

Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee

April 16, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kay Baker, Tanya Bell, Denise Currie, Julio Fesser, Lori Fritts, Ken Hinz, David Jones, Brenda Kyle, Peter Latuff, Sharon Johnson, Nell McClung, Sondra Reis, Chang Thao, Brian Thoemke, Christine Wiegert, David Youmans, Jim Roth, Jeannine Kessler,

Members Absent: Harry Melander, Kathy Bjerke, Guy Mingo, Tom Olesak, Khue Yang,

Others Present: Robin Caufman, Joan Grzywinski, Mark Fuhrmann, Karri Plowman, Va-Meng Thoj, Christina Danico, Shoua Lee, Eric Weiss,

1. Welcome

Brief welcome by Lori Fritts, Co-Chair BAC

2. Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves and were asked to tell the location of their business or property they owned or operated.

3. Overview of Communications and Public Involvement Plan

Robin Caufman presented an overview of the Communication and Public Involvement Strategic Plan. She indicated that the purpose of the plan is to coordinate project partners on communication and public involvement activities. She also noted that the plan will be updated on a regular basis as the project progresses, issues come up and the needs change. The goals of the plan are to (1) develop and maintain broad public support, (2) create transparency and build mutual trust, (3) encourage meaningful public participation, and (4) ensure that messages are clear, consistent and responsive.

The plan identifies avenues for public involvement, broad categories of audiences and an action plan. She presented categories generated by the CAC of key stakeholders to receive communication. She asked the BAC to further expand on the area labeled *business community*. The information from the small group discussions at the BAC meeting will be used to update and enhance the plan.

Mr. Fuhrmann reviewed the timeline for making some of the significant scope decisions by the end of the year. The technical analysis would start in June, after the Project Management Consultant is hired. While technical analysis continues, we will start holding public meetings and presenting information to the various advisory committees.

Each of the decisions made in Preliminary Engineering will be assigned a level of public involvement. Mr. Fuhrmann reviewed the 3 levels:

- Inform: Project staff will present technical information and analysis to the public. The objective is to assist the public in understanding the issues, alternatives and solutions. An example is the location and impact on utilities.
- Input: Project staff will ask the public for information about different aspects of the project. The objective is to understand public concerns as project is engineered and designed. An example of this level is parking.

- **Influence:** The public will be included in the development of alternatives and selection of the preferred solution. The objective is to reflect the community in Central Corridor LRT project. An example includes station design.

Mr. Fuhrmann reviewed the list of project decisions that will need to be made by the end of the year. The public will be informed of the following decisions; 2 or 3 car stations and trains, traffic signals and intersections, utilities, railroad and other bridges, and connection with Hiawatha. The Council will seek public input into the following decisions; reconstruction and landscaping of University Avenue, addition or reduction in stations, downtown St. Paul alignment (including 4th street segment and Union Depot), U of M alignment, West Bank Station. In 2008, the Met Council will inform the public about right of way and location of substations. The Met Council will seek input on parking and construction mitigation plans. The public will have influence over station design and accessibility decisions.

4. University Overlay

As a for your information item (fyi), the BAC and Joan Grzywinski presented briefly the City of Saint Paul's proposed interim overlay district zoning along the corridor. In addition, co-chair Lori Fritts reminded the committee that this was not the venue to discuss this issue, but was brought to the committee's attention as it was relevant to businesses along the corridor. Issues that may affect the University businesses should be know about as they may or may not affect business mitigation issues in the future. She encouraged everyone to find out more information and attend any event in the future where this issue might be discussed so as to become a more informed and better prepared committee member. Joan, who sits on the City of Saint Paul's University Task Force briefly explained the City's procedure; comments and questions could be asked of City of Saint Paul staff and written statements, could be submitted to the Task Force by May 3rd. She also told the committee that public hearings would be available in the future. It was asked that contact information for Donna Drummond, PED staff member with the City of Saint Paul be shared via email with the group, for further clarification or information.

5. Business Mitigation Plans

The BAC divided into small groups and was asked a series of questions that lead to a larger discussion on Business Mitigation.

1. Define Business Mitigation and what areas your group believes this covers?

The groups as a whole identified communication as a major component of Business Mitigation along with access to business sites and proactive technical assistance offered to businesses. Several groups made suggestions on ways to creatively communicate with groups including notices placed in bank statements, websites with proper translations, and adequate signage.

2. Identify groups or individuals that will be served or impacted by the Central Corridor LRT project. Feel free to include associations, tenant groups, and other stake holders that you believe should be communicated with about the project.

Some of the groups identified included: Students, customers, clients, Tenant Meetings, Land owners, Facilities Managers, Condo Associations, Property Managers,

3. Discuss what communications techniques are most effective for the business community and their customers. How would you like to see the BAC and/or the Met. Council contributing to this process?

Web Access, email lists, post cards, newsletters, Banners, flyers and pamphlets, community meetings, neighborhood papers, smaller specific business association newsletters, ethnic press, and district council meetings.

One specific strategy that was discussed was a train the trainer method, in which, individuals serve as ambassadors for the LRT project. They would be kept up to date on current information and encouraged to speak with other businesses and bring issues forward as needed. It was decided that this was the intent of the BAC and that others could be added as needed in the future. The Project Specialists would also server a seemlier role.

4. Identify the topics you are most interested in learning more about and presentation ideas for future BAC meetings.

Future meeting topics that interest the BAC include: Landscape Design, Education for Business, Safety concerns, Property Access, traffic flow management - during and after project, Ensure access to supply chain, avoid loss of customer base –marketing techniques, Emergency Management, and Technical assistance to existing businesses.

6. Corridor Management Committee Report

As there was neither a Central Corridor Management Committee meeting nor a Central Corridor Communication Strategy meeting in the last month, Robin Cauffman, briefly told the committee about the current contractor hiring process for the Preliminary Engineering design work. She explained that the first of 3 corridor representatives would be hired soon, with over 140 individuals applying for 3 immediate positions.

7. Next Meeting: Monday, May 21, 2007, 4:30-6:30 pm

8. Adjourn

Prepared by Karri Plowman, Director of the Central Corridor Partnership