



**Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee**

Thursday, March 19, 2015

1:30 – 3:00 PM

Council Chambers, St. Louis Park City Hall

**Agenda**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>I. Welcome and Announcements</b><br><i>Chair Jan Callison</i>  | <b>1:30 to 1:35 PM</b>                          |
| <b>II. Approval of the February 2015 Meeting Minutes*</b><br><i>Chair Jan Callison</i>  | <b>1:35 to 1:40 PM</b><br><i>(Action)</i>       |
| <b>III. Committee Updates</b><br><i>Technical Implementation Committee (TIC)</i><br><i>Business &amp; Community Advisory Committees (BAC/CAC)</i> | <b>1:40 to 1:55 PM</b><br><i>(Information)</i>  |
| <b>IV. Membership Nominations</b>   | <b>1:55 to 2:10 PM</b><br><i>(Action)</i>       |
| <b>V. LRT Station Architecture</b>  | <b>2:10 to 2:30 PM</b><br><i>(Presentation)</i> |
| <b>VI. Draft Corridor Wide Housing Strategy*</b>  | <b>2:30 to 2:50 PM</b><br><i>(Action)</i>       |
| <b>VII. 2015 Workplan*</b>  | <b>2:50 to 3:00 PM</b><br><i>(Action)</i>       |

\*enclosed

Note: The Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee will NOT meeting in April. The next Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee meeting will be held on **Thursday, May 21, 2015** at the St. Louis Park City Hall at 1:30 PM.

**Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee  
Roster (March 2015)**

<b>Representing</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Hennepin County	Jan Callison (Chair)	Member	jan.callison@hennepin.us
	Linda Higgins	Member	Linda.higgins@hennepin.us
Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority	Marion Greene	Member	Marion.greene@hennepin.us
	Peter McLaughlin	Alternate	Peter.mclaughlin@hennepin.us
Metropolitan Council	Jennifer Munt	Member	jennifer.munt@metc.state.mn.us
City of Minneapolis	Linea Palmisano	Member	Linea.palmisano@minneapolismn.gov
	Lisa Goodman	Alternate	Lisa.goodman@minneapolismn.gov
City of St. Louis Park	Anne Mavity	Member	annemavityslp@comcast.net
	Sue Sanger	Alternate	suesanger@comcast.net
City of Edina	James Hovland	Member	jhovland@ci.edina.mn.us
	Mary Brindle	Alternate	mbrindle@comcast.net
City of Hopkins	Kristi Halverson	Member	khalverson@hopkinsmn.com
	Aaron Kuznia	Alternate	akuznia@hopkinsmn.com
City of Minnetonka	Tony Wagner	Member	twagner@eminnetonka.com
	Terry Schneider	Alternate	tschneider@eminnetonka.com
City of Eden Prairie	Kathy Nelson	Member	knelson@edenprairie.org
	Brad Aho	Alternate	baho@edenprairie.org
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Dick Miller	Member	dickrmiller@gmail.com
	Jeff Casale	Alternate	jasale@minnesotahomes.com
Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board	Anita Tabb	Member	atabb@minneapolisparcs.org,
	Meg Forney	Alternate	megf@visi.com
SouthWest Transit	Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Member	ntyra-lukens@edenprairie.org
Urban Land Institute-Minnesota	Caren Dewar	Ex-officio	caren.dewar@uli.org
	Cathy Bennett	Alternate	Cathy.bennett@uli.org
Community Advisory Committee	Russ Adams	Ex-officio	russ@metrostability.org
Business Advisory Council	TBD	Ex-officio	



**SOUTHWEST LRT**  
community works

*Beyond the Rails*  
[swlrtccommunityworks.org](http://swlrtccommunityworks.org)

Southwest LRT Community Works  
Steering Committee

2015 Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 PM at the St. Louis Park City Hall, Council Chambers.

*February 19*

*March 19*

*May 21*

*July 16*

**August 20**

*September 17*

*November 19*





## SW Community Works Steering Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 19, 2015

1:30 – 3:00 PM, St. Louis Park City Hall

### Meeting Attendees:

Steering Committee Members and Alternates:

Chair Jan Callison, Hennepin County Member

Dick Miller, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Member

Jeff Casale, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Alternate

Caren Dewar, Urban Land Institute – Minnesota Member

Marion Greene, Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority Member

Kristi Halvorson, City of Hopkins Member

Kathy Nelson, City of Eden Prairie Member

Linea Palmisano, City of Minneapolis Member

Nancy Tyra-Lukens, Southwest Transit Member

Tony Wagner, City of Minnetonka Member

Other attendees: Katie Walker (Hennepin County) Chuck Darnell (Hennepin County), Janet Jeremiah(EP), Meg McMonigal (SLP), Julie Wischnack(Minnetonka), Elise Durbin(Minnetonka), Kersten Elverum(Hopkins), Kerri Pearce Ruch(Hennepin County), Dan Pfeiffer(SPO), Michael Krantz (SPO), Cathy Bennett (Urban Land Institute), Barry Schade (BMNA), Larry Blackstad (MCWD).

I. **Welcome and Announcements:** Chair Callison called the meeting to order and began with a number of announcements. It was announced that President Obama included \$150 million in his 2016 budget for the Southwest LRT project and the project's New Starts rating also improved from a medium to medium high due in part to the work done by the Southwest Community Works partners in the areas of land use, economic development, and housing. Funding applications were submitted under the regional solicitation process for three trail grade separations and a park/ride at the Beltline station. The proposals have ranked well and staff are cautiously optimistic that they will received the requested funding.

II. **Approval of October 2014 Minutes:** Chair Callison requested action on the October 2014 minutes. Jeff Casale moved approval, Nancy Tyra-Lukens seconded. Minutes from October meeting were approved on a voice vote.

III. **Committee updates:** Katie Walker, co-chair of the Southwest Community Works Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) provided an update on committee activities. The TIC is working on identifying funding sources to implement the infrastructure projects contained in the Southwest Corridor Investment Framework as well as sharing information on development projects.



Dan Pfeiffer, Southwest Project Office (SPO) provided an update on the Business and Community Advisory Committees. The two committees have been reconstituted now that the Southwest LRT project has progressed into advanced design. The committees will meet monthly for the next two years and will advise both the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee and the Southwest LRT Corridor Management Committee. A member from each committee will be appointed to serve on the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee. Those appointments are expected prior to the March meeting of the steering committee.

IV. **Survey Results and Recommendations:** Katie Walker, Hennepin County staff, reviewed the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee survey results. Members were asked to complete an online survey to help inform future activities. The general conclusion from the survey and the committee discussion is that the committee is well served by their current charter and the Technical Implementation Committee and that their focus areas are and should remain continuing to work collectively to achieve their stated vision and goals. The committee did identify infrastructure connections, financing/funding, public spaces, and jobs/employment development as their priority focus areas for 2015. The committee also discussed expanding their membership to include the Three Rivers Park District and business/corporate interests. The committee also expressed an interest in strengthening their relationship to and clarifying the roles of the Business and Community Advisory Committees. Staff was asked to reflect these priorities in the proposed 2015 workplan which will be discussed at the March meeting.

Member Tony Wagner requested that Southwest LRT Project Office (SPO) staff be asked to attend the March meeting to discuss their approach to LRT station design with an emphasis on how the SPO will respond to comments and concerns about passenger comfort, protection from the elements, and integration with the character of the broader station area and development. Staff was asked to invite SPO staff to present at the March meeting.

