



**Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee**

Meeting Notes

Thursday, August 18, 2011

1:30 - 3:00 pm

St. Louis Park City Hall

**Meeting Attendees**

Steering Committee Members & Alternates

Chair Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County Member  
Vice-Chair Jim Hovland, City of Edina Member  
Jan Callison, Hennepin County Member  
Anne Mavity, City of St. Louis Park Member  
Don Samuels, City of Minneapolis Member  
Kathy Nelson, City of Eden Prairie Member  
Jennifer Munt, Metropolitan Council Member  
Mary Brindle, City of Edina Alternate

Other Attendees

Katie Walker (Hennepin County), Patrick Connoy (Hennepin County), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Lisa Middag (Hennepin County), Carol Lezotte Anderson (Hennepin County), Mark Fuhrmann (Metro Transit), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Karin Berkholtz (City of Minneapolis), Amanda Arnold (City of Minneapolis), Karen Lyons (Metropolitan Council), Dick Miller (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Jeff Casale (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Cathy Bennett (ULI Minnesota), Steve Stadler (City of Hopkins), Tara Beard (City of Hopkins), Julie Wischnack (City of Minnetonka), Kevin Locke (City of St. Louis Park), Meg McMonigal (City of St. Louis Park), Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County), Janet Jeremiah (City of Eden Prairie), Mona Elabbady (SRF Consulting), Dan Duffy (Duffy Architects/Twin West Chamber), Stacy McMahon (Cedar Lake Park Association), Edward Ferlauto (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association), Jeff Benson (URS Corporation)

**I. Welcome & Introductions**

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

**II. May 19, and June 16, 2011, Meeting Minutes**

Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) asked for review and action on the minutes from the May 19 and June 16, 2011 Steering Committee meetings. Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) moved to approve the minutes; Jim Hovland (Edina Member) seconded this motion, and the minutes were approved on a voice vote.

### **III. Transitional Station Area Action Plans**

Patrick Connoy, Hennepin County, presented on the Transitional Station Area Action Plans for which Hennepin County released a request for proposals on August 8, 2011. Mr Connoy described the need for the Action Plans and how they fit in with past station area planning efforts and the Southwest LRT Community Works workplan, including the Corridor Investment Framework. The Transitional Station Area Action Plans include a Short-Term Development Feasibility Analysis, Housing Inventory & Assessment, Access & Circulation Plan, and an Infrastructure Plan, which will come together to form an action plan for each station.

Funding for the \$500,000 study is from the Sustainable Communities grant (\$430,000) and a Federal Transit Administration Community Planning grant (\$70,000). Mr. Connoy noted that the Short-Term Development task was listed as optional for potential bidders as, pending timing, it is possible that this work could be done by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and Center for Transit Oriented Development (CTOD) under the Living Cities grant funding. Cathy Bennett, ULI-Minnesota, elaborated, stating that ULI and CTOD have already completed a station characterization exercise, and are currently at work on a market and development assessment component, which incorporates demographics along the corridor, developer interviews, and transit's impact on the market by station. This work will be completed in September, with a final component – Development Feasibility—to be done in 2012. The Development Feasibility will ascertain whether the market can support the development goals sent out in the station characterization and development assessment. All of this work will build into the Action Plans and the Corridor Investment Framework. Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) asked how planners will find a mix of development that works at each station. Ms. Bennett responded that the development feasibility study will include information on the kinds of visitors to the station areas, which leads to a better understanding of the market.

Don Samuels (Minneapolis Member) asked what role neighborhoods' existing plans will play in the Action Plans; Anne Mavity (St. Louis Park Member) asked if the station area plans from a couple of years ago will be a starting point for the Action Plans. Mr. Connoy responded that the study partners' neighborhood plans and station area plans, as well as other studies, are being provided to the proposing consultants and the Action Plans will build on the previous work. Chair Dorfman asked if one consultant will be hired for the work. Mr. Connoy responded that he is not certain; there could be more than one consultant hired. Chair Dorfman also asked what the RFP proposes for Community Engagement. Mr. Connoy answered that the RFP asks the proposers to put forward a plan for community engagement. Chair Dorfman noted that more outreach will be needed in the suburban communities, akin to what was done for the Minneapolis Station Area Planning process last year. Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) asked if the Actions Plans will look at suburb to suburb access, or access to the LRT from more isolated neighborhoods. Mr. Connoy responded that that is an important consideration that will have to be addressed with Metro Transit, but is not really in the scope of the Action Plans. Chair Dorfman asked if access to Edina will be considered as part of the Action Plans. Mr. Connoy responded that it will. Jennifer Munt (Metropolitan Council Member) commented that the public involvement is especially critical at this point, and advised that planners work closely with the neighborhoods now, before construction, to get buy-in on the opportunities that come with LRT, so that they will survive construction and anticipate the benefits of LRT. Edward Ferlauto, meeting attendee, commented that a University of Minnesota capstone study was recently completed on traffic in the West Calhoun Neighborhood, and that businesses in that area have organized to stay informed of the project.

