

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee

June 21, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jerry Blakey (Chair), Joshua Bunker, Larry Englund, Ken Erickson, Readus Fletcher, Steve Grans, Bree Halverson, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hanson, Doug Hennes, Margot Imdieke Cross, Richard Kleinbaum, Xiongpaoo Lee, Vanessa Levingston, Jeffrey Peltola, Ken Rodgers, Rozanne Severance, Art Sidner, JoAnn Tesar, Jessica Treat, Dave VanHattum, Chip Welling, John Wicks, ThaoMee Xiong.

Members Absent: Fredrick Blocton, Veronica Burt, Kristen Denzer, Denise Fosse, Metric Giles, Brant Ingalsbe, Karen Inman, David Johnson, Daniel Kirk, Laura Nevitt, Ferdinand Peters, Nick Rosenberry, James Ruiz, Hussein Samatar, Seng Tchaa, Keith Thompson, Anne White, Chris Worthington.

Others Present: Laura Baenen, Robin Caufman, Nkongo Cigolo, Donna Drummond, Mark Fuhrmann, Shoua Lee, John Levin, Carol Swenson, Va-Megn Thoj, Eve Vang, Linda Youngwirth.

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

CAC Chair Jerry Blakey called the June 21, 2007 meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee to order at 5:05 pm in the Goodwill Easter Seals offices at 553 Fairview Avenue North, St. Paul.

Chair Blakey introduced Ken Erickson as a new CAC member from the Capitol Heights neighborhood. Robin Caufman also mentioned the Julie Wild and Max Page submitted resignations. Ms. Wild resigned because she is no longer with the Stadium Village Business Associate and Mr. Page resigned because he graduated from the University of Minnesota.

2. REPORTS

Mark Fuhrmann gave the report of the June 13, 2007 Central Corridor Management Committee (CCMC) meeting. At the June CCMC meeting he gave a legislative update and the status of the project consultants. The Council selected HDR as the Final Environmental Impact Statement consultant and DMJM Harris as the Engineering Services consultant. The Council is in the process of finalizing the contracts. The CCMC also heard a presentation by Mr. Fuhrmann, called "What is PE?" that outlined the Federal Transit Administrations process and highlighted a portion of the issues that will be studied in PE.

Joshua Bunker asked if the absence of a state bonding bill impacts the project. This does not affect the ability to start preliminary engineering.

Readus Fletcher asked about DBE participation in the DMJM Harris contract. The contract meets the 17% project goal.

Robin Caufman gave the report of the Business Advisory Council (BAC). At their June 18, 2007 meeting, the BAC members heard from three businesses or representatives impacted by the Lake Street reconstruction project, including Joyce Wisdom, Director of Lake Street Council, Tigi Dekker owner of Universal Hair Salon on Lake Street, Manny Gonzalez owner of Manny's Torte.

Richard Kleinbaum asked if the project budget included money for business hardship. The project does not include money for hardship but will maintain access to businesses and residences.

Ken Rodgers asked what business and construction mitigation includes. The Central Corridor Partnership is taking the lead on business mitigation which will look at strategies to assist businesses such as working with local business colleges and universities to set up business plans. The Met Council will take the lead on construction mitigation which will look at ways to maintain access, notify businesses and residents of construction activities etc...

Jessica Treat made the observation that the Lake Street area differs from the Central Corridor because it has one business organization that represents the whole 4 mile stretch of reconstruction. Joshua also asked what the scope of business and construction mitigation plans. For example, are we considering in home businesses and how far from University Avenue will we be looking at. Ms. Cauffman said that she would forward these comments to Karri Plowman for the BAC to discuss.

Next Ms. Cauffman introduced 3 new staff persons working on communications and public input. Nkongo Cigolo and Shoua Lee will both be starting on June 25, 2007 as Community Outreach Coordinators. Ms. Cauffman also introduced Eve Vang, who is interning for the project through August. Not present, but also mentioned was Rita Rodriguez and Jessica Hill. They will also be starting on June 25, 2007 as Community Outreach Coordinators.

3. BUS TRANSIT PLANNING

John Levin reviewed plans for the regional transit system. He also talked about Hiawatha LRT and how the bus transit system was restructured to connect with the LRT system. The 34 bus routes that connect with Hiawatha LRT bring 29% of all LRT riders to the 17 stations.

Next Mr. Levin reviewed some of the proposed changes to the bus transit system to build on connections to the Central Corridor LRT system. He noted that bus transit planning in this corridor has been going on as long as LRT planning has for the project in order to create a good network of transit service and coordinated schedules. In fact, the proposed bus routes the he reviewed are identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and will be studied further in Preliminary Engineering (PE).