V. **Future March meeting topics:** Chair Callison announced that the March meeting topics will include LRT Station Architecture, the Downtown Hopkins station video, the draft Corridor Wide Housing Strategy, and the 2015 Workplan.

VI. **Adjournment:** Chair Callison adjourned the meeting at 2:50 PM



**Agenda Item III – Business & Community Advisory Committees**

	Steering Committee Action Requested:
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Background:

Previous Action on Request:

Recommendation:

Attachments:

Comments:



**Southwest Light Rail Transitway (SWLRT)  
Business & Community Advisory Committee Meeting**

**February 12, 2015**

**Beth El Synagogue**

**5224 W 26<sup>th</sup> Street**

**St. Louis Park, MN 55416**

**6:00 PM – 7:30 PM**

**Meeting Summary**

BAC Members: Will Roach, Dan Duffy, Bill Beard, Curt Rahman, Gary Orcutt, Christy Swenson, Stuart Ackerberg

CAC Members/Alternates: Council Member Jennifer Munt, Russ Adam, Amanda Kappes, Andrew Pieper, Asad Aliweyd, Bill James, Brian Kirk, Charles Weber, Doug Peterson, Janet Weivoda, Jeff Strate, Kathryn Campbell, Kevan Hanson, Lee Munnich, Melissa Everett, Miguel Zuniga, Sara Masske, Vida Ditter

Agency Staff and Guests: Commissioner Jan Callison, Craig Lamothe, Sam O'Connell, Sophia Ginis, Dan Pfeiffer, John Welbes, Mark Fuhrmann, Nani Jacobson, Robin Caufman, Ryan Kronzer, Katie Walker, Kerri Pearce Ruch, Regina Rojas, Alysén Nesse, Greg Hunt, David Greene, Michael McDowel, Mat Holinshead

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

CAC Co-Chair Munt opened the meeting. Commissioner Callison gave opening remarks on the importance of community involvement in the project. The members went around the room introducing themselves, who they represent, and their interests/goals for being involved in the project. Sam O'Connell presented an overview of the project scope, timeline, and connections to other transitways throughout the metro region. CAC Co-Chair Russ Adams then asked members to share their Vision; what does success of Southwest LRT look like. Responses from members included; creating a linear community linked to the whole city, easy to get from west suburbs to downtown, connecting people from different communities, accessible affordable transit creates wealth, LRT is the back bone of the transit system and the bus system is the artery, looking forward to the choice of LRT to go somewhere without a car, equity and economic development, another step to a great transit system for greater MSP, build a transportation system without destroying the communities it goes through, becoming a regionally connected community.

**2. Roles, Responsibilities and Resources**

Sam O'Connell presented the roles and responsibilities of the committees and resources for the committees. The committees support both the Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County. On the

Metropolitan council side is the Southwest Project Office, the Southwest LRT Corridor Management Committee, and the Metropolitan Council. On the Hennepin County side is the Technical Implementation Committee, Community Works Steering Committee, and Hennepin County. Members of the committee serve as a voice for the community, provide input on design, identify impacts related to construction and operation of the line, and serve as an information resource for their community. Staffs from the Southwest Project Office and Hennepin County's Community Works program support the committees. Committee agendas, presentation and meeting materials are posted on [www.SWLRT.org](http://www.SWLRT.org), members can sign up to receive the project newsletter, and Hennepin County's community works website at [www.swlrtccommunityworks.org](http://www.swlrtccommunityworks.org).

### **3. Hennepin County Community Works**

Katie Walker presented an overview of Hennepin County's Community Works program, which looks at beyond the rails for housing, jobs, connections. Community Works is moving into the implementation stage after completing the Investment Framework (Transitional Station Area Action Plan).

### **4. 2015 Look Ahead**

Craig Lamothe, Southwest LRT Project Director, began the 2015 Look Ahead with an update on the New Starts rating and the Full Funding Grant Agreement. In the recent presidential budget, the Southwest LRT Project was included as a New Starts project for funding in federal fiscal year 2016. The project's New Starts rating was also updated in February to an overall rating of "Medium-High" from its last rating in September 2011 as "Medium". Ryan Kronzer gave a brief look ahead at advancing design from 30% to 60% and the remaining slides, both design and environmental, would be presented at the next meeting. Sam O'Connell presented the project's public involvement activities in 2014 highlighting the President and Secretary Foxx visit last February, the June 14 opening of the METRO Green Line, the municipal consent public hearings, outreach at the State Fair, and the hosting of Rail~Volution in September 2014. Sam presented a look ahead at 2015 public involvement.

### **5. Member and Committee Reports/Public Forum**

None

### **6. Adjourn**



**Agenda Item IV – Membership Nominations**

**Steering Committee Action Requested:**

**Background:**

According to the adopted Southwest Community Works Steering Committee Charter, the committee may add members using their adopted Membership Nomination procedure (see attached). At the February Southwest Community Works Steering Committee meeting the committee discussed adding the Three Rivers Park District and business/corporate interests to the committee. Members wishing to nominate new members are required to complete the enclosed membership nomination form and present to the committee.

**Previous Action on Request:**

**Recommendation:**

**Attachments:** Southwest Community Works Steering Committee Membership Policy and Nomination Form.

**Comments:**





**Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee  
Membership Policy**

Adopted by the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee on October 20, 2011

- Size:** The ideal size of the Steering Committee is no more than 20 members, including ex-officio members. The Steering Committee will establish subcommittees that will allow for membership to expand and contract as priorities and projects proceed and change over time.
- Composition:** The Steering Committee should be composed of public and private members who share the Southwest LRT Community Works vision.
- Eligibility:** In order for an entity to be considered for Steering Committee membership they must have a mission/vision that aligns with the Southwest LRT Community Works vision. In addition, they must possess both an asset (e.g., property, land use controls, employees, etc) and the authority to partner with others to implement a Community Works project. Community Works projects are defined as those within a ½ mile of the LRT line.
- CAC & BAC:** A representative from each of these committees should be added to the Steering Committee as ex-officio/nonvoting members.
- ULI MN:** A representative from ULI-MN should be added as an ex-officio/nonvoting member. ULI-MN is an important partner because they engage public and private sector leaders to foster collaborations, share knowledge, and join in meaningful strategic action to create thriving sustainable communities. ULI-MN initiatives are focused on housing, jobs and economic development, and transportation.



**Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee  
Membership Application**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Member Nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Vision/Mission Statement:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Asset(s):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Rationale**

*In 300 words or fewer, please provide a rationale for the inclusion of your organization on the Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee*

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Please mail completed applications to: [Katie.walker@hennepin.us](mailto:Katie.walker@hennepin.us)

*Nominees should note that Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee membership does not currently include a financial contribution to the program, but should the need arise, financial and/or in-kind contributions may be requested.*





## Agenda Item V – LRT Station Architecture

**Steering Committee Action Requested:**

Information and Discussion

**Background:**

In 2015, the Southwest Project Office (SPO) will design the 17 stations along the alignment. This is a continuation of the process that began last fall, when design staff started discussions with city and county staff on a draft station design approach that includes four station types that range from understated to bold. These preliminary designs provide architectural consistency with the existing stations along the Green Line in Minneapolis and St. Paul and offer designs that could fit into the variety of settings along the Green Line Extension.

