



Springfield Rail Improvements Project Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #3 Summary Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Overview

The third meeting of the Springfield Rail Improvements Project Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) was held at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center. Eleven participants and four members of the study team attended the nearly two-hour session, which provided an opportunity to share information on project planning, design, funding and public engagement. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Present comprehensive updates on the project's progress;
- Share information about upcoming efforts and activities; and
- Solicit advisory group members' feedback.

Kevin Seals, of Hanson Professional Services, opened the meeting with an introduction of the project team and a brief description of team members' responsibilities. He then invited meeting attendees to state their organizational affiliations. A list of meeting participants is presented below.

Advisory Group Members:

- Jamie Adaire Bunn Park Neighborhood Association
- Grant Franklin Town & Country Bank
- Gary Giacomelli S.I.U. School of Medicine
- Tom Gihl Illinois National Bank
- Pat Grady State Representatives La Shawn Ford & Litesa Wallace's Office
- Teresa Haley Springfield Branch NAACP
- Chris Hembrough Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Michelle Higginbotham Springfield Business Journal and Enos Park Neighborhood Improvement Association
- Juan Huerta Office of Community Relations - City of Springfield
- Leroy Jordan Randall Court Neighborhood Association
- Darrell Schaver Springfield Public Schools-District 186
- Herman Senor Springfield City Council

Project Team Members:

- Jimmie Austin Hanson Professional Services Inc.
- Kevin Seals Hanson Professional Services Inc.
- Mandi Voegele Vector Communications Corp.
- Eve Blackwell-Lewis Project Ombudsman

Technical Presentation

After participant introductions, the project Ombudsman, Eve Blackwell-Lewis, presented on the land acquisition process and took questions from SAG members.

Following that, Kevin Seals – the project’s environmental and public engagement lead, and Jimmie Austin – Senior Engineer – gave a presentation on the project’s technical components. Copies of the PowerPoint presentation were provided to attendees, in addition to the latest project newsletter and FAQ sheets. Presentation highlights included:

- A brief review of the project’s purpose and need, benefits, approved alternative and EIS;
- Information on funding and the project’s schedule;
- An update on Usable Segment 1, Carpenter Street Underpass construction funding and schedule;
- A overview of the Carpenter Street Archaeological Site, history of the site, and the Section 106 process;
- An update on Usable Segment 2, the Ash and Laurel Street Underpasses, and funding options since the City did not receive the TIGER grant for \$16 million;
- An overview of the public engagement program, the August 2015 Public Open House and new resource center;
- The project’s DBE construction goals, minority workforce numbers to date, and minority training program;
- Other Springfield rail projects;
- Potential bridge and fencing aesthetics.

In response to the presentation, SAG members offered both questions and comments. Where appropriate, project team members provided answers and feedback. The exchanges are summarized on the following pages.

QUESTIONS DURING LAND ACQUISITION PRESENTATION

Question / Comment	Team Response
■ PAT GRADY: Have you already started making offers for properties?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ EVE: There are a couple that are going to city council (two), and a third one by December. The forth one might take longer. That is as far as we’ve gotten.■ KEVIN: That is on Usable Segment II, which is Ash and Laurel streets.
■ LEROY JORDAN: How many homes will be acquired?	■ KEVIN: 117 homes for the entire project.
■ PAT GRADY: Why aren’t the railroads donating more to the project?	■ JIMMIE: Because they already own the ROW. They were ready to go with the project but the City didn’t want those trains all coming through at high speeds without revisions.
■ PAT GRADY: It's a shame because they are impacted all of us, the	■ KEVIN: The railroads are a business as well and

citizens.	trying to make money. It's unfortunate for Springfield, but it's the same in cities across the country. One reason they are going along with it is because of all the grade crossings that are big liabilities for the railroad. When you can take 25 of those off your system by putting in underpasses, they pay attention.
■ PAT GRADY: So how does the imminent domain affect the property? The federal, state and city, do they have enough power to take places?	■ KEVIN: It doesn't usually get that high. Railroads have a lot of power and it has to go pretty high up to get them to do anything.
■ PAT GRADY: Wasn't Dick Durbin trying to get the funding?	■ KEVIN: Yes, all the congressional delegates were pulling for the TIGER funding.

QUESTIONS DURING CARPENTER STREET PRESENTATION

Question / Comment	Team Response
■ DARELL SHAVER: North Grand will look like that too?	■ JIMMIE: Yes, but North Grand will have an overpass at Robin Roberts stadium.

