



Meeting Minutes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)
March 11, 2009, 8:00 to 9:30 AM
St. Louis Park City Hall

PAC Members and Alternates

Gail Dorfman, Chair	Hennepin County Commissioner	Member
Robert Lilligren,	City of Minneapolis	Member
Sue Sanger	City of St. Louis Park	Alternate
Amy Vennewitz	Met. Council	Alternate
Jean White	City of Edina	Member
LuAnn Toliver	Minnetonka	Alternate
Dan Duffy	Twin West Chamber	Member
George Puzak	Cedar Lake Park Association	Alternate
Ralph Remington	City of Minneapolis	Member
Travis Bunch	Minneapolis Regional Chamber	Alternate
Bob Corrick	Midtown Community Works Partnership	Member
Brian Willette	Cedar Lake Park Association	Member
Bob McFarlin	Met. Council	Member
Bruce Rowan	City of Hopkins	Member
Jim Brimeyer	St. Louis Park	Member
Nancy Tyra Lukens	Southwest Transit	Member
Kathy Nelson	City of Eden Prairie	Member
Gary Aiken	Twin West Chamber	Alternate

Southwest Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members & Agency Staff

Katie Walker (Hennepin County Study Manager), Regina Herron (Eden Prairie), Randy Newton (Eden Prairie), Steven Hay (Minneapolis), Elise Durbin (Minnetonka), Meg McMonigal (St. Louis Park), Steve Mahowald (Metro Transit), Lisa Freese (Scott County), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Carol Lezotte Anderson (Hennepin County)

Consultant Team

Mona Elabbady (HDR Engineering), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting)

Other Attendees Art Higinbotham (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)), Kerri Pearce-Ruch (Hennepin County), Jackie Cherryhomes (Cedar Shores Townhomes), Bill Schreiber (Messerli & Kramer), Jason Flohrs, Bill James (St. Louis Park.), Gen McJilton (Ryan Companies), Dave Nuckols (Hennepin County), Jeanette Colby (Kenwood Isles Area Association), Rod Miller (Eden Prairie Chamber).





I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Dorfman opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves. The Chair announced that agenda items three and five will be covered first because the Minneapolis City Council members have to leave the meeting early. Chair Dorfman reported to the group that the Southwest Transitway project has been allocated \$534,000 in the Federal FY '09 Omnibus Transportation Bill which passed the senate last night and awaits President Obama's action. In the Minnesota state legislature, House Representative Steve Simon and Senators Latz have authored bills that include \$5 million in bonding. These fund allocations are a promising sign that Southwest will have federal and state funding partners soon.

Chair Dorfman made a motion to approve the minutes from the February meeting. George Puzak (Cedar Lake Park Association Alternate) stated that his name was on the minutes twice, and his statement on page 5 should say "5 or 6 light rail lines". The motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Luann Toliver. Submitted and approved unanimously by the PAC.

II. Evaluation Process-Locally Preferred Alternative (Deviation in agenda order)

Hennepin County Study Manager Katie Walker referred PAC members to the Selection Criteria handout and reviewed the criteria. Ms Walker explained that the selection criteria include planning compatibility, transit mobility, costs (capital and operating) and the cost effectiveness index (CEI), critical environmental impacts, and other factors including displacements and engineering issues.

Discussion

Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) asked if all of the affected cities have submitted their comprehensive plans. Ms. Walker said that no, they have not, but the Metropolitan Council will allow the study to proceed with running ridership forecasts with the updated numbers in the plans, though they have not formally been approved by the Council.

Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) asked if local historic agencies, as well as state agencies, will be consulted with regard to historic districts and properties. Ms. Walker answered yes, that Hennepin County will be working with the City of Minneapolis and local historic preservation efforts on ways to avoid or mitigate effects to historic areas.

Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) asked if special consideration will be given to noise and vibration impacts upon multi unit housing, like the buildings on First and Blaisdell Avenues. Ms. Walker replied that this is a two tiered analysis and that locating the sensitive receptors will happen first, then the buildings, structures, and characteristics of the area will be considered. Mr. Lilligren responded that this issue is a very important one, since residents are concerned about the amount of vibration in their homes. Ms. Walker agreed and added that the FTA was pleased that noise and vibration have been addressed so early in the planning process, especially considering the increased sensitivity to noise and vibration issues on the Central Corridor with Minnesota Public Radio.

Jean White (Edina Member) asked if 2010 census information will be used for planning purposes. Ms. Walker answered that 2030 estimates are used.



Chair Dorfman asked where the feet of structure numbers will appear in the rankings. Ms. Walker replied that feet of structure affect costs, so that number will be figured into the cost ranking for each alignment.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked how employment near stations figures into the rankings. Ms. Walker responded that employment numbers are part of the ridership forecast for each station.

III. DEIS Study Schedule (Deviation in agenda order)

Ms Walker reviewed the schedule for materials to come before the Southwest PAC for the April, May, June, and August meetings.

Discussion

Chair Dorfman, referring to the handout, asked what the LPA Report to be reviewed at the June meeting is. Ms. Walker responded that the LPA Report is the TAC recommendation for the LPA.

Dan Duffy (Twin West Chamber Member) asked if at the June meeting the PAC will make their LPA decision. Chair Dorfman responded that there will be a lot of information to consider, and though there might be some desire to vote, it is not likely.

George Puzak (Cedar Lake Park Association Alternate) asked if the TAC meetings are public and if the times are published anywhere. Ms. Walker responded that the question arose before and the Hennepin County Attorney's office was consulted. The official response is that TAC meetings are not public meetings and therefore the agendas and meeting dates/times are not publicized on the website. The PAC and CAC meetings are public meetings and their agendas, minutes, and materials will be made available on the project website. This is consistent with the Central Corridor LRT project.

Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) asked if once the TAC forwards their recommendation, will the PAC agree or change things. Chair Dorfman answered that the PAC can send the recommendation back with changes or accept it, but it will not move forward for the HCRRA's consideration without the PAC decision.

Kathy Nelson asked if the decision is not made in June, when it will occur. Chair Dorfman replied that it is the PAC's decision. If members are comfortable, a decision can be made in June, but it seems that the group will need some time to decide.

Bob McFarlin (Metropolitan Council Member) asked if there is a suggested deadline for action within the project development process. Ms. Walker replied that once the TAC and PAC identify the LPA, HDR's scope of work is narrowed into the details of the LPA. There is a significant amount of work that must be completed after the decision has been made and the HDR contract does terminate at the end of 2009.

Chair Dorfman asked if anything else important, such as federal authorization, is riding on the LPA decision. Ms. Walker answered that when the Metropolitan Council approves the LPA into the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), then the New Starts application can be submitted, but not before then. In the second half of 2009, it would be ideal for the consultants to be working on the details of the LPA and the New Starts application so that by the end of 2009, the DEIS is complete and the New Starts application has been submitted. Mr. McFarlin asked when the LPA is official. Ms. Walker answered that



the LPA will be official upon the Metropolitan Council's decision to include it in the TPP. Chair Dorfman asked how long the Metropolitan Council's process is. Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) replied that a public hearing date must be set and the hearing held 45 days later. Then a report will be issued and the decision will come before the full council.

IV. Legislative/Congressional Update (Deviation in agenda order)

Bill Schreiber distributed the Capital Investment Committee 2009 Legislative Session Bonding Proposals and updated the group on recent legislative and congressional happenings. The federal omnibus bill passed in the senate last night, Tuesday, March 10, and has been forwarded to the President for his signature sometime in the next week.

In the Minnesota senate, the capital investment committee bill passed and was taken up in the senate finance committee on Thursday. Bonding could be debated in the senate next week. The bonding bill includes \$5 million for Southwest Transitway, \$500,000 each for Bottineau, Robert Street, and Rush Lines, \$1 million for Northern Lights Express, and \$5 million for high speed rail from the Twin Cities to Chicago. Governor Pawlenty is not recommending any bonding; the budget forecast is for \$133 million in bonding. Mr. Schreiber commented that Minnesota has one the lowest state debts and the now is a good time to issue bonds to create jobs. The Governor is opposed. He does not want to raise taxes, but without additional revenue from increased taxes, cannot service bond debt.