The four station types vary by canopy, support structures and other architectural elements:

- **Landscape** Station design is understated with a horizontal profile and flat canopy roofs.
- **Neighborhood** Station design is scaled to fit into a neighborhood or district with a pair of flat canopy roofs with slightly raised structural elements.
- **Town Square** Station design has a higher profile to fit into of an activity center with flat canopy roofs but higher structure and additional horizontal architectural features above the canopy.
- **Landmark** Station design has the largest station profile, with pairs of sloped canopy roofs, highest structure, and vertical architectural features located between the station canopies, to increase station visibility.

SPO has reviewed the four station designs with city and county staff and discussed which station type would fit best with each station location. In April, the Metropolitan Council will be hosting a series of open houses and seeking public input on the station design (see attached). More information is available on [www.swlrt.org](http://www.swlrt.org)

**Previous Action on Request:**

**Recommendation:**

**Attachments:**

**Comments:**



## Community Open Houses

# SOUTHWEST LRT STATION DESIGN

Come to a community open house to see LRT station architecture concepts and learn about what goes into designing a light rail station. Metropolitan Council project staff will be on hand to receive public input and answer questions.

The Southwest LRT Project has developed several different station architecture concepts to fit into different settings. This open house is an opportunity to learn about station design and give feedback to project staff. You can also hear a brief presentation on station design at the beginning of each open house.

If you can't come in person, meeting materials and a comment form will be available online at [www.swlrt.org](http://www.swlrt.org).

Anyone who requires assistance to participate should contact Southwest LRT Assistant Public Involvement Manager Dan Pfeiffer at least seven business days before the scheduled meeting:

Email: [Daniel.Pfeiffer@metrotransit.org](mailto:Daniel.Pfeiffer@metrotransit.org)  
Phone: 612-373-3897



*One of four station design concepts developed for the Southwest LRT project.*

### MINNEAPOLIS STATIONS

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**Thursday, April 2, 2015, 5:30–7:30 P.M.**

**Wednesday, April 8, 2015, 7:30–9:30 A.M.**

Dunwoody College of Technology  
818 Dunwoody Blvd., Minneapolis  
Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/Vhs71>

### ST. LOUIS PARK STATIONS

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**Wednesday, April 8, 2015, 5:30–7:30 P.M.**

St. Louis Park City Hall  
5005 Minnetonka Blvd., St. Louis Park  
Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/j64JQ>

### EDEN PRAIRIE STATIONS

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**Thursday, April 9, 2015, 5:30–7:30 P.M.**

Eden Prairie City Center  
8080 Mitchell Road, Eden Prairie  
Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/w0rJX>

### HOPKINS & MINNETONKA STATIONS

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**Tuesday, April 14, 2015, 5:30–7:30 P.M.**

Hopkins City Hall  
1010 First Street South, Hopkins  
Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/XdxGq>



**Agenda Item VI – Draft Corridor Wide Housing Strategy**

**Steering Committee Action Requested:**

Accept the draft Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy, direct staff to circulate for stakeholder feedback, and to return to the committee with the final Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy in August 2015.

**Background:**

On May 17, 2012, the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee endorsed development of a Corridor Wide Housing Strategy intended to develop joint policies, tools and financing strategies to achieve a full range of housing choice along the Southwest Corridor. Development of a corridor wide housing strategy is consistent with the adopted Southwest Community Works Vision statement as well as the adopted Southwest Community Works Guiding Principles. The Southwest Corridor Wide Housing Strategy is composed of three steps, a corridor wide housing inventory, a corridor wide gaps analysis, and a corridor wide housing strategy. The corridor wide housing inventory was completed in 2013 and the corridor wide gaps analysis was completed in December 2014. A draft of the Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy has been completed and is ready for review and acceptance by the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee. Staff will present an overview of the draft Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy and ask the committee to accept the document, direct staff to conduct stakeholder engagement, and return to the committee in August with the final Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy.

**Previous Action on Request:** The Southwest Community Works Steering Committee endorsed the preparation of the Southwest Corridor Wide Housing Strategy on May 17, 2012.

**Recommendation:** Accept the draft Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy, direct staff to circulate for stakeholder feedback, and to return to the committee with the final Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy in August 2015.

**Attachments:** draft Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy

**Comments:**





**SOUTHWEST LRT**  
community works

# **SOUTHWEST LRT**

## **Corridor-wide Housing Strategy**

*A plan to support and encourage a full range of housing choices along the Southwest Corridor (Green Line Extension) station areas*

**DRAFT - March 9, 2015**



**Prepared for:**

**Southwest Community Works Steering Committee**

# Partners

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This document was prepared by the Southwest Community Works Housing Workgroup. The Workgroup is comprised of partner staff from all six Corridor cities, Family Housing Fund, Twin Cities LISC, Minnesota Housing, Metropolitan Council, the Southwest Corridor Project Office and ULI-Minnesota.

Workgroup members have collaborated on background research and funding to support development of a corridor-wide housing strategy for the Southwest Corridor (Green Line extension).

## Housing Workgroup Members

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Tara Beard, Metropolitan Council  
 Theresa Cunningham, City of Minneapolis  
 Elise Durbin, City of Minnetonka  
 Margaret Kaplan, Minnesota Housing  
 Tania Mahtani, City of Eden Prairie  
 Gretchen Nicholls, Twin Cities LISC  
 Joyce Repya, City of Edina  
 Brian Schaffer, City of Minneapolis  
 Libby Starling, Metropolitan Council  
 Katie Walker, Hennepin County

Cathy Bennett, ULI-Minnesota  
 Margo Geffen, Hennepin County  
 Kathryn Hansen, Southwest Project Office  
 Molly Koivumaki, City of Eden Prairie  
 Alysen Nesse, City of Eden Prairie  
 Kerri Pearce Ruch, Hennepin County  
 Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund  
 Michele Schnitker, City of St. Louis Park  
 Stacy Unowsky, City of Hopkins

For additional information on **Southwest Community Works**, its members, partners and initiatives, as well as contact information, please visit:

[www.swlrcommunityworks.org](http://www.swlrcommunityworks.org)

### Southwest Community Works Vision

***“collaborate and partner so that Southwest Corridor becomes a premier destination that is accessible, livable and vibrant”***

### Southwest Community Works Adopted Goals

- **Economic competitiveness and job growth** - promote opportunities for business and employment growth
- **Housing choices** - position the Southwest LRT communities as a place for all to live
- **Quality neighborhoods** - create unique, vibrant, safe, beautiful, and walkable station areas
- **Critical connections** – improve affordable regional mobility for all users.

### Southwest Community Works Guiding Principle – Housing

***“providing a full range of housing choices – positioning the Southwest LRT communities as a place for all to live”***

# Background

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In May 2012, the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee approved a process to develop a corridor-wide housing strategy for the Southwest LRT Corridor. The outcome of the strategy is to help achieve the Southwest Community Work's vision and guiding principle for providing a full range of housing choices specifically within ½ mile of the Green Line Extension station areas.

