

Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee

November 19, 2007

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Karri Plowman, Lori Fritts, David Jones, Kay Baker, Sharon Johnson , Sondra Reis, Harry Melander, David Youmans

Members Absent: Kathy Bjerke, Julio Fesser, Jeannine Kessler, Brenda Kyle, Peter Latuff, Denise Currie, Ken Hinz, Guy Mingo, Chang Thao, Tom Olesak, Brian Thoemke, Nell McClung, Tanya Bell, Jim Roth, Christine Wiegert, Khue Yang.

Others Present: Mark Fuhrmann, Chuck Hymes, Harvey Jaeger, Denny Probst, Kyle Williams, Dan Soler, Robin Caufman, Dana Dellis, Jessica Hill, Linda Jungwirth, Craig O'Brian, Rita Rodriquez, Steve Morris, VaMegn Thoj.

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 Caufman, Manager of Public Involvement, introduced guest speakers, Mark Fuhrmann, Project Director; Denny Probst, Project Manager for DMJM Harris; Kyle Williams, DMJM Harris; and Jim Alexander, Manager of Design.

3. Metropolitan Council Update:

I. Request for a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Mark Fuhrmann, Project Director, gave an update on his report to the Central Corridor Management Committee about a request from the Federal Transit Authorities (FTA) for a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). Mr. Fuhrmann explained that the central Corridor Project Office had notified the FTA about these adjustments and that they are being considered for approval. The eight elements that will be addressed in the SDEIS include:

1. **Hiawatha/Central Corridor Connection:** DEIS proposed connection on the East side of the Metrodome Downtown East Plaza. It appears that we might have to connect further to the south and east along Hiawatha line. We are developing alternatives to allow this to happen and evaluate cost, safety, operations and how they will intersect.
2. **University of Minnesota:** This will include identifying at grade or tunnel alignment as well as considering the location of West Bank/Cedar Riverside. The DEIS proposes the station between Blegen and Wiley Hall but there are considerations to move the station several 100 feet to the west based on public comments.
3. **Additional Stations:** Potential added station at Victoria, Western and Hamline: The SDEIS will look at impact to design, cost, travel time, and rider-ship.

4. **Capital Area Alignment:** Columbus Street/relocated on Robert Street Capital Area Alignment: DEIS showed the Capital East Station on Columbus Street. This station will need to switch to Robert Street due to developments that have occurred in the area since the DEIS was finalized.
5. **Rice Street Location:** It has been suggested that we relocate the Rice Street Station to the east of Rice Street rather than the DEIS westward location. This location helps to address grade issues to the east of the Rice Street Station by moving the tracks to the south-side of University Avenue.
6. **Down town St. Paul Station:** DEIS option brings the train via 4th Street to the front of the Union Depot with the station located on 4th Street; two additional options are now being evaluated that would take the train to the rear concourse of the Union Depot:
 - South on Cedar Street to underneath Kellogg Boulevard (tunnel) and by the 2nd Street viaduct to the rear of the Union Depot
 - Along 4th Street pass the front of the Union Depot then around to the east of the Union Depot then cross Kellogg Boulevard either in structure, up above Kellogg Boulevard or at grade across Kellogg Boulevard then hook up to the Union Depot concourse.

The DEIS shows the line making a 90 degree turn to go east at 4th and Cedar; the City of Saint Paul's Development Strategy adopted on 10/24/2007 recommends a diagonal track alignment through the center of the block bonded by the 4th Street, 5th Street, Cedar and Minnesota. The SDEIS will also consider this diagonal alignment.

7. **System Support Facilities:** The CCPO will have to site the locations for 13 substations and 8 communication buildings. Substations are facilities about the size of a semi trailer or 14' by 40' and surrounded by a 45' by 80' enclosure to contain the equipment. Communication buildings are comparable to a shed. At this time the CCPO has only identified the blocks which these substations might be located. This would include sub-stations, communication buildings bungalows, and Right of Way for System Components.
8. **Three Car Train Requirements:** The DEIS assumes 2-car trains but the FTA requested we study the ability of a 2-car system to accommodate projected 43,000 daily riders or if the system should be build for 3-car trains. This would mean 3-car platforms, stronger traction power and a new vehicle maintenance facility.

Next steps include going through the federal process to publish a Notice of Intent (NOI). The SDEIS document will be compiled early 2008 and we will also seek community input, including formal public hearing in summer 2008.

