

# Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee January 17, 2008

## Meeting Minutes

**Members Present:** Kirstin Beach (Co-chair), Jerry Blakey (Co-chair), Veronica Burt, Larry Englund, Ken Erickson, Denise Fosse, Metric Giles, Steve Grans, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hansen, Margot Indieke Cross, David Johnson, Jackie Lunde, Ken Rodgers, Art Sidner, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Dave VanHattum, Chip Welling, Anne White, John Wicks.

**Members Absent:** Fredrick Blocton, Kristen Denzer, Mohamed Egal, Readus Fletcher, Bree Halverson, Doug Hennes, Maricruz Hill, Karen Inman, Richard Kleinbaum, Xiong Pao Lee, Jeffrey Peltola, Nick Rosenberry, Rozanne Severance, Ross Skattum, Seng Tchaa, JoAnn Tesar, Chris Worthington, ThaoMee Xiong.

**Others Present:** Phil Anderson, Laura Baenen, Justin Bigelow, Joey Browner, Sam Buffington, Robin Kaufman, Michael Corbett, Donna Drummond, Mark Fuhrmann, Les Everett, Jessica Hill, Kent Hranicka, Harvey Jaeger, Dan Kravetz, Joe Scala, Shoua Lee, Shawn Leclair, Terry Olsen, Sarah Penman, Denny Probst, Rita Rodriguez, Dan Soler, Roderic Southall, Carol Swenson, VaMegn Thoj, Kyle Williams, Linda Winsor, Linda Youngwirth.

## 1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

### a. Chairs Reports

Co-Chair Jerry Blakey called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM. He asked if there were any changes to the December meeting minutes; none were mentioned.

Mr. Blakey announced CAC membership changes:

- Jacob McKnite, West Bank Community Council-resigned
- Hussein Samatar, African Development Corporation, was replaced by Mohamed Egal, Somali Community at West Bank.

Co-Chair Blakey thanked all CAC members for participation during last year; Mr. Blakey announced that in recognition for perfect attendance and setting up public meetings he would hand out certificates signed by Chair Peter Bell. Co-Chair Beach awarded certificate to Co-Chair Blakey, certificates also awarded to John Wicks, Larry Englund, Jessica Treat, Art Sidner, Richard Hanson, Metric Giles, Steve Grans, Jackie Lunde, Anne White, Chip Welling, Frederick Blocton, Ken Erickson, Readus Fletcher, Xiong Pao Lee, Jeffrey Peltola, Ken Rodgers, Rozanne Severance, Keith Thompson, and Dave VanHattum.

Co-Chair Beach reminded members that the Metropolitan Council listening sessions pertaining to the scope decisions will be held in February; she urged members to encourage their constituents to attend both public update meetings and listening sessions.

She mentioned that the Central Corridor Project Office met with the DCC and University United to discuss their proposal for a supplemental model. Community Outreach Coordinators attended. She recognized Community Outreach Coordinators' outstanding performance for having spoken to 15,000 people during 2007.

## b. Members Reports

Co-Chair Beach asked members to report community events and meetings related to the Central Corridor:

Anne White, District Councils Collaborative, read a letter into the minutes:

I would like to respond to Chair Bell's January 15th Star Tribune Op Ed piece, where he states that some community groups have called for "rebuilding all of University Avenue at a cost of more than \$50 million and adding three more stations along University at \$5.5 million apiece. And the list goes on from there."

This statement is extremely misleading. Community discussions have focused on adding stations at Western, Victoria, and Hamline; no one has tacked on rebuilding University Avenue at \$50 M as an additional request. The concern has always been, and remains, one of Transportation Equity and Environmental Justice for everyone along the corridor.

Chair Bell has also asked that the community "bring a spirit of compromise to the table". We believe we have done just that. After presenting solid research to justify added stations at Western, Victoria and Hamline, the community groups have:

- suggested supplemental modeling to give us more information about which combination of stations would best address issues of transportation equity and cost effectiveness;
- invited Chair Bell to speak to a community meeting on University Avenue; and
- requested that one of the Met Council's "Listening Sessions" be held on University Avenue.