Southwest Corridor Community Works and their funding partners have been working together since 2012 to inventory existing housing options in the corridor, understand what the future housing demand may be and the likely demographics of people interested in living along the corridor. In addition, the work includes deep understanding of the current and potential local, county, state and federal technical and financial resources to support a full range of housing choices. Some of the Southwest-specific studies and resources that inform this work include:

- **Southwest Corridor- wide Housing Inventory (2013)**, which chronicles existing housing and demographics along the corridor;
- **Southwest LRT New Starts Affordable Housing Rating Evaluation Summary, MZ Strategies (2013)**, which outlines existing SW Corridor Cities plans and programs that support affordable and workforce housing that can be applied to the LRT Corridor.
- **Southwest Corridor Investment Framework (2013)**, which provides Transitional Station Area Action Plans (TSAAPs) for each of the 17 station areas, including recommendations on likely sites for housing development.
- **Southwest Corridor Housing Gaps Analysis (2014)**, which projects future housing demand, provides market analysis and outlines recommendations and tools to achieve a full range of housing choices.
- **Southwest LRT New Starts Submittal (2014)**, which provides updated information on costs, ridership and land use/economic development both presently and looking into the future, as part of the Federal LRT Funding process.

Additionally, cities have undertaken housing studies, outlined tools and strategies in comprehensive plans and set individual housing goals. These efforts, along with other resources and technical assistance, have been compiled and taken into consideration to inform a Southwest Community Works Corridor-wide Housing Strategy along the Green Line Extension.

# Why a coordinated housing strategy?

Recent studies by the [Dukais Center for Urban and Regional Policy](#) of 42 neighborhoods and 12 metropolitan areas revealed that when transit is added, housing stock becomes more expensive. These and other studies overwhelmingly indicate that existing and future housing located strategically near light rail experience a rise in value and rents at a more rapid pace than the general market. This increase helps to spur economic development and at the same time has a tendency to reduce the opportunities for lower to moderate income people and transit dependent individuals that may desire and benefit most by living near station areas. Rising housing costs generally hit working households the hardest, which elevates the risk of involuntary displacement of people already living in those areas who may no longer be able to afford to own or rent due to the increase in values.

“Ensuring that there is a full range of housing choices with access to transit in our cities builds economic prosperity and competitiveness by attracting and retaining residents to support key employers. “

- Family Housing Fund

## Why work together?

Creating a full range of housing choices is a difficult challenge yet is critical to the success of Southwest LRT (Green Line Extension) and the surrounding communities. In order to adequately address the challenges, particularly in developing affordable housing, collaboration is key.

“... we must act now to ensure that the housing built in these locations provides for a mix of incomes or a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will be lost.”

- Center for Transit Oriented Development

A collaborative approach increases the corridor’s ability to be competitive, adds leverage to secure public and philanthropic resources, sends a positive message to the development community that the corridor is “all-together” in supporting a mix of housing choices along the Southwest Corridor, and creates alignment to achieve regional housing goals.

**Successful collaboration creates shared benefits and enables cities to do more – better - together than they can do alone.**

**By coming together to create a Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy for Southwest Corridor, the cities, Hennepin County and other public and private partners will be better able to:**

- **Create and sustain healthy communities:** By providing a full range of housing choices all along Southwest Corridor, cities will be able to create and sustain the livable, vibrant neighborhoods that contribute to overall city well-being. Housing that is affordable to a mix of incomes around

all station areas increases choices for residents looking to live near work, family or educational opportunities, reduces transportation costs and creates equity in communities.

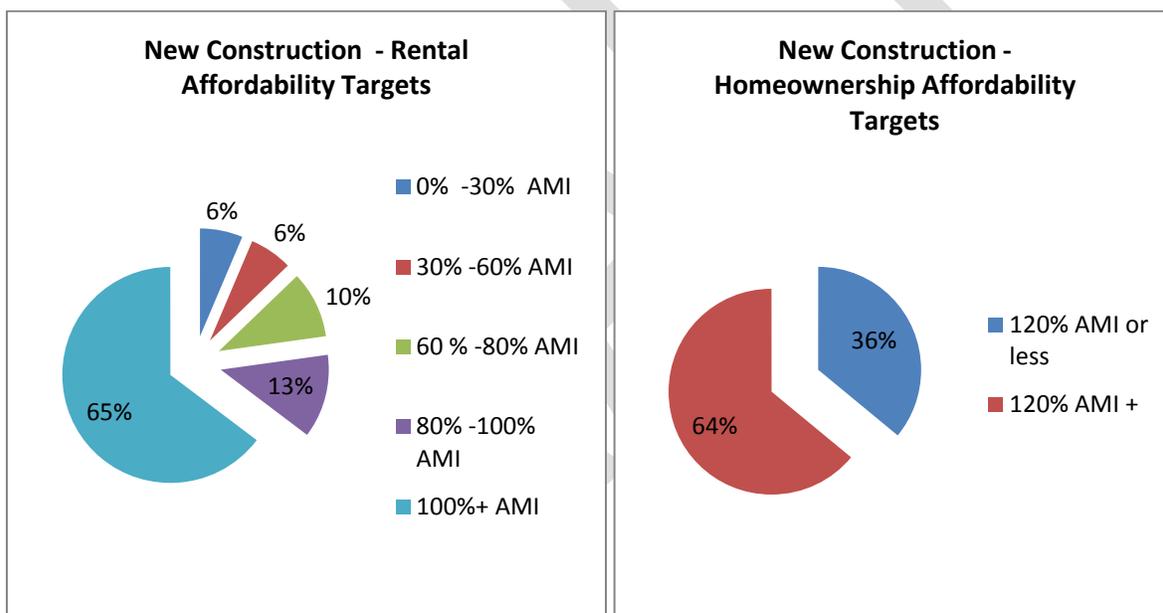
- **Provide lifecycle housing for existing residents:** Whether it's housing for young people just out of college, move-up housing for growing families or housing options for seniors looking to age in place, cities know that retaining residents helps to build strong, stable communities. A Corridor-wide Housing Strategy will help cities respond to the needs of their existing residents and accommodate community needs.
- **Achieve individual city goals:** The Corridor-wide Housing Strategy will assist cities in meeting their individually adopted housing goals for their community and may allow them to increase their Housing Performance Score for resources from the Metropolitan Council's LCDA program.
- **Leverage Resources:** The Corridor-wide Housing Strategy will enable Southwest cities and Hennepin County to leverage additional public and private resources, compete better for limited grant funds and philanthropic dollars and attract greater private development than may be possible acting individually.
- **Increase Economic Competitiveness:** There is an economic case for providing the best opportunities for access to quality housing for those with modest incomes. If the essential workers along the corridor cannot afford to live there anymore, it impacts not just each individual city but the economic growth and competitiveness of the corridor and region as a whole.
- **Provide Consistency of Approach:** Quality development capacity to pursue projects is limited. The pursuit of capital developers endure when there are inconsistencies of visions, goals and processes adds to the costs of a project. Developers will be drawn to an area that has a collaborative housing approach, a consistency of vision and is redevelopment ready. This reduces the complexities of development, helps to solve problems and manages development risks. A Corridor-wide Housing Strategy will provide clarity and consistency to the local and national development community, allowing cities and the County to take full advantage of the unique TOD opportunities and to be creative in development near transit that will grow the tax base now and into the future.
- **Sustain and improve the Southwest LRT New Starts Score:** The Federal Transit Administration considers policies, planning and programs that support development and retention of affordable housing along transit corridors. In the most recent New Starts ranking, FTA spoke highly of the coordinated planning efforts and programs along Southwest Corridor, noting that "The region appears to have one of the most comprehensive set of affordable housing initiatives in the country." FTA ranked Southwest LRT "high" based on coordination and planning efforts around affordable housing but the line only ranked "medium-low" based on the formula for counting legally-binding affordable housing along the corridor. In order to make the LRT project as competitive as possible for federal funding, FTA will be looking for further action, such as adoption of a corridor-wide housing strategy, when it reviews Southwest LRT for the Full Funding Grant Agreement.

