



## Meeting Minutes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

August 20, 2008, 8:00 to 9:30 AM

St. Louis Park City Hall

### PAC Members and Alternates

Gail Dorfman	Hennepin County, PAC Chair	Member
Jean White	Edina	Member
Jim Brimeyer	St. Louis Park	Member
LuAnn Toliver	Minnetonka	Alternate
Dan Duffy	Twin West Chamber	Member
Robert Lilligren	City of Minneapolis	Member
Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Southwest Transit	Member
Bob Corrick	Midtown Community Works Partnership	Member
Tony Wagner	Minnetonka	Member
Jim Benshoof	Eden Prairie Chamber	Member
Keith Downey	Minneapolis Regional Chamber	Member
John Dillery (for Steve Legler)	Metro Transit	Alternate
Sue Sanger	City of St. Louis Park	Alternate

### Southwest Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members & Agency Staff

Katie Walker	SW TAC - Hennepin County Study Manager
Elise Durbin	SW TAC - City of Minnetonka
Julie Wischnack	SW TAC - City of Minnetonka
Bob Suko	SW TAC - TC&W Railroad
Regina Herron	SW TAC - City of Eden Prairie
Steven Hay	SW TAC - City of Minneapolis
Adele Hall	Hennepin County
Blair Tremere	Hennepin County

### Consultant Team

Kathie Doty	KLD Consulting
Oscar Gonzales	HDR Engineering

**Other Attendees** Adam Fulton (City of St. Louis Park), Travis Bunch (Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce), Art Higinbotham (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)), Rogers Adams (CIDNA Resident), Thatcher Imboden (Ackerberg Group & Uptown Association), Gen McJilton (Ryan Companies), Bruce Nustad (Twin West Chamber), Steve Faber (Bassett Creek Redevelopment Oversight Committee), Bill James (St. Louis Park), Parker Trostel (CIDNA Resident).

### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

Commissioner Gail Dorfman, SW PAC Chair, opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

## **II. Approval of Meeting Notes from July 23 Meeting**

Jean White, Edina Member, moved and Jim Brimeyer, St. Louis Park Member, seconded approval of the July 23, 2008 Meeting Minutes. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

## **III. Committee Updates**

Hennepin County Study Manager Katie Walker announced that on Tuesday, August 19<sup>th</sup> the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) established the following dates/times/locations for the three public scoping meetings for the Southwest DEIS project:

Tuesday October 7, 2008 at the Hennepin County Government Center  
An open house will be held from 2pm until 3pm  
A public hearing will be held at 3pm

Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at the St. Louis Park City Hall  
An open house will be held from 5pm until 6pm  
A public hearing will be held at 6pm

Thursday, October 23, 2008 at the Eden Prairie City Center  
An open house will be held from 5pm until 6pm  
A public hearing will be held at 6pm

### Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Ms. Walker updated the PAC members on the CAC meeting on August 13, 2008. The meeting was a mock scoping open house and public hearing, with several CAC members testifying. Following the mock scoping meeting was a presentation to the group on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process by Terry Pheimester, HDR's Environmental Manager.

### Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Ms. Walker updated the PAC members on the July 28 TAC meeting.

### Southwest Alliance/Business Advisory Committee (BAC)

Travis Bunch of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber updated the PAC. Mr. Bunch stated that the Southwest Alliance is a coalition of chambers along the Southwest Corridor formed to lobby in support of the Southwest Transitway. Mr. Bunch informed the group that he has been working with Hennepin County and Project staff to discuss the proper formation, role and function of a Southwest BAC. Discussions continue on what entity should lead the formation of the Southwest BAC.

### St. Louis Park Issues

Chair Dorfman asked Jim Brimeyer, St. Louis Park Member, and Sue Sanger, St. Louis Park Alternate, to share with the group a memorandum drafted by the St. Louis Park CAC representative entitled, "Unique Concerns of St. Louis Park Regarding Southwest LRT and Recommendations for Inclusions into Draft Environmental Impact Statement". Chair Dorfman also announced that the document was emailed to all Southwest PAC members and was available in hard copy format at this meeting. Ms. Walker suggested, and Sue Sanger and Jim Brimeyer agreed that what is needed is a background paper on this issue, which would cover how and why Mn/DOT, the City of St. Louis Park, the City of Minneapolis, the freight rail companies, and Hennepin County are all involved in this issue, and if and how it is related to the Southwest Transitway project.

### Actions Taken by Neighborhood Organizations

Chair Dorfman asked Kathie Doty, KLD Consulting, to summarize recent actions taken by neighborhood and community groups related to the Southwest Project. Ms. Doty distributed a summary of recent actions of neighborhood and community groups including resolutions passed by Kenwood Isles Area Association, Bassett Creek Valley Redevelopment Oversight Committee, Whittier Alliance, and Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association.

