



Meeting Minutes

Southwest Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

May 13, 2009, 8:00 to 9:30 AM

St. Louis Park City Hall

Meeting Attendees

PAC Members and Alternates

Gail Dorfman, Chair	Hennepin County Commissioner	Member
Jan Callison	Hennepin County Commissioner	Member
Robert Lilligren	City of Minneapolis	Member
Sue Sanger	City of St. Louis Park	Alternate
LuAnn Toliver	City of Minnetonka	Alternate
Ralph Remington	City of Minneapolis	Member
Jeff Arnold	Minneapolis Regional Chamber	Member
John DeWitt	Midtown Community Works Partnership	Alternate
Brian Willette	Cedar Lake Park Association	Member
Bruce Rowan	City of Hopkins	Member
Jim Brimeyer	City of St. Louis Park	Member
Kathy Nelson	City of Eden Prairie	Member
Gary Aiken	Twin West Chamber	Alternate
Tony Wagner	City of Minnetonka	Member
Rod Miller	Eden Prairie Chamber	Member
George Puzak	Cedar Lake Park Association	Alternate
Janet Jeremiah	City of Eden Prairie	Alternate

Southwest Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members & Agency Staff

Katie Walker (Hennepin County Study Manager), Steven Hay (City of Minneapolis), Robert Vockrodt (Mn/DOT), Steve Mahowald (Metro Transit), Adele Hall (Hennepin County), Meg McMonigal (City of St. Louis Park), Elise Durbin (City of Minnetonka), Regina Herron (City of Eden Prairie)

Consultant Team

Oscar Gonzalez (HDR Engineering), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Ann Wolff (KLD Consulting)

Other Attendees

Art Higinbotham (Cedar Isles Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA)), Jason Flohrs (Project consultant), Travis Bunch (Minneapolis Regional Chamber), Cameron Slick (Transit for Livable Communities), Kim Malrick (City of Minneapolis), Kevin Locke (City of St. Louis Park), Joan Vanhala (Alliance for Metropolitan Stability), Jackie Cherryhomes (Cedar Lake Shores Townhomes), Bryan Dodds (Mn/DOT)





I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Dorfman called the meeting to order and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Chair Dorfman announced a change to the agenda moving forward the committee updates.

Chair Dorfman introduced Jason Flohrs, who briefed the group on recent outreach activities to the business community. The City of Lakes Chamber hosted a meeting with Minneapolis businesses interested in learning more about the new LRT 3C-2 (11th/12th sub-alternative). Approximately 30 business representatives attended the meeting including the University of St. Thomas, WCCO, and Orchestra Hall. Other recent meetings attended include the Lyn-Lake and Nicollet-Lake Business Associations. Many connections have been made, and a forum for businesses along the alignments is being planned.

Ms. Walker updated the PAC on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The CAC did not meet in April; their next meeting is on Wednesday, May 27. The CAC has been given the evaluation measures, and they will review them at the next meeting, as well as the public outreach strategy, and how members can be effective ambassadors from each station area.

Ms. Walker also reported on the most recent conversation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The project schedule and the evaluation measures were shared with FTA who had very few comments. Southwest project team staff plan to meet with FTA Region V staff in June.

Ms. Walker reported that station area planning is moving forward. St. Louis Park will host its station area planning open house tonight, and Minnetonka will host its meeting tomorrow evening. Hay Dobbs contract, set to expire in June, will be extended. When the LPA is selected, station area planning will begin in Minneapolis.

Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) asked if there are any fatal flaws in the alignments. Ms. Walker responded that at about ten percent engineering there are no fatal flaws, but there are some changes that need to be made. Chair Dorfman added that a part of the Eden Prairie alignment may have to be moved in a way that does not agree with the city's plan. Janet Jeremiah (Eden Prairie Alternate) commented that experts recommend relocating the line at Eden Prairie Town Center Station. The alignment shift is not the city's preference, but it may need to happen.

