



Meeting Minutes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee Meeting
October 14, 2009 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
Jeff Arnold	Minneapolis Regional Chamber	Member
John DeWitt	Midtown Community Works Partnership	Alternate
Robert Lilligren	City of Minneapolis	Member
Bruce Rowan	City of Hopkins	Member
Jim Brimeyer	City of St. Louis Park	Member
George Puzak	Cedar Lake Park Association	Alternate
Jean White	City of Edina	Member
Dan Duffy	Twin West Chamber	Member
Amy Vennewitz	Metropolitan Council	Member
Tony Wagner	City of Minnetonka	Member
Ralph Remington	City of Minneapolis	Member
Mark Haggerty	Three Rivers Park District	Member
Gary Aiken	Twin West Chamber	Alternate
Luann Toliver	City of Minnetonka	Alternate
Bob McFarlin	Metropolitan Council	Member
Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Southwest Transit	Member
Pat Mulqueeny for Rod Miller	Eden Prairie Chamber	Member
Brian Willette	Cedar Lake Park Association	Member
Kathy Nelson	City of Eden Prairie	Member

CAC Members and Alternates

TAC Members

Katie Walker	Hennepin County	Member
Robert Vockrodt	Mn/DOT	Member
Elise Durbin	City of Minnetonka	Member
Julie Wischnack	City of Minnetonka	Member
Randy Newton	City of Eden Prairie	Member
Don Pflaum	City of Minneapolis	Member
Steven Hay	City of Minneapolis	Member
Kevin Locke	City of St. Louis Park	Member
Meg McMonigal	City of St. Louis Park	Member
Steve Stadler	City of Hopkins	Member

Consultant Team & Project Staff

Janet Kennison (HDR Engineering), Scott Reed (HDR Engineering), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Phil Eckhert (Hennepin County), Carol Lezotte Anderson (Hennepin County), Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting), Jason Flohrs (Jason Flohrs Consulting)



Other Attendees

Kim Malrick (City of Minneapolis), Bill Schreiber (Messerli & Kramer), Kerri Pearce-Ruch (Hennepin County), Scott Neal (City of Eden Prairie), David Greene (ISIAAH), Karen Lee Rosar (North Loop Neighborhood Association), Cameron Slick (Transit for Livable Communities), Jackie Cherryhomes (Cedar Lake Shores Townhomes), Mary Karlsson (Metropolitan Council), Loren Aandahl (Concerned Citizens for Optimized Southwest LRT Service), Peter Wagenius (City of Minneapolis), Travis Bunch (Minneapolis Regional Chamber), Thatcher Imboden (Uptown Association), Eric Lind (Kenwood Isles Area Association), Art Higinbotham (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association), David Bagley (Whittier Alliance), Vida Ditter (Bassett Creek Valley ROC), Herb Spooner (AECOM), Rex Brejnik (AECOM), Dave Peterson (AECOM), Michelle Glynn (Comcast), Jim Benshoof (Eden Prairie Chamber), Laurie Blake (Star Tribune)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Dorfman called the meeting to order and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Meeting minutes from the August 10, 2009 PAC meeting were reviewed. Nancy Tyra Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) moved to approve the minutes, Bruce Rowan (Hopkins Member) seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Public Outreach

Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting) updated the group on recent public outreach efforts. The public hearing on September 17th was well attended; approximately 200 people attended and 50 people testified. The hearing transcript is available on the Southwest website. A second hearing before the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRA) will be held on October 20, 2009. A wide range of comments have been received via email, mail, and comment cards. The project has been covered in many local and regional publications of late.

III. TAC Recommendation on Locally Preferred Alternative

Julie Wischnack (Minnetonka TAC Member) briefed the PAC on the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) recommendation of LRT 3A as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) with three friendly amendments regarding freight rail relocation, the regional importance of the trail system, and the transportation significance of the Midtown Corridor.

Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) commented that the trail system should be part of LRT design and the Three Rivers Park District should be involved in the planning. Jean White (Edina Member) asked if the cost of rebuilding the trails is included in the project. Katie Walker (Hennepin County Project Manager) responded that for the area where trails exist with rails in St. Louis Park and Hopkins and Kenilworth in Minneapolis the two tracks of LRT will consume 30 feet, an additional 20 to 30 feet will be needed for stations, leaving plenty of space for trails, which are shown on the conceptual engineering plans. The cost for re-grading but not for paving the trails is included in the project budget.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) commented that she would like to have the freight rail and LRT in one place and asked how much this would cost. Chair Dorfman answered that there is a study by TKDA and a meeting coming up next week on October 26th that will answer some of these questions. Mark Haggerty (Three Rivers Park District Member) noted that ten years ago when we decided to pave the trail there was talk of what would happen down the line when LRT comes. The plan is to put together a plan and funding. Hennepin County and Three Rivers Park District have bonding authority. Federal funds cannot be used but the Park District will work with St. Louis Park on this.



