

Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee October 15, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kay Baker, Tanya Bell, Julio Fesser, Lori Fritts, Sharon Johnson Jeannine Kessler, Brenda Kyle, Harry Melander, Nell McClung, Peter Latuff, Tom Olesak, Sondra Reis, Jim Roth, Christine Wiegert, Khue Yang.

Members Absent: Kathy Bjerke, Denise Currie, Ken Hinz, David Jones, Guy Mingo, Karri Plowman, Tom Chang Thao, Brian Thoemke, David Youmans,

Others Present: Laney Barhaugh, Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Dana Dellis, Shawntera Hardy, Jessica Hill, Chuck Hymes, Harvey Jaeger, Linda Jungwirth Shoua Lee, Dennis Probst, Rita Rodriguez, Dan Soler.

1. Welcome

Brief welcome by Lori Fritts, Co-Chair Business Advisory Committee

2. Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves and were asked to tell the location of their business or property they owned or operated. Robin introduced guest speaker, Denny Probst, Project Manager, DMJM Harris. Denny presented on the station design principles. Shawntera Hardy from the City of St. Paul to discussed the station area planning process.

3. Metropolitan Council Update

Robin Caufman gave a brief update on the contract work at the Metropolitan Council, Central Corridor Management Committee and the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee. Ms. Caufman introduced Joey Browner and Dana Dellis as the projects two new Community Outreach Coordinators and Kent Hranicka, community outreach intern.

The Community Outreach Coordinators talked to 2,500 stakeholders and their comments and questions are available for review. Her goal is to reach 5,000 by the end of the year.

- **Joey Browner** will be working in the Downtown and greater metropolitan areas. Joey has been in Minnesota since 1983, played for the Vikings and retired in 1996. He has worked in community outreach for several years including activities with Children's Miracle Network, and Vikings Children's Fund.
- **Dana Dellis** will be working with Downtown Minneapolis area. She has been working with community based organizations for the last 10 years including employment consulting and working in a women's homeless shelter.
- **Kent Hranicka** is the new intern for the public involvement plan and is a graduate student at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

4. Metropolitan Council Station Design Principles

Denny Probst, Project Manager, DMJM Harris, talked about the overall design principles for the Central Corridor alignment from Minneapolis to Downtown St. Paul. He talked about what other LRT lines around the county have for station elements. He also stated the lessons learned from Hiawatha and presented several poster boards that provided ideas for standard elements along the corridor that are consistent and do not change from station to station. They include signage, ticket vending machines, information kiosk, and platform edge. The variable elements that may change include a palette of materials and colors that provide neighborhood identity at stations such as platform surface paving, railings, canopy support columns and artwork.

The next steps are advancing engineering and platform configurations at Dale, Raymond, Westgate, and Fairview stations. The Snelling station will require a separate study with the City of St. Paul and the outcome is to lock down the exact location by the end of November. The station should be located to optimize the pedestrians and community residents. The traffic should be second. The County has agreed with this decision and more meetings will help identify this.

Before opening the meeting up to discussion, Lori Fritts handed out a worksheet and asked BAC members to fill it out with their comments, comments and questions related to the Snelling station configurations and station design (Attachment 1). BAC members had the following questions and comments:

- Will the station platforms be heated? Platforms will not have radiant heat but stations will have overhead heat.
- When will station design start? Starting middle to late November, we will start designing the stations and initiating the public art and outreach program.
- Will the design include asphalt or concrete? Costs will determine what we use.
- Lori Fritts asked if BAC members are interested in a tour of Hiawatha. Yes, Outreach staff will work with Lori to put together a tour that looks at the details of the platforms, traffic, signals etc.
- Will the streets signals be similar to Hiawatha? No, Hiawatha has a different system than will be used on Central. The traffic signals on Central Corridor LRT will be different in that the trains will move along with the traffic.
- Are there any considerations to improving on/off ramps to the Central Corridor LRT? The City of St. Paul conducted a comprehensive study to look at on/off ramps. BAC members suggested the engineers review that study. The City learned that with the addition of the I-35W traffic, Snelling has become more congested. The hope is to have the pedestrians concerns come first.
- Will there be additional bus connections? Yes, the Draft Environmental Impact statement looked at proposed improvements and connections of bus routes. Robin Cauffman suggested staff could present the proposed routes and changes at a future BAC meeting if there is interest.
- Does the Split Side Platform allow left turns? Yes, one of the benefits of the split side platform configuration allows left turns at signalized intersections.
- Will there be two cars or three? We anticipated designing the station to accommodate a three car train and may start out with two trains. This is one of the 37 issues the engineers are studying.
- Will we lose a lane of traffic in the winter due to plowing and storage of snow? The City of St. Paul and Minneapolis are looking into how they will manage snow removal with Central Corridor LRT.
- How are pedestrians going to cross over University to reach their stop? There will be pedestrian cross walks and signals at station areas to help people safely cross the street.

5. City of St. Paul Station Area Planning Process

Shawntera Hardy, City of St. Paul PED, shared information about the City of St. Paul's Station area land use planning process aimed at gathering information on land use. (More information about the City's planning

process). The City's next steps include 3 workshops on October 23, 24 and 25 that focus on specific stations and all day workshops in November that will help pull the vision, ideas and strategies together.

6. Business Mitigation

Robin Caufman reviewed a hand out from the September meeting that outlines the separation between construction mitigation and business mitigation. Business mitigation will focus on providing marketing and business assistance to businesses along the LRT corridor. Construction mitigation will focus on communicating to residents, businesses and property owner's information about planned construction schedules, impacts, and other issues related to the construction of the Central Corridor LRT.

