

# Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee

## September 20, 2007

### Meeting Minutes

**Members Present:** Kirstin Beach (Co-chair), Jerry Blakey (Co-chair), Fredrick Blocton, Joshua Bunker, Veronica Burt, Ken Erickson, Readus Fletcher, Metric Giles, Steve Grans, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hanson, Margot Imdieke Cross, Brant Ingalsbe, Karen Inman, David Johnson, Jeffrey Peltola, Nick Rosenberry, Ross Skattum, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Dave VanHattum, Chip Welling, Anne White, John Wicks, ThaoMee Xiong.

**Members Absent:** Kristen Denzer, Larry Englund, Denise Fosse, Bree Halverson, Maricruz Hill, Doug Hennes, Richard Kleinbaum, Xiong Pao Lee, Laura Nevitt, Ken Rogers, Hussein Samatar, Rozanne Severance, Art Sidner, Seng Tchaa, JoAnn Tesar, Chris Worthington.

**Others Present:** Laura Baenen, Nkongo Cigolo, Donna Drummond, Mark Fuhrmann, Oscar Gonzales, Jessica Hill, Wanda Kirkpatrick, Shoua Lee, Arlene McCarthy, Kathryn O'Brien, Rita Rodriguez, Dennis Probst.

### 1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Co-Chair Kirstin Beach called the September 20, 2007 meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to order at 5:02 PM in the Goodwill Easter Seals offices at 553 Fairview Avenue North, St. Paul.

Co-Chair Beach mentioned that an Environmental Justice Memo was included in today's handout and highlighted that the memo resulted from last month's environmental justice discussion.

Co-Chair Beach reviewed the CAC's role, which is to communicate with community groups by taking to CAC members' respective constituencies the information received at the meeting and also reporting constituencies' concerns back to the CAC.

Co-Chair Beach announced that it would not be feasible to host an electronic communication tool such as the Yahoo discussion group that some CAC members had suggested because:

- it would not provide equal access to this information due to one CAC member not having access to the internet
- online groups will also not be used because several people do not want their email addresses to be shared
- the amount of staff time to moderate and respond to the discussions is not available
- the risk of an email tool to replacing the CAC meetings.

The Metropolitan Council came up with an alternative which would be to communicate either in small groups or via email with the outreach coordinator representing the CAC member's geographical area. Co-Chair Beach advised CAC members that Community Outreach Coordinators have put packets together with their contact information and that these packets would be available at the end of today's meeting. Co-Chair Beach mentioned that this alternative to the yahoo group would be used and evaluated.

Anne White asked whether CAC members still needed to contact their Community Outreach Coordinators even for issues that were not geographical, for example, standards for stations that would apply throughout the corridor. Co-Chair Beach advised that CAC members should communicate all concerns through the Community Outreach Coordinators representing their area.

Mark Fuhrmann announced that he had signed two requisitions to fill the two remaining Community

Outreach Coordinators positions and suggested that Robin Caufman, Manager of Public Involvement, was the contact person for both downtowns until the two new Community Outreach Coordinators were on board.

Co-Chair Jerry Blakey announced that James Ruiz representing the West Bank Coalition and Ferdinand Peters representing Saint Anthony Park resigned their positions as CAC members. Co-Chair Blakey informed CAC members of Maricruz Hill's nomination; Ms. Hill will be representing the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce but was not available to attend today's meeting.

Co-Chair Blakey asked whether there were questions on the environmental justice memo included in the packets. Veronica Burt asked to know whether issues covered in the memo were included within the scope of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Co-Chair Beach confirmed those issues were included, and Kathryn O'Brien, the Principal Environmental Contract Administrator for the Central Corridor Project, added that those issues will be addressed in the FEIS.

Also included in the meeting packet was a Summary of Public Meetings Memo from Robin Caufman.

## **2. REPORTS**

Rich Rovang, Deputy Director of Design and Construction for the Central Corridor Project, gave an update on the URS report of the Washington Avenue Bridge. Mr. Rovang reported that there were provisions in the project to upgrade the Washington Avenue Bridge and about \$2 million had been set aside for that purpose. As a result, the Metropolitan Council contracted URS to give a report on the Washington Avenue Bridge's ability to accommodate Light Rail Transit Trains.

In June of 2007 URS gave the Metropolitan Council a draft report, which mentioned that the Washington Avenue Bridge had been designed based on design criteria available in 1961. However, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) had issued new design criteria after 1961. URS analyzed the Washington Avenue Bridge based on three criteria: 1) based on the required highway loading today, 2) if designed for LRT load today by adding a composite deck (firmly attaching deck to numerous part of the structure), 3) model the bridge with LRT and Highway load without the composite deck.

URS determined that in any case, the girders that are available will not meet the requirement for minimum compressive flange width thickness under highway loading based on the current design criteria, that there would be additional load from LRT, and for the reasons specified above URS mentioned that they would still advocate for a composite deck to address fatigue load. Therefore, URS is suggesting a significant rehabilitation of the Washington Avenue Bridge by placing additional girders under the bridge, and this is rehabilitation of the bridge beyond the DEIS anticipation. Mr. Rovang advised that an accurate cost estimate is not available at the moment but per URS it would cost between \$25 and 30 million to perform the necessary work.

