

Court International Building, Ground Floor-RM #150 2550 University Avenue West St. Paul

Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee

Monday, November 17, 2008

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kathy Bjerke, Julio Fesser, Lori Fritts, David Jones, Jeannine Kessler, Brenda Kyle, Nell McClung, Sondra Reis, Jim Roth, Brian Thoemke, Christine Wiegert.

Others Present: Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Linda Jungwirth, Hue Pham, Karri Plowman, Rita Rodriguez, Dan Soler, Eve Vang

1. WELCOME

Lori Fritts opened the meeting at 4:07PM. She recapped the last BAC meeting stating that we performed a brainstorming exercise to collect ideas on how businesses can be mitigated through and after construction. Karri Plowman stated that additional requests for business listening sessions were made for West Bank, etc...

Ms. Fritts added that feedback from those listening sessions will be provided to the BAC when they wrap up.

Mr. Plowman announced that he came from a joint House/Senate Transit subcommittee where Corridor LRT was declared to be the first project in Minnesota's history that is almost entirely locally funded before submittal to the FTA. In addition, Chair Bell stated on record that he supports the Union Depot in Saint Paul to be deemed a multi-modal hub.

2. PROJECT UPDATES

Public Art

Robin Caufman provided an update on the five artist groups selected for the station art designs: Andrea Myklebust and Stanton Sears, Nancy Blum, Seitu Jones, Robert Delgado, and Janet Lofquist. We are looking for members to serve on the Station Art Committees (SAC). It will be a 4-5 month commitment.

Karri Plowman stated that he'd like to have businesses involved in the station art design. It would be an opportunity to influence a station that would act as an entry way into introducing businesses on the corridor.

FEIS open houses

Ms. Caufman announced that we will be holding five open houses in December to cover issues that will be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS):

- **December 1st, 5:00-7:00 p.m.** -Model Cities, 839 University Avenue West, St. Paul
- **December 2nd, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.** -Alliance Bank Center food Court, 55 East Fifth Street, St. Paul
- **December 3rd, 5:00-7:00 p.m.** -Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar Street, St. Paul
- **December 4th, 6:00-8:00 p.m.** -Brian Coyle Center, 420 15th Avenue South, Minneapolis
- **December 6th, 12:00-2:00 p.m.** -Goodwill Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Avenue North, St. Paul

Ms. Cauffman also distributed a copy of the Northstar Weekly Memo used to communicate to the public about construction. The BAC was asked to review it and provide us with feedback because we are looking at using a similar tool during construction of Central Corridor LRT.

Brian Thoemke asked when the construction will be completed for the Northstar Commuter Line. Next summer. Is Big Lake the end of that line? Yes.

Ms. Fritz asked what the budget is for public art. The total budget is about \$3 million which equates to, \$170,000 per station. Have they determined how the public art is going to be implemented? All stations will have a similar structure; however, the art will be incorporated into the columns, communication boxes, flooring, railings, and so forth.

3. TECHNICAL REPORTS

2009 Traffic Improvements and Utility Relocation

Dan Soler announced that we will begin some early work on the corridor to prepare for the construction phase by reviewing slides 3-5 of the presentation. This will include two projects:

1. The U of M area, beginning in the summer of 2009 through the third week of August 2009 before Welcome Week. This will include installing turn lanes, traffic signals and converting one way roads into two way roads.
2. Early utility relocation is also a possibility in downtown Saint Paul during Fall 2009. Water, District Energy, and Excel Energy are included.

Ms. Fritz asked if traffic will be allowed through 4th Street during utility relocation. No, that segment of 4th will be closed between Minnesota Street and the end of the alignment in Saint Paul. Ms. Fritz suggested that businesses in that area be notified ahead of time.

Mr. Plowman also noted that businesses will be concerned about costs in relocating utilities.

Mr. Soler replied that there will be contracts for the utilities owned by Public Works and will be paid for by Public Works. Privately owned utilities will have to be paid for affiliated owner.

Downtown Saint Paul

Dan Soler reviewed slides 6 through 18 of the presentation on the traffic modeling in downtown Saint Paul on University Avenue from 29th Avenue to Robert Street. Both SYNCHRO and VISSIM software were used to evaluate intersections and how traffic would operate with and without LRT.

Nell McClung inquired if the modeling considers the measure of space available in downtown St. Paul before and after LRT? The future volume and growth anticipates the land use downtown, but not amount of space.

Brenda Kyle stated that 4th Street and Cedar Avenue are not taken today during PM peak hours. 5th Street, Robert Street, and Minnesota Street are the most popular during peak hours.

Ms. McClung asked what the vacancy factor is in the core business district right now. In Saint Paul, 23% and about 24% in Minneapolis.

Mr. Plowman stated that Robert Street carries the out-traffic to I-94. Does the traffic modeling take into account future station locations and intermediary areas?

Mr. Soler noted that we will work on the timing of the light signals on University Ave and Robert St to allow traffic movement.

Will the Lafayette Bridge alleviate some of the traffic congestion? Yes, the bridge should help.

Christine Wiegert asked what would happen with events downtown at the Xcel Center. Event traffic during high peak traffic hours would be a concern but flow is often assisted by people directing traffic.

University Avenue

Julio Fesser asked why only SYNCHRO was used for downtown Saint Paul. What's the difference between SYNCHRO and VISSIM? The traffic engineers are working on the VISSIM for downtown St. Paul soon. SYNCHRO does a better job at individual intersection delay, VISSIM is better at analyzing how the whole corridor operates.

Ms. Fritz asked if both of those systems used to study traffic on Hiawatha. No, which is why we are using them to test traffic modeling on CCLRT.

Washington Transit/Ped Mall

Mr. Soler reviewed slides 19-31 of the presentation. The transit mall design groups are looking at whether or not there should be a shared lane that will include both LRT and buses on Washington Avenue.

Mr. Plowman asked about the number of busses on Washington Ave? According to the DEIS, there will be 913 buses per day with the removal of Bus 50 and the reduction of Bus 16. During peak hour, there will be 16 trains and 90 busses.

West Bank

Mr. Soler reviewed updates on ramp configurations in the west bank area, slides 32-39 of the presentation.

Ms. Fritz asked if the CEI will change with the ramp configuration. It will bring costs down in comparison to the preliminary PE plan West Bank ramp alignment.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:21PM.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 15, 2008.