# Corridor-wide Housing Goal:

## *Provide a full range of housing choices*

- **New Construction:** Add 11, 200 new units within ½ mile of the Corridor, including 3520 that are affordable to lower (<60% AMI) to moderate income (60% - 80% AMI) households by 2030.
- **Preservation:** Preserve 3800 unsubsidized affordable (<60% AMI) rental units by 2030, out of 6700 unsubsidized units within ½ mile of the Corridor.

### Affordability targets for new construction\*:



% of Area Median Income (AMI)	Salary for a family of four (HUD, 2014)	Affordable monthly housing payment (30% of income)
30% AMI	\$24,850	\$621
60% AMI	\$49,740	\$1244
80% AMI	\$63,900	\$1598
100% AMI	\$82,833	\$2071
120% AMI	\$99,400	\$2485

\*Building on the Southwest Community Works investment guiding principle of providing a full range of housing choices, the Housing Gaps Analysis examined each station area and suggested development scenarios. These included potential unit numbers for new construction as well as identified existing rental units in need of preservation. These scenarios form the baseline for unit targets along Southwest Corridor.

# Why set corridor affordability targets?

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Each of the diverse cities along the corridor are individually taking steps to plan for land uses along the corridor, and have housing strategies and goals outlined within their comprehensive plans. All of the cities work toward housing goals that were negotiated with the Metropolitan Council. So what is the benefit of setting affordability targets together?

- **Respond to regional and federal funders.**
  - **Federal Sustainable Communities Grant.** In 2011, Hennepin County was a sub-recipient of a federal Sustainable Communities Grant. Combined with Living Cities resources through Corridors of Opportunity, the Southwest Corridor was tasked with developing a set of measurable unit goals for housing along the Corridor.
  - **Corridors of Opportunity Transit Recipients need to address Fair and Affordable Housing.** In September 2011, the Corridors of Opportunity Policy Board adopted several recommendations on how regional transit corridors should address Fair and Affordable Housing in their overall TOD strategies. The primary recommendation was for the adoption of measurable, corridor-wide goals and strategies to ensure sufficient housing, both new production and preservation, to serve a full range of incomes.

*The Sustainable Communities grant and Corridors of Opportunity program have both ended. However, their guidance and best practices are still applicable for work in the corridor. There are also important funding opportunities in the future, both for the LRT project and for competitive development resources.*

- **Competitiveness for FTA Funding of Infrastructure.** In 2013, the Federal Transit Administration released new guidance for scoring transit projects that included existing and future plans for affordable housing. FTA is seeking to “ensure that as service is improved over time, there is a mix of housing options for existing and future residents.” In anticipation of application to the FTA for the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for Southwest Corridor, commitment and progress toward meeting affordable housing goals is essential to be viewed competitively against other regions seeking the same limited funds.
- **Alignment with Metropolitan Council Housing Policies:** A coordinated strategy along the Corridor that aligns with Metropolitan Council's housing policies, including the Housing Policy Plan (2014), will help cities in planning, tracking progress and addressing regional housing needs. Metropolitan Council will be allocating new affordable housing need numbers, along with negotiating affordable and life-cycle housing goals with

participating cities in the future. A corridor-wide housing strategy that aligns with regional housing policies will help cities improve their competitiveness when seeking Council resources.

- **Align development policies and resources throughout the corridor**

Corridor-wide affordable housing targets, developed in collaboration and tied to existing city plans and Metropolitan Council housing goals, will allow partners to focus efforts and public resources to identified gaps. Collaboration between partners will allow sharing of tools and information, while preserving each entity's unique identity and role in housing creation.

- **Track progress over time**

Similar to the work being done on Central Corridor, a Corridor-wide affordable housing target will allow cities, Hennepin County and funders to track progress over time to ensure that the corridor is moving towards its policy goals. Having specific numeric targets allows measurement against a baseline and can also help identify where targets may need adjustment due to market trends or development activity.

# Achieving the Goal: Corridor-wide Objectives

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To achieve the Corridor-wide goal and the unit targets, Southwest LRT Community Works supports four Corridor-wide objectives. These objectives will only be achieved through public/private partnerships, utilizing strategies and implementation steps detailed below:

## **1) Development of new housing opportunities**

- Create new housing that includes a mix of unit types with values and rents affordable to people with a full range of incomes.

## **2) Preservation of existing housing opportunities**

- Preserve and enhance existing subsidized and unsubsidized housing stock to reduce the involuntary displacement of low to moderate income residents.
- Maintain opportunities to use Section 8 vouchers in corridor units.

## **3) Resources: Technical, Financial and Regulatory tools**

- Utilize existing resources and develop new resources to achieve corridor housing targets by seeking funding sources and technical expertise to support the development and preservation of full range of housing choices.
- Modify regulatory tools to support housing development and preservation.

## **4) Market the Corridor - "Tell our Story to the World"**

- Attract developers and new residents and retain existing residents and employees to TOD neighborhoods and a TOD lifestyle.

# Achieving the Goal: Implementation Strategies

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The following implementation strategies, divided between corridor-wide and city/county specific actions, are recommended in support of the Corridor-Wide objectives:

## **Corridor-wide implementation strategies:**

- **Develop Coordinated Mixed Income (Inclusionary Housing) policy language**
  - This language would apply to new housing development within corridor cities, particularly in areas targeted for new transit oriented development.
  - Seek support for policy adoption by Corridor Cities.
- **Evaluate existing agreements (subsidized properties)**
  - Determine length of contracts, develop policies and engage owners early in maintaining and extending legally binding affordable housing units along the Corridor.
  - Monitor use of Section 8 vouchers along the corridor to preserve units accepting vouchers.
- **Maintain and improve the quality of existing aging rental and ownership housing stock**
  - Particularly focus on properties that are at values and rents affordable to low-moderate income people.
  - Develop programs together, with regional partners, that provide for strategic acquisitions, low-interest loans and public-private partnerships
  - Work with owners to match lower income residents with unsubsidized affordable housing units and create a structure to maintain that affordability.
- **Leverage private and philanthropic investments locally, regionally and nationally, along the corridor through a TOD Housing Fund.**
  - Link development prospects to Regional Pre-development Funders Roundtable to connect corridor goals to appropriate funding sources.

