



Meeting Minutes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

June 10, 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
Robert Lilligren	City of Minneapolis	Member
Sue Sanger	City of St. Louis Park	Alternate
LuAnn Toliver	City of Minnetonka	Alternate
Jeff Arnold	Minneapolis Regional Chamber	Member
John DeWitt	Midtown Community Works Partnership	Alternate
Brian Willette	Cedar Lake Park Association	Member
Bruce Rowan	City of Hopkins	Member
Jim Brimeyer	City of St. Louis Park	Member
Kathy Nelson	City of Eden Prairie	Member
Gary Aiken	Twin West Chamber	Alternate
George Puzak	Cedar Lake Park Association	Alternate
Bob Moeller	Southwest Transit	Alternate
Jean White	City of Edina	Member
Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Southwest Transit	Member
Mark Haggerty	Three Rivers Park District	Member
Dan Duffy	Twin West Chamber	Member
Bob Corrick	Midtown Community Works Partnership	Member
Amy Vennewitz	Metropolitan Council	Member
Rod Miller	Eden Prairie Chamber	Member

Southwest Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members & Agency Staff

Katie Walker (Hennepin County Study Manager), Robert Vockrodt (Mn/DOT), Steve Mahowald (Metro Transit), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Carol Lezotte Anderson (Hennepin County), Meg McMonigal (City of St. Louis Park), Elise Durbin (City of Minnetonka), Regina Herron (City of Eden Prairie), Julie Wischnack (City of Minnetonka), Don Pflaum (City of Minneapolis)





Consultant Team

Oscar Gonzalez (HDR Engineering), Terry Phemister (HDR Engineering), Scott Reed (HDR Engineering), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting)

Other Attendees

Art Higinbotham (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)), Jason Flohrs (Project consultant), Travis Bunch (Minneapolis Regional Chamber), Kim Malrick (City of Minneapolis), Kevin Locke (City of St. Louis Park), Joan Vanhala (Alliance for Metropolitan Stability), Bill James (St. Louis Park), Bill Schreiber (Messerli & Kramer), Tim Sullivan (Hopkins), Scott Petersen (Mn/DOT), Ellen Hacker (Hennepin County), Kerri Pearce-Ruch (Hennepin County), Elise Peterson (Housing Preservation Project)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Dorfman called the meeting to order and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Chair Dorfman asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May PAC meeting. Jeff Arnold (Minneapolis Regional Chamber Member) made a motion to approve the minutes and Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by a unanimous voice-vote.

II. Legislative/Congressional Update

Bill Schreiber (Messerli & Kramer) reported that the state has a \$4.6 billion deficit, but Governor Pawlenty did not cut general funds for transit, since the motor vehicle sales tax revenues that fund transit were already down. The legislature cut \$12 million in transit funding from the general fund, but made up for it in other ways, avoiding the need for a fare increase. Though Governor Pawlenty trimmed the bonding budget by \$84 million, transit bonding remained intact and \$21 million for transit projects was included in this year's bonding bill. Historically, bonding is requested for a project and appears as a line item in the budget, which the governor can veto. This year, the funds were lumped together, allowing for discretionary use amongst several identified projects. Of the \$21 million, \$8.5 million has been reserved for Central Corridor, and the remaining \$12.5 million will be allocated amongst six to eight transit projects. The Metropolitan Council will allocate the funds and is currently contacting projects to determine needs and set budgets. The bill does stipulate specific uses for the funds, so not all project costs are eligible.

Mr. Schreiber reported that at the federal level Representative Oberstar intends to assemble a new surface transportation bill before the August recess, but the senate is not in a hurry to move the bill forward because there are no new revenues. It could be 2010 or 2011 before the bill passes.

Jean White (Edina Member) asked if it would be possible to raise the federal gas tax for additional revenues. Mr. Schreiber responded that a raise is long overdue, but it would be a major fight to pass the increase.

III. Resolution-State Bond Funds from Met. Council for SW LRT

Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) moved and Mark Haggerty (Three Rivers Park District Member) seconded that the PAC consider a resolution supporting \$5 million from the 2009 bonding bill proceeds to be distributed by the Metropolitan Council for Southwest LRT project Preliminary Engineering (PE)/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Discussion

Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) suggested that the third clause of the resolution be changed to reflect the impact that Southwest Transitway will have on the entire region, and not just the



business environment in the Southwest Metro Area.

Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) asked what the considerations were in requesting the \$5 million amount for funding. Ms. Walker responded that this was the amount agreed upon as the minimum to keep the project moving. Mr. Lilligren asked if there has been coordination between the lines for funding, and if Southwest's is the largest request. Mr. Schreiber responded that the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) and the state will jointly fund the Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which will be construction-ready next spring. Southwest is next in priority. Chair Dorfman added that there has been no coordination between the lines; this work has fallen to the Metropolitan Council. Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) added that there are park and ride projects at Maplewood Mall and Manning Avenue that are immediate needs, and the Metropolitan Council will also be considering which projects could receive funding next year, which is a bonding year. Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) asked if Southwest receives \$5 million in 2009, will additional funds be required in 2010. Chair Dorfman replied that yes, \$5 million will also be needed in 2010. Jeff Arnold (Minneapolis Regional Chamber Member) commented that the resolution assumes that the Metropolitan Council supports the Southwest project, and asked if we have indication of this. Chair Dorfman answered that the Metropolitan Council has been partners on the project since the beginning, and Metropolitan Council Chairman Peter Bell supported the Southwest legislative request. Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) said that the resolution is fine.

A PAC member suggested changing "improved" to "improvement" in the sixth clause of the resolution. Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) moved to approve the resolution with the proposed amendments, Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) seconded and the amended resolution was approved on a unanimous voice-vote, with Amy Vennewitz (Metropolitan Council Alternate) abstaining.

IV. Southwest LRT Project Schedule

Ms. Walker distributed a key milestones handout. On July 22, HDR will present the evaluation results to the PAC in the morning and the CAC in the evening. The results will be in a "consumer reports" format for comparison between alternatives. Five public meetings (one per city) and a business forum will be held in August. On August 26th the PAC will meet for a report on the feedback from the open houses. On August 27th, the Technical Advisory Committee will meet to make their recommendation on the LPA. In September a media campaign will begin, and on the 17th of September the PAC will hold a public hearing. A location for this will be determined in the next few weeks.

Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) asked what the media campaign will consist of. Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting) responded that the major and neighborhood newspapers, city newsletters, and television stations will all be contacted. There will also be updates via e-blast and the Southwest Transitway website.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked what the purpose of the public hearing is. Ms. Walker answered that it is principally for public comment on the LPA. Ms. Sanger questioned that the TAC would make its preliminary recommendation before the hearing was held. Chair Dorfman responded that the TAC is intended to make a technical decision; the PAC is responsible for a policy decision.

Discussion resumed regarding the schedule. The handout notes an October 8th PAC date; the meeting



will be held on the 14th, not the 8th. On September 30, the PAC will meet to make the LPA decision. At the October 14th PAC meeting the consultants will brief the group on the remainder of the year and the DEIS issues. On October 20th, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority board will accept the LPA from the PAC and forward it to the Metropolitan Council.

Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park Alternate) asked if the Community Advisory Committee and the Business Advisory Committee will make recommendations on the routes. Ms. Walker responded that they will not.

Ms. Walker noted that the goal is for the DEIS to be ready for public comment in November, though this schedule is subject to Federal Transit Administration approval.

Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) asked if having completed some of the environmental work will make the Southwest project more competitive. Ms. Walker and Mr. Gonzalez confirmed that the more we know, the more satisfied FTA will be with the process.

V. Evaluation Process

Oscar Gonzalez and Scott Reed (HDR Engineering) distributed a handout and presented on the evaluation process. Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) asked if there were any red flags coming up as the work is being done. Mr. Reed answered that there is not much merit to discussing issues individually, and that a better understanding will come of reviewing all of the results at once. Chair Dorfman asked if the Nicollet Mall alignment will be carried through the whole evaluation. Mr. Gonzalez said yes, a full evaluation will be done for the 3C alignment. All alternatives will have associated costs listed and materials will be distilled into a public-friendly handout for distribution. Another Newsline and a multi-media presentation will also help to explain the results.

Nancy Tyra-Lukens (Southwest Transit Member) asked if the matrix will have FTA thresholds or national averages for comparison of criteria. Mr. Gonzalez said that the alternatives will be rated as they compare to one another, and Ms. Walker added that measures used for transit across the country will also be included.

Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) asked if station area planning is a required part of the New Starts process and if it must be completed in Minneapolis before proceeding. Ms. Walker answered that though it is not completely required, station area planning feeds into the land use portion of the New Starts application and shows municipal action for the LRT line. Chair Dorfman added that the Urban Land Institute would like to bring in their team to look at land use along Southwest. They will come to the PAC and the cities to see if there is interest. Mark Haggerty (Three Rivers Park District) stressed that since there will be new information on the LRT, that it be reemphasized that the trails will be maintained.

VI. Adjournment

Chair Dorfman adjourned the meeting at 9:30am. The PAC will meet next on Wednesday, July 22 from 8-10:30am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.