

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee July 19, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Veronica Burt, Kristen Denzer, Larry Englund, Ken Erickson, Readus Fletcher, Denise Fosse, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hanson, Margot Imdieke Cross, Brant Ingalsbe, Karen Inman, Jeffrey Peltola, Rozanne Severance, Art Sidner, JoAnn Tesar, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Dave VanHattum, Chip Welling, Anne White, John Wicks, Chris Worthington.

Members Absent: Jerry Blakey (Chair), Joshua Bunker, Fredrick Blocton, , Metric Giles, Steve Grans, Bree Halverson, Doug Hennes, David Johnson, Daniel Kirk, Richard Kleinbaum, Xiongpaoo Lee, Vanessa Levingston, Laura Nevitt, Ferdinand Peters, Ken Rodgers, Nick Rosenberry, James Ruiz, Hussein Samatar, Seng Tcha, ThaoMee Xiong.

Others Present: Robin Caufman, Nkongo Cigolo, Mark Fuhrmann, Jessica Hill, Shoua Lee, Kathryn O'Brien, Rita Rodriguez, Va-Megn Thoj, Eve Vang, Linda Youngwirth.

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Manager of Public Involvement Robin Caufman called the July 19, 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.

Robin Caufman introduced Community Outreach Coordinators; Outreach Coordinators Jessica Hill, Rita Rodriguez, Shoua Lee and Nkongo Cigolo spoke about their backgrounds and their area of focus on the corridor. Ms. Caufman advised that the Community Outreach Coordinators will make themselves available at the end of the meeting to speak to CAC members. Ms. Caufman noted that she would be covering the two downtowns until additional Community Outreach Coordinators are hired.

2. REPORTS

Mark Fuhrmann gave the report of the July 11, 2007 Central Corridor Management Committee (CCMC) meeting. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that the focus of the agenda was to talk about principles that the Metropolitan Council will need to apply as it makes key scope decisions while looking at top one, tier II and tier III priorities and how this relates to input and influence items. At the July CCMC meeting new criteria that would affect the CEI were identified: environmental justice and land use impacts. These new criteria are part of the overall FTA application process. It was noted that senior officials and elected officials needed to get out to the field and look at comparable LRT that had been built throughout the country and also look at LRTs that go through a university campus in order to learn what other cities have accomplished. Four cities have been identified for this study.

Richard Hanson asked which cities had been identified for the study. Mark responded that the preliminary list (which has not yet been finalized) included Salt Lake City, Denver, San Diego, and Dallas.

Larry Englund asked to list items that would affect the CEI. Items that could affect the CEI include projected ridership, costs (capital and operating), and travel time.

Readus Fletcher asked whether Seattle was one of the cities to be studied and if not why. Seattle was mentioned during the selection process but Mr. Fuhrmann recommended against because their site is not yet operational (their tunnel is being rehabilitated to accommodate light rail). This study will be most useful by looking at an operational system rather than becoming a construction site visit. The study will help CCMC members to understand the challenges that will help lead the decision making process.

Anne White asked to identify which major scope decisions will be looked at during the study. Project office staff are in the process of preparing a matrix that identifies all the decisions.

Mr. Fuhrmann gave an update on the contracts.

1. The Washington Avenue Bridge structural analysis report is underway.
2. Peer Consulting is conducting Phase I environmental study review and has identified potential hot spots on corridor (88 spots).
3. The Metropolitan Council has awarded the Environmental Services Contract to HDR Inc. and a notice to proceed has been issued to HDR Inc.
4. The Engineering Services Contract has not been awarded yet; waiting for FTA approval to execute the contract.

Mark Fuhrmann introduced Oscar Gonzalez from HDR project office and Kathryn O'Brien, who is the staff person at the Central Project Office overseeing the environmental review work.

Jessica Treat asked to differentiate between Phase I environmental study and the work that the environmental services consultants will be performing. Mr. Fuhrmann asked that the answer to the question be answered as part of Kathryn O'Brien's presentation that was next on the agenda.

Larry Englund asked why the FTA was holding the Engineering Services Award. Mark responded to say that the FTA has asked for additional information.

Chip Welling asked to know the value of Environmental Services Award and the Engineering Services Award. Response indicated that the Environmental Services Award was approximately \$3.2 million and \$35.5 million for the Engineering Services.

Robin Caufman gave an update on the BAC meeting of July 16, 2007. BAC received the same land use presentations as the May 2007 CAC meeting.

Ms. Caufman thanked CAC members for involvement in setting up public meetings.

- Model Cities Community Fair: talked to about 40 people and announced to about 200 people over the loud speaker
- DCC meeting at end of June: about 40 people attended
- Camphor United Methodist Church: about 15 people attended
- Center for Hmong Arts and Talent: about 20 people attended
- St. Anthony Park Recreation Center: about 40 people attended

Ms. Caufman announced that Community Outreach Coordinators will be compiling a summary of comments and questions to submit to the CAC, BAC, and CCMC.

Richard Hanson raised a concern and stated that the Black male is being forgotten in workforce programs and people should ask what America is doing for the Black male.

3. Overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

Kathryn O'Brien gave an overview of the DEIS and the FEIS. NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act, which President Nixon signed on January 1, 1970. NEPA encourages productive and enjoyable Harmony between people and the environment. It also encourages intergovernmental cooperation. The Environmental Impact Statement is the most stringent level of review that resulted from NEPA. This is an extensive document that records all processes, identifies items that must be part of the process, identifies the role of the public, and records results of technical analysis. The EIS strives to make decisions transparent and understandable to the public. The EIS has three major steps:

1. Scoping: CCLRT publication in Federal Register on June 5, 2001
2. DEIS: published in June 2006.
3. FEIS: result of this will be the issuance of a Record of Decision by the FTA and an approval to move into the final engineering process.