- Participate in the evaluation of private/public TOD Housing fund.
- **Engage large corridor employers to strategically invest in the preservation and production of housing opportunities for low-to-moderate income employees.**
  - Engage the Southwest Investment Partnership.
  - Support efforts to create a privately capitalized TOD Housing fund.
- **Evaluate corridor cities interest in exploring the cost/benefits, mechanics and legislative authority for joint financing mechanisms such as corridor-wide TIF, fiscal disparities sharing, and other forms of value capture.**
- **Provide marketing resources and expertise to promote the Corridor and its housing vision to developers, employers, schools and future residents.**
- **Develop metrics to track progress towards unit targets over time, using existing partners and resources.**

#### **City/County implementation strategies:**

- **Develop and adopt a clear and consistent vision, goals and affordability targets for housing development within ½ mile of station areas.**
- **Maintain and enhance policies around station areas to promote increased density and include a mix of uses consistent with federal and regional transportation policies.**
- **Implement infrastructure recommendations from the Investment Framework to provide connectivity in and around station areas and maximize development potential at station sites.**

# Achieving the Goal: Next Steps

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- **Seek city/county support for the four key Corridor-wide Objectives**
  - Encourage integration of strategy tools within zoning and development plan review.
  - Encourage use of strategy goals in funding allocation decisions
- **Determine mix of unit types and affordability for the corridor**
  - Ask cities to identify station area mix of housing units, types and values
- **Seek city goals for preservation and new construction at various affordability levels for each station area, to apply to corridor targets**
  - Adopt corridor targets that are consistent with city goals
- **Develop Housing Workgroup work plan to track progress on Corridor-wide strategy implementation.**
- **Engage regularly with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure that Corridor-wide strategy reflects current goals and market conditions.**



**Agenda Item VI – 2015-2016 Workplan**

**Steering Committee Action Requested:**

Adopt the proposed 2015-2016 Southwest Community Works Steering Committee Workplan.

**Background:**

According to the adopted Southwest Community Works Steering Committee Charter, the committee may adopt a workplan to guide their activities. Staff prepared a 2015-2016 workplan for consideration by the Southwest Community Works Steering Committee.

**Previous Action on Request:**

**Recommendation:**

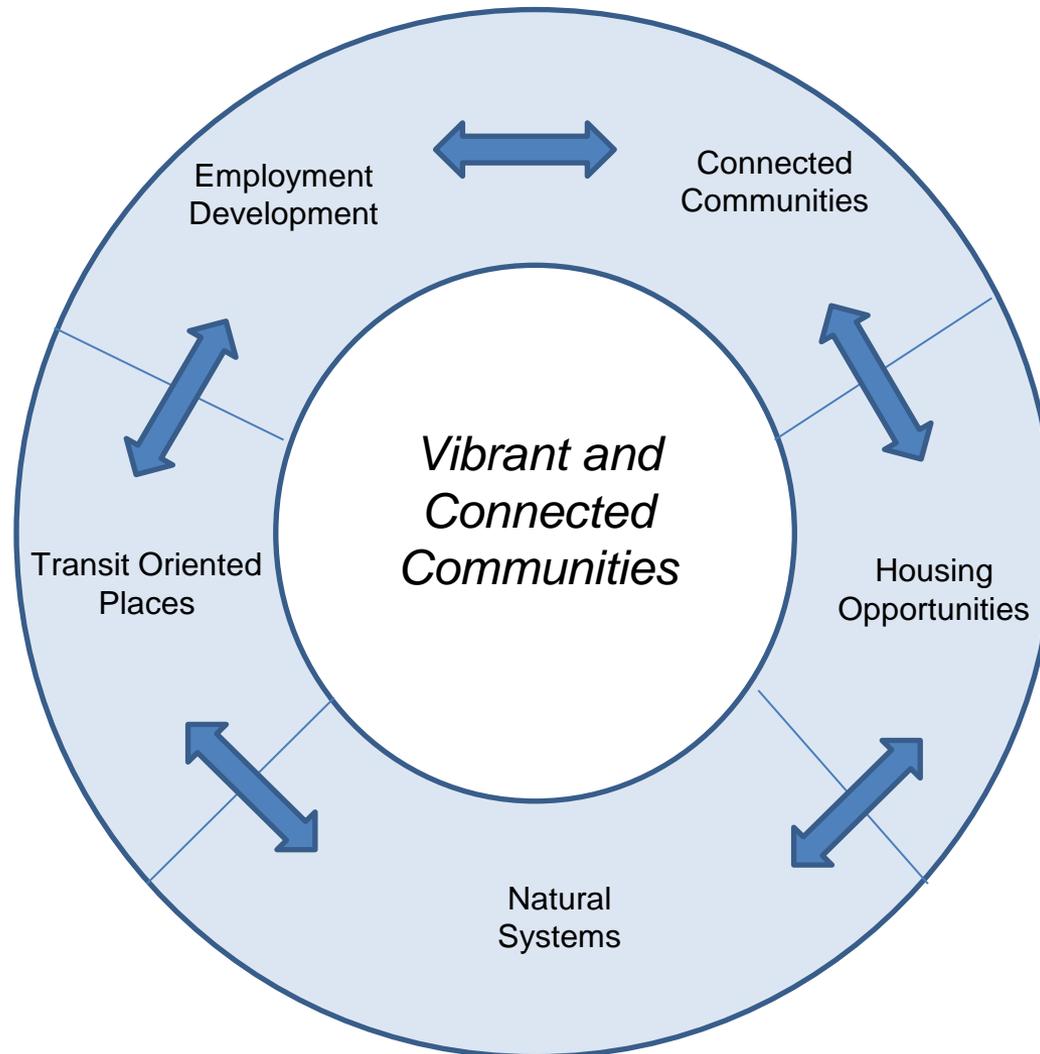
**Attachments:** 2015-2016 Southwest Community Works Steering Committee Workplan.

**Comments:**



# Southwest Community Works Vision

*“connecting people to jobs, housing, shopping and fun”*



## **Southwest Community Works Steering Committee 2015 Work Plan**

The Southwest Community Works Steering Committee will provide overall guidance and direction to the Southwest Community Works project, which is intended to support infrastructure development and public space improvements in concert with LRT design in order to maximize public benefits, improve economic equity, provide affordable housing opportunities, improve access to jobs, protect the natural environment, and strengthen communities.

### **1. General Activities**

The Southwest Community Works Steering Committee will act as the coordination entity to implement the “beyond the rails” initiative which focuses on building vibrant and connected communities through focusing on connecting communities, access to jobs, creating transit oriented development, providing housing choices, and enhancing natural systems.

- Offer guidance to the partner agencies including Hennepin County
- Coordinate studies, analyses and technical assistance to further collective goals and objectives
- Oversee and monitor progress on implementation of the Investment Framework, the Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) districts/projects and other initiatives
- Work to ensure the coordination of public involvement activities with partner agencies and the Met Council’s Southwest Project Office (SPO)
- Act as a liaison with the Southwest Corridor Management Committee (CMC) to seamlessly integrate land use/economic development and LRT engineering/design
- Provide assistance to the Southwest Project Office (SPO) in developing the land use and economic development sections of the Federal Transit Administration’s’ (FTA) New Starts application

### **2. Management, Policy and Administrative Activities**

- Adopt an annual workplan
- Develop policy positions and advocate for additional/improved financing tools and other mechanisms to expedite the implementation of transit oriented development at stations
- Prepare an annual report including a financial report
- Produce a progress tracker

Administrative support for the Steering Committee will be provided as an in-kind contribution by Hennepin County.