The Met Council has declined these suggestions and opportunities to talk directly with the community about this most important issue. The community does want the line "built right". We stand ready to work with the Met Council to find solutions, so that the promise of a successful Central Corridor light rail line can be realized.

Anne White

Chair of the District councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis,  
Member of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee,

On behalf of the Transportation Equity and Stops for Us Campaign.

Larry Englund, LOCATE, read a recent resolution to the CAC:

The Board of Directors of the Capitol River Council (CRC) passed a resolution supporting the diagonal alignment as a preferred alignment for downtown St. Paul.

Through a process co-sponsored by CRC and the St. Paul Planning Commission, downtown leaders spent great time and thought crafting the downtown portion of the Central Corridor Development Strategy. Based on the work, the St. Paul City Council adopted an officially preferred route for light rail downtown. That alignment brings light rail from University Avenue, south on Robert Street, west on 12th Street, south on Cedar Street to 5th & Cedar, crossing the University Club block to 4th & Minnesota, and continuing eastward along 4th Street to a stop in front of Union Depot.

CRC strongly affirms its support for the light rail alignment outlined in the Central Corridor Development Strategy, and adopted by the St. Paul City Council. We urge the County, Met Council, State and Federal governments, at minimum, to support and build the light rail route laid out in the plan in the initial phase of light rail construction. We believe such a route is feasible within the federal cost effectiveness constraints, as it reduces the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI) by 39¢ over the existing proposal in the DEIS. Such a route is essential to solidify downtown St. Paul's long-term regional economic prospects.

Chip Welling, District 13, reported that early January he invited Community Outreach Coordinator Rita Rodriguez to attend District 13 board meeting; he mentioned that they had a very good discussion on the Central Corridor Project.

Dave VanHattum, Transit for Livable Communities, read a resolution to the CAC:

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We support the construction of the Central Corridor LRT by 2014. Support the addition of one or more stations on the east end of University with agreement from the City and community to increase development density. These stations will provide critical access for high concentrations of transit-dependent and people of color. And to consider consolidation of one or more stations locations elsewhere along the line to ensure appropriate station spacing and a competitive CEI for the FTA Grant Application

We support a “direct connection to St. Paul’s Union Depot”.

We recognize that securing necessary federal funding will require a price tag substantially lower than current estimates

- we support full reconstruction of University with funding to come from state and local sources, not FTA
- we oppose putting LRT in a tunnel at the U of M because a surface alignment will improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment along Washington Avenue

We Support passage of comprehensive transportation funding bill (HF946) which provides greatly expanded funding for transit (1/2 cent regional sales tax = \$200M/yr) and for roadway and street improvements.

## 2. PROJECT REPORTS

Staff gave technical reports on project issues.

Mark Fuhrmann reviewed the current re-estimates of the project cost, U of M East Bank Update and West Bank Station location update.

Mr. Fuhrmann reported next month (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 decision, which are due at the end of February. Following those decisions an application to enter final design will be submitted to Federal Transit Authority (FTA) late August 2008.

When the FTA granted the CCOP permission to enter into Preliminary Engineering the agency requested that the CCPO refined project costs and proposed three areas of adjustment:

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.

Jackie Lunde mentioned the inflation rate was not shown on the updated DEIS cost slide. Mr. Fuhrmann stated that cost was included in the adjusted contingency plan.

Metric Giles requested to know what the University Avenue reconstruction meant. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that it meant reconstruction of public right of way, which in most cases means from building face to building face along University Avenue.

Veronica Burt requested itemized cost for East Bank Tunnel, 4<sup>th</sup> Street Union Depot, and University Avenue reconstruction. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that \$150M estimated for the DEIS tunnel, \$72M for 4<sup>th</sup> Street connection to the front of Union Depot and \$55M for University Avenue reconstruction; all of which were included in the \$932M budget estimate.

