute; details are available in the attached presentation and the staff freight rail report is currently in draft form and is available at Hennepin.us/freightrail.

V. Next CAC Meeting

The CAC will meet next on October 26, unless there is a need for a September meeting. The role of the CAC will become more clear when the project progresses into PE.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.