### **3. Investment Framework**

- Act as a liaison with the Southwest Corridor Management Committee (CMC) to coordinate community works activities with the LRT engineering/design to ensure that the LRT facilities and infrastructure do not impede the successful development of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) districts/projects along the line
- Monitor the alignment of capital improvement programs (CIPs) to ensure coordinated implementation of the Investment Framework
- Actively support pursuit of new/additional funding sources to implement the Investment Framework
- Work to leverage private sector infrastructure investment coordinated with public sector infrastructure investment
- Promote transit accessible job creation by providing pedestrian and bike connections from LRT stops to key employers along the corridor
- Oversee and track implementation of the Investment Framework
- Update the Investment Framework on an annual basis or as needed to address emerging needs and to document progress

### **4. Housing Opportunities**

- Develop, adopt and implement a corridor wide housing strategy with joint policies, tools and financing strategies to achieve a full range of housing choices (types/sizes/styles/values) to meet different needs, stages of life and income levels within walking distance of LRT stations
- Integrate the housing strategy with the Investment Framework to ensure market reality, financial feasibility and access to employment, education and amenities
- Monitor progress towards achieving the targets/goals outlined in the Southwest Corridor-Wide Housing Strategy

### **5. Finance Tools**

- Evaluate finance tools to identify gaps and strategize on a collective action plan to fill gaps and pursue innovate finance mechanisms to expedite TOD

### **6. Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

- Provide input and evaluation that helps prioritize and focus resources on the TOD projects that are most viable, catalytic and likely to be successful
- Identify challenges to TOD implementation and a collective action plan to resolve

### **7. Strategic Marketing and Communications**

- The Steering Committee's strategic marketing and communications will be separate from, but closely coordinated with the public involvement processes of the partner agencies and the Southwest LRT Project Office (SPO)
- Develop a specific marketing and branding campaign to attract prospective businesses and residents to the corridor



**SOUTHWEST LRT**  
community works

*Beyond the Rails*  
[swlrtccommunityworks.org](http://swlrtccommunityworks.org)

## Updates/Information



# Joint release: Understanding reached on SWLRT Kenilworth Channel Crossing

## Understanding on SWLRT Kenilworth Channel Crossing Reached Between Metropolitan Council and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

February 27, 2015

Contact:

[Dawn Sommers](#), Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board  
612-230-6407

[Meredith Vadis](#), Metropolitan Council  
651-602-1518

(Minneapolis, MN) – Metropolitan Council Chair Adam Duinick and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board President Liz Wielinski announced today that the two agencies reached an understanding on the Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) crossing of the Kenilworth Channel. With its engineering studies complete, Park Board staff and legal counsel are recommending to Park Board Commissioners support of a light rail transit bridge over the channel. The agencies have an agreed upon memorandum of understanding (MOU) that provides for a more direct Park Board role in the design of the proposed bridges over the channel and earlier involvement in any light rail transit project to address impacts to park land and park resources owned by the Park Board.

“Thanks to the diligent work of the Park Board and project engineers, we now have a path forward for this critically important transit investment, which is a vital link in the 21st century transit system we will build here in the greater Twin Cities metro,” said Council Chair Adam Duinick. “The Council is pleased to have the Park Board’s support for bridging the channel.”

Tunnel options evaluated by Park Board and Council project engineers would significantly add cost and time to complete the project. Increased involvement from the Park Board as bridge designs are advanced will inform the designs and help maintain the park-like setting throughout the corridor.

“We have received a lot of new information this month from our consultants and the Metropolitan Council. The Park Board is very optimistic about the new, more collaborative efforts for the ongoing work on the Southwest Light Rail, the Bottineau Line and any future mass transit that may impact parkland in the metro area,” said Park Board President Liz Wielinski. “Our thanks go to Chair Duinick for his leadership in moving this forward.”

Duinick noted that the Council agreed to pay the Park Board 50 percent of the engineering costs, not to exceed \$250,000, incurred during the Park Board’s exploration of additional tunnel options because the work will be incorporated in the Council’s environmental documentation and analysis. The Council will benefit from analysis conducted by the Park Board commissioned engineering study to further evaluate tunnel alternatives under the channel. This information will help inform the 4(f) analysis that will be addressed in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) and the final 4(f) analysis.

The MOU calls for the Metropolitan Council to:

- Work together with the Park Board on design considerations offered by the Park Board in the final engineering and design of the bridges over the Kenilworth Channel;

- Change project office policy to engage the Park Board more directly in the Southwest LRT project and earlier in any light rail projects that involve park land.

The MOU calls for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to:

- Work with Metropolitan Council earlier in the planning process to identify potential Section 4(f) impacts for park and recreational areas within its jurisdiction;
- Collaborate more closely with the Council on design principles and final design and engineering of the bridges over the Kenilworth Channel.

The MOU will allow Southwest LRT and future light rail projects to move through the environmental review process more smoothly. Both the Metropolitan Council and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board are expected to take action on the MOU at their next regularly scheduled meetings: March 4 for the Park Board and March 11 for the Council.

The memorandum of understanding regarding the environmental review process, design principles and increased Park Board collaboration on current and future light rail projects can be found [here](#).

The letter committing the Council to pay 50 percent of the Park Board's engineering costs to date can be found [here](#).

The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning organization for the seven-county Twin Cities area. It runs the regional bus and light rail system, including Northstar Commuter Rail, collects and treats wastewater, manages regional water resources, plans regional parks, and administers funds that provide housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The Council is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is an independent, semi-autonomous body responsible for maintaining and developing the Minneapolis Park system. With 251 park properties totaling 6,790 acres of land and water, the Park Board provides places and recreation opportunities for all people to gather and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community and the environment. More than 21 million annual visits are made to the nationally acclaimed park system. Park Board Commissioners are elected by Minneapolis residents.

[metro council.org](http://metro council.org)

## Just Sold: Exhibit Partners pays \$3.75M for new HQ in Maple Grove

By: Anne Bretts February 25, 2015 7:05 am 0

*Editor's note: "Just Sold" is a Finance & Commerce feature based on certificates of real estate value recently filed for commercial transactions and significant residential transactions in Twin Cities counties. Additional details in the transactions come from Plat Research, the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office, company documents, online real estate listings, F&C archives, CoStar and other research. Some purchase prices and per-unit calculations have been rounded. Full prices on the CRVs are [available here](#).*

### 5725 Highway 7, St. Louis Park



5725 Highway 7, St. Louis Park (File photo: Bill Klotz)

**Description:** Vacant former McGarvey Coffee plant, a 29,218-square-foot Class C manufacturing building, built in 1947 on 1.8 acres

**Buyer:** St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority

**Seller:** DMD Properties LLC, St. Louis Park

**Purchase price:** \$2.75 million, with a \$550,000 down payment and a two-year contract for deed for the balance at 4 percent interest

**Price per square foot:** \$94.12

**The transaction:** The St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority has closed on the \$2.75 million deal to become the temporary owner of the former McGarvey Coffee plant while Minneapolis-based PLACE completes its financing for a planned mixed-use project with 324 units of affordable housing.

The EDA closed Feb. 2 on the purchase of the property at 5725 Highway 7 from DMD Properties LLC, according to a certificate of real estate value made public Feb. 20. The 29,218-square-foot building is on a 1.8-acre site on the southeast quadrant of Highway 7 and Wooddale Avenue, adjacent to the planned Wooddale station along the future Southwest Light Rail Transit line.

DMD Properties is an entity related to local developer Donald Kasbohm, who [bought the site](#) for \$1.5 million in 2012.

"This was a unique situation," said Greg Hunt, economic development coordinator for the city. "It's a highly visible piece of property. We have a real vested interest in seeing that it is developed as optimally as possible."

