

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee March 20, 2008

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kirstin Beach (Co-chair), Jerry Blakey (Co-chair) , Bill Carter, Larry Englund, Ken Erickson, Readus Fletcher, Denise Fosse, Metric Giles, Steve Grans, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hanson, Doug Hennes, Karen Inman, Jackie Lunde, Xiong Pao Lee, Jeffrey Peltola, Tim Schwarz, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Dave VanHattum, Chip Welling, Anne White, John Wicks, ThaoMee Xiong..

Members Absent: Fredrick Blocton, Veronica Burt , Kristen Denzer, Mohamed Egal, Maricruz Hill, Margot Imdieke Cross, David Johnson, Richard Kleinbaum, Ken Rodgers, Nick Rosenberry, Rozanne Severance, Art Sidner, Ross Skattum, Seng Tchaa, JoAnn Tesar, Chris Worthington,

Others Present:, Laura Baenen, Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Dana Dellis, Donna Drummond, Mona Elabbady, Mark Fuhrmann, Molly Grove, Jessica Hill, Harvey Jaeger, Linda Jungwirth, Shoua Lee, Al Lovejoy, Christina Morrison, Sarah Penman, Karri Plowman, Joe Scala, Dan Soler, Carol Swenson, VaMegn Thoj.

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- a. **Chairs Reports.** Introduced new CAC members, Bill Carter, with the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Tim Schwarz representing the West Bank Community Coalition.

Co-Chair Beach reported on the Met Council's February 27, 2008 meeting and noted a handout in their packets that summarizes the changes.

- b. **Members Reports**

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

Anne White, District Council Collaborative, indicated that the DCC would be submitting a data practices request for traffic studies.

- c. **Community Outreach Reports**

Dana Dellis, the community outreach coordinator for the downtown St. Paul area, reported that she is meeting with downtown residents, businesses and property owners. The purpose of the meetings is to update them about Central Corridor and identify issues such as access to buildings and parking ramps. She also reported that several of the CCPO staff would be meeting with St. Paul School District to talk about safety and identify issues or impact and mentioned that all the outreach coordinators became certified for safety training education.

Jessica Hill, outreach coordinator for the UofM area and surrounding neighborhoods reported on recent meetings with the West Bank community to give a project update and Prospect Park regarding the 29th Avenue Station.

Co-Chair Beach reported that Roderic Southall has been hired to work with DBE program and has created a DBE brochure that was handed out at the CAC meeting. Co-Chair Beach noted the brochure was also posted online along with a link to the Met Council's DBE website.

- d. **BAC report**

Karri Plowman, Central Corridor Partnership, gave the BAC report. The BAC received a similar presentation. BAC members expressed concern over impact on parking and flexibility of the desirable design elements. Also reported on the business community's efforts to develop a business mitigation plan.

2. PROJECT REPORTS

Dan Soler presented information about the University Avenue design elements.

He presented the mandatory and desirable design principles and reviewed two street cross sections before pausing for questions.

Jessica Treat asked why 2 lanes were mandatory for east and west bound traffic? Traffic volumes today exceed 20,000 vehicles per day which exceeds design standards for one lane. Two lanes are needed for traffic volumes of 16,000 cars per day or more. Number of trucks and buses and well as the number of traffic lights requires 2 lanes for through traffic movement.

Xiongpaoo Lee requested visual graphics showing the ins and outs. Mr. Soler asked that he hold that request, we'll be showing more graphics later in the presentation.

Anne White asked about the scope of the traffic studies for the Washington Ave. transit mall. The question was deferred, traffic studies will be presented at a future CAC meeting.

Ken Erickson, asked if these principles apply east of Rice Street. The principles apply between the 29th Ave. to Rice Street stations.

John Wick asked what the minimum standard is for spacing of tracks; can they be closer. With the catenaries in the middle of the track, the tracks are as close as possible.

Jack Lunde asked if buses will be stopping in the traffic lanes or in a bus pull out. Buses will be stopping in the right lane or in the right turn lane.

