



Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 21, 2012

1:30 - 3:00 pm

St. Louis Park City Hall

Meeting Attendees

Steering Committee Members & Alternates

Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County Member

Jan Callison, Hennepin County Member

Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) Member

Jennifer Munt, Metropolitan Council Member

Tom Harmening, City of St. Louis Park

Molly Cummings, City of Hopkins Member

Terry Schneider, City of Minnetonka Alternate

Kathy Nelson, City of Eden Prairie Member

Nancy Tyra-Lukens, SouthWest Transit Member

Dick Miller, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Member

Jeff Casale, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District Alternate

Caren Dewar, Urban Land Institute-Minnesota Member

Other Attendees

Katie Walker (Hennepin County), Kerri Pearce Ruch (Hennepin County), Kevin Locke (City of St. Louis Park), Tom Harmening (City of St. Louis Park), Paul Mogush (City of Minneapolis), Julie Wischnack (City of Minnetonka), James Wisker (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Jack Sullivan (City of St. Louis Park), Meg McMonigal (City of St. Louis Park), Jackie Cherryhomes (Royalston Businesses), Kersten Elverum (City of Hopkins), Larry Blacksted (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Mike Hayman (Minnehaha Creek Watershed District), Chris Weyer (Metro Transit), Janet Jeremiah (City of Eden Prairie), Kathie Doty (KLD Consulting), Cathy Bennett (ULI-MN), Karen Lyons (Metropolitan Council), Randy Newton (City of Eden Prairie), Mark Fuhrmann (Metro Transit)

I. Welcome & Introductions

Chair Gail Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Tom Harmening stated that he was representing St. Louis Park as their members were not able to attend.

II. May 17, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gail Dorfman asked for review and action on the minutes from the May 17, 2012, Steering Committee meeting. [The minutes were approved on a voice vote.](#)

III. Updates

Chair Gail Dorfman asked Katie Walker, Hennepin County, to provide various updates:

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Ms. Walker stated that the Federal Transit Administration's administrative review of the document has been completed and that the next step is for legal review. After release, there will be a 45-day comment period which will include a series of public meetings. Comments will be documented and forwarded to Metro Transit, who will prepare responses to comments received through the Final Environmental Impact Statement process.

Transitional Station Area Action Planning Request for Proposals (TSAAP RFP)

Ms. Walker indicated that the consultant procurement process is moving forward, and the RFP is out. Proposals are due on June 28 and the County Board is expected to take action on selecting a contractor in late August or early September. Funding for the TSAAP work will come from the HUD Sustainable Communities and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority funding. The focus of the TSAAP work will be on getting station areas ready for the opening of the LRT line in 2018, and on integration of land use planning with LRT engineering. In response to a question from Molly Cummings (Hopkins Member), Ms. Walker indicated that the TSAAP consultants would be spending time during the first three months evaluating the current station sites and recommending changes, to help inform the Preliminary Engineering. Kathy Nelson (Eden Prairie Member) asked if that means that cities should be engaging their communities, for example, businesses near the proposed Eden Prairie Town Center station, now to ensure that their voices are heard. Peter McLaughlin (HCRRA Member) and others stated that this is a good time to get interested parties involved, and the cities have a key role in this work. The County and the TSAAP consultants will be working very closely with city staff to be sure that all those who have a stake in station locations and development around stations are fully engaged.

Engineering Services Contract

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit, spoke about the status of the process to select a contractor to provide engineering services for the SW LRT line. He provided background on Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee actions and indicated that the Committee will be reviewing a full report on the Sabo Bridge before taking up the Engineering Services contractor selection. Given uncertainty as to when information will be available and the time it will take to analyze potentially new information, a date has not yet been set for when the selection item will be in front of the Transportation Committee. Peter McLaughlin (HCRRA member) asked Mr. Fuhrmann if he agreed that this is a good time for cities to be identifying and working through issues around station siting and station area planning; Mr. Fuhrmann did agree. Chair Dorfman stated that cities are well-poised to take on this work.

Southwest Community Advisory Committee (SW CAC)

Chair Dorfman provided a brief update on the recent SW CAC meeting, stating that she had heard from community members about an issue concerning the committee process and the role of members and alternates. She will be forwarding these comments on to the co-chairs of the SW CAC.

