



Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 17, 2012

1:30 - 3:00 pm

St. Louis Park City Hall

Meeting Attendees

Steering Committee Members & Alternates

Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County Member

Jan Callison, Hennepin County Member

Anne Mavity, City of St. Louis Park Member

Terry Schneider, City of Minnetonka Alternate

Molly Cummings, City of Hopkins Member

Dick Miller, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Member

Jeff Casale, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Alternate

Nancy Tyra-Lukens, SouthWest Transit Member

Jim Hovland, City of Edina Member

Jennifer Munt, Metropolitan Council Member

Caren Dewar, Urban Land Institute (ULI) – Minnesota Member

Don Samuels, City of Minneapolis Member

Anita Tabb, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Member

Bob Fine, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Alternate

Other Attendees

Katie Walker (Hennepin County), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Lisa Middag (Hennepin County), Carol Lezotte Anderson (Hennepin County), Patrick Connoy (Hennepin County), Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County), Kevin Locke (City of St. Louis Park), Tom Harmening (City of St. Louis Park), Paul Mogush (City of Minneapolis), Julie Wischnack (City of Minnetonka), James Wisker (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Jack Sullivan (City of St. Louis Park), Jackie Cherryhomes (Royalston Businesses), Kersten Elverum (City of Hopkins), Larry Blacksted (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Mike Hayman (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Chris Weyer (Metro Transit), Janet Jeremiah (City of Eden Prairie), Mark Ruff (Ehlers, Inc.), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Cathy Bennett (ULI-MN), Karen Lyons (Metropolitan Council), Tim Johnson (Pro Source Technologies)

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Gail Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

II. March 15, 2012, Meeting Minutes

Chair Gail Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) asked for review and action on the minutes from the March 15, 2012, Steering Committee meeting.

Dick Miller (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Member) moved to approve the minutes; Terry Schneider (Minnetonka Alternate) seconded this motion, and the minutes were approved on a voice vote.

III. Minnehaha Creek Proposed Trail Project Presentation

James Wisker, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD), requested Steering Committee endorsement for "Reach 20", a MCWD project that intends to seek Hennepin County Community Works funding. The project is part of MCWD's efforts to restore the creek between Highway 169 and Excelsior Boulevard. Mr. Wisker described an example of where MCWD has 'remeandered' the creek in the area of Louisiana Avenue and Excelsior Boulevard, working with Methodist Hospital. Park Nicollet paid for a boardwalk system that was installed concurrently with the restoration work. This kind of collaboration allows for water goals, recreation goals, and community goals to be achieved. The project would include a bituminous trail around Meadowbrook housing (market rate affordable) and could also connect to the Southwest LRT trail for increased access to both the Louisiana and Blake Stations.

Nancy Tyra-Lukens (SouthWest Transit Member) asked how a Meadowbrook resident would reach the station. Mr. Wisker responded that residents would cross the creek on a bridge that is part of the project and connect to Louisiana Circle to walk over to Louisiana Avenue, and could also connect via the LRT trail accessed via a city-owned property. Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) asked about the timing of the project and if funding had been assembled. Mr. Wisker answered that the project was postponed last year because of the design complexity, but construction is planned for winter 2012. MCWD would like to construct the trail concurrently to save \$150,000-\$200,000. MCDW has committed \$1.3 million; design is approximately \$225,000 of that amount and MCWD is seeking a 50/50 match from Hennepin County Community Works funds. Anne Mavity (St. Louis Park Member) noted that the St. Louis Park council is supportive of this project as putting in the trail later could be detrimental. Chair Dorfman indicated that the County and its partners are in the process of developing a framework for reviewing and funding projects, but the framework and selection criteria are not yet in place. Various Steering Committee members indicated that they saw value in this project, but expressed concern about this proposal being premature, given that the framework for funding projects is not yet in place. In response to a question about other Hennepin County Community Works projects and funding processes, Patrick Conroy, Hennepin County Community Works, offered that it is important to have a framework in place, with some flexibility to respond to projects that may be outside the formal process.

The Committee asked the Watershed District representatives more clarifying questions about this project, then turned to the question of possible action on the Watershed District's request. Ms. Callison stated that she felt that action would be premature and unfair to other projects; Chair Dorfman agreed with this concern. Ms. Tyra-Lukens added that she would like to see criteria developed. Terry Schneider (Minnetonka Alternate) added that the concerns about process make sense. Ms. Mavity commented that this process should be nimble and responsive, and criteria should be developed quickly. Chair Dorfman suggested that the Steering Committee ask the Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) to start working on establishing parameters for endorsing projects and for advising on funding, and report back to the Steering Committee.