Chair Dorfman noted that an email was sent that went over the changes to the ridership numbers. Janet Kennison (HDR Engineering) commented that the links in the ridership model at the Royalston Station were not in place on LRT 3C-2 and LRT 3A. Ridership on both lines increased but the relationship is still the same between them.

Chair Dorfman noted that this has been an open process all the way through; there is always an opportunity for non-committee members to speak. Chair Dorfman then asked if anyone would like to raise concerns. Art Higinbotham (Meeting Attendee) noted that he received a revised list of boardings and alightings, but Ms. Walker and Vijay Mahal (HDR Engineering) could not explain the numbers. This is evidence that the ridership is still not right. There is a 10,000 person difference between those getting on in the suburbs and getting off downtown. Mr. Higinbotham expressed that for this reason he would like to see the PAC wait to decide on the LPA. Thatcher Imboden (Meeting Attendee) said that he has concerns about ridership, and asked the PAC not to forget about Uptown and its businesses, which have a lot of traffic and parking issues due to Uptown's status as a regional destination. Karen Lee Rosar (Meeting Attendee) commented that it is time to move forward. We have studied enough and it is time to create a regional system.

IV. Southwest PAC Action on LPA

Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) made a motion to support moving LRT 3A forward to the HCRRA. Nancy Tyra-Lukens seconded.

Discussion:

Mr. Lilligren emphasized the regional benefit of LRT 3A and said that we should celebrate the change of perspective on the regional system. From a Minneapolis perspective the TAC recommendation is more consistent with our long-term planning efforts. We can work together on this and a connection through Uptown/Midtown.

Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) complemented Chair Dorfman on how the committee was run, openly and inclusive of many perspectives. Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) noted that he has learned much in the past week. The recent questions and responses have been really informative, and the decision is ready to be made now, especially with the involved public process. Mr. Brimeyer commented that he would like to have information earlier as the process goes forward, and asked if, by making the LPA decision now we are trying to meet a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) deadline. Ms. Walker answered that the first time we submit an application to the FTA we do not have to submit at a specific time, but we cannot submit our application until we have the LPA. Mr. Brimeyer commented that the group has spent a lot of time and now there is a whirlwind of information. Chair Dorfman reminded the group that we could have made a decision on the LPA during the Alternatives Analysis (AA) but we decided to wait. Every planning stage has taken longer than expected. This whirlwind is natural as we approach a decision. There will not be an application to FTA until first quarter of 2010 at the earliest.

Tony Wagner (Minnetonka Member) noted that the magnitude of difference between the two lines is strong enough to make a decision, but we need to do a good public relations job of letting people know why we chose to recommend LRT 3A. Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) agreed that it might have been nice to get some of the information earlier, but he feels he is ready to decide today. Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) commented that she does think that we have a public relations problem. On the surface it looks like we are not addressing two major questions at these meetings: first,



why the Midtown/Nicollet alignment cannot be built without a tunnel, and second, why people do not get off the bus to get on LRT. Ms. Sanger said that we need to explain all of this to the public.

George Puzak (Cedar Lake Park Association Alternate) said that there were 25 questions raised at the last PAC meeting, six were addressed at the meeting, and 11 were addressed in the packet. Where are the missing questions? Chair Dorfman responded that she believed all questions had been addressed. Mr. Puzak asserted that the chain of lakes in Minneapolis is public, unlike in Eden Prairie where the lakes are surrounded by private land. Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) responded that that is not correct; all lakes in Eden Prairie are publically accessible. Mr. Puzak responded that we need to acknowledge the chain of lakes and he encouraged the PAC to watch the Parks for the People documentary.

Ralph Remington (Minneapolis Member) asked if there was a motion before the group. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) repeated the motion. Mr. Remington continued that regionally, it is good that we are here. The numbers speak; LRT 3A seemed to be the only option after talking with shopkeepers on Nicollet Avenue, so we came up with LRT 3C-2. Mr. Remington stated that he still thinks that the greater number of citizens are not being served and that the formula is flawed; we will create a project on the cheap and years from now we will wonder why we did it. Mr. Remington then distributed an amendment, asked the PAC to read it, and moved the amendment as follows:

Hennepin County agrees with the City of Minneapolis that the already dense and growing residential and employment centers of south Minneapolis in between the Hiawatha and Southwest LRT lines should be served by rail transit.

