



Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee

Meeting Notes

Thursday, April 21, 2011

1:30 – 3:00 pm

St. Louis Park City Hall

Meeting Attendees

Steering Committee Members & Alternates

Gail Dorfman, Chair, Hennepin County Member
Jan Callison, Hennepin County Member
Anne Mavity, City of St. Louis Park Member
Mary Brindle, City of Edina Alternate
Rick Brausen, City of Hopkins Member
Janet Jeremiah, City of Eden Prairie Alternate
Terry Schneider, City of Minnetonka Alternate
Kathy Nelson, City of Eden Prairie Member
Jim Hovland, City of Edina Member
Don Samuels, City of Minneapolis Member

Other Attendees

Katie Walker (Hennepin County), Phil Eckhert (Hennepin County), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Lisa Middag (Hennepin County), Mark Fuhrmann (Metro Transit), Carol Lezotte Anderson (Hennepin County), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting), Karin Berkholtz (City of Minneapolis), Julie Grove (City of St. Louis Park), Kersten Elverum (City of Hopkins), Karen Lyons (Metropolitan Council), Susan Hoyt (Metropolitan Council), Dick Miller (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Jeff Casale (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), , Larry Blackstad (Three Rivers Park District, Cathy Bennett (ULI Minnesota), Katie Roth (SRF Consulting), Elise Durbin (City of Minnetonka), Kevin Locke (City of St. Louis Park), Meg McMonigal (City of St. Louis Park), Adam Fulton (City of St. Louis Park), Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County), Katie Hatt (Hennepin County), Randy Newton (City of Eden Prairie), Mary Kay Bailey (Corridors of Opportunity/St. Paul Foundation)

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Gail Dorfman opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

II. March 17, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Chair Dorfman asked for review and action on the minutes from the March 17, 2011 Steering Committee meeting. Anne Mavity (St. Louis Park Member) moved to approve the minutes; Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) seconded this motion, and the minutes were approved on a voice vote.

III. Updates

LRT Project & SW Corridor Management Committee (CMC)

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit, reported that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be coming to town to sign the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the Central Corridor project in five days. This is the largest Federal grant provided to Minnesota for a public works project, and the largest single public works project in the state.

Mr. Fuhrmann indicated that the Southwest Corridor Management Committee will meet in St. Louis Park on Wednesday, April 27th from 1:00 to 2:30 PM. Mr. Fuhrmann shared that there is no word yet from the FTA as to the timeline to release the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public review nor for approval to enter into the next project phase, Preliminary Engineering. Updates on formation of the Southwest project office will be provided in the future.

Legislative/Federal

Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) asked for updates on recent legislative activity. Katie Hatt (Hennepin County) reported on federal activities, saying that while it appears that high speed rail has taken the biggest cut, that the New Starts program had received a relatively smaller cut. Sustainable Communities did retain its funding level of \$100 million for fiscal year 2011.

Chair Dorfman suggested that the group keep an eye on the negotiations and shared that Dave Nuckols (Hennepin County) has also been talking with the business community to encourage them to contact legislators about their support for the SW LRT line. Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) recommended that Community Works Members urge SW Steering Committee members to contact Rep. Paulsen and others to express the importance to businesses and communities of the Southwest LRT project. Chair Dorfman stated that there was a recent Twin West forum on state funding for transit that included legislators and Commissioner Callison. She also mentioned an article in the Sun Sailor based on the Twin West forum that provides an opportunity for local elected officials to respond to contentions that our region does not need transit improvements. Commissioner Callison added that the article referred to her comments about property taxes for roads and transit, and needed a clarification.

Katie Hatt (Hennepin County) added more information about current bills and issues that the Steering Committee members should watch. Chair Dorfman stated that the county will be getting out messages toward the end of session as things are happening so that the committee members know what is going on and the best way to communicate our positions.

Anne Mavity (St. Louis Park Member) and Jim Hovland (Edina Member) updated the Committee on resolutions and letters to legislators. Mr. Hovland inquired as to the group's interest in having a legislative subcommittee that could move quickly in response to legislative issues. The Committee discussed this and there was consensus support for the idea of virtual meetings as needed to communicate and decide on possible action. Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) asked if the Committee should develop a formal position that could be used on short notice. Chair Dorfman responded that there could be a resolution prepared regarding efforts to curtail funding for the SW LRT project. Don Samuels (Minneapolis Member) stated that this would be helpful for him to share with others. Chair Dorfman said that the county would work on a draft resolution and send it out for Committee review and input. Terry Schneider and Anne Mavity encouraged each council to also voice support for the Southwest LRT project. Mary Brindle (Edina Alternate) also suggested talking to the Itasca Group about getting a statement from them about the importance of transit for economic development from a business perspective. Chair Dorfman summarized that the County will send out a draft resolution to serve as a model for cities and for future Steering Committee consideration.