II. Legislative/Congressional Update

Chair Dorfman reported that \$21 million in transit bonding was included in this year's bonding bill, now on Governor Pawlenty's desk. Of the \$21 million, \$8.5 million has been reserved for Central Corridor, and the remaining \$12.5 million will be allocated amongst six to eight transit projects. The Metropolitan Council will allocate the funds. The bonding bill is currently at \$300 million, the Governor would prefer it to be \$200 million, so there will be some trimming. Jim Brimeyer (St. Louis Park Member) asked if the Governor could line-item veto the Southwest project. Chair Dorfman replied that the Governor cannot veto specific projects, just the general bonding. Robert Lilligren (Minneapolis Member) asked if \$21 million was the lump sum originally proposed, and if the proportions to the various transit projects are known. Chair Dorfman said that yes, this was the amount proposed by Representative Hausman, and Ms. Walker added that the proportions are not known, but the following projects are eligible for the funding:



Bottineau Transitway, Cedar Lake Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Red Rock Corridor, Riverview Corridor, Robert Street BRT, Rush Line Corridor, Southwest Transitway, and the St. Paul Union Depot.

Chair Dorfman reported that Congressman Ellison and Paulsen both supported the Southwest allocation in the Federal Omnibus Bill. Ms. Walker commented that the Southwest Transitway will need to be authorized in the reauthorized SAFETEA-LU to proceed as a New Starts project. Chair Dorfman asked if the project is ready to enter into PE, and SAFETEA-LU has not been reauthorized, does the project have to wait. Ms. Walker responded yes, the project must be authorized before it will be considered a New Starts project by FTA.

Jeff Arnold (Minneapolis Regional Chamber Member) asked what is happening with high speed rail in the state legislature. Chair Dorfman replied that President Obama and Congressman Oberstar are in favor, though there is still regional dissent about whether the train would terminate in St. Paul or Minneapolis. Ms. Walker added that the debate is about coming to St. Paul only, or St. Paul and Minneapolis. There is \$8 billion dollars of federal funding allocated to high speed rail across the country.

III. Evaluation Process – Tech Memo #3 and Schedule

Ms. Walker reviewed the evaluation process for selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) explaining that the evaluation criteria contained in the Southwest Alternatives Analysis (AA) for goals 1. Improve Mobility and 2. Provide a Cost-Effective and Efficient Travel Option are carried forward into the LPA evaluation. In addition, the critical environmental impacts/benefits will be considered in the LPA selected where these were not considered during the Alternatives Analysis (AA).

Ms. Walker discussed the project schedule, saying that it was initially the plan for the TAC to make their LPA recommendation, then open houses would be conducted and the PAC would make their decision. It is now suggested by staff that the public open houses occur before the TAC makes their recommendation to be sure that the public has more time to learn about and process the evaluation results.

Discussion

Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) commented that we need to be very specific about what input we need. Sue Sanger (St. Louis Park, Alternate) expressed agreement with holding the public hearing first in order to minimize the criticism of decisions already having been made, but expressed concerned about this becoming politicized. Ms. Walker commented that the technical work will be completed in July, and will be followed by an intensive public outreach period with a media pitch, new Newslines, open houses, and new website information. This will allow the public to gain an understanding of the project, and to do a joint meeting between the PAC and TAC, where consultants would report on the open houses. Then the TAC would make their recommendation, and the PAC would take action in September or October.

IV. Intermodal

Hennepin County is leading an effort to address freight rail requirements, additional commuter rail needs, high-speed inter-city rail, LRT full build out, pedestrian facilities, bus circulation, development, and the physical location for a downtown Minneapolis Intermodal Station. Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) commented that the facility should be built to accommodate the transit lines, well lit, and American



SOUTHWEST
transitway

green means go.

Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, so that it does not have to be rebuilt in the future.

V. Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Southwest PAC is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2009 at 8:00 AM at the St. Louis Park City Hall

VI. Adjournment

Chair Dorfman adjourned the meeting at 9:30am.

