



## Meeting Minutes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

September 17, 2008, 8:00 to 9:30 AM

St. Louis Park City Hall

### PAC Members and Alternates

|                  |                                     |           |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Gail Dorfman     | Hennepin County, PAC Chair          | Member    |
| Robert Lilligren | City of Minneapolis                 | Member    |
| Ralph Remington  | City of Minneapolis                 | Member    |
| Jim Brimeyer     | St. Louis Park                      | Member    |
| Sue Sanger       | City of St. Louis Park              | Alternate |
| Bruce Rowan      | Hopkins                             | Member    |
| Jean White       | Edina                               | Member    |
| Tony Wagner      | Mnettonka                           | Member    |
| LuAnn Toliver    | Mnettonka                           | Alternate |
| Amy Vennewitz    | Met. Council                        | Alternate |
| Brian Lamb       | Metro Transit                       | Member    |
| Jim Benshoof     | Eden Prairie Chamber                | Member    |
| Dan Duffy        | Twin West Chamber                   | Member    |
| George Puzak     | Cedar Lake Park Association         | Alternate |
| Brian Willette   | Cedar Lake Park Association         | Member    |
| John DeWitt      | Midtown Community Works Partnership | Alternate |

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

|                 |                               |        |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| Katie Walker    | Hennepin County Study Manager | SW TAC |
| Elise Durbin    | Mnettonka                     | SW TAC |
| Julie Wischnack | Mnettonka                     |        |
| Regina Herron   | Eden Prairie                  | SW TAC |
| Randy Newton    | Eden Prairie                  | SW TAC |
| Meg McMonigal   | St. Louis Park                | SW TAC |
| Steve Stadler   | Hopkins                       | SW TAC |
| Steve Mahowald  | Metro Transit                 | SW TAC |
| Adele Hall      | Hennepin County               |        |

### Consultant Team

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Kathie Doty    | KLD Consulting  |
| Oscar Gonzales | HDR Engineering |

**Other Attendees** Art Higinbotham (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)), Thatcher Imboden (Ackerberg Group & Uptown Association), Gen McJilton (Ryan Companies), Steve Faber (Bassett Creek Redevelopment Oversight Committee(ROC)), Kim Malrick (City of Minneapolis), Kari Anderson (Bassett Creek ROC), Blair Tremere, Hennepin County, Kerri Pearce-Ruch, Hennepin County, Ron Black, Bruce Milligan





## I. Welcome and Introductions, Announcement of Scoping Meeting Dates

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

### Scoping Process in Progress

Hennepin County Study Manager Katie Walker updated the PAC members on the scoping process of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The comment period is open and comments will be accepted until November 7, 2008 at 5pm (CST). Comments can be submitted via mail, fax, the Southwest Transitway website, and at scoping meetings. Comments will be responded to with categorical responses: 1) the scope will be modified to include the comment; 2) the issue is already considered in the scope and the scope will remain the same; or 3) the issue is not relevant to the project, it will not be included in the scope.

The scoping meetings will be held:

Tuesday October 7 at the Hennepin County Government Center  
- Open house from 2pm until 3pm  
- Public hearing at 3pm in the Board Room on the 24<sup>th</sup> floor.

Tuesday, October 14 at the St. Louis Park City Hall  
- Open house from 5pm until 6pm in the Council Chambers.  
- Public hearing at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

Thursday, October 23 at the Eden Prairie City Center  
- Open house from 5pm until 6pm in the Atrium.  
- Public hearing at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) asked what would happen at the open house portion of the scoping meetings. Ms. Walker answered that staff would be available to answer questions, and map boards and other project materials would be available for viewing. Ms. Walker stressed that comments verbally communicated to a staff member during an open house are not considered part of the record; the comments must be written. The public hearings are special meetings of the Hennepin County Railroad Authority (HCRRA), and will be chaired by Commissioner Peter McLaughlin. Meeting attendees will be able to sign up at the scoping meeting to testify before the HCRRA.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) requested that Ms. Walker share the present scope of the project with the committee. Ms. Walker replied that a scoping booklet that includes a summary of the project scope would be provided to each member of the PAC, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Community Advisory Committee (CAC), and any who request copies.

Dan Duffy (Twin West Member) asked how decisions will be made and what issues will need to be further examined in the DEIS. Ms. Walker answered that HCRRA and HDR staff will review the scoping comments with the Southwest TAC and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and develop an agreed upon methodology for evaluating them for inclusion or exclusion from the DEIS. For additional alternatives that are suggested, Ms. Walker quoted the federal guidelines, which state that, " *The test of 'reasonableness' for alternatives is one that is determined with respect to purpose and need of*



project ...as "those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant" . U.S. DOT considers that an alternative is not feasible if it cannot be built as a matter of sound engineering judgment, and an alternative is not prudent if: 1) It compromises the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed in light of its stated purpose and need; 2) It results in severe safety or operation problems;3) After reasonable mitigation, it still causes severe social, economic, or environmental impacts, disruption to established communities, disproportionate impacts to minority or low income populations or severe impacts to environmental resources protected under other Federal statutes;4) It results in additional construction, maintenance, or operational costs of an extraordinary magnitude; 5) It causes other unique problems or unusual factors; or6) It involves multiple factors in paragraphs described above, that while individually minor, cumulatively cause unique problems or impacts of extraordinary magnitude. (23 USC §771.135).