Hennepin County commits to being a leader in replacing bus service on Hennepin Avenue, Nicollet Avenue and Chicago Avenue with modern streetcars and adding streetcar service to the Midtown Greenway as described in the City's *Access Minneapolis* plan which Hennepin County helped to create.

Hennepin County will amend its transportation plan to include these four streetcar projects recognizing that all four would be assets to the region and are deserving of regional funding because they help to achieve regional goals, as described in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan:

- Increase the use of alternative transportation modes such as walking, bicycling, public transit, carpooling, vanpooling and flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Mitigate congestion during the peak periods, special events and construction.
- Reduce air pollution and energy consumption related to transportation.
- Make more efficient use of transportation infrastructure and services.
- Reduce the necessity of car ownership when other travel choices exist.
- Promote transportation-efficient land development.

(p. 53, Ch 5 of the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan)

Mr. Lilligren seconded the motion for discussion. Mr. Remington noted that there is no timeline attached to the amendment. Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) asked what we are committing to with this amendment. Mr. Remington answered that the PAC is committing to the regional interest of



serving dense urban areas. Mr. Lilligren added that it is important to consider the essence of this amendment, and that he is unsure that it is consistent with the scope of the PAC. For example, in paragraph three, he said he does not think it is possible for the PAC to direct Hennepin County to amend its plan. Streetcars have been a robust discussion, and he is hesitant to support this amendment without first seeking Minneapolis City Council support. To get this support we would need to change that paragraph. The Southwest conversation has propelled this streetcar/rail conversation in the city. We need to clarify who has the lead on streetcar and rail in the city; this amendment asks Hennepin County to take the lead.

Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) noted that she could see the City of Minneapolis adopting an amendment like this, but not the PAC. The PAC has no funding to put behind this. Metropolitan Council approval would be needed to change bus service on Hennepin Avenue. Ralph Remington (Minneapolis Member) responded that the City of Minneapolis has already talked about Hennepin County supporting streetcars. His support and Mayor Rybak's (Mayor of Minneapolis) support of Southwest is contingent upon this amendment passing. A commitment is important now. LRT 3A is a train to nowhere until it gets to the stadium. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) commented that the City of Minneapolis is not on record as having a position that Hennepin County needs to commit to funding streetcars. LRT 3A as reviewed by city staff is more consistent with long-range plans. In response to a request, Chair Dorfman agreed to let Peter Wagenius (City of Minneapolis-Aide to Mayor Rybak) speak since he was here when there was an open forum. She also noted that while she and Commissioner Callison cannot speak for the Hennepin County board, she has long supported streetcar in the Midtown Corridor, and added that she and Peter McLaughlin sit on the Midtown Greenway Coalition and support the streetcar on the Greenway. Mr. Remington noted that he meant "city" colloquially and not City as a corporate body. He indicated that 4,000 signatures have been collected and 98 percent of emails are for an Uptown alignment. He noted that he represents 35,000 people, the majority of whom want LRT to Uptown. If he supports LRT 3A, that does not represent the interests of his constituents.

Peter Wagenius (City of Minneapolis) spoke, representing Mayor Rybak. He noted that there are many people in South Minneapolis who believe that they can support LRT 3A because streetcars are coming. We need to represent that the streetcars will happen. The Amendment offered by Councilmember Remington does not include funding or timelines. It does not hold Hennepin County responsible for streetcar development, but the City needs to know that they have Hennepin County support for streetcars. They know that Chair Dorfman is supportive, but they need the rest of the board. When they go to the capitol asking for permission to raise money for streetcars, they want to know that Hennepin County will support such a request. Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) responded that she is supportive of a streetcar project, but the language of the amendment is wrong. The PAC cannot make commitments on behalf of Hennepin County. Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) agreed with Ms. Tyra-Lukens, noting that long ago we discussed this LRT project in relation to streetcars and understood that this discussion needs to be separate from the LRT project.

Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) proposed an amendment to Mr. Remington's amendment as follows:

The Southwest PAC and Hennepin County agree with the City of Minneapolis that the already dense and growing residential and employment centers of south Minneapolis in between the Hiawatha and Southwest LRT line should be served by rail transit.



The PAC recommends Hennepin County commit to being a leader in replacing bus service in Minneapolis with modern streetcar service to the Midtown Greenway as described in the City's *Access Minneapolis* plan which Hennepin County helped to create.