Anne White requested to know the timing of both the next URS report and the bridge rehab. Before timing for next report is available it would first involve meeting with the owner of the bridge (Hennepin County) and the University of Minnesota, who is not the owner but a privileged user of the top deck. The timing of rehabilitation would be done in a timely manner necessary to deliver the project.

Dave VanHattum wanted to know whether some road money would be available to pay for the bridge rehabilitation so that it would not affect the project budget. URS will prepare a separate report for Hennepin County identifying what would be necessary to bring the Washington Avenue Bridge to meet today's design criteria.

Arlene McCarthy gave the Central Corridor Management Committee (CCMC) update. Ramsey County

Commissioners Rafael Ortega and Toni Carter hosted the CCMC on a tour of the Union Depot concourse. The CCMC also toured the three alignments to the Depot being studied in Preliminary Engineering:

- 1) travels down 4<sup>th</sup> street ending in front of the Union Depot (DEIS alternative),
- 2) travels on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and going East to continue in back of Union Depot (the concourse), and
- 3) continue on Cedar Street Southbound, tunneling under Kellogg Boulevard, and coming out onto 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and coming to the Depot from the back side bridging over Sibley and Jackson Street.

### **3. Review Issue Matrix**

Mr. Rovang referenced the color coded Issue Matrix that was in the CAC packets. Yellow colored issues are scheduled to be resolved by the four quarter of 2007 and blue highlighted are scheduled to be resolved by the first quarter of 2008. Mr. Rovang mentioned that there were 37 total issues and they were assigned numbers based on priority levels; numbered 1 is high priority then follows 2 and so forth.

Mr. Rovang stated that there were 17 different teams of technicians and engineers working on these issues. The right column identifies the government agencies working on each issue.

Veronica Burt wanted to know what the functions of 1A and 1B were as they were numbered on the issue matrix, whether the issue matrix would include issues that are identified later, and where bus reduction issue was addressed in the matrix. The numbering 1A and 1B identify priority level. If additional technical issues are identified the issue matrix will be updated. Bus transit service and operations is part of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Ken Erickson wondered where the trains would be stored. Mr. Rovang reported that this would depend on whether 2 or 3 car trains (Issue #5)

Joshua Bunker wondered whether there was a public involvement plan around each issue. Each issue is assigned “inform”, “input”, or “influence” that determines the public involvement level.

Margot Imdieke Cross wanted to know the timeline for the station location at the West Bank. The West Bank station will be brought to the CAC for discussion later this year along with the east bank stations.

Brant Ingalsbe wondered whether the technical group working on the issue matrix had enough time before the end of the year to cover all issues in a timely manner. Resolution teams have already started to work on some of the issues and all are expected to be delivered in time.

Jessica Treat asked to know whether 17B (Snelling) issue also covered the number of travel lanes on University and whether there would be additional traffic lights. The number of travel lanes will be addressed throughout the corridor and signalization will be improved.

Anne White asked how pedestrian concerns fit into the matrix and how those concerns would be resolved. Ms. White also wondered how access would be facilitated at station locations. Issue 35 on the matrix (pedestrian/bicycle access to station) is broader than just access to station and will cover pedestrian issues along the whole corridor.

Mark Fuhrmann revisited the March 15, 2007 presentation on the 3I's (input, inform, and influence items).

### **4. Station Discussion**

Dennis Probst reviewed the Central Corridor alignment map.

Anne White wondered whether the recommendation from the City of Saint Paul station area planning and the District Council Collaborative research would influence station locations. Arlene McCarthy clarified that the city's area planning would only focus on the land use around station and that the station locations have already been determined through the Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

(DEIS) process. Donna Drummond from Saint Paul Planning and Economic Development added that the City of Saint Paul was studying area planning only around the DEIS proposed stations.

Dennis Probst presented two station configurations:

1. Split side platform: Platform splits at intersection; east platform on east side of intersection and west platform on west side of intersection.
2. Center platform: platform is wider and trains operate on either side of the platform.

Ken Erickson, Veronica Burt, and Thao Mee Xiong wondered whether one platform worked better at facilitating transferring East to West and which platform was more pedestrian friendly. No platform was given preference as they both equally facilitate pedestrian access and transferring. On both platforms one must know whether he or she would like to travel eastbound or westbound before boarding the train.

Mr. Probst reviewed the configuration of six proposed stations:

- a) Dale: split side platform across Dale.
- b) Lexington: split side platform across Lexington Parkway
- c) Snelling: has three proposed alternatives and additional information will be brought back at future CAC meeting:
  - split platform across Snelling (DEIS preferred alternative)
  - split platform across Pascal
  - center platform between Asbury Street and Simpson Street.
- d) Fairview: center platform configuration
- e) Raymond: center side platform configuration
- f) Westgate: split side platform configuration

Readus Fletcher wondered what the platform sizes would be. Around 300 feet.