There was discussion around business fears during construction:

Ms. Fritts suggested that BAC members forward their comments and concerns, suggestions, ideas to their community outreach coordinators. She distributed a worksheet and asked BAC members to fill it out with their ideas and concerns related to Business Mitigation Plan (Attachment 2).

Ms. Fritts also suggested that businesses owners consider their business needs as an example of what other businesses may need assistance to resolve. For example, your business may not be equipped with having your water turned off. Also, consider strategies for financial planning, ways to handle the economic impact during and after construction. The BAC offered the following comments or suggestions:

- When people are bidding (early 2010), we should get the information as early as one year before construction
- Businesses have to be proactive and plan ahead when it comes to taxes, business plans, and insurance.

7. Wrap up and adjourn

Before adjourning, robin Caufman noted two changes on the Input and Influence section, including:

- Item 15C: Study potential additional station at Hamline
- Revised the definitions of Inform, Input and Influence as presented at the February BAC and CAC meetings.

Ms. Caufman invited the BAC members to the Central Corridor Project Office's Open House on October 26, from 2:00 – 6:00 PM.

Ms. Fritts noted the next BAC meeting will be November 19, 2007, 4:30-6:30 PM. Tentative agenda items may include a preview Capitol Area Stations, substations, public art process, University of Minnesota alignment, West Bank Station, and Downtown St. Paul alignment.

Prepared by Rita Rodriguez, Community Outreach Coordinator

Attachment 1: Responses to questions related to Snelling Avenue Station and general station design

Identify issues or concerns with the Snelling station configurations

- Will there be a loss of right turn lanes at University/Snelling and how will that work?
- Safety is key when crossing and entering stations
- Pedestrian access & safety
- Traffic flow for automobiles (pedestrians should be first)
- There are benefits to consolidating some aspects of density
- A lot of activity in a very small space – I'm concerned that there are no park and ride lots planned
- I don't really understand why it would be necessary to re-route N/S busses if you move the LRT to Pascal. Ideally, yes it would be nice but...
- Need to leverage the experiences from other LRT systems in other cities with similar dynamics.

Identify opportunities or benefits with the Snelling station configurations.

- Increase use of other North/South routes other than Snelling
- Better to divert traffic and strengthen other entrances and exits
- Good location on Snelling. This is where the pedestrians will look for the train
- Placing the station nearest to Snelling makes the most sense for 1) Can evolve into a great urban intersection 2) pedestrians transferring from one mode to another
- I don't feel I have enough information or background to discuss configurations
- Look at the successes and failures of other LRT solutions and apply those lessons here. We simply cannot represent a unique scenario here, without precedent in the USA or abroad.

Identify principles or criteria the engineers should use in designing the Snelling station configuration.

- Traffic Flow
- Pedestrian Concerns
- Bus Connections
- Safety
- Ease of access

Identify issues or concerns you have about the station design.

- Lighting
- Heat
- Splash walls for riders from cars
- Safety
- Standards to reduce maintenance costs
- Sound
- Plan for transit that serves pedestrians and let the autos disperse by slowing their ability to flow through this intersection
- Has there been research on N/S bus routes increasing frequency and decreasing bus 16. Where are people currently going or need to go?
- A transparent shelter does not lend itself well to sheltering from the wind, water, etc. How do we achieve security and weather protection with one design?

Identify opportunities or benefits you have about the station design.

- Safety
- Openness
- Heat
- Long platforms (3 car minimum)
- Slowing their ability to flow through this intersection
- Public art will enhance this area
- Based on presentation, the designers seem to have a good sense of possibilities
- Could catenaries be more than just poles with horizontal extension? Let's celebrate the structure as both functional and aesthetic devise

Identify principles or criteria the engineers should use in designing the station.

- Functional,
- Safety
- Access
- Take snow plowing into consideration
- Safety South bound is most important
- Apply lessons learned including environmental uniqueness of our corridor

Attachment 2: Responses to questions related to business mitigation

Objective 1: Identify techniques that could be used to communicate construction schedule, impacts and utility disruptions.

- Newsletters, Blogs, Websites other than Met Council
- Email and voice mail alerts
- Distribute flyers door to door
- Advance collection of businesses
- Telephone and cell phones (especially in immigrant communities)
- Not everyone has internet access
- Mass text messaging should be looked into
- DCC Communications
- Block club meetings
- District Councils
- Area Newspapers
- Multiple languages

Objective 2: Identify strategies for maintaining business in the corridor that you would like the BAC to explore.

- Begin to identify traffic & parking routes
- Communicate early & often
- Accumulate available parking within 3 blocks of affected areas
- Negotiate short term agreements
- Small business planning, one-to-one
- Cash flow projections
- Marketing
- Advertise corridor businesses (many restaurants available on corridor)
- With all the vacant retail, what opportunities exist for temporary relocation of businesses? (during construction)
- Talk to Hiawatha businesses to see what worked and what didn't
- Financing
- Signage
- Are grants/tax abatement an option to help business weather the effects of construction?
- Will there be assessments?

Objective 3: Identify resources and strategies for providing technical assistance to corridor businesses.

- Hire/consult with Joyce Wisdom, she has the grass roots experience
- Work with St. Paul Score to provide technical support
- Work with the SBA office in Midtown Commons
- Use something similar to tax increment financing
- Parking, alternative parking
- Delivery options
- MCCD (at the appropriate time, they can convene this group)

- NDC
- SPARC
- MEDA
- Women Venture
- Frog town CDC
- Selby Area CDC
- LDC, ADC, LISC
- State and Foundations (\$)
- Hiawatha LRT

Objective 4: Identify factors that may affect construction staging. For example, are there times that are worse or better for different business/industry?

- Loss of service such as power and water could be conducted on Sunday or Monday Evenings.
- Impact of winter on specific construction stages