Chair Dorfman commented that in 2010 Southwest will request \$9 million in federal appropriations and that it will be important for each member of congress whose district is covered by Southwest LRT make the official request. Discussions and meeting have occurred with members of Congress and it appears that Congressman Ellison is highly supportive, but Congressman Paulsen remains uncommitted. Chair Dorfman emphasized that it is important for Southwest PAC members to communicate with Congressman Paulsen, who wants to hear from the business community about the importance of this appropriation request.

Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) asked if this allocation was just a part of the preliminary engineering costs. Ms. Walker replied yes, preliminary engineering is estimated to cost \$35-40 million. Additional funds will be requested in 2010. It is expected that 50% of the funding for the project will come from the federal government, 30% from the Counties Transit Improvement Board, 10% from the state, and 10% from the HCRRA.

V. Public Outreach Plan (Deviation in agenda order)

Kathie Doty, KLD Consulting, presented on the updated public involvement plan. Currently the team is publicizing the new sub-alternative and contacting the affected neighborhoods. Staff has been to neighborhood meetings in Cedar Isles Dean, Stevens Square, Whittier, Loring Park, and East Isles/Downtown West, and has reached out to businesses at 12th and Nicollet, and the Minneapolis Chamber. The focus of presentations has been on the planning process, and maps have been distributed at the meetings.

Chair Dorfman was recently interviewed on Minnesota Public Radio, and an article on Southwest appeared in the Southwest Journal.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) commented that she is concerned that outreach is focused on



groups near the alignments, but that people who live further from the alignments also need information. Chair Dorfman agreed, stating that this is a short-term intensive effort, and outreach does need to be expanded. Ms. Sanger added that since scoping was only for environmental issues, there needs to be a forum for commenting on routing preferences.

Bob Corrick (Midtown Community Works Partnership Member) commented that other Minneapolis neighborhoods, such as Phillips, are affected by the alignment. Ms. Doty added that media efforts will be more widespread and in mainstream papers such as the Star Tribune. Ms. Walker added that two press releases have been issued since the HCRRRA took action on the Scoping Report. Copies of these press releases will be given to the PAC.

Chair Dorfman asked the group to help project staff identify appropriate venues for public outreach, especially in the suburbs where there are no neighborhood associations. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) commented that neighborhoods appreciate the updates. The Whittier meeting was well attended and interest in the project will only rise. The outreach team should go back out to the neighborhood groups in June, he recommended.

Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) said that the Metropolitan Council will hold a public hearing for amending the TPP, but asked if the HCRRRA would hold any other meeting. Ms. Doty responded that in order to hear from the public there will be three open houses held along the corridor before the LPA decision. These will occur after the TAC has made a recommendation on the LPA, but before the PAC makes their recommendation. A press release will announce the TAC recommendation. A new *Newsline* is planned for this spring as well.

Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) asked if there will be a column about Southwest Transitway in the Sun Newspapers. Ms. Doty responded that the media sub-consultant will follow up on this. Ralph Remington (Minneapolis Member) asked if there has been outreach to businesses. Jason Flohrs, (Meeting attendee) said yes there will be an ongoing outreach effort.

Ms. Doty commented that the public involvement plan presented today goes through September. Art Higinbotham (Meeting Attendee) added that the sub alignment serve institutions such as St. Thomas University, Hennepin Theatres, and the Convention Center, that would not be represented on business groups. Travis Bunch (Minneapolis Regional Chamber Alternate) commented that University of St. Thomas is updated because they are on the Minneapolis Regional Chamber board. Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked about representation from Abbott Northwestern, which has a large campus on the C alignments. Bob Corrick (Midtown Community Works Partnership Member) replied that Abbott Northwestern is represented by the Midtown Community Works Partnership.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM. The PAC will meet next on Wednesday, April 8 at 8am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.