

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee
October 15, 2009
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kirstin Sersland Beach, Ken Erickson, Ann Finseth, Missy Gettel, Jackie Lunde, Ken Rodgers, Jim Thalhuber, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Chip Welling, Anne White,

Others Present: Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Dana Happel, Christina Morrison, Rita Rodriguez, Joe Scala, Dan Soler, Shawn Walding, Linda Jungwirth, Kevin Ryan, three UofM urban planning students.

1) MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

CAC Chair Kirstin Beach called the meeting to order at 5:05 and asked if anyone had changes to the September meeting minutes. There were no changes.

2) REPORTS

Chairs Report

Kirstin Beach announced that the public art designs are moving through the approval process. The first step was approval at the Transportation Committee on Monday Oct. 12, 2009. Approval is on the Metropolitan Council's consent list on Oct. 28.

CAC Reports

Keith Thompson reported from Desnoyer Park's transportation meeting. Twenty-five residents attended. Among other speakers, Christina Morrison talked about city bike and pedestrian plans. Dan Soler and Rita Rodriguez also presented on traffic changes designed for the UofM area as well as the Franklin and University Avenue intersection. The neighborhood was concerned about impacts and think that the planned solutions are workable. Mr. Thompson thanked Rita and Dan for attending.

Anne White reported on the issues that they are studying. She expressed concern about the public art process; they are reviewing the process and will be drafting a letter to the Met Council re their concerns about the public process. They recognize that the process is too far along to make any changes but hope that for the three missing stations there will be more opportunity for public involvement in the decision-making process, from choosing the artists all the way through the process. The DCC is supporting the Union Park District Council in looking at final locations for TPSS#7 and recommending relocation of #6 to accommodate potential development. The DCC is also supporting efforts to build out all three of the missing stations, including testifying at the legislature in support of a bonding bill to pay for the second and third stations. They are also working with the City on developing a process to decide which station is built. They are reviewing the St. Paul Parking report and looking at ways to bring businesses and residents together to look at issues and solutions that affect both. They are concerned about maintaining ongoing public participation whether or not the CAC continues. The DCC has invite Robin Caufman to attend their November Governing Council meeting to discuss the public involvement and communication plans for construction. They have a meeting scheduled with CCPO staff to look at plans to reconstruct the Washington Avenue Bridge and they continue to review the impacts of diverted traffic on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Ken Rodgers asked for clarification on the City of St. Paul's commitment to build a station and whether it is proposed for downtown St. Paul or one of the University Avenue infill stations. The downtown stations are already in the budget; the City is developing a process to select full build out of one of the infill stations on University Avenue.

Jessica Treat reported that the City of St. Paul has a draft of the Bike Walk St. Paul report out for public review and comment. Comments will be accepted until mid-November. She encouraged CAC members to review the plan.

Jackie Lunde reported that the St. Anthony Park Community Council recommends that the CAC or some other community input process is retained.

COC Reports

Shawn Walding reviewed the process for signing up for the newsletter and reported that we continue to grow our distribution list. Almost 100 people have signed up in October. Total distribution list is over 1600 people.

Ken Rodgers asked if the text version includes a description of pictures. Outreach staff will confirm that descriptions of the photos are in the text only messages.

Jackie Lunde asked what happens if you want more information; can I enter my email address and sign up for more information without getting duplicates. Shawn advised Ms. Lunde to go onto the webpage using her email address and select the items she wants to receive.

Anne White asked if the neighborhood construction updates will include information about other construction projects. Kevin Ryan noted that we are working with other agencies to coordinate construction activities.

Chair Beach noted that it is important that each of the CAC members take this information back to your organizations and encourage people to sign up.

2) CONSTRUCTION STAGING

Robin Cauffman introduced Kevin Ryan, the Central Corridor Project Office construction manager. Dan Soler reviewed several pictures of examples of what people can expect during different phases of construction. The first phase is utility relocation.

Chair Beach asked if we are working with utility companies to make improvements when the road is open. We are coordinating with utilities that are interested in making necessary improvements.

The next step is demolition including removing pavement, hauling away debris and excavating.

Ken Rodgers asked if the concrete and aggregate can be reused. It is common that aggregate is crushed and reused.

During construction, pedestrian access can be maintained and pedestrians can be protected using concrete barriers and metal railing.

Ken Erickson asked if it is the intent to keep the sidewalks open on both sides. It will be different in different spots, depending on the specific conditions.

Ken Rodgers commented and Dan Soler agreed that it is necessary to keep an accessible access point. Mr. Soler referred to the next slide that demonstrated an attempt to provide access but did not meet ADA requirements because the paths are blocked by barrels and a 4" bump up prohibits wheel chair access. Mr. Soler noted that we will be on the look out for these situations and make sure that they are corrected.

Signage will be provided and maintained, acknowledging that it is difficult to keep them updated.

Ann Finseth asked if there is a way to minimize the number of signs that become obstructions in the sidewalk. Mr. Soler acknowledged the challenge to provide sufficient and visible signage but not turning the sidewalk into an obstacle course. Kevin Ryan noted we have had a few complaints recently.