Chair Dorfman asked Chris Weyer, Metro Transit, about the current state of Preliminary Engineering in light of failed efforts to secure \$25 million in bond funding this legislative session. Mr. Weyer responded that the project will move forward with state and local dollars; it is a 60-20-20 match right now. Mr. Weyer added that Metro Transit will be seeking funding from another source: funding allocated by the legislature to the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Chair Dorfman noted that between Counties Transit Improvement Board, state bonding, and HCRRRA funding there is about \$47 million currently in place to support PE work. In discussing the legislative session, a point about the importance of all partners being kept 'in the loop' regarding strategies for securing funding from the State legislature was raised by Mayor

Hovland. It will be important as this project advances for the partners to pull together with a united front, and that means that communication among the partners must reflect transparency and partners must be made aware of how to best support the project. The Committee discussed this point, and reviewed the various things that occurred during the legislative session that may have created some confusion and misunderstanding about strategy.

IV. Housing Strategy Workplan

Cathy Bennett, ULI-MN, and Julie Wischnack, City of Minnetonka, reviewed the proposed housing strategy workplan. At the March meeting, the Steering Committee endorsed Hennepin County's Local Implementation Capacity grant application for a housing strategy on behalf of Southwest LRT Community Works. The workplan has not significantly changed from the March Steering Committee meeting. Step one is the creation of an inventory that will evaluate existing conditions in the corridor and analyze household demographics, existing housing, commute and labor sheds, and how housing connects to schools. The inventory will also collect and review cities' comprehensive plans and other policies.

Staff will report to the Steering Committee on the housing strategy several times over the course of the study, ask for Steering Committee approval of the outcomes, and then ask cities to adopt the outcomes into their comprehensive plans. At today's meeting, staff asked for the Steering Committee to endorse the strategy and authorize staff to move forward.

Chair Gail Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) asked if funding is in place for the remaining three phases of the housing strategy and if the school analysis was only for K-12 schools, could post-secondary and early childhood schools be added. Ms. Bennett said that funding an additional \$50,000 to \$60,000 would be needed to complete the strategy, and the other types of schools would be added to the analysis.

[Terry Schneider \(Minnetonka Alternate\) made a motion to endorse the proposed housing strategy and direct staff to carry it out. Jennifer Munt \(Metropolitan Council Member\) seconded the motion and the strategy was unanimously approved on a voice vote.](#)

V. Proposal for Development Services

Southwest LRT Community Works partner agencies' staff met in April to discuss funding and governance issues including corridor-wide funding mechanisms and potential development authorities. As a result of these discussions, many of which centered on parking, Hennepin County invited Ehlers, Inc. to submit a proposal to analyze a hypothetical development with structured or surface parking at the Shady Oak station. Mark Ruff of Ehlers introduced himself and gave some background on Ehlers. Mr. Ruff noted that entities bear risk when they make infrastructure investments before the development arrives. The Shady Oak case study would be a good demonstration project for forecasting what the private sector can afford and what public tools will need tweaking in order to promote development.

[Jim Hovland \(Edina Member\) made a motion to endorse the Ehlers proposal. Nancy Tyra-Lukens \(SouthWest Transit Member\) seconded the motion. Discussion: Terry Schneider \(Minnetonka Alternate\) asked how, for an undefined area like Shady Oak, realistic development scenarios could be developed for use in the case study. Mr. Ruff responded that the study will aim to understand the scale of the development and what to expect from the private sector, but will not predict the specifics of the development. The motion to endorse the Ehlers, Inc. proposal was unanimously approved on a voice vote.](#)

VI. Community Advisory Committee Update

Jennifer Munt (Metropolitan Council Member) updated the Steering Committee on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), of which she is a co-chair. At the first CAC meeting members heard presentations from Mark Fuhrmann and Katie Walker on the LRT project and Community Works program, respectively. Members were asked to identify issues of concern to

their communities, and at their June meeting will do a “dot-mocracy” exercise to further flesh out what matters most to people. Ms. Munt commented that her background includes leading the public engagement work for the Hiawatha LRT line. As Co-chair of the SW CAC, she will encourage CAC members to get their opinions into the mix and interact with Project Office and Community Works staff to provide useful input. The link between Community Works and LRT construction is important because it means the CAC will get to talk not just about the challenges of building the LRT project, but also the development benefits that we are hoping to realize.

VII. Metropolitan Council LCDA-TOD Projects

Jennifer Munt (Metropolitan Council Member) relayed that the Metropolitan Council awarded the Livable Communities Demonstration Account-Transit Oriented Development (LCDA-TOD) grants on April 25. Southwest corridor projects were among the grantees, including:

- in Minneapolis, Linden Yards West coordinated infrastructure planning for \$100,000;
- in St. Louis Park, Walker-Lake area surface water management plan for \$40,000;
- in Hopkins, 8th Ave corridor gateway improvements to connect Main Street and LRT station for \$1.4 million
- in Minnetonka, Opus Phase II to identify potential roadway and pedestrian system changes for \$100,000;
- in Eden Prairie, Town Center storm water analysis to set the table for development for \$45,000.

All of the projects had received endorsement from the Steering Committee. Metropolitan Council added funds to the first-round funding amount because the projects were so strong. The tentative application deadline for the next round is in August; there will be \$6 million in LCDA and \$3 million in Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) funds available.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, June 21, at 1:30 pm at the St. Louis Park City Hall.