



## Meeting Minutes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee Meeting  
January 20, 2010 8:00 to 9:30 AM  
St. Louis Park City Hall

### Meeting Attendees

#### PAC Members and Alternates

|                     |                                     |           |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Gail Dorfman, Chair | Hennepin County Commissioner        | Member    |
| Jan Callison        | Hennepin County Commissioner        | Member    |
| Sue Sanger          | City of St. Louis Park              | Alternate |
| Robert Lilligren    | City of Minneapolis                 | Member    |
| Bruce Rowan         | City of Hopkins                     | Member    |
| Jim Brimeyer        | City of St. Louis Park              | Member    |
| Jean White          | City of Edina                       | Member    |
| Dan Duffy           | Twin West Chamber                   | Member    |
| Tony Wagner         | City of Minnetonka                  | Member    |
| Meg Tuthill         | City of Minneapolis                 | Member    |
| Gary Aiken          | Twin West Chamber                   | Alternate |
| Luann Toliver       | City of Minnetonka                  | Alternate |
| Bob McFarlin        | Metropolitan Council                | Member    |
| Kathy Nelson        | City of Eden Prairie                | Member    |
| Bob Corrick         | Midtown Community Works Partnership | Member    |

#### TAC Members

|                |                        |        |
|----------------|------------------------|--------|
| Katie Walker   | Hennepin County        | Member |
| Elise Durbin   | City of Minnetonka     | Member |
| Randy Newton   | City of Eden Prairie   | Member |
| Don Pflaum     | City of Minneapolis    | Member |
| Steve Hay      | City of Minneapolis    | Member |
| Meg McMonigal  | City of St. Louis Park | Member |
| Steve Mahowald | Metro Transit          | Member |
| Amy Vennewitz  | Metropolitan Council   | Member |

#### Consultant Team & Project Staff

Janet Kennison (HDR Engineering) via phone, Craig Lenning (HDR Engineering), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Phil Eckhert (Hennepin County), Jason Flohrs (Jason Flohrs Consulting)

#### Other Attendees

Kerri Pearce-Ruch (Hennepin County), Travis Bunch (Minneapolis Regional Chamber), Art Higinbotham (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association), Bill James (Meeting Attendee), Patrick Connoy (Hennepin County), Kevin Anderson (PBS&J), Jena Montgomery (PBS&J)

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

Commissioner Jan Callison, Chairing the PAC meeting in Commissioner Dorfman's absence, called the meeting to order and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Meeting minutes from the October 14, 2009 PAC meeting were reviewed. PAC members decided they needed more time for review. The minutes will be sent electronically, and PAC members can respond with changes. The minutes will be



approved at the March 10, 2010 PAC meeting.

## II. Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Update

Katie Walker, Hennepin County Southwest Project Manager, updated the group. Each of the cities along the Southwest Transitway have passed resolutions in support of the project. Ms. Walker directed PAC members to two handouts describing the Metropolitan Council schedule for amending the regional Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). Today the Metropolitan Council Committee of the Whole will be briefed on the project, and then at their meeting on February 24, 2010, they will select the LPA, open the amendment to public comment, and set a public hearing. April 12, 2010 4-6pm is the tentative date for the public hearing, which will be held at the Metropolitan Council Chambers in downtown St. Paul. The public comment period will close on April 22, 2010, and the Metropolitan Council will take action to amend the TPP on May 12, 2010.

Bill James (Meeting Attendee) asked what the format for public comment will be. Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council) answered that in addition to the public hearing, community members will be able to submit comments via the Metropolitan Council website. Comments should be specific to this change to the TPP. At the end of the comment period, comments will be categorized and responded to.

## III. Project Work Plan

Ms. Walker updated the PAC on the upcoming project activities in 2010 and directed them to a corresponding handout.

### Transportation Policy Plan Amendment

When the Metropolitan Council amends the TPP, the Southwest Transitway Alternatives Analysis is officially complete and Metropolitan Council can submit the New Starts application to enter Preliminary Engineering. Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) staff is working with Metropolitan Council staff on the Preliminary Engineering application to submit to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) shortly after the TPP has been amended. After the application is submitted, there is usually a three to six month period of negotiation and FTA review.

### Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

As the LPA selection and New Starts application processes proceed, HCRRA staff are working with HDR to complete the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). All four alternatives will be fully considered in the DEIS, and a section of the document will explain the LPA selection process that occurred in 2009. Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) asked if it is a federal requirement to complete the DEIS for all four alternatives. Ms. Walker answered that it is a State requirement. Commissioner Callison asked about the review process for the DEIS document. Ms. Walker responded that the DEIS is technically a federal document which is being prepared by the HCRRA, on behalf of FTA. As part of the process the FTA will review the DEIS and approve it for official release and public comment. After FTA review, the document will be released to the public and agencies for a 45-day comment period, which will include a public hearing. While the official DEIS document will not be released for public comment until the FTA review is completed, portions of the analysis conducted by HDR will be shared with the Southwest advisory committees. Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked what happens to the comments. Ms. Walker responded that public hearing comments and written comments become part of the DEIS document and will be responded to in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

### Station Area Planning

The first phase of Station area planning in the four suburban communities is complete. Additional station area planning work needs to be conducted in the suburban communities to ensure that land use



planning is being conducted in anticipation of the LRT line and relevant information for inclusion in the Preliminary Engineering (PE) application is being generated.. Federal funding will be used this spring to complete station area planning for the five stations along the LRT 3A alignment in Minneapolis. Station area planning information will be rolled into the New Starts application. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) asked how land use will be considered in light of the new FTA evaluative environment. Ms. Walker gave some background on the recent policy changes at the FTA. The U.S. Department of Transportation, of which the FTA is a part, has just taken action to rescind the Bush administration policy of using a medium rating of the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI) as a pass-fail measure. The Obama administration will no longer require a medium rating of the CEI, but rather, projects will be rated on the following attributes: mobility benefits; environmental qualities; economic development and land use, both what exists today and plans and policies in place; and other factors such as operating, and ridership for special events. The FTA will look at current evaluation measures this summer, so there could be changes to the evaluation criteria. The CEI in some form will probably stay, but more emphasis will likely be placed on livability and sustainability. Rulemaking will take anywhere from three to 18 months. Commissioner Callison asked if the new policy improves our project's chances of receiving Federal funding. Ms. Walker responded that our work to plan for development along the LRT line should position us well to compete. Mr. Lilligren asked if Southwest will need to abide by the current rules or the rules as they evolve. Ms. Walker answered that Metropolitan Council's application for Preliminary Engineering needs to be submitted under current guidance before rulemaking starts. Strengthening the transit oriented development and land use part of the application will further strengthen the project under what we think the new rules will be. HCRRRA staff have been working with city staff on station area planning and Metropolitan Council staff to pull the land use part of the application together. Bob Corrick (Midtown Community Works Partnership Member) reminded the group that the CEI was not the only basis upon which the Southwest LPA was selected. Mr. Brimeyer commented that the new rules are advantageous to the Central Corridor project.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked if the Southwest New Starts application is going to be held up because of the issues on the Central Corridor project. Bob McFarlin (Metropolitan Council Member) said that at this point Southwest and Central are separated by a large gap in the project development process, so Central's progress will not likely affect Southwest. Commissioner Callison commented that financial and staff resources on Central will be needed to move forward on Southwest, however. Mr. McFarlin added that those resources would still be used by Central Corridor now, even if the project was progressing perfectly smoothly. Commissioner Dorfman arrived at the meeting and noted that in this region we are progressing with transit projects in a sequential pattern, while other regions are doing several lines at once. The faster we can go and line up federal dollars, the better. Tony Wagner (Minnetonka Member) asked if there are any heightened expectations for city planning under the new regulations. Ms. Walker responded that we will keep an eye on what FTA is looking for as we progress with project development. The station area planning we have done is good, but as we move through the process, FTA will be looking for implementation such as adoption of plans, changes to comprehensive plans and zoning codes, land assembly and infrastructure improvements.

