

## Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee January 22, 2008

### Meeting Minutes

**Members Present:**, Lori Fritts, Kay Baker, Brian Thoenke, Jeannine Kessler, Sondra Reis, Guy Mingo

**Members Absent:** Karri Plowman, Kathy Bjerke, Brenda Kyle, Peter Latuff, Denise Currie, Ken Hinz, Chang Thao, Nell McClung, Tanya Bell, Christine Wiegert, Khue Yang, Va Megan Thoj

**Others Present:** Mark Fuhrmann, Robin Caufman, Dan Soler, Rita Rodriguez, Shoua Lee, Roderick Southall, Jessica Hill, Dana Dellis

#### 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.

#### 3. Metropolitan Council Update:

##### Technical Reports and Updates

Mark Fuhrmann, Project Director, gave an update on his report to the Central Corridor Management Committee and reviewed the current re-estimates of the project cost. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that February will be a very important month for the Central Corridor project Office (CCPO) as the Metropolitan Council will be listening to various community groups before making final scope decisions. Next step is to submit an application to enter into final design to the Federal Transit Authority in late August 2008.

1. Inflation Rate: increase assumed inflation rate which had been previously assumed at 2.7 % and now readjusted to 3.5 % after refinements as per the FTA.
2. Contingency Plan: increase contingency previously set to \$130M for a \$932M project; now readjusted to \$172M.
3. Financing: per state law contractors must be paid within 30 days but federal dollars are disbursed later which creates need for internal financing to pay bills. As a result, \$6M was added to project budget to cover financing costs.

When will decisions be made? The scope decisions are scheduled for February 27<sup>th</sup>. The Central Corridor Management Committee will receive briefings, deliberate and make their considerations to Metropolitan Council.

##### Cedar Street and 280/University Avenue Bridges

Both bridges require minor modifications. We will analyze the structure, strength, cost and all the modifications. This may include two lanes in each direction, left through lanes, tracks, width; beams (remove center/additional beams)

Will you look at traffic movements at 280 ramps? We understand University and Cromwell have many accidents. We will be looking at that issue.

Will the only left turn be at Cromwell? Left and right turns will be allowed at Cromwell and Utica.

BAC member commented that traffic is moving very fast and autos often miss the stoplight on Franklin

### **U of M West Bank Station Location (DEIS proposed station in front of Blegen Hall)**

Several community and civic organization requested to have station moved toward Cedar Avenue. As a result, the Metropolitan Council agreed to locate the station at grade between Cedar Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue with stairwell and elevator access from both Avenues serving both the University Of Minnesota and the Cedar Riverside community.

Who will the station serve? High rider ship will be from the U of M Students, Riverside residents, business residents, U of M Riverside businesses and community.

Will there be a signalized pedestrian crossing? Yes, the traffic signals will serve pedestrians as well as traffic.

### **U of M East Bank Alignment**

Mr. Fuhrmann presented on the East Bank alternatives; the DEIS assumes tunnel starting at Church Street and ending at Oak Street; which is part of the \$990M. The new Gopher stadium is in the way of the DEIS alignment; tunnel realignment requires University of Minnesota and private Right of Way (ROW). The other alternative runs at grade through Washington Avenue.

Will Washington be one or two lanes? One through lane in each direction on Washington Avenue.

Where will the bus stop pull out? The bus stop pull-outs will be at Coffman union and at Walnut Street.

Is there time allowance for pedestrians? Yes, fractured in is access time that walkers require to go 35 feet down to the mezzanine.

Does this include wheelchairs and physically disabled riders? Yes

Are there any considerations to re-development? Unknown at this time.

### **Hiawatha-Central Connection and I-35 W Interchange**

Mr. Soler reported that the DEIS planned the Hiawatha-Central Corridor connection at the Metro dome; this entails crossing over to tracks to catch the west bound Central Corridor train. The first alternative shows the connection still at the Metro dome without crossing over the tracks, providing a smooth transfer from Hiawatha to Central Corridor. with grade crossing and no grade crossing are two alternatives currently being studied that would stay away from the West Bank Station traffic, connecting along Hiawatha tracks, away form the Metro dome and would allow building additional storage tracks.

Do you have to create a whole signalization when the train connects with Central Corridor? Train and traffic signals will have to be designed and we will have to incorporate new train signals to communicate exactly when trains will coordinate.

What is the current grade? Grade can be as much as 5%

How will the cross over of trains work? Not favorable option. The cost is high and requires further studies.

Will snow effect grade? Heated switches will melt the snow. Trains will polish the rails as evening snow falls and can be controlled by remote.

### **Reconstruction of Right of Way**

Mr. Soler reported that Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) assumed full reconstruction on University Avenue including street, curb and sidewalks. The preliminary engineering findings indicated that the structural pavement is good and basically the roadway condition is also good. We don't have to sub-cut the entire road.

Although 15% does not need reconstruction, we are going to recommend 100% curb and cutter replacement.

Who will pay for the 15%? 85% will be paid by the project and 15% paid by the city/county.

### **University Avenue Street Crossings/Station access**

Traffic signals from 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Marion Street include 22 traffic signals. We are proposing 28 traffic signals and removing signals at Albert Street. (Slide 39).

Similar to Hiawatha LRT the signal priority for LRT includes the extension of the green light to move train across intersection (minimizes delay of train) (slide 41)

VISSIM traffic modeling allows us to look at travel time of trains to impacts. We will continue to evaluate this in downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul.

How do you control pedestrians crossing to the stations? We will model pedestrian behavior and assume full pedestrian phase.

Will there be gates? No

University Avenue will have signalized pedestrian crossings every 1/4 mile. They include "Walk/Don't Walk" and pedestrian activation. We are looking at unsignalized crossings 1/8 mile apart with active warning devices.

Why are you looking at 1/8 mile apart? We are looking at what locations would work best. We don't want people crossing the tracks. We need to look at how we can balance this out.

BAC members suggested it would be helpful to look at crossings on a case by case situation.

### **Next Steps**

February – Discuss scope issues

March – Review remaining issues

April – Station Design

May – Review SDEIS

**6:15 meeting adjourned**