



Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 16, 2014

1:30-3:00pm, St Louis Park City Hall

Meeting Attendees

Steering Committee Members & Alternates

Chair Jan Callison, Hennepin County Member

Linda Higgins, Hennepin County Alternate

Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin Regional RR Authority Member

Linea Palmisano, City of Minneapolis Member

Anne Mavity, St. Louis Park Member

Jason Gadd, City of Hopkins Member

Terry Schneider, Minnetonka Member

Kathy Nelson, Eden Prairie Member

Jeff Casale, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Alternate

Cathy Bennett, Urban Land Institute-Minnesota Alternate

Other Attendees

Katie Walker (Hennepin County), Chuck Darnell (Hennepin County), Meg McMonigal (St. Louis Park), Kathryn Hansen (SPO), Vida Y Ditter (ROC), Janet Jeremiah, (EP), Kersten Elverum (Hopkins), James Wisker (MCWD), Julie Wischnak (Minnetonka), Meg McMonigal (SLP), Allison Bell (Metro Transit), Kevin Locke (SLP), La Shella Sims (MICAH), Sara Schmitt (KLD), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Jan Callison convened the meeting and provided updates. She reminded attendees that the August meeting has been cancelled. She also announced that the Urban Land Institute-Minnesota has asked that Cathy Bennett be seated as an alternate on the Steering Committee. Chair Callison reminded attendees of the upcoming Railvolution conference and Kersten Elverum described the planned mobile tour for the Southwest project that will take place on September 23.

II. June Meeting Minutes

Chair Callison asked for a motion on the draft minutes. The minutes were moved, seconded and approved on a voice vote.

III. New Starts Submittal

Chair Callison introduced Kathryn Hansen, Southwest Project Office, who presented at the April Steering Committee meeting on the draft document of the Land Use and Economic Development component of the New Starts application for the Southwest LRT project. Key factors will focus on growth; number of employees served by the system, average population density, parking (typical cost per day and parking spaces per employees) and affordable housing measurement. Future economic development is supported by the plans and policies such as the Metropolitan Council/MPO, the Investment Framework, TOD Offices

and SW Community Works. The Community Works Corridor wide Housing Inventory and Gaps Analysis include affordable housing strategies that will be captured in the application. Ms. Hansen stated that the Land Use component of the New Starts application is 17% of the overall scoring. The due date to submit the New Starts Application to the FTA is September 10, 2014. Chair Callison asked about new guidance from the FTA and Ms. Hansen responded with reference to summary of changes made. Committee members dialoged about issues and concerns related to the application.

IV. TOD before the “T”

Janet Jeremiah (Eden Prairie), Julie Wischnak (Minnetonka), Kersten Elverum (Hopkins), James Wisker (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District) and Meg McMonigal (St. Louis Park) presented updates on activities and plans for areas around proposed SW LRT stations. Highlights included:

Eden Prairie – Ms. Jeremiah provided a detailed update on city studies and plan updates including an update of citywide design guidelines, specific TOD ordinances for their five station areas, a stormwater study for the Town Center Station area, update of their ped/bike master plan, and a hotel market study (that shows substantial interest in the station areas). She also described current and planned market investments including an Eden Gardens sustainable and energy efficient housing project within the Mitchell station bikeshed, and a 200-unit housing project currently under construction called Martin Blu. In the Town Center area, the city owns property on Single Tree lane where developers have shown interest in housing and hotel projects. The Golden Triangle Station area has an IT solutions company called OneNeck that made a major investment in a datacenter, and UHG Optum Development is expanding their campus including a 15-story and a 10-story office building. The city is experiencing a lot of speculation and interest in housing and retail development the corridor. Eden Prairie has as lot of affordable housing TIF districts that are due to expire, so the city is working to get those districts extended, including Lincoln Park, Summit Place, and Purgatory Creek townhomes.

