

Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee

Monday, June 16, 2008

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Nell McClug, David Youmans, Sharon Johnson, Chang Thao, Khue Yang, Kay Baker, Denise Currie, Julio Fesser, Tom Olesak, Brian Thoemke, Sondra Reis, Brenda Kyle, Mike LaFave, Jeannine Kessler

Members Absent: David Jones, Harry Melander, Guy Mingo, Tom Olesak, Jim Roth

Others Present: Chair Peter Bell, Robin Caufman, Karri Plowman, Shoua Lee, Rita Rodriguez, Joey Browner, Dana Dellis, Jessica Hill, Kent Hranicka, Mike LaFave, Jonathan Sage Martinson.

1. WELCOME

Brief welcome by Karri Plowman, lead staff person for the Business Advisory Committee.

2. PROJECT UPDATES AND DISCUSSION

Karri Plowman introduced Metropolitan Council Chair Peter Bell. Mr. Bell thanked Mr. Plowman and Ms. Fritts for their leadership and work. Mr. Bell stated that this is the largest project in the state of Minnesota and believes this project will stay on track. He reviewed recent accomplishments including the passage of the Transportation Policy Bill which includes a ¼ cent sales tax increase for transit improvements, State bonding bill of \$70 million, and the University of Minnesota's agreement to have LRT at grade on Washington Avenue with a transit pedestrian mall. Any funding has to meet Met Council approval. Mr. Bell stated that we want to approach the FTA and say that all our funding is available for CCLRT. To date, we still need \$8 million from the state.

Chair Bell noted that we are one of two regions in the country that have one commuter rail project funded by FTA, one light rail project in preliminary engineering and participant in the Urban Partnership Agreement project for bus rapid transit.

Chair Bell also mentioned vibration impacts on MPR; he has meet with Bill Kling. We are in the process of studying the impacts and will be looking at mitigation. He acknowledged the concerns of the 2 churches north of MPR.

Chair Bell reviewed the three infill stations. He explained that due to CEI and budget constraints, a compromise with the infrastructure and foundation for three future stations at Western, Hamline and Victoria was added into the project scope. He indicated his first priority is adding one of those three stations if additional funds are made available in the project budget.

He also provided an update on recent activities including:

- **The University of Minnesota** negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the Metropolitan Council and other project partners. The U of M has worked hard to resolve the issues with this line and FTA Secretary Simpson was intrigued with the U of M mall.
- **Parking:** There are 25,000 off street parking spaces in the city of St. Paul within ½ mile of of the stations on University Ave. Most of the 1200 parking spaces will be eliminated (200 saved). We do not have a global solution because there needs to be a business by business solutions and block by block. Robin Cauffman and our outreach staff are working hard to identify those businesses that are directly impacted by the loss of parking and other concerns. He recognizes that while the loss of parking is a very small percentage of the 25,000 off street parking spaces, the impacts are significant for those small businesses that don't have access to off street parking.
- **Business Mitigation** includes construction mitigation and we will work on minimizing impacts to businesses along the corridor.
- **Vibration Concerns:** Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) have concerns about vibrations and the impacts it may have on world class broadcasting. MPR wants us to move the line to the West of Cedar. This is not possible, what is possible is to look at vibration mitigation and analyze how we can minimize vibrations. The University of Minnesota also has vibration concerns for their research building along Washington.

BAC members raised the following questions or comments:

Residents along the corridor are transit dependent and Lexington to Snelling eliminates those riders. This is not enhancing there transit experience. People that live on University will have the best transit service that includes trains and busses. We are building the infrastructure for Hamline, Victoria and Western and there is a realization that we need more stations. If we find more dollars, we need to build one of the stations. The decision will be which one.

Why not build Park and Ride lots? Our goal is to ease congestion in and around University Avenue. Park and ride lots would only encourage more people to not leave their cars at home. It is not part of our budget and plan.

Is Met Council looking at a commuter rail for Woodbury residents? Met Council is completing their transportation policy this year and will look at transit corridors in Woodbury and other areas.

How many tracks will run to the depot? We will run two tracks and run behind the depot in the future. When we have trains from Hastings and Duluth that is the tie we build around the depot.

We should build 3 car stations. Is that going to happen? We will build 3 car stations to accommodate the projected rider ship numbers for CCLRT is based on 43,000 riders per day.

Have you seen increase in rider ship and what will the future of the bus play? Yes, we have tremendous increase in rider ship. For the next 50 years the bus will be the back bone for our transit system and we will build more lines in the future.

What is the experience in other cities regarding hide and ride? This is a common problem in other cities and we need to look into it.

Regarding construction, where on University will construction begin? We are in preliminary engineering and that has not been determined.

3. BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROJECT

Karri Plowman introduced Jonathan Sage Martinson as the coordinator for the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC) and Learning Network. It is comprised of local and national foundations dedicated to working with others to unlock the transformative potential of the new LRT line along the Central Corridor.

Mike LaFave, presented on behalf of a group of nonprofits that are working on business mitigation issues. Mr. LaFave stated that they will provide technical support and work with the small businesses along University Avenue. They began meeting 6 months ago to look at University Avenue, what it looks like today and after the line is built. Mr. LaFave stated that they are trying to work collaboratively with other agencies for business mitigation services. Our mission is to stay true to what we do best and provide opportunities for businesses to strive and thrive before, during and after CCLRT. They are looking at providing the following service:

- Workshops/training for businesses (\$1M or less)
- Working with technical services (expertise one-on-one)
- Finance: one tier lending , Capital working loan, Matching grant program

They are looking at establishing criteria to making businesses eligible for assistance, such as:

- Small businesses revenues \$1 million dollars or less
- Non-profits are not eligible

Mike explained that they have begun to strategize how we can raise funds to support this type of program and assistance. They have MBA students that can help and are still defining our purpose and will convey our services to businesses as we develop them.

4. MUNICIPAL CONSENT PROCESS:

Robin Caufman reviewed the municipal consent process. Mn/DOT, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Ramsey County have held their public hearings. The information presented at the hearings will be used by the local jurisdictions to make their decision for approval of the plans; which will be forwarded to the Metropolitan Council by July 13th. Met Council will make their final decision at the end of August.

The next steps for the project will include the publication of the Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) and a series of public hearings in August. \

Next Meeting: Monday, July 21, 2008