### **IV. Engineering Services Procurement Process and Schedule**

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit, presented a project roadmap, including information on what will happen when the project proceeds into Preliminary Engineering (PE). Mr. Fuhrmann noted, with regard to the previous conversation, that Metro Transit will do a sector study to evaluate the bus network before Southwest LRT opens. This study includes a public engagement process.

Mr. Fuhrmann noted that the schedule that he will present for PE activities is contingent upon receiving entry into PE from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in the next two weeks. Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) asked why the project continues to wait for entry into PE. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that several weeks ago, FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff met with Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh. At this meeting, Mr. Rogoff indicated that entry would likely be approved by the end of July. FTA has since been quiet on the issue, but Mr. Fuhrmann noted that since this meeting, freight rail issues have surfaced, and FTA is very risk averse and has noticed the freight rail issue. Jim Hovland (Edina Member) commented that lawsuits and sustainable sources of funding are issues, and asked when we will work on these issues, especially on presenting evidence of a sustainable operating budget. Mr. Fuhrmann answered that for entry into Final Design FTA will require a 20 year financial plan that includes adequate resources and contingency for Southwest LRT. Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) noted that during this year's legislative session there was an attempt to keep funding from being spent on Southwest. This legislative climate makes it extremely important to get into PE so that the project can progress. Mr. Hovland commented that freight rail may not be resolved for a year; what will happen to Southwest? Mr. Fuhrmann responded that FTA is anxious to advance good projects, and we must keep making the case that Southwest is a strong project. Chair Dorfman added that the freight rail appeals process could take anywhere from two months to two years. Mr. Hovland asked about Central Corridor's experience at the legislature. Mr. Fuhrmann answered that he visited the legislature four times from 2005 through 2009 to get the needed bonding for Central Corridor. Metropolitan Council took the lead with support from Ramsey and Hennepin Counties in 2005 and 2006, then the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) was established in 2008. Mr. Hovland commented that a legislative partners team for Southwest should be formed immediately. Mr. Fuhrmann added that the Metropolitan Council is already reaching out to be included on the legislative bonding tour this fall. Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) asked when businesses will be able to submit their issues about where the LRT is located. Mr. Fuhrmann said that this will definitely occur during PE.

Mr. Fuhrmann moved on to an update on the engineering services procurement which will result in a large contract for approximately \$100 million. Don Samuels (Minneapolis Member) asked if there will be a disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) requirement. Mr. Fuhrmann answered that yes, the Metropolitan Council office of diversity set the goal at 17 percent DBE participation for the Central Corridor LRT project, and the same is expected for Southwest. Mr. Fuhrmann went on to describe the evaluation panel that will recommend a firm to be awarded the engineering services contract. The evaluation panel will have two voting representatives from the Southwest LRT Project Office, and one each from Metro Transit Operations, MnDOT, Hennepin County, and Community Works. A Technical Advisory Group with representatives from the five cities, Three Rives Park District, Southwest LRT Project Office, Metro Transit Operations, MnDOT, and Hennepin County will not vote, but will participate in all selection discussions.

## **V. Updates**

### **a. Technical Implementation Committee Update**

Julie Wischnack, City of Minnetonka, presented an overview and update on the Southwest LRT Community Works Technical Implementation Committee. Ms. Wischnack familiarized the group with the TIC functions, members, principals' group, and subcommittees. She noted that the goals of the TIC are to initiate discussion, generate ideas, and share experience and expertise; to carry out Steering Committee vision and direction; and to prepare for development around the stations. The TIC's next steps are to develop a communications plan, define the roles and responsibilities of project partners, decide on group procedure, and carry out the Transitional Station Area Action Plans. Chair Dorfman noted that more of an effort should be made to inform elected officials not on the Steering Committee of the project's progress and asked the TIC figure out a way to do so. Anne Mavity (St. Louis Park Member) commented that this information should also reach community leaders.

**b. ULI-Minnesota/Dallas Area Rapid Transit September Workshop**

Cathy Bennett encouraged all Steering Committee members and meeting attendees to attend a series of events with visitors from Dallas Area Rapid Transit. The three visitors, the Chief Financial Officer of DART, the former mayor of Richardson, TX, and the Transit Oriented Development Director at DART will present at a ULI event on the evening of September 7, and an all-day workshop on September 8.

Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) commented that at the last meeting membership on the Steering Committee was discussed. Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) asked that the TIC take up the membership issue at their September meeting and that the Steering Committee would take action in September. Resolution and clarity of business's role is needed to resolve the membership issues. Don Samuels (Minneapolis Member) commented that a presentation on the Interchange project would be helpful.

**VI. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00. The next Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, September 15, at 1:30 pm at the St. Louis Park City Hall.