- II. **Public Art:** Mr. Fuhrmann stated that the rumors that the Met Council has hired an artist are not true. He clarified that the Central Corridor Project Office has not hired a public artist. The CCPO is developing a process to solicit public art ideas and we will be reaching out into the art community to submit ideas and a formal bid for work. Station design elements will be looked at and public art will be included in station design and station elements. This decision will be made in 2008.

4. Presentation and Discussion

I. U of M East Bank Alignment

Chuck Hymes presented current work on both the at grade and tunnel alignments on the East Bank. The DEIS included a tunnel on the East Bank. We are conducting engineering on both a tunnel and at grade option. The at grade option would cross the Washington Avenue Bridge, continue running in the center of Washington Avenue, turn on Huron toward the at L shape parcel that will contain the multimodal station. We will have to rebuild a portion of the UofM bus way that contains the LRT track. The CCPO is also looking at adding a third set of tracks for storing extra trains during special events.

The U of M requested the East Bank station be located near Oak and University to accommodate their long range plans. Full center platform will allow a pedestrian to enter platform (5' tall and 50' wide) and proceed to east or westbound train.

Both options have significant issues that need to be resolved including access for emergency vehicles, traffic, safety etc...

Questions/Comments:

- Is there a timeline for the tunnel? We will not be prepared to present the cost comparisons and will report sometime in December.
- What is the cost difference between the tunnel and at grade and what is the difference in construction time? We do not have them yet. They will be significant.
- What materials will the side walls consist of? We have not explored with the U of M on this yet.
- Please consider Washington Avenue a street like environment. It should feel safe and friendly.

II. West Bank Alignment/CCLRT Connection with Hiawatha:

Kyle Williams reviewed the history of the West Bank station. CCPO has received public comments requesting that the station be moved closer to Cedar Avenue. CCPO engineers have developed a station location concept that includes a center platform under 19th Avenue. The proposed station has 8 ways to access it including:

- Bus stop with sidewalk connections to platform, west campus buildings and neighborhood
- Pedestrian activated signal to access platform (near Cedar)
- Gateway and signage for the University and Cedar Riverside neighborhood
- Vertical circulation to platform from 19th Avenue

Questions and Comments:

- Will there be a back up of traffic? The entire scheme needs to be considered with the Engineers
- Will there be a connection from Blegen Hall to the University? We are looking at that possibility.
- How will pedestrians access the platform? Ramps from Cedar Avenue and 19th Avenue to the platform.
- What is meant by a vertical circulation to platform? It is an elevator/stair access to the platform.
- Washington is very bleak and barren. The traffic moves very fast and it feels uncomfortable. Vehicles move at 30-45 MPH.
- Consider an elevator or stairway from Cedar Avenue Bridge to platform so pedestrians don't have to cross the tracks and an elevator is costly.

III. Downtown St. Paul Alignment:

Jim Alexander explained that as part of our agreement with Ramsey County, the Project Office is looking at putting a station in the back of the Depot. Per the agreement, we are studying two alignments in addition to the DEIS route:

Wacouta Alternative: From Cedar Street, track goes east on 4th and turns south between Wall and Wacouta Street to connect to the platform level. There are several issues with this route, including difficult grades and taking property east of Wacouta. We would have to move the 4th Street and Minnesota station west, which would block Sibley Street. The CCPO is also looking at a variation of this alignment which runs on Broadway instead of Wacouta. This route also has issues. For example, the Farmers Market may be impacted by the alignment as it would go west and cut into the structure to get to Union Depot.

Viaduct Option: From Cedar and 4th Street, the route would include a tunnel under Kellogg and turn to follow the 2nd Street the viaduct to concourse and eventually behind the Depot. There are significant issues with this alignment including impact to the park above the viaduct and the vertical height can not accommodate the LRT, which would require a new viaduct to get clearance. It also requires a bridge structure to get to the concourse level due to the grade changes. Using the viaduct for LRT would close it to vehicle traffic.

Questions/Comments:

- What is the CCPO looking at when considering the St. Paul alignment? Travel time, environmental impact, cost, rider ship and compare all the parameters against the DEIS.
- How many lanes of traffic will there be on Cedar? One single lane of traffic (per DEIS)

5. Wrap up and adjourn

Ms. Caufman invited the BAC members to the Central Corridor Station Area Planning workshop sessions hosted by the City of St. Paul (included handout of dates). They run from November 19 -27 and December 3-5 at the Central Corridor Resource Center. Each day included an open house to display workshop results (5:30-6:30 PM) and a public “pin-up” and feedback sessions (6:30-9:00 PM).

Ms. Fritz adjourned the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Prepared by Rita Rodriguez, Community Outreach Coordinator