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## Southwest Transitway

### Meeting Notes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)  
May 21, 2008, 8:00 to 9:30 AM  
St. Louis Park City Hall

#### PAC Members and Alternates

Gail Dorfman	Hennepin County, PAC Chair
Jean White	Edina
Jim Brimeyer	St. Louis Park
LuAnn Toliver	Minnetonka
Dan Duffy	Twin West Chamber
Jim Benshoof	Eden Prairie Chamber
Ralph Remington	Minneapolis
Robert Lilligren	Minneapolis
Amy Vennewitz	Metropolitan Council
Brian Willette	Cedar Lake Park Association
Steve Mahowald	Metro Transit
Janet Jeremiah	Eden Prairie
Bruce Rowan	Hopkins
George Puzak	Cedar Lake Park Association
Kathy Nelson	Eden Prairie
Nancy Tyra-Lukens	Southwest Transit
John Dewitt	Midtown Community Works Partnership

#### Other Attendees

Steve Simon	Minnesota Legislature
Meg McMonigal	St. Louis Park
Barb Thoman	Transit for Livable Communities
Kim Malrick	Minneapolis
Art Higinbotham	Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood
Blair Tremere	Hennepin County

#### Staff

Katie Walker	Hennepin County Study Manager
Kathie Doty	KLD Consulting
Adele Hall	Hennepin County

### I. Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Gail Dorfman, SW PAC Chair, opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves. She announced that Requests for Proposals had been sent out for the Southwest Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Station Area Planning work.

### II. Project Updates

Katie Walker updated the Committee on the status of the procurement process to bring on consultants for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the Station Area Master Planning work. Five firms submitted proposals for the DEIS. Interviews of selected firms will occur during the first week in June and the board will approve the selection of one firm before the end of June. Eight firms submitted proposals for the station area master planning (which will occur in the four suburban cities). Four were interviewed and staff are currently negotiating to bring the contract to the board for approval within two weeks. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will then enter the Southwest Transitway project on the Federal Register and scoping meeting dates will be set.

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Kathie Doty updated the committee on the presentations made by Southwest staff at various community meetings over the last several weeks, and described the Southwest Community Advisory Committee tour of the Hiawatha LRT line taken in early May.

A question was asked regarding the FTA scoping requirements and how to decide, if there are additional alignments proposed, which will be included in the DEIS. Katie Walker answered that suggestions to add routes for study will be reviewed with regard to several factors including the Purpose and Need Statement for the project and the FTA's guidelines for considering route options as "reasonable and practical by reasonable standards". Ms. Walker also indicated that the decision as to whether to add a route to be studied during the DEIS process will be made jointly by the HCRRA, the Metropolitan Council, and the FTA. The scoping meetings will have a formal format, much like a public hearing and are a forum for the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) to present information about the Southwest Transitway and the history of studies of this project, and ask the public to identify environmental and community issues of importance. There will be formal scoping meetings held in suburban locations and in Minneapolis. Interpreters and translators will be present at the meetings if needed.

The scoping process will take place over 30-60 days, so there will be many other opportunities for members of the public to comment outside the formal scoping meetings.

### **III. Legislative Update**

Representative Steve Simon presented on actions of the Minnesota legislature. He said that the Central Corridor's \$70 million is back in the transportation bill, but that Southwest and other transitways do not get any funding in this bill. He also commented upon the original draft of the bill (not passed), which gave Southwest the same amount of money, \$500,000, as the other corridors. This proposed funding plan made him realize how important it is that Southwest become more active in communicating with legislators that this is the next rail project in the queue. Talking points for approaching legislators were then discussed and several identified: Southwest has been in the works for six years, the process has been smooth and on pace; employment nodes in Eden Prairie and Minneapolis anchor the line; and the Metropolitan Council Transit Study analyzed 29 corridors, only Southwest and Bottineau were identified as able to support rail. Steve Simon commented that it was helpful to have the Twin Cities Business magazine cover story about Southwest, which provided a visible sign to legislators of the importance of this project to the business community.

### **IV. New Transit Funding-CTIB**

Katie Walker reviewed the transit allocations in the 2008 Minnesota Transportation Bill, specifically, the Counties' Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) sales tax. A joint powers board was established on April 1<sup>st</sup> with representatives from each of the counties (Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Anoka, and Washington) that opted in on the sales tax increase. The CTIB will award grant fund from the sales tax and also has the authority to issue bonds. The tax collection will begin on July 1, 2008; the first payment to CTIB will be on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. It is projected to generate \$49 million in 2008 (half year), \$107 million in 2009, and \$110 million in 2010. The new law calls for a change in the funding formula for transitway project in CTIB counties:

#### **Funding of Capital Costs**

	<b>Pre-Sales Tax</b>	<b>Post-Sales Tax</b>
Federal	50%	50%
State	33%	10%
Local	17%	10%
Sales Tax	N/A	30%

A committee member asked if the new sales tax dedicated funding stream is going to help move the Southwest project along. Katie Walker answered that there's a possibility, though there will be competition for CTIB funds, including to pay a portion of the Central Corridor

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ongoing operating costs, an ongoing cost. The new sales tax revenue should increase the reliability of the funding stream and for CTIB county projects. A CTIB committee, called GEARS, has been formed to dispense the funds. One county commissioner member from each county will serve on GEARS, along with city officials from each county and the Chair of the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Committee. Commissioner Dorfman is the representative from Hennepin County on the GEARS committee. Per the new law, grants dispensed must be consistent with the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan, must be for a transitway purpose, must grant \$30.8 million of the 2009 revenues to fund Metro Transit work, and must grant County members at least 1% of the total revenues of 2009, 2010, and 2011.

**V. Closing**

The next SW PAC meeting will be Wednesday, July 23, 2008, at 8am at the St. Louis Park City Hall.