#### IV. Role of Southwest PAC in 2010

Ms. Walker explained that the PAC will continue to meet until the DEIS is complete. State statute dictates that, as the project is transferred to the Metropolitan Council and moves into Preliminary Engineering, the Chair of the Metropolitan Council will assemble a Southwest Corridor Management Committee (CMC). Bob McFarlin (Metropolitan Council Member) commented that the statute is vague on the composition



of the CMC. For example, the Central Corridor CMC is Chaired by Peter Bell, Chair of the Metropolitan Council, with other members including Mayors Rybak and Coleman, Hennepin and Ramsey County Commissioners, and some city council members. Minnesota Department of Finance and several other members have been added. Commissioner Dorfman commented that for people who have long participated in the project and want to continue there will be opportunities beyond the CMC. Mr. McFarlin added that there are many other activities and committees staffed by Metropolitan Council that report to the CMC. In some cases, like for the Community Advisory Committee, the neighborhood associations were asked to appoint or recommend representatives.

Katie Walker informed the PAC that Dennis Gimmestad, with the State Historic Preservation Office, will be invited to the March 10 PAC meeting to brief the group on the 106 Review of historic and cultural resources. Mr. Gimmestad will also come to present to the SW Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on January 27. His presentations are to ensure that if the community knows of a historic or cultural resource, they will be included.

Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) asked if there is a CAC and TAC for the Central Corridor project. Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) said yes, there is a CAC, Business Advisory Committee, and a Project Management Team that serves as the TAC, which is composed of city representatives. Mr. Brimeyer commented that he was surprised the PAC was still meeting. Commissioner Callison responded that the DEIS is the purpose for meeting. When the DEIS is complete, the group will disband. Bob Corrick (Midtown Community Works Partnership Member) asked where members should follow up with their issues. Bob McFarlin (Metropolitan Council) responded that issues can be taken to the CMC or the Project Management Team which will be managed by the Metropolitan Council and the Project Office. The PAC has a purpose until the CMC is established because it is a public forum to receive information on the project.

## V. Southwest Community Works Project

Commissioner Dorfman described Community Works projects and offered the Midtown Community Works Partnership as an example of a Hennepin County Community Works project. The Southwest Community Works project will be a way to coordinate transit, housing, and economic development. Community Works staff will be reaching out to cities to craft a plan going forward. The creation of a Community Works project is quite consistent with the new FTA policy. It will complement station area planning and potentially offer additional resources for betterments. Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked how neighborhoods will participate in the Community Works project and how it will be organized. Commissioner Dorfman noted that staff is in the process of figuring out these issues; we are currently in a 90 day period when we determine the governance and parameters. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) noted that the Community Works resolution refers to parks and recreation and that the Community Works resolution would be a good place to bring forward the protection and enhancement of parks and green space, in addition to development.

Bill James (Meeting Attendee) asked how many projects across the country similar to ours are in the pipeline. Ms. Walker responded that there are likely over 100. Mr. James asked if we do all of this work is there a way to move up the list. Can we set the bar and be a model project? Commissioner Callison responded that that is what we are hoping to do, but we need to get into Preliminary Engineering. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) noted that we have been sequential in our project development



and are trying to evolve into a system approach. The station area planning and community works projects are moving the project along. The buy-in and ridership also make this a strong line.

Commissioner Dorfman asked if the station area planning and community works project will be reflected in the New Starts application. Janet Kennison (HDR Engineering) answered yes. We need to tell our story in the "Making the Case" document and reflect the project's best qualities in order to be in the best position to move forward to a full funding grant agreement.

## VI. 2010 Legislative Schedule

Commissioner Dorfman noted that the Governor's 2010 bonding proposal includes \$7 million for Southwest. A resolution in support of the allocation of \$7 million of 2010 state bond proceeds came before the PAC for approval. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) made a motion to approve, Tony Wagner (Minnetonka Member) seconded and the resolution was passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) noted that the CEI inflationary factor has allowed the Central Corridor project to increase their budget. This means that, in addition to requesting additional federal funds, the request for the state contribution increased, hence the \$3 million allocation in the Governor's bonding proposal. Bob McFarlin (Metropolitan Council Member), responding to earlier comments about the speed of moving projects forward, added that there is only so fast a project can proceed within the federal process. Our region's "sequential approach" is not always desirable, but reflects prudent spending of local dollars. Commissioner Dorfman responded that we now have resources from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), as well as federal and state dollars and are in good shape to accelerate the Southwest project. She commented that the sooner we get the New Starts application in, the better off the project will be.

## VII. Adjournment

Commissioner Callison noted that staff have two assignments. First, to distribute the October minutes to members via email; and second, to put the PAC meeting dates on the calendar. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 am. The PAC will meet next on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 from 8:00-9:30 am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.