Minnetonka – Ms. Wischnak talked about foundational work going on to prepare for redevelopment. Minnetonka’s zoning overlay district tool has proved successful in allowing the city to deter development that wouldn’t fit with plans for the Shady Oak station so they can wait for preferred development to occur. They’re also working with Hopkins on a joint TOD zoning district that would span Hopkins and Minnetonka boundaries, helping streamline development processes. She also talked about challenges related to financing gaps for redevelopment projects, citing an example of a proposed HCMC project at Excelsior and Shady Oak Road. An affordable housing project is underway for the Music Barn Property with 30 units that would be within a walkable distance to the Opus station, trail connections, and jobs within the Opus Business Park. She also talked about how property values along the line are increasing substantially which makes redevelopment more challenging. As part of the city’s capital improvement process, they are considering ways to address the reconstruction of Opus one-way streets, and working on redevelopment for the six-mile trail inside Opus.

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District – Mr. Wisker introduced examples of infrastructure investments that are expected to address development barriers related to stormwater management between the Blake and Louisiana station areas. They want to expand the green areas around the creek in a way that will fit with other public and private development goals. To achieve this, the District is partnering with Park Nicollet, St. Louis Park, Meadowbrook, Excelsior Town Homes, Japs-Olson, Hennepin County, the Met Council, Hopkins, Cottageville Park, Knollwood Mall, et al. The District purchased the Cold Storage facility, a 17 acre parcel that has a 1,000 feet of creek, 1,000 feet of County road and 1,000 feet of light rail – perfectly situated for mixed use development. Improvements are planned for Cottageville Park, starting in August 2014, and including daylighting of the creek, space for active recreation, stormwater management, and continuation of the greenway connection. Target Knollwood is promoting a 10-acre redevelopment that includes stormwater management, leaving them with more unencumbered real estate and increased

property value. He also talked about plans around the Louisiana station to create green space, connected trails and stormwater management.

Hopkins – Ms. Elverum described several current and planned projects, starting with the redevelopment of a business on the west end of Main Street, the city-led Gallery Flats project, the Park Nicollet Clinic site that was rezoned for mixed use and now has 163 units. Units on the first floor that can now be used for community space and ‘flex units’ will have to be marketed for retail when light rail begins operating. While this development has low parking maximums (1 space/unit), the developer leased some city surface parking lots to bridge the gap between now and the opening of LRT. The next site she discussed is the Johnson Building site in the 8th Ave corridor. They were able to obtain \$6 million in CMAC funds for a park-and-ride ramp which the city plans to wrap with development. The Artery will be the 8th Ave connection to the Downtown Hopkins LRT station. The city plans to transform the two-block stretch into a more walkable and bikeable space, to create public spaces for art and events, and a seductive connection between the LRT station and Main Street as well as a connection to the Cedar Lake Trail. The city will be doing a ‘tactical urbanism exercise’ next spring to experiment with potential changes. Ms. Elverum also talked about a Project for Pride in Living project whereby they recently purchased six duplexes for an affordable housing development.

St. Louis Park – Ms. McMonigal referenced projects outlined by Mr. Wisker, then presented slides to show planned changes. She described efforts to improve bike and pedestrian connections near the interchange of Highway 7 and Louisiana. Development continues at the Wooddale Station with nearly 1,000 units built over the past ten years, beginning with a Hennepin County study of this area. The city is working on stormwater management and pedestrian improvements near 36th Street. Ms. McMonigal showed a slide of the Hwy 100 area and proposed changes. The Beltline Station has a north-south challenge so improvements to flow are being studied there. Approximately 40 properties have been rezoned in the Beltline and Louisiana area to better prepare for future needs. Ms. McMonigal concluded with a description of a major initiative called Connect the Park that will fill in missing pedestrian connections.

Terry Schneider asked about the impact of high water levels around Minnehaha Creek. Mr. Wisker responded that creek levels are not anticipated to get back to normal until late August and that the District’s projects are designed to manage flooding and reduce it. Peter McLaughlin asked about the gap in development mentioned in reference to Minnetonka, and if this implied that there is not enough density and wondered about dialogue with the community. Ms. Wischnak stressed the difficulty of developing a very urban project in a suburban area. Higher density would improve the numbers however the needed construction costs are not necessarily offset by added value. Mr. Schneider talked about changing lifestyle preferences and the impact on development patterns. Anne Mavity was interested in the idea of leveraging reduced parking with developer requirements and also talked about strategies to retain local businesses while catalyzing new development.

V. Adjournment

Chair Callison reminded members that the next meeting will held be in September. Peter McLaughlin suggested that the panelists be invited to present at an upcoming County Board briefing. Chair Callison adjourned the meeting.