Corridors of Opportunity

Mary Kay Bailey (Corridors of Opportunity/St. Paul Foundation) and Lisa Middag (Hennepin County) updated the committee on Living Cities and Sustainable Communities grant activities.

Mary Kay Bailey discussed funding, grants being made from the source funding, and core elements of the 2011 workplan: supporting ULI to organize workshops of local leaders to have a conversation about lessons learned from the Central Corridor LRT project, development of a corridor level development assessment, and data gathering to engage major employers near the corridor in regional economic development. There will be a new work program each year building upon what has been learned so far.

The Living Cities loan monies will focus on Central Corridor and Hiawatha at this time, but there will also be opportunities for Southwest as projects advance. Chair Dorfman shared that the challenge in terms of taking advantage of the available funding is going to be timing. Terry Schneider (Minnetonka Alternate) stated that mayors will need to focus on telling the story through case studies to show how to engage and lead. Don Samuels (Minneapolis Member) asked for a review of the numbers and it was shared that in 2011 there is \$105,000, in 2012 \$115,000, and in 2013 \$35,000.

Lisa Middag (Hennepin County) updated the committee on the \$5 million HUD grant and reported that the Sustainable Communities work plan adopted at the last Steering Committee meeting was submitted and Corridors of Opportunity gave feedback and they implemented some minor changes. The Policy Board approved the work plan on 3/20 and it was submitted to HUD on 3/21. Chair Dorfman encouraged the committee to be looking for opportunities to take advantage of the funding available.

Jim Hovland (Edina Member) said that he has met with Representative Beard who stated that he would like to "park" rail projects for two years. Mr. Hovland shared that it is important to be able to show him a good return on investment (ROI) for Southwest and funds committed, work already completed, and investments made. Chair Dorfman indicated that others are also in conversations with Representative Beard. Rick Brausen (Hopkins Member) stated that losing Southwest would be devastating to Hopkins and other cities. Terry Schneider (Minnetonka Alternate) stressed the importance of focusing on the missed opportunity. Mr. Brausen said that it would be a big set-back to the planning that Hopkins has done and Mr. Samuels stated that there would be consequences in regard to entry-level jobs and other employment issues.

Parking & Access Subcommittee (Handout)

Randy Newton, City of Eden Prairie, thanked the subcommittee and shared the draft work plan. They will be meeting in late May with Chris Weyer, the Metro Transit Southwest Project Manager, and coordinating with the Project Office, including Craig Lamothe from Metro Transit who has been assigned to the project. Katie Walker, Hennepin County, indicated that they are getting their feet wet to determine how to integrate the various entities to find a win-win for those involved. Chair Dorfman asked about how much movement is possible for station areas. Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit, stated that the purpose of PE is to refine and finalize details. Station locations can shift somewhat, and planned stations can also be removed or new ones added during PE.

IV. Southwest LRT Community Works Vision (Handout)

Mary Brindle (Edina Alternate) shared the work of the visioning committee and distributed two handouts. The handout states that the Southwest LRT Corridors vision is: Southwest LRT Corridor: connecting people to jobs, housing, shopping and fun. Chair Dorfman asked about the source of the information on the handout that states current and future job, housing, growth and commuter projections. Karen Lyons, Metropolitan Council, stated that the forecasted growth numbers are from the New Starts application information. The group discussed if additional information should be added to the box of projections and if there are studies that show the growth of particular businesses along Hiawatha and other LRT corridors. The group discussed the wording of the mission handout. Don Samuels (Minneapolis Member) suggested the addition of the word 'vibrant' to the vision statement. Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) suggested taking out 'enriched'. The final vision statement reads: The Southwest Community Works Initiative

collaborates with citizens, businesses, and government to align land use and transit planning so that the Southwest LRT Corridor is a premiere destination that is •accessible •livable •vibrant. It was decided that under Housing choices, 'corridor' be changed to 'communities'. Anne Mavity moved the suggested changes, Don Samuels seconded, and the visioning statement passed on a voice vote.

V. Business Involvement in Southwest LRT Community Works

Chair Dorfman led the discussion regarding efforts to convene a Business Advisory Committee to involve the business community. Chair Dorfman shared that there has been a lot of work to expand to business involvement beyond the chambers and build to other connections. There will be a membership subcommittee to work on the best ways to reach out to key CEO's and have a serious discussion about business involvement. Those members interested in being part of the subcommittee should be in touch with Adele Hall, Hennepin County. Terry Schneider (Minnetonka Alternate) suggested that CEOs may want to get involved in more key discussions only when they are actually needed. Chair Dorfman shared that in the Midtown project they found that having CEOs at the meetings was critical to getting strong "buy-in" and to catalyze public/private partnerships.

Adjournment

Chair Dorfman adjourned the meeting. The next Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19 at 1:30 pm at the St. Louis Park City Hall.