QUESTIONS DURING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PRESENTATION

Question / Comment	Team Response
■ LEROY JORDAN: The City was charged by the FRA to cover up the site until next spring. The railroad, Union Pacific, has already rejected any thoughts about anything other than what they want to do. As much as some of us would like to see something done, I don't see the RR being willing to do much.	■ KEVIN: Yes, last spring we protected the site from rain and now we are protecting it from snow and freezing conditions. We thought we might be further along in the process by now. To further protect them, as Leroy mentioned, we have put sand and another level of soil, and grass seed was planted today, so it's preserved in place to protect it from the winter. We have not received a formal response from the railroad, but the steering committee did write a letter to UP as well, and specifically requested a formal response.
■ TERESA HALEY: Let us know what else we can do. I'm NAACP state president now too so we have more pull.	■ KEVIN: Congratulations, I haven't heard that. We'll keep everyone apprised and let you know what we find out on how we move forward with the project.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS DURING BRIDGE AESTHETIC CONVERSATION

Question / Comment	Team Response
■ HERMAN SENOR: Who would pay for that?	■ KEVIN: If the city has to pay for it, it needs to be low maintenance.
■ TERESA HALEY: It looks good compared to what we had to deal with in the 70's. Maybe the arts council will decorate it. There is a lot that could be done.	■ KEVIN: You're right, for safety reasons it is much more improved. There will be another one at Sixth Street. This group can make some recommendations to make it look better. We want to do something that makes it look nice and fit into the community.
■ DARELL SHAVER: If you drive through Peoria they have Street bridges that look nice.	■ KEVIN: Maybe we can do something like that where it is an overlay treatment versus just painting the steel.
■ HERMAN SENOR: How many will there be? Maybe we can come up with an "adopt a truss" campaign.	■ KEVIN: Great idea. While we're doing it, let's do it right. We talked about the Madison Street Bridge doing a commemorative mural for the Race Riot.
■ TERESA HALEY: We want people to see it coming in and going out of town.	■ KEVIN That is a great location to do it. Maybe we can recommend a theme-based option at each location.
■ DARELL SHAVER: Open it up to designers in the City and State.	■ KEVIN: If you leave it up to the agencies, you'll likely just get a steel bridge. With a bit more money, we can make it look decorative and nice. If you get an idea, email it to Mandi or me and at the next meeting we can go through design options and get a consensus on what we should recommend.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS DURING FENCING OPTION CONVERSATION

Question / Comment	Team Response
■ TERESA HALEY: There are standards in the city, it's got to be at least 6 foot. Iron is better than wood because it doesn't deteriorate. ■ TERESA HALEY: An iron fence forces people to keep their property clean.	■ KEVIN: Do you like the look of that or other fencing options? These are the kind of decisions where we need feedback.
■ DARELL SHAVER: If it was solid it would be hard to see if people were on the property.	

<p>■ HERMAN SENOR: Can you give us a tentative schedule of events for the timeline and underpasses and land acquisition from now through 2020 so we can get that out to our constituents? The construction of underpasses will have an effect on students getting to the schools.</p>	<p>■ MANDI VOEGELE: We do have all the schools on the mailing list principals, superintendents, etc. so they get the information, but that is good idea.</p> <p>■ KEVIN: Regarding a long-term project schedule, funding is driving the bus. If we don't come up with the funding in the next couple months for Usable Segment II, it will likely change how we move forward.</p>
<p>■ PAT GRADY: I get all the information about grants for the state, and I would like to put you on the list.</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: Thank you, I appreciate that.</p>
<p>■ LEROY JORDAN: It is my understanding that the Grow Our Own is also funded by the City and County. It is great that Hanson is doing this with great success, but what is the City contributing?</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: It is a \$60,000 program. The City, county and Hanson each put in \$20,000 and share that responsibility equally.</p>
<p>■ LEROY: How do you get the referrals of the young people?</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: We get student referrals from the schools, the NAACP, the boys and girls club, and other organizations.</p>
<p>■ LEROY: What are the alderman doing?</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: The schools are great in providing us the information on higher achieving students.</p>
<p>■ LEROY: I want to compliment Hanson for stepping up to the plate.</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: I know the Chamber is also interested in stepping this program up and it forward so the program has a wider range of interests and options. The goal is to get the kids an education so they can come back and have careers and raise their families here in Springfield.</p>
<p>■ TERESA: The Grow Our Own is taken from the "Grow Your Own" program that was already here.</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: Well we attribute that to former alderman, Gail Simpson for bringing that name up. There is a lot of money out there for kids going to college and we want to help them access that.</p>
<p>■ TERESA: Hanson also had their interns as student mentors, so hopefully that will be a lifetime relationship. Kids need to meet people that they can relate too.</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: You're right, it is a great connection and those are success stories.</p>
<p>■ LEROY: The thing I like about it, is it's a statement that there will be jobs. It doesn't do you any good to go to college and then come out and take a job at McDonalds.</p>	<p>■ KEVIN: To answer your question about the city's involvement too, they have been doing some minority hiring for summer jobs as well.</p>