Dave VanHattum asked whether increasing bus route 16-service would affect the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI). CEI calculation is affected by changes in bus transit service changes due to increase in operation costs and reduced LRT ridership.

Chip Welling asked whether the cost for maintenance facility, 3-car trains and 3-car platforms were included in the current cost estimates. The \$990M included substations, catenary and a support system maintenance facility for 2 car-trains only. It does not include 3-car trains and nor does it include 3-car platforms. Mr. Welling requested clarification on the January CCMC PowerPoint showing \$25M for reconstruction of University Avenue. The \$25M possible savings on reconstruction of University Avenue because the road bed is in excellent condition and would not need to be replaced.

Anne White asked whether the 600 additional riders shown under the ridership adjustment have been allocated to a specific station and if not how has that been allocated along the Corridor. The additional riders came from data correction.

Dan Soler reviewed the Hiawatha-Central Corridor connection, the reconstruction of right of way costs, and initial traffic signalization and street crossing plans.

Mr. Soler reported that the DEIS planned the Hiawatha-Central Corridor connection at the Metrodome; this entails crossing over to tracks to catch the west bound Central Corridor train. The first alternative (slide 16) shows the connection still at the Metrodome without crossing over the tracks, providing a smooth transfer from Hiawatha to Central Corridor. Slide 17 (with grade crossing) and slide 18 (no grade crossing) are two alternatives currently being studied that would stay away from the West Bank Station traffic, connecting along Hiawatha tracks, away from the Metrodome and would allow building additional storage tracks.

Co-Chair Beach wondered whether there would be a potential to add tracks at the new Gopher Stadium so that additional trains would be allocated to quickly move fans after a gaming event; Co-Chair Beach mentioned that Salt Lake had that capability. This is possible if additional tracks were built and is being looked into.

Ms. White wondered whether there was a necessity to acquire additional ROW for the connection alternatives. It was too early to make those assumptions.

Mr. Fuhrmann presented on the proposed West Bank Station; 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.

Mr. Fuhrmann presented on the East Bank alternatives; the DEIS assumes tunnel starting in front of Coffman Union and ending east of 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.

Jessica Treat asked why both alternatives projected only a 10% vehicle diversion. The traffic analysis that the University of Minnesota shared with the CCPO projected 10% vehicle diversion. Mr. Soler added that the University of Minnesota study showed that 80% of traffic's destination is somewhere on campus. That leaves only 20% of vehicles on Washington as pass through traffic.

Ms. White asked whether the CCPO was going to study the Northern alignment as requested by the University of Minnesota. Mr. Fuhrmann responded that Chair Peter Bell has agreed to study the alignment; the University of Minnesota would fund the study.

Mr. Soler presented on bridges and stated that both the Cedar Avenue Bridge and the 280-University Avenue Bridge will require reinforcement to support Central Corridor Trains.

Mr. Welling asked who would pay for utility relocation. Mr. Soler stated that only sewer and water relocation was included in the project cost. All other utility relation costs will be paid by the provider.

Ms. White asked what the timing for sidewalk reconstruction is. Mr. Soler stated that design and replacement would be done at the same time.

Mr. Giles asked whether alleyways parallel to University Avenue were going to be upgraded. Mr. Soler responded that was not part of the project.

Ken Erickson wondered whether the Marion Street crossing would create traffic issues. Mr. Soler responded that was not expected; traffic signals would be added to direct traffic and address safety as the track transitions to the south side of University.

Mr. Giles asked whether additional traffic lights would be installed to attain equitable distribution through all neighborhoods. Mr. Soler responded he was not sure traffic signal equity was included in the plan, but he reassured that additional traffic lights would be installed where needed.

Co-Chair Beach asked whether intersection traffic would back up into neighborhoods. Mr. Soler stated that the traffic signals being sought would have a priority component which would extend the green light for several seconds in order to allow rapid traffic flow.