Jessica Treat stated it is a trade off and suggested closing a lane, if possible, to put the signs in the drive lane and maintain unobstructed pedestrian and bike access.

Jim Thalhuber asked if the bus stop relocation signs are available in Braille. Ken Rodgers noted that the signs aren't but there is a number people can call to get updates. Robin Cauffman noted that she is identifying agencies and organizations that can help us get information out to impacted community members and employees.

Mr. Soler described the process for installing the duct banks and utilities, such as cables to provide the traction power to the light rail vehicles.

Ken Rodgers asked if we are designing a redundancy in the utilities. There is a backup.

Mr. Soler described the process for laying the track and constructing the track bed, including a rubber boot to protect the track from stray current.

Anne White asked what stray current is and if it is a problem around the traction power substations. The track system and TPSS sites are engineered and to ground the system.

Ken Rodgers noted that in third rail system there have been some cases where small surges of electrical current will zap people crossing the tracks. This is especially an issue with guide dogs. This should not be a problem with Central Corridor because it is an overhead catenary light rail system and not a third rail system.

The next steps include installing the systems such as ticket vending machines, traction power substations, etc... And reconstructing the sidewalks and repaving the roadways.

Ken Erickson asked if the TPSS facilities are the same along the system. They may be different than Hiawatha because of improvements that have been made but they will be standard along Central Corridor.

Jackie Lunde asked if we are planning on doing any work at night. If we can reduce timeframe and minimize impacts, we will look at night construction. For example, work requiring an intersection may avoid impacts by completing the work at night. Another option may include working two shifts.

Anne White asked what the process would be for gathering input from the businesses. We will look to the geographic community construction committees for feedback. Other organizations and agencies have input such as the City, County or Mn/DOT, depending on the ownership of the road.

Keith Thompson noted that he recently talked to the owner of River Terrace Apartments who also owns residential rental properties along the 4th Street construction area. The owner had very generous praise for the outreach coordinators, especially Dana Happel, efforts to inform and engage the property owners.

Kevin Ryan noted that we've been coordinating and working closely with other businesses and properties. He gave the example of delaying construction by one week to accommodate tpt's National Parks series at the end of September.

Ken Erickson asked if we have Pierce Butler on our radar screen. Yes.

Ann Finseth asked if the Hamline bridge reconstruction would be coordinated with timing of our project. Dan Soler will research this.

The final step in the construction process is testing the trains and the systems including communications, electrical and switches.

As we transitioned to a conversation about construction staging, Robin Caufman noted that our intent is to post this photo presentation on our website. She asked CAC members to email any feedback or suggestions. CAC members expressed approval of the idea.

Dan Soler highlighted several of the issues that need to be balanced as we develop the construction staging plans including traffic flow, bus service and property access.

Anne White asked if any components of the system could be built off site. Kevin Ryan noted that we'll use precast track pieces for the intersections to minimize the construction time. This saves construction impact time because the track is constructed off site but is cost prohibitive to do the entire length of the corridor.

Ken Rodgers asked if the economy could result in lower bids than our budget estimates. CCPO staff is monitoring construction materials costs fluctuations. The utility contracts came in under estimates.

Ann Finseth asked if temporary lights could be installed at intersections that receive detoured traffic. Temporary lights or signs are often used on detours.

Chip Welling asked about the bidding timeframe. Civil East is the first contract which is going out for bids in February; the other bids will be staggered after that.

Ms. White asked if Washington Avenue Bridge is a separate contract. It is part of Civil West.

Ms. Lunde noted the number of personal vehicles of the construction workers shown in the pictures.

Robin Caufman asked the CAC for feedback on proposed topics for next month. We will plan to continue with the phasing and staging discussion as well as present draft bid specifications dealing with public involvement and community concerns.

3) DBE REPORT

Roderic Southall followed up on questions from last months meeting. Regarding the question about whether the Met Council is interested in increasing its DBE participation. The Met Council

Does the DBE apply to persons with disabilities? The DBE program is based on the federal requirements, which focuses on low income and minority populations. However, DBE certification process requires a business to demonstrate that they are socially disadvantaged. Several businesses owned by someone with a disability have been successful in becoming certified.

Mr. Southall reported on several workforce and DBE activities. On Oct. 14 we held two sessions targeted at the African American community. Over 200 people attended the event at the Hallie Q. Brown center. Ken Rodgers asked for clarification and whether the State can exceed the federal standards. Mr. Southall noted that we have not received data from the State or guidelines from the federal government on including such businesses in the DBE program.

Ann Finseth asked how people can get information about jobs with the contractors. We are working with the unions and apprenticeship programs to get people in the door.

4) PUBLIC INVITATION

Chair Kirstin Beach asked if any CAC members or general public wanted to make a comment. No one expressed interest in making a statement.

5) ADJOURNMENT

Chair Beach noted the next meeting is November 19 and asked if CAC members wanted to keep or cancel the December meeting. The committee consensus was to cancel the December meeting.

Chair Kirstin Beach adjourned the meeting at **7 PM p.m.**