CCLRT scoping looked at alignment alternatives, including I-94 and Pierce Butler, and modal alternatives such as bus rapid transit (BRT) and rail alternatives. The CCLRT DEIS looked at physical and natural environmental factors, air quality, vibrations, social factors, land use, potential for displacement, neighborhood and community disruption, environmental justice, economic factors, and transportation factors for three alternatives, BRT, LRT, and a Baseline (No Action) Alternative. The Central Corridor FEIS has just begun and will examine the Locally Preferred Alternative (defined as LRT at the culmination of the DEIS process), including a disclosure of all anticipated impacts and commitments to mitigation.

Jessica Treat asked whether environmental justice looked at displacement before or after construction due to price increase. Displacement due to construction is part of the environmental review process; however, it is typically defined as displacement *directly* due to project implementation (i.e., a building or structure acquired as part of purchasing right-of-way and demolished or used for another purpose) and not as displacement related to other economic or market factors.

Dave VanHattum asked to define access under transportation factors. This category includes access to businesses during construction, pedestrian and bicycle access, which also fall under community cohesion

Karen Inman asked whether the FEIS included the at grade or tunnel decision. This will be examined during this process.

Anne White asked whether the FEIS could raise issues that were not raised in the DEIS. There is flexibility in the environmental review process to address issues not known during the DEIS process.

Veronica Burt asked if the FEIS will provide more detailed analysis of environmental justice issues. The FEIS will look at issues that have been identified; this process will also identify specific impacts and mitigation plans.

Brant Ingalsbe asked whether Kathryn O'Brien was located in Minneapolis. Ms. O'Brien works for the Metropolitan Council but Oscar is the consultant from HDR, who will also be moving into the new Saint Paul project office in September 2007.

Readus Fletcher asked whether social impacts and environmental justice were defined in the DEIS. Yes, environmental justice issues are defined under [Executive Order 12898](#). E.O. 12898, titled Federal Actions To Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations was issued by President Bill Clinton on February 11, 1994.

Karen Inman asked when the FEIS would be completed and also asked when the at-grade or tunnel decision will be made. It is anticipated that the FEIS will be completed by the end of 2008. Determining the alignment through the East Bank is dependent on the award of the Engineering Services Contract.

Anne White asked whether FEIS work will be completed before the Metropolitan Council makes final decisions. The FEIS will greatly affect decisions.

Denise Fosse wanted to know whether it was within the environmental justice section of the FEIS process that the community expresses their interest and how do those questions get answered. Low income and minority population are taken into consideration. Issues can be raised at various levels in the process from informal discussions to formal meetings such as the CAC.

Dave VanHattum wanted to know how the CEI would be affected if a station was added as a result of environmental justice. The CEI is an accounting of the costs of the project (capital, operating, etc.) relative to the benefits it confers (increased ridership, etc.). Anything that could add to the costs while providing
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relatively marginal benefits (such as an additional station) would have a likely adverse effect on the CEI. It was noted that the effect of adding stations on the CEI will be studied in Preliminary Engineering.

Jessica Treat mentioned that the Central Corridor goes through an industrial area and asked whether pollution and chemical control have been examined. Investigations of this issue are underway. Ms. O'Brien responded to Ms. Treat's initial questions about the difference between a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment and the FEIS process. A Phase I ESA reviews historical documentation and active MPCA databases to identify contaminated sites. A Phase II ESA is conducted on those sites that are noted from the Phase I process. The end result of this work is documented in the FEIS, which will also identify any mitigation and/or site remediation work that must be done as a result of the Phase I and II ESA processes.

Larry Englund expressed concern for people that would be displaced if property values were raised due to development and the LRT project. Oscar indicated that several variables will need to be looked at in order to determine the impact to land values, if any, and respond to that concern during the FEIS process.

Jeff Peltola commented on the environmental justice process, indicating that we should also keep in mind some of the positive environmental benefits such as decreased dependence on the auto and improved air quality.

Chip Welling asked if highway projects had a procedure dealing with land value and suggested we check with MnDOT to see how they address changes in property values due to highway construction.

Jessica Treat asked when the process of station design would begin. Later this year a station design task force will be created, depending on the execution of the engineering services contract.

Veronica Burt asked what the overall FEIS schedule was and how that related to PE. This is unknown until the Engineering Consultants get on board. However, it is expected that both PE and FEIS will be completed by end of 2008.

Denise Fosse made a comment and stated that a procedure was needed for the CAC to start discussing issues such as tunnel or at grade. The process should include identifying issues, explaining current analysis, understanding the timeline for decisions and formulating advice to the CCMC. Several other CAC members and Project Director Fuhrmann expressed their eagerness in delving into the issues.

Jeffrey Peltola suggested that Robin Caufman and Chair Jerry Blakey meet outside of the CAC meeting to talk about framing future discussions. This was supported by Larry Englund, Denise Fosse, Chris Worthington, and Richard Hanson.

4. NEXT MEETING

Robin Caufman stated that Chair Jerry Blakey and she will coordinate the creation of a group that will assist address issues. The next CAC meeting is scheduled for August 16, 2007.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Robin Caufman adjourned the meeting at 6:50 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) - Presented at 7/19/07 CAC meeting.
- 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