The PAC recommends Hennepin County amend its transportation plan to include streetcar projects recognizing that they would be assets to the region and are deserving of regional funding because they help to achieve regional goals, as described in the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan:

- Increase the use of alternative transportation modes such as walking, bicycling, public transit, carpooling, vanpooling and flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Mitigate congestion during the peak periods, special events and construction.
- Reduce air pollution and energy consumption related to transportation.
- Make more efficient use of transportation infrastructure and services.
- Reduce the necessity of car ownership when other travel choices exist.
- Promote transportation-efficient land development.

(p. 53, Ch 5 of the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan)

Jeff Arnold (Minneapolis Regional Chamber) seconded.

Discussion:

Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) asked how the PAC can make a motion for Hennepin County. Chair Dorfman suggested "The PAC recommends". Tony Wagner (Minnetonka Member) suggested that "rail transit" be replaced by "Access Minneapolis Plan". Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) noted that there are disagreements between Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis on parts of the plan. Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) asked if we should indicate that streetcar lines elsewhere might want to be considered, or if lines should be specified. Ralph Remington (Minneapolis Member) suggested "The PAC recommends that Hennepin County agree with the City of Minneapolis", or that "The PAC recommends that Hennepin County commit to being a leader in replacing bus service". Mr. Lilligren objected stating that it is problematic to ask Hennepin County to be the leader in returning streetcars to the region. It is premature to identify a leader except on the Midtown Streetcar line. Chair Dorfman suggested clarifying the third paragraph to request Hennepin County to amend its transportation plan to include streetcars. Robert McFarlin (Metropolitan Council Member) noted that the PAC is recommending things for regional transportation and he has two concerns: first, has the PAC delved into the issue of streetcars and what it really means to seek regional funding. He respects the intent, but offers caution. Secondly, the LPA decision is part of the FTA process for funding LRT. We must not burden it with other issues. This is a good debate but should not be part of the LPA decision.

Jeff Arnold (Minneapolis Regional Chamber Member) asked for the TAC amendment to be reread. TAC amendment was reread. Mr. Arnold commented that the TAC has already included a clause about the Midtown Corridor and if the PAC is going to vote on that, why is an extra amendment needed? Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber) agreed, asking how the PAC could vote on this when they are not convinced of the best solution. Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit) reminded the group that the amendment is on the table. The amendment was reread. Jean White (Edina Member) asked for clarification on whether the bullet points remain in the motion. Chair Dorfman responded that they do.



The amendment was moved by Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) and seconded by Ralph Remington (Minneapolis Member). The motion failed on a roll call vote: 5 yays, 11 nays, 1 abstention.

Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) suggested changes to TAC Amendment #3 by adding "and commitment to" after "development". PAC members discussed adding "rail" before "transit" in the amendment. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) moved the amendment as follows:

"That the region continue to explore the development of and commitment to the Midtown Corridor as a rail transit connection between the Southwest and Hiawatha LRT lines"

Seconded by Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member). Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) suggested changes to TAC Amendment #2 by removing "dis" from "disconnected". Ms. Walker stated her concern that this would add the trail system to the project and thus the project costs. Mr. Duffy asked if the project would be out of the CEI range with this addition. Robert McFarlin (Metropolitan Council) noted that we are in "cut" mode. Mr. Duffy asked if the trails will always be cut. Mr. McFarlin responded no, but we cannot be adding costs to the project. Chair Dorfman proposed:

"That the regional trail operated by the Three Rivers Park District and the City of Minneapolis in the 3A corridor, as an important transportation link in the region, be addressed as an integral part of the project development process as to design, funding and construction as a separate disconnected action"

Motion moved by Robert McFarlin (Metropolitan Council Member) seconded by Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County Member). Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

LPA Motion is still on the table at this point. Discussion: George Puzak (Cedar Lake Park Association Alternate) asked if the TAC made any recommendation related to mitigation. Chair Dorfman responded yes, as it relates to freight rail. Other mitigation is in the project. Jeff Arnold (Minneapolis Regional Chamber Member) asked if it was appropriate to include mitigation for the Cedar Shores Townhomes. Janet Kennison (HDR Engineering) replied that we cannot single out an area for mitigation before the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is complete. The mitigation will be addressed in the DEIS.

The motion, as moved by Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) and seconded by Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) was approved on a roll call vote: 15 yays, 1 nay, 1 abstention.

V. Next Steps LPA Process

The HCRRA will hold a public hearing on the LPA on October 20, 2009; HCRRA action is scheduled for November 3, 2009. In the interest of time, no further items were discussed.

VI. Adjournment

Chair Dorfman adjourned the meeting at 9:50am. The PAC will meet next on Wednesday, January 13, 2010, from 8-9:30am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.