Comments received during the scoping period as well as the responses will be compiled into a Scoping Report, which is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2008.

Jim Benshoof (Eden Prairie Chamber Member) asked Ms. Walker if there was a difference between state and federal requirements surrounding the project. Ms. Walker responded that completing the federal requirements in most cases covers the state requirements.

## II. Community Issues: Bassett Creek Redevelopment Oversight Committee (ROC)

Steve Faber, Jen McJilton, and Kari Anderson of the Bassett Creek ROC presented on the Bassett Creek Redevelopment. The area slated for redevelopment is bounded by I-94 on the East, Cedar Lake Road on the West, Glenwood Avenue on the North and I-394 on the south. The neighborhoods of Harrison and Bryn Mawr came together to form the ROC in order to create a plan for development of the Bassett Creek Valley area. The plan has since been approved for inclusion into the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan. Ryan Companies was brought on board as the master developer. According to the plan, the City of Minneapolis will sell the Linden Yards and Impound lot areas to Ryan Companies for the development. The Small Area Plan and zoning for the area have been approved. 3,000 to 5,000 new housing units will be added, two to four million square feet of office space will be built, 500,000 square feet of retail is also in the plans. Six to eight thousand jobs are expected to locate there. The Van White station of the Southwest 'LRT A' alignment is on the southern edge of the planned development. Though the project will continue with or without the light rail, the presenters stressed that transit was essential to unifying the two neighborhoods near the development. They have also spoken with Metro Transit staff about this issue. Tony Wagner (Minnetonka Member) asked if these numbers have been included in the ridership numbers for the LRT A alignment. Ms. Walker said that these numbers were not factored in because at the time of the ridership count, the development project had not been entered into the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan. When the ridership is recalculated, these numbers will be included, as will any other changes in the comprehensive plans of the cities along the alignments.

## III. Presentation on Mitigation and Betterments, Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager.

Mark Fuhrmann described how the FTA considers a project. They want the project sponsor to define the scope, schedule and budget of the project in order to receive a full funding grant agreement (FFGA). Mitigation will be identified from issues raised in the DEIS; betterments relate to the project but



do no need to be in place for the train to operate and do not improve travel times. For example, if a community would like aesthetic improvements added to a station, that is a betterment and must be paid for with money outside the project. Public art is the one exception; the FTA guidelines recommend one to two percent of construction funds go toward public art. Betterments are not included in the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI) calculation for a project.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked if the rerouting of freight through St. Louis Park will be considered as part of the project costs. Ms. Walker responded that the Southwest LRT project assumes that the freight rail is relocated from the Kenilworth Corridor as a separate project funded through non-New Starts funding. The Southwest LRT project does not specify where the freight rail is relocated and assumes that decision is made independently upon the merits of the options for relocation.

George Puzak (Cedar Lake Park Assoc. Alternate) asked if the FTA looks at the potential loss of travel time savings to other modes due to the light rail. Mr. Fuhrmann answered that the FTA looks at travel time savings from a system perspective, which includes travel time impacts of travelers in the study area. Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) asked for examples of how traffic impacts will be mitigated for the Central Corridor project. Mr. Fuhrmann responded by giving the example of the Washington Avenue being closed to traffic. The project will be responsible for the costs of rerouting the traffic such as turn lanes and traffic lights; the project will not pay for the all the betterments that the University may want.

#### **IV. Transportation Policy Plan**

Amy Vennewitz provided an update on the TPP review process and passed out a Draft Schedule of the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan Update. PAC members asked questions about the process for commenting on the Plan. Katie Walker distributed PAC Resolution No. 2007-4 adopted January 23, 2008.

#### **V. Public Outreach**

Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting) updated the group on the recent public outreach efforts. Over the course of the summer the Southwest Project staff have distributed materials at many community events and neighborhood meetings. The website has been updated and features news, a zoom map, frequently asked questions, and upcoming meetings and events. Staff also distributed map boards and Scoping Booklets at locations along the alignments. Southwest press releases were sent to many local publications, including neighborhood or city newsletters.

#### **VI. Approval of Minutes & Adjourn**

Luann Toliver (Minnetonka Alternate) made a motion to accept the minutes. Ralph Remington (Minneapolis Member) seconded the motion. The PAC voted unanimously to approve the minutes. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40. The Southwest PAC will meet again on November 19, 2008 at 8:00 in the St. Louis Park City Hall.