Mr. Levin highlighted several proposed changes that will be studied in PE including:

- Route 50 is replaced by LRT service,
- Route 16 remains, although frequency will be changed,
- Route 94 remains during peak periods,
- Route 67 shifts from Prior to Fairview to connect with the LRT station and extends south of University,
- Route 60 loop is added at 30 minute intervals in both directions to promote local connections to activity centers,
- Route 83 is added on Lexington with direct connection to Rosedale Mall
- Route 65 will continue
- Downtown St. Paul routes will not see significant changes.

During the presentation, Mr. Levin responded to several questions about specific routes and general transit planning.

Doug Hennes asked what would happen if we eliminate Route 16 altogether. Transit staff has not studied eliminating Route 16 because the Central Corridor LRT and Route 16 would work hand in hand. Ms. Treat also pointed out that Route 16 provides the block by block coverage for people with disabilities, children etc.

Chip Welling noted that the Snelling/University Study suggested that reconstruction of that intersection could increase bus travel time through the intersection. Mr. Levin noted that we will work with Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul to minimize the delay.

Jessica Treat and Richard Hanson had questions about running buses on Lexington Parkway and recalled that at one time smaller shuttles were used to provide transit service. The smaller shuttles were used due to height restrictions for a bridge near Como Park, not because Lexington is a parkway.

Ms. Treat also asked if the frequency of routes will change. The next step is to continuing reviewing these proposed routes changes, including frequency, in PE. The proposed frequency is shown in the DEIS,

which staff will make available to CAC members.

Joshua Bunker and Dave VanHattum commented on budget constraints and that service would be dependent on funding.

Larry Englund asked if there will be different bus shelters at connecting LRT station areas. Mr. Levin noted that the Met Council has policies on the placement of shelters based on ridership numbers.

Chair Blakey asked if the fares would change for LRT. Rail fares will be the same as the 2014 bus fares.

Brian Hanninen asked what impact moving the West Bank Station closer to 19th or Cedar Avenue would have on ridership. The transit ridership model is not sensitive enough to detect a 1-block shift. Only shifts close to ½ mile affect the ridership models.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

Mark Fuhrmann started his presentation on project budget with a review of sources and uses of funds spent to date on the project. Ramsey County, as the project lead until June 2006, indicates that they have spent \$5 million dollars on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Alternatives Analysis and preparation of the New Starts Application. Next Mr. Fuhrmann reviewed the anticipated sources and uses of funds for Preliminary Engineering. Sources of funds include federal grants, Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority, Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, and state bonding. Uses of funds include project staff, office space and engineering consultants.

Vanessa Levingston asked if the DBE goal of 17% was overall. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that Wanda Kirkpatrick, Director of Diversity for the Met Council, reviews the scope of work for all contracts and sets a contract specific reasonable goal based on capacity.

Mr. Bunker asked if the project costs were based on calendar or fiscal years. The PE budget reflects 2007-2008 anticipated costs.

Readus Fletcher asked if the University of Minnesota was a source of funds. The UofM is not contributing funds to the project.

Larry Englund said that he was still unclear after the tour about the location of the stops within the tunnel. Mr. Fuhrmann said that the stations are in the mouth or trench going into the tunnel.

Rozanne Severance followed up with a question about how the decision about the tunnel and station locations will be made. These decisions will be made after detailed analysis in preliminary engineering.

Next, Mr. Fuhrmann reviewed general breakdown of sources and uses of funds for the entire project shown on slides 21 and 22 of the presentation.

ThaoMee Xiong asked Mr. Fuhrmann to define Yard and Shop, Vehicles and Contingency. Yard and Shop refers to a place to store and maintain the trains. Vehicle refers to LRT trains. Contingency sets aside funds to address unknown costs. FTA indicates that at this point in the project, we should have a contingency fund of 30% of project costs; current estimate is at 14% so we may need to increase allocation.

Richard Kleinbaum asked if engineering was being done for a 2 or 3-car system. We are working with transit service planning staff, including Mr. Levin who presented earlier. We may not need 3-car trains right away but may need to build 3-car system that the region can grow into.

Next Mr. Fuhrmann reviewed the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI) and the factors that can influence it such as cost, travel time and ridership. He also went through two hypothetical scenarios to see how changes in cost or scope can change the CEI. Hypothetical scenario one included a project cost increase, such as

reconstruction of a bridge, that raised the CEI by \$0.27.

Chip Welling asked if other unexpected project costs could also raise the CEI. Yes, but hopefully covered by contingency.

Hypothetical scenario two added a station that raised project cost, increased travel time by 44 seconds and decreased ridership by 510 people. The net effect of adding the station was increase in the CEI by \$0.33.

