

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

Meeting of the Central Corridor Business Advisory Committee

Monday, December 15, 2008

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Lori Fritts, Brenda Kyle, Brian Thoenke, Christine Wiegert

Others Present: Joey Browner, Robin Cauffman, Dana Happel, Linda Jungwirth, Jeff Lunde, Sarah Penman, Karri Plowman, Dan Soler, Eve Vang.

1. WELCOME

Lori Fritts opened the meeting at 4:10PM.

2. UPDATES

Business Listening Sessions

Karri Plowman recapped the Business Listening Sessions. He stated that we have one final business listening session with the Hmong businesses tomorrow and will then compile the results and distribute it to the BAC at the next meeting.

Parking

Dan Soler gave an update on parking by reviewing slides 3-4 of the presentation. The Central Corridor Project Office (CCPO) and the City of St. Paul created a Parking Solutions Team (PST) to identify critical areas that qualify as having potential parking issues based on certain considerations. By February or March, the CCPO will have drafted a report with recommended solutions.

Ms. Fritts asked if there are definitive costs. We do not know yet what the cost will be for solutions.

Mr. Plowman asked if the City of Saint Paul is the decision maker in allowing on-street parking during parts of the day where there is less traffic volume like in the early mornings or the evenings. The roadway is designed to include 2 lanes of traffic. The utilization of the outside lane on University Ave. will be left up to the City.

Mr. Plowman asked Mr. Soler to talk about water run-off issues and the plans to install the new curb and gutter as part of the project. Mr. Soler stated that in order to keep the outside lanes dry, the design will include catch basins spaced closer together on University Ave.

Jeff Lunde, owner of a small business on University Avenue, asked whether short-term parking during off-peak hours will occur all along the corridor. Mr. Soler responded that parking

solutions will vary along the corridor on University Ave. because there are some areas that will benefit from bringing back on-street parking during off-peak hours and some areas that won't. We are looking at areas block-by-block and coming up with solutions that would work in specific areas.

Mr. Lunde expressed his concern about the problems facing small business prior to and during construction. His concerns pertain to lack of parking, access for clients, customers, employees, deliveries, and surviving through construction.

Mr. Plowman stated that business mitigation plans will come out in 2009. We will work with each business to help them with their specific concerns to keep them sustained through construction.

Mr. Soler added that he worked on projects while he was at Ramsey County that figured out how to get people to and from work, homes, and businesses.

Mr. Lunde asked about communication during construction. For example, he said that his business is located in the middle of a block with high-density and wondered if project staff can help communicate to neighboring businesses that deliveries may need to be made through their property

Ms. Fritz inserted that coordinating access for businesses should include sharing an alley, figuring out what day or time would be best to make deliveries, or putting in a temporary access during construction.

3. TECHNICAL REPORTS

Traction Power Substations and Signal Bungalows

Mr. Soler talked about Traction Power Substations (TPSS) and signal bungalows by reviewing slides 5-31 of the presentation. The purpose of the TPSS is to house the electrical power. Signal bungalows contain the electronic equipment that are used in operating the LRT. TPSS and signal bungalows are being placed on sites that are typically vacant and underutilized in order to minimize impacts to existing businesses and future redevelopment.

Mr. Plowman asked whether future redevelopment could be built over or around the TPSS. Yes. However, the area for TPSS still needs to be 40 feet by 80 feet to provide access for maintenance vehicles and personnel. For example, there is one TPSS built in to the lower level ramp at the Mall of America.

Ms. Fritz asked if we have contacted the property owners. Mr. Soler stated that we have sent out letters to the property owners to let them know that we need to do soil testing. We will eventually talk to tenants at the site.

Robin Cauffman added that letters were sent to the property owners and the outreach coordinators talked to the business, if different than the property owner.

Ms. Fritz suggested that information should be communicated to the right person at the business, i.e. the manager. She also asked who at the CCPO the public could talk to about the TPSS or signal bungalows. Mr. Soler noted that businesses should talk to the outreach coordinator assigned to their area.

Mr. Plowman asked why the TPSS and signal bungalows are often set back or by themselves instead of next to development? Mr. Soler responded that placing closer to University Avenue where they could be next to an existing building is possible, however, the City of Saint Paul asked that the TPSS be sited towards the back of the block so that future development could front University Avenue.

Ms. Fritz referred to TPSS 8 on slide 24 and asked what if the billboard company doesn't want to negotiate? Mr. Soler stated that the project has the ability to acquire the property through eminent domain or condemnation. However, the CCPO staff are conducting soil testing before they confirm the specific location on the site.

Ms. Fritz asked if the siting strategy was the same for TPSSs on Hiawatha LRT. Yes.

Mr. Soler added that we will only acquire the part of the property necessary for the TPSS. For example, TPSS 10 is located south of University and west of Galtier on a car dealership lot. We only need to acquire a small portion of the lot.

Operation and Maintenance Facility

Mr. Soler gave an update on the changes in the OMF location, reviewing presentation slides 32-51.

Ms. Fritz asked what the City thinks about the changed location. Soler stated that the City and public have raised concern about using the Diamond Product building because of impacts to residential areas, future redevelopment and the Farmer's Market.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Fritz adjourned the meeting at 5:29PM.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Jan. 19, 2009 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day); project office staff will notify BAC members if the meeting is cancelled or the date is changed.