



Community Working Group Meeting #15 - Summary

Meetings Schedule

CWG meetings are held at the Upper Merion Township Building and begin at 7:00 PM. Below is the schedule of the next meeting. Future meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of every other month unless otherwise noted.

Wednesday, April 17, 2019 – Valley Forge Room

Meeting #15 Summary

Location: Upper Merion Township Building, Freedom Hall

Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2019

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Attendees:

KOP Rail project team members

Ryan Judge, SEPTA

Erika Morgan, McCormick Taylor

Greg May, HNTB

Eric Nelson, HNTB

CWG members

Vivian Peikin

Susan Groff

Pamela Hale

Marty Trumpler

Jaquelin Camp

Mark Vondra

The CWG held its fifteenth meeting on Wednesday, March 20, 2019. The goal of the meeting was for CWG members to meet HNTB and for HNTB to describe what preliminary 15% design means for the KOP Rail Project during a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation stated that the 20-year financial plan is underway, HNTB was selected for 15% design, and FEIS/ROD will be completed in early 2020. The 15% design began in February 2019 and will be completed in August 2019. It supports the environmental analysis needed to complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and receive a record of decision from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Much of the discussion was around the cost and funding of the project. These questions included:

How is the 15% design funded?

KOP Rail project's preliminary 15% design is funded by the remaining Federal earmark that was originally established for the Schuylkill Valley Metro project. Since this project is in the same corridor as the earlier



Schuylkill Valley Metro, it was eligible for this funding. If this funding was not used for this project area, it would have been returned to the federal government.

Where is future funding coming from? Will there be an Upper Merion Township tax?

SEPTA is currently working on a 20-year financial plan that is examining potential funding sources. A tax on Upper Merion Township is not being considered as an option. KOP Rail project will also apply for the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts grant. It is a several yearlong process. Applicants typically receive less than 50% or less of their project's total cost.

Who regulates/who is the watchdog of the costs? Do projects like this stop because they are too expensive?

Projects do stop or are modified if they are too expensive. There are several checkpoints, including the design process, SEPTA, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Through the engineering process, the project cost will be refined. Market factors will be taken into account too. SEPTA has an internal decision-making process that determines if projects are prohibitively expensive. FTA's New Starts grant rates projects cost-effectiveness as well. They look at the estimate and approach and compare it to similar projects. If they see cost overrun, they will address it with the applicant.

How do you control construction costs?

There are ways of controlling construction cost through project delivery methods, like design-build.

Other comments included ensuring that the station areas have good bike/pedestrian connections because the station areas could become civic spaces that are missing in King of Prussia. Additionally, the aesthetics of the KOP Rail are important so that it fits into the community and becomes a lovely asset. A non-car connection, possible via shuttle, to King of Prussia Town Center is important as well.