Steve Grans asked what would prevent a driver from making a left turn from an undesignated location. Mr. Soler responded there would be curbs preventing unauthorized left turns.

Ms. White wondered whether the curb would prevent pedestrian from crossing. Pedestrian crossing would be designed to be ADA accessible.

Ms. Treat stated that the permitted crossing time needed to be adjusted as some groups of people like the disabled may not cross as fast.

Mr. Giles stated that crossing University is confusing even before the LRT and wondered whether crossing instructions would be provided when LRT gets built. Pavements, signals, and signs would assist people with crossing.

### **3. NEXT MEETING**

Next month's meeting is tentatively scheduled to include:

- Present the plans for the 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station – Input
- Present the plans for maintenance facility– Input

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2008 at 5:00 PM.

### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

Co-Chair Blakey adjourned the meeting at 7:00 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) Reported analysis on 12/20/2007 CAC agenda.
- Reason for U tunnel (10) Presented tunnel and at grade route at 11/15/2007 CAC meetings.
- 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. Forwarded CAC DBE press release 12/17/07.
- Issues of cost and under-lying assumptions (6) – Presented overview of project budget at 6/21/07 CAC meeting. Analysis and costs of additional stations on 12/20/2007 agenda.
- Connecting Bus Service (6) – Presented at 6/21/07 CAC meeting.
- Construction mitigation (6) Karri Plowman shared work of BAC at 10/18/2007 CAC.
- Future expansion (cut short now or extends system in future) (5). Presented potential routes to connect to Union Depot 11/15/2007 CAC
- Access to businesses and community services during construction (4) 1/17/08 CAC talked about University Ave. reconstruction.
- 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. Presented review of SDEIS on 11/15/07.
- 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. Discussed West Bank at 11/15/2007 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) 1/17/08 CAC presented initial traffic signalization and street crossing plans.
- Summary Report on RFP process (procedure) (2)
- Access to line (1)
- Bike Lane (1)
- Techniques to reach all constituencies (1) Brainstormed stakeholders and public involvement strategies at 2/15/07 CAC.
- Union Depot (1). Presented potential to connect to Union Depot 11/15/2007 CAC.
- Very detailed information must be provided (1)
- Visual simulations of corridor design (1) – Include at beginning of CAC meetings.
- Working groups and clear outputs/products (1). Started using workstation format at 10/18/2007 CAC.
- 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 - 1/17/08 CAC talked about University Ave. reconstruction.

## Attachment 1: CAC meeting January 17, 2008 - Feedback Sheet Comments

### 1. Results

Results tallied from feedback forms distributed toward end of meeting. Form asked members to grade overall meeting performance and today's meeting format on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was the lowest and 5 the highest. Grades are replicated in columns to the right.	Overall Meeting Performance	Today's Meeting Format
	4	4
	2	2
	4	4
	3	3
	4	4
	5	5
	4.5	4.5
	4	4
	4	4
	5	5
	4	4
	4	4
	4	4
	4	4
Average	4.0	4.0
Number of respondents	13	13

### 2. Comments

- Much better. Still not enough time to discuss. Need more time re ped and bicycle access and crossings.
- You give a lot of information that is too technical for the audience and still have not answered questions community members have asked about the Met Council. Please don't lecture us, but engage us. Also, what is going on with the funding, please keep us in the loop.
- Very good! I like the format of meeting over workstations.
- Ask what we want on the agenda, unresolved issues.
- I thought tonight's meetings was well executed and flowed well. Questions responded to ad kept to a minimum.
- Appreciate all the good work!
- Much better with audio description. Be careful with pointing landmarks and directions.
- Subjects were necessarily dry but well presented. Q&A was well handled.
- Best yet, I liked the return to meeting format of full group. Also, limited questions of non-CAC members.
- I appreciated the shift back to the large group format.
- Portable microphone users should be asked to keep the head of microphone pointed at the speakers to avoid the buzz.