#### **IV. Special Item** (deviation in agenda order)

##### Presentation by Art Higinbotham, Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association

Chair Dorfman informed the group that Mr. Higinbotham, a Cedar Isles Dean Resident and Southwest CAC Member, requested 10 minutes on the Southwest PAC agenda to provide an overview of his proposed new routing option, Option "E". Mr. Higinbotham presented on 'Alternative E' which he plans to submit to the HCRRRA during the scoping process. Mr. Higinbotham described the alignment and the areas it would serve, and the advantages of the E alternative. He provided a handout with details to meeting attendees.

##### Discussion

Mr. Higinbotham's proposed alignment raised several questions among PAC members and meeting attendees. Ms. Walker asked for clarification on how elevating the train will work and what type of structure is envisioned for the train. She also commented on the need for clarification of what is park land.

Keith Downey, Minneapolis Regional Chamber Member, questioned whether an alternative similar to this one had already been considered. Ms. Walker answered that at some point nearly every street in Minneapolis was considered for light rail. Ms. Walker further clarified that Mr. Higinbotham worked with Minneapolis Mayor Rybak to request that an analysis be completed of an alternative called Option "D", which was proposed to use the Opus Golden Triangle route (Alternative 3) and then the Midtown Corridor to Park Avenue terminating either at the Metrodome or operating from the Metrodome to the proposed Intermodal Station on the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Hiawatha LRT tracks. The "3D Alternative" was considered and recommended for exclusion from the DEIS by both the Southwest TAC and the Southwest PAC. The primary issues with the 3D Alternative (Park Ave) included inconsistency with the Southwest purpose and need, the potential impacts to the use of Park and Portland Avenue as minor relievers for I-35W, and capacity and traffic issues associated with operation of three separate LRT lines on 5<sup>th</sup> Street. When the scoping period begins, Mr. Higinbotham will submit "Alternative E" for study. The DEIS Consultants (HDR Engineering), Hennepin County, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will evaluate the alternative as well as all other comments received and will respond in one of three ways: 1. The issue/alternative is already in the DEIS scope; 2. The issue/alternative is not appropriate for inclusion in the DEIS scope; or 3. The issue/alternative requires modification to the DEIS scope. Mr. Downey asked if the PAC members would be as informed about alternatives proposed during scoping as other alternatives considered in the past. Ms. Walker responded that the comments and responses to them will be shared with the PAC and TAC, and that more detail would be requested from Mr. Higinbotham, so that the alternative is well understood.

Robert Lilligren, Minneapolis Member, commented on several elements of Alternative E that were questionable, including 1) whether Alt E would actually better serve business areas such as Eat Street; 2) whether Alt E would generate trip times that would be competitive with other alternatives; 3) the impact on homes that are located within 25 feet of the Greenway; 4) the impact of park & ride / hide & ride – why would the same concerns not apply to all neighborhoods and not just the CIDNA and Kenwood areas; 5) the importance of serving major medical facilities – they have large parking facilities because of the type of visitors they serve; and 6) the feasibility of light rail vehicles passing through the skyway system in Downtown Minneapolis.

Nancy Tyra-Lukens, SouthWest Transit Member, asked about the role of the PAC in response to Mr. Higinbotham's presentation; are members supposed to comment now, or will that happen more formally later? Chair Dorfman answered that allowing Mr. Higinbotham to present was a courtesy to him, and there will be time to raise concerns later. Dan Duffy, Twin West Chamber Member, commented that Mr. Higinbotham's proposed alternative should be considered from a feasibility standpoint, since he thinks it is unlikely to be cost effective.

#### **IV. NEPA/New Starts**

##### Presentation by Katie Walker, Hennepin County Study Manager, continued from July 23 meeting

Ms. Walker presented to the PAC on the DEIS process and how the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, and the New Starts program administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) come together. The Alternatives Analysis is an

FTA process. Since the AA has been completed, the project moves into the DEIS, which is a requirement under NEPA. When a Record of Decision on the DEIS is issued, then the project can move into Preliminary Engineering.

Ms. Walker further detailed the impending scoping process:

After the Notice of Intent is published in the Federal Register, Environmental Quality Board Monitor, and Finance & Commerce on September 5, invitations to public agencies will be sent, inviting those agencies to comment on the project. The scoping booklet will be released and will provide information on the scoping period and include a tear-out comment card. A press release will also be sent to local publications. The purpose is for the public to understand the process and be invited to comment.

Commissioner Dorfman reminded PAC members that all scoping comments received would count equally, regardless of the number of people who repeat them, and to please be considerate in allowing others time to air their concerns. Thatcher Imboden, audience, commented that it would be helpful to communicate to organizations and associations that there will be other opportunities to advocate for their positions; the scoping meeting is not a forum for lobbying for a preferred alternative.

#### Discussion

Jim Brimeyer, St. Louis Park Member, commented that it is critical that the PAC members understand the difference between mitigation and betterment. Ms. Walker responded that Mark Fuhrman, Project Director for the Northstar and Central Corridor projects, will attend the next PAC meeting to explain the difference between mitigation and betterment.

#### **V. Closing**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45am. The next Southwest PAC meeting will be on Wednesday, September 17 from 8:00am-9:30am in the St. Louis Park City Hall Council Chambers.