Metric Giles, Ann White, and Dave VanHattum wondered whether concurrence with the stations that are being discussed at this meeting would exclude adding stations at other locations such as Hamline, Victoria and Western, where some communities reportedly wanted stations added. Mr. Fuhrmann clarified that the stations being discussed at this meeting are DEIS approved and that adding stations beyond the DEIS proposed stations must go through a technical analysis then brought back to the CAC for discussion. It is very important that between now and when the technical analysis is available other stations be explored and engineered. Mr. Fuhrmann added that the Hamline station was a new item, and if both Co-Chairs permitted, it would be analyzed and brought back for discussion as well.

Veronica Burt wondered whether there would be gate arms at intersections and whether there would be a possible consolidation of stations downtown Saint Paul. Mr. Probst responded that this information was not yet available but it would be communicated when available.

Jeffrey Peltola pointed that there are topographical issues at the Westgate station and that the station seems to be located down the hill. This issue will be studied further.

John Wicks wondered why there were platforms on the east and west of the intersection; Mr. Wicks stated that buses dropped pedestrian further away from the stations. Eastbound trains pick up from east platform and westbound trains pick up from west platform; this type of platform is also called “far side platform,” and it allows left turns.

Brian Hanninen and Jessica Treat wondered whether Snelling could be engineered to accommodate future trains while keeping in mind that it has the potential of becoming a major transfer point. We could not speak to additional Light Rail Transit on Snelling, but our team knows that Snelling is the highest bus transfer point in the corridor.

Joshua Bunker wondered whether if the cost of bus connections is factored into the overall project cost. Mr. Fuhrmann mentioned that bus connections to LRT are funded by bus grants outside of the project budget.

Chip Welling was concerned about locating the Snelling Ave. station east of Snelling at Pascal or Simpson and then taking bus routes off Snelling to send them by the LRT station would increase travel time on the bus routes. He also asked if there would be delays in the northbound and southbound bus connections. Bus networks will be reengineered.

Anne White proposed a motion to postpone CAC confirmation of the locations and configuration of the Westgate, Raymond, Fairview, Lexington and Dale stations to allow for broader community discussion. Co-Chair Beach ruled the motion out of order due to the fact that these stations had been predetermined through the DEIS process.

## **5. Next Steps**

- Confirm location and configuration of stations
- Start engineering
  - \*Intersections
  - \*Track
  - \*Utilities
- Prepare for October CAC
  - \*Consistent station elements
  - \*Capitol area stations

Co-Chair Beach asked CAC members to submit additional comments on the forms provided. She also mentioned that CAC members were assigned homework to keep track and record their constituencies' concerns. A packet had been put together that contains Central Corridor information and your Community Outreach Coordinator contact information. Co-Chair Beach asked members to work closely with their Community Outreach Coordinators.

## **6. NEXT MEETING**

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for October 18, 2007.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Co-Chair Beach adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.

Prepared by Nkongo Cigolo, Community Outreach Coordinator

## Attachment 1: Future Meeting Topics

Responses to the following question: Identify the topics you are most interested in learning more about and presentation ideas for future CAC meetings.

- Flexibility in locating/adding stations (13)
- Reason for U tunnel (10)
- Job Opportunities (8) Noted need for 75 part time bus drivers and 26 mechanics due to transit demand following the collapse of the I-35 bridge, 8/16/07 CAC
- Issues of cost and under-lying assumptions (6) – Presented overview of project budget at 6/21/07 CAC meeting
- Connecting Bus Service (6) – Presented at 6/21/07 CAC meeting.
- Construction mitigation (6)
- Future expansion (cut short now or extend system in future) (5)
- Access to businesses and community services during construction (4)
- Environmental Justice Analysis (4) Initiated conversation 8/16/07 CAC; submitted summary memo at 9/20/07 CAC.
- Parking, including Hide and Ride (4)
- St. Paul's Development Plan (4) - Presented at 5/17/07 CAC meeting
- E.I.S. Presentation (3) - Presented at 7/19/07 CAC meeting.
- Station information including design (3) Presented Dale, Lexington, Snelling, Fairview, Raymond and Westgate station at 9/20/07 CAC. Station standard design and Capitol stations planned for 10/15/07 CAC
- Timelines with deadlines for decisions (3) Presented issues matrix at 9/20/07 CAC.
- Community Benefits Agreement (2)
- Gentrification (2)
- Historic sites along the line/route (2) - Pointed out historic buildings on 4/19/07 CAC tour.
- Residential development and safety (2)
- Signal pre-emption or prioritization for LRT (2)
- Summary Report on RFP process (procedure) (2)
- Access to line (1)
- Bike Lane (1)
- Techniques to reach all constituencies (1)
- Union Depot (1)
- Very detailed information must be provided (1)
- Visual simulations of corridor design (1) – Include at beginning of all CAC meetings.
- Working groups and clear outputs/products (1)
- Balance budget outcome with outcome of meeting people
- Best way to Reach ELL
- Communication Plan – Presented to the CAC on 3/15/07
- Discussion around overlapping service “sheds” for downtown stations vs. lack on parts of University (How was station placement determined).
- Equitable access
- Financing (other options)
- Streetscaping