The City Council [authorized the purchase](#) in December. The city plans to lease the building to PLACE so it can begin work on the project while it finalizes all of its funding, a process that could take about 18 months, Hunt said.

**Last sale:** The seller paid \$1.5 million in 2012

**Property ID:** 16-117-21-31-0078

**Date of deed:** 2-2-15

**ECRV released:** 2-20-15

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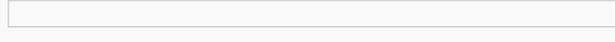
# St. Louis Park's ASAP building to give way to development under plan

By Seth Rowe

January 29, 2015 at 4:58 pm

A historic building on the border of St. Louis Park and Minneapolis would give way under a development proposal.

Bader Development, the St. Louis Park company behind the Ellipse on Excelsior and the Ellipse on Excelsior II projects along the border of the two cities, plans to redevelop the white, round ASAP building at France Avenue and County Road 25, a stretch of roadway that runs seamlessly between Highway 7 and West Lake Street.



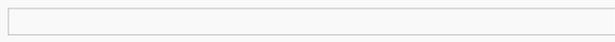
An architectural rendering illustrates the higher section of a planned building that would replace the ASAP building and other uses at France Avenue and County Road 25 along St. Louis Park's border with Minneapolis. (Submitted art)

Architect James Robert Dresser, who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright, designed the peculiar ASAP building, according to the St. Louis Park Historical Society. Dresser also designed round homes and the Minnesota Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1964.

Along with the ASAP building, the mixed-use project would replace Battlefield Books, two single-family homes, three townhouse units and a parking lot on a combined site of more than 2 acres.

In place of the existing structures, Bader Development would add 150 residential units and 10,000 square-feet of office space. The company would relocate its headquarters to the new space.

The building near the frontage road for County Road 25 would rise five stories while a section of the development to the south would reach a height of three stories instead.



The ASAP building would be demolished to make way for a mixed-use development under a plan by Bader Development. (Sun Sailor staff photo by Seth Rowe)

The council approved changing the comprehensive plan from commercial and medium-density residential uses to mixed-use during a Jan. 20 meeting.

The prominent ASAP building, home to a graphic communication company, As Soon As Possible Inc., has been found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, said St. Louis Park Associate Planner Ryan Kelley. However, the decision to list the property is the responsibility of the property owner.

"The current property owner has decided not to pursue listing of the property, and the developer has indicated they do not intend to list the property, either," Kelley said.

Although the ASAP building has a unique look, Bader Development considers it to be obsolete, said Robb Bader, the company's vice president of acquisitions and development.

"It's really the functionality of the building itself doesn't fit with our proposed development," Bader said.

Councilmember Susan Sanger said she met with the developer to learn more about the reasons keeping the building is not feasible.

"I just feel really sad about the loss of the ASAP building that is of historical and architectural significance," she said. "I guess I have to reluctantly conclude that you're right, but it still makes me sad."

She said the development overall constitutes a good project and that planners went “above and beyond” to scale the building down by nearby residences.

A map shows plans for a St. Louis Park project Bader Development has proposed along the city's border with Minneapolis. (Submitted map)

The developer also plans to create walk-up units along France Avenue and West 31st Street in an effort to complement the residential nature of the neighborhood, Kelley said.

St. Louis Park residents Gary and Kristen Wolfe, who own a home along West 31st Street near the project, told the council they want to ensure the development does not rise higher than three stories near their house. The project should reflect the scale of existing buildings, Kristen Wolfe said.

Dean Dovolis of DJR Architecture said the building along West 31st Street would stand 30-35 feet high, depending on possible minor variations in the heights of ceilings and other details in the final plan.

“Our intention is what you see in the plans here is what we’ll stick with,” Dovolis said. “That’s basically our commitment to the project. What we present to you initially is what it’s going to finally be in the end. I won’t sneak in extra stories.”

Gloria Wolfe, who has lived in St. Louis Park for 44 years and will move into a new home by Gary and Kristen Wolfe, said she would like to see an even lower elevation.

“I think it’s going to be higher than what we’ve already got as far as apartment buildings,” she said.

However, Kristen Wolfe said the family is overall in approval of the project.

“It’s much prettier than a parking lot and ASAP,” she said.

Council members said residents will have a chance to weigh in on details of the project more thoroughly before the city considers a Planned Unit Development application.

#### Positive responses

Bader said the project is similar to the Ellipse on Excelsior in that the site is a gateway to St. Louis Park.

“We love capturing the urban resident who really doesn’t want to live in the heart of the city, and vice versa the suburban resident who doesn’t want to live in the city but close to it,” he said.

The site’s location between planned Southwest light rail stations at West Lake Street and Belt Line Boulevard also attracted the developer, Bader said.

“Hopefully, God willing, Southwest light rail will come,” he said.

The council reacted favorably to Bader’s revelation that about 20 percent of the residential units in the development would meet government standards for affordability. Bader said the affordable component is linked to the developer’s financing options. The units would be considered affordable to people with incomes that are 50-60 percent of the area median income, as judged by Hennepin County standards.

Councilmember Tim Brausen said the affordability component of the project excited him because he has had a concern about gentrification at highly desired properties near proposed light rail stations. In this case, the property is also near Lake Calhoun, he noted.

“I worry that the market forces are going to drive the rents up really high and not everyone can afford to live there,” Brausen said. “I want the opportunities there available for all of us.”

He added that the market-rate apartments should bring in substantial funds. Brausen said that should allow the developer to request a relatively small amount of tax-increment financing, a form of financial assistance in which new property taxes generated by a development return to the developer for a period to pay for site acquisition, infrastructure upgrades and other qualifying costs.

## Concerns

Some council members lamented the loss of single-family homes, though none opposed the project during the comprehensive plan change vote.

“We’ve lost a few over the years, and I generally have not supported projects taking out single-family homes,” Councilmember Steve Hallfin said. “This is a different piece of land with a lot of different things going on. I’m going to be in support of it.”

Councilmember Gregg Lindberg said the loss of the single-family homes also gave him pause, but he praised the developer for working with the neighborhood. The city may be able to make up for the loss elsewhere, he suggested.

“I know that we will have opportunities as a council to look at perhaps adding some single-family homes in different areas over the course of the coming months, and I would ask us to remember that as we look at maintaining our single-family housing stock,” Lindberg said.

The city will also need to address roadway and traffic concerns, Kelley noted during his presentation. The project includes a small surface parking lot and underground parking, but residents at a neighborhood meeting expressed concern that not enough on-street parking exists in the neighborhood. Additionally, Kelley said that France Avenue currently narrows south of the frontage road, creating traffic patterns the city considers unacceptable.

Kelley said city staff will work to address those concerns, perhaps working with Minneapolis officials to widen the roadway on the larger city’s side of the border or to connect France Avenue to 31st Street.

He noted the comprehensive plan change would not alter the situation. Any further intensification of uses in the area, including those that would have conformed with the previous comprehensive plan, would have prompted the city to study France Avenue and the parking situation, Kelley said. Bader Development’s proposal exceeds the city’s parking requirements, he added. A study indicated the project would add an estimated 73 trips in the area during the morning peak period and 79 trips during the evening peak period.

As for the loss of the ASAP building, Councilmember Jake Spano joked that the new development could provide a tip of the hat to the old building by including a round lobby.

On a more serious note, Mavity suggested, “It may be an opportunity for some creative art – let that live on in some fashion.”

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