Jessica Treat asked if the model reflects additional riders due to new or potential for development. The ridership model is based on population and employment projections based on existing land use plans. Ms. Treat asked if the model includes increase in travel time on highways due to increasing congestion on I-94 that may increase transit ridership. The model is based on Traffic Analysis Zones and transportation modeling that forecasts increased traffic on I-94.

Mr. Welling asked how much verification and validation was done? Mr. Fuhrmann noted that Met Council and project partner staff spent two years with FTA staff confirming and validating the CEI and model.

Ken Erickson asked if we'd consider skipping some stations due low demand times, as is done in European cities. This has not been considered and would be a policy question that would need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages. A significant issue is how to communicate to riders which trains stop when and where.

John Wicks asked if the model includes riders from new bus transit connections and what happens if there is funding to implement those service improvements? The model contains proposed routes shown in the DEIS. We will need to continue studying these routes and modifying the model as assumptions change.

Larry Englund asked if the model looks at population changes. Yes, it includes population and employment forecasts.

CAC member asked if the CEI would change if a station is moved a block. The model is not sensitive enough to detect a 300' change. It takes 3 or more blocks to affect the CEI.

Ken Rodgers asked what changes would have a positive affect on the CEI, meaning the CEI would go down. Anything that would decrease cost or increase travel time benefit, such as reducing travel time or increasing riders.

ThaoMee Xiong made the comment that it seemed that 5 stations in downtown St. Paul would unnecessarily increase travel time. If a station were moved from downtown to University Avenue somewhere would it keep travel time and costs constant? Moving a station would keep the cost of the station constant, however there may be other changes that could increase or decrease costs such as utilities, road improvements etc... Ms. Severance commented that the number of downtown stations reflect the peak hour and are based on the need or capacity. Mt. Englund noted that the Downtown St. Paul Task Force has proposed reducing the number of downtown stations by one.

Jeff Peltola asked what forecast year was used in the model. 2030.

Doug Hennes asked how much the CEI would decrease without the tunnel. We will look at this and other project components in PE to rerun the model based on cost changes, useful life factors, ridership impacts and travel time savings.

Mr. Treat asked how station number affects capacity. In PE will we look at 2 versus 3-car trains and resulting capacity, especially at the UofM, which is our peak load point?

Bree Halverson asked if the model reflects the number of hospitals in downtown St. Paul. The model is not able to account for hospital beds, given patients probably arrive by other means. However, the model does reflect employment, which is significant for hospitals.

5. NEXT MEETING

Before adjourning the meeting, Chair Blakey asked for feedback about how the meetings are going. Jeff Peltola said that the info so far and the ability to have input on the topics were good. He asked that we map out upcoming topics to give CAC members an idea of what we'll be discussing at future meetings. One topic he would especially like to know more about is the DEIS and previous decision making process.

Rozanne Severance suggested a tour of Hiawatha LRT.

Chip Welling suggested that the CAC members be given a revised outreach plan, especially timeline of key issues.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 19, 2007 5-7:00 pm, Goodwill Easter Seals.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Jerry Blakey adjourned the meeting at 7:05 pm.

Prepared by Robin Caufman, Manager of Public Involvement

Attachment 1: Future Meeting Topics

Responses to the following question: Identify the topics you are most interested in learning more about and presentation ideas for future CAC meetings.

- Flexibility in locating/adding stations (13)
- Reason for U tunnel (10)
- Job Opportunities (8)
- Issues of cost and under-lying assumptions (6) – Presented overview of project budget at 6/21/07 CAC meeting
- Connecting Bus Service (6) – Presented at 6/21/07 CAC meeting.
- Construction mitigation (6)
- Future expansion (cut short now or extend system in future) (5)
- Access to businesses and community services during construction (4)
- Environmental Justice Analysis (4)
- Parking, including Hide and Ride (4)
- St. Paul's Development Plan (4) - Presented at 5/17/07 CAC meeting
- E.I.S. Presentation (3)
- Station information including design (3)
- Timelines with deadlines for decisions (3)
- Community Benefits Agreement (2)
- Gentrification (2)
- Historic sites along the line/route (2) - Pointed out historic buildings on 4/19/07 CAC tour.
- Residential development and safety (2)
- Signal pre-emption or prioritization for LRT (2)
- Summary Report on RFP process (procedure) (2)
- Access to line (1)
- Bike Lane (1)
- Techniques to reach all constituencies (1)
- Union Depot (1)
- Very detailed information must be provided (1)
- Visual simulations of corridor design (1) – Include at beginning of all CAC meetings.
- Working groups and clear outputs/products (1)
- Balance budget outcome with outcome of meeting people
- Best way to Reach ELL
- Communication Plan – Presented to the CAC on 3/15/07
- Discussion around overlapping service “sheds” for downtown stations vs. lack on parts of University (How was station placement determined).
- Equitable access
- Financing (other options)
- Streetscaping