Request for State funding - Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

Mr. Fuhrmann also reported that the Metropolitan Council had just passed a resolution to formally submit a request to DEED for funding for the SW LRT engineering work. The request is for up to \$14 million. Tom Harmening, St. Louis Park, added that the mayors from all the cities along the SW corridor had signed a letter supporting this funding request.

IV./V. Hennepin County Community Works Capital Funding / Steering Committee Project Endorsement Process

Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County Member) provided an overview of the purpose of the County's Community Works program, which is a mechanism to support job creation, provide access and connections, work with partners for effective planning, enhance the tax base, and improve natural areas. The Hennepin County Board has purview over this program and has established about 6 - 8 Community Works initiatives since its inception. The SW LRT Community Works initiative is probably the most complex to date, and the County anticipates allocating \$9 million to this project over the next couple of years. Use of these funds requires action by the Hennepin County board. Peter McLaughlin (HCRRA Member) added information about the history of the County's

Community Works program, saying it focuses on supporting development in conjunction with major transportation infrastructure investments. This program helps create a vision, support projects to help realize that vision, and act as a catalyst for a range of development opportunities, particularly private sector led initiatives.

Chair Dorfman stated that, in light of the complexity of the SW LRT Community Works program and since the County and its partners are working on developing a framework to review and prioritize funding requests, it is premature to lay out a plan and process for granting County Community Works funds. Katie Walker, Hennepin County, then distributed a handout, reviewed by city staff, which outlines criteria for assessing if a proposed project meets the vision and goals of the SW Community Works program. Steering Committee members offered suggestions, including that this process allow for discussing relative strength of proposals, and that this should be integrated with the results of the TSAAP work. Ms. Walker indicated that the TSAAP work and the inventory of investment opportunities should be completed by the first and second quarters of 2013, at which time we will be in a better position to be able to assess and rank funding proposals. After further Committee discussion, Chair Dorfman summarized that the group had agreed that it would be prudent for the County to wait for more structure before providing grants from the County's Community Works capital funds, but that the Committee would continue to offer endorsement for projects that seek it, such as with the Metropolitan Council's TOD grant process.

[Chair Dorfman asked for a motion to approve the process outlined for project endorsement by the Southwest LRT Steering Committee. Terry Schneider moved, and Dick Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.](#)

VI. Community Works & Preliminary Engineering (PE) Workplan

Katie Walker, Hennepin County, reviewed a chart labeled, "Southwest LRT Community Works 2012 – 2013 Activities". This chart takes the adopted workplan of the SW LRT Community Works program and shows how it connects to planned PE work. Caren Dewar (ULI-MN Member) suggested we show how the private sector will participate, how job growth will be generated. Jan Callison (Hennepin County Member) stated that we have a vision but she's not sure we know how to get there. She suggested, based on what she's learned from Will Fleissig, who speaks about the developer perspective, that the Committee identify the key stations where it's crucial to bring in developers to determine what it will take for them to move forward on development projects. Ms. Callison further stated that she felt we should proceed with the TSAAP work, but on a parallel track, identify perhaps five key stations and begin communication with developers. She challenged the group to begin a substantive discussion to identify those key stations. Tom Harmening, St. Louis Park, supported this idea, and said that the cities have experience working with developers. Peter McLaughlin (HCRRRA Member) offered ideas for how the group could take a more proactive approach. Terry Schneider (Minnetonka Alternate) noted that there's a healthy tension between pursuing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and the development community's tendency towards risk aversion. He questioned whether developers would get very involved until Federal funding for the LRT project has been secured. Mr. McLaughlin acknowledged the challenges, saying that 1) banks typically don't like mixed use projects, and 2) developers are risk averse. Given this, he agreed that meeting with developers and providing real world examples of successful TOD projects could be useful. Chair Dorfman (Hennepin County) thanked the Committee for this robust discussion and indicated that she and staff would work on refining the plan for next steps.

Chair Dorfman asked Ms. Walker to review a handout, "Southwest LRT Community Works Project Ranking Process & Criteria". Ms. Walker provided a quick overview.

VII. United Health Group Development at City West Station

This item was forwarded to the next Steering Committee agenda.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next Southwest LRT Community Works Steering Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, August 16, at 1:30 pm at the St. Louis Park City Hall.