Jessica Treat noted that studies have shown that it is quicker for buses to pause in the through lane to allow passenger to get off versus pulling in and out of traffic. She also asked if the lanes could be designed at 10' instead of 11'. Ten feet is the standard width for roadway, decreasing the width would require a variance from Ramsey County.

Mr. Soler reviewed the principles in more detail including traffic signals, pedestrian crossings and turn lanes before breaking for questions again.

Richard Hanson expressed concern over U-turns from left turn lanes. Left turns would only be allowed with a green arrow to ensure that vehicle traffic has the right of way and trains are stopped and pedestrians do not have a walk sign.

Ken Erikson asked if refuge areas would be on both sides of the track. At signalized crossings, the light would be long enough for pedestrians cross without having to stop at a refuge spot. At non-signalized crossings, both sides of the track would include a refuge area that meets ADA requirements.

Anne White asked if non-signalized crossings would be at intersection or midblock? Non-signalized crossings will only be at intersections for safety reasons.

Metric Giles noted that currently street crossing is chaotic and rules are not enforced. He suggested we implement an education program.

Dan Soler reviewed the impacts to on-street parking.
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Keith Thompson asked about the height of the curb. Typical curb height will be 6”.

Metric Giles asked about impacts to the residential areas and about use of alley for through traffic. We haven’t broken it into residential and business areas, staff are looking at impacts along the corridor. Staff will look at impacts.

Xiongpao Lee asked as we review impacts block-by-block, how CAC members can be involved. Robin Cauffman asked CAC members to assist in setting up or hosting meetings with impacted stakeholders.

Bill Carter noted that snow accumulation in the winter time could increase loss of on street parking and expressed concern about wheel chair access. Stations will be ADA accessible and rail operations and maintenance staff will be responsible for clearing the stations.

Richard Hanson suggested having St. Paul and Metro Transit police enforcing jaywalking by issuing warnings and then tickets.

Ken Erikson asked if the secondary access adds operational costs. Additional cost of maintenance is minimal.

Larry Englund asked if people will be able to cross anywhere. We are working with the city staff to design something to deter people from crossing anywhere but signalized and non-signalized pedestrian crossing areas.

Jackie Lunde suggested that the design should maximize on street parking where ever possible.

Chip Welling noted that adding the train to University Ave. is going to make dramatic changes; encouraged people to consider the tradeoffs and suggested CCPO study the utilization of on-street parking. He also suggested looking at adding meters.

Readus Fletcher said he was concerned pedestrian safety at non-signalized crossing.

Keith Thompson and Jeff Peltola suggested looking at shared parking opportunities or meters.

Jessica Treat stated that the non-signalized pedestrian crossings and secondary station access are important. She said that it seems like there is an oversupply of parking and suggested looking at shared parking or charging for parking. She suggested focusing on the pedestrian realm.

Larry Englund suggested at looking into new ways for metered parking and expressed concern about pedestrian and bike access.

Jackie Lunde said she is concerned on-street parking. She acknowledged that long term there will be more transit friendly, however concerned about short term impact to existing businesses.

Karen Inman said she is concerned about the impact to small and minority businesses as well as hide-and-riders in residential areas. She asked that planners look at impacts 2-3 blocks from the corridor.

John Wicks asked to maintain as many on-street parking spaces as possible to avoid impacts to small businesses.

Bill Carter concerned about pedestrian safety and suggested including fences or barriers to prevent people from crossing in undesignated areas.

Metric Giles said that the presentation was helping visualize the corridor and suggested doing a walking tour from Rice to Snelling to get a better sense of the street.

Denise Fosse expressed concern over environmental impacts and suggested keeping as many non-signalized crossings as possible.

Xiongpaoo Lee expressed concern about impacts to the residential areas.

ThaoMee Xiong expressed concern over impacts to small businesses and stated that she thinks LRT is an important step and that the three infill stations will reduce demand for parking.

3. NEXT MEETING

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for April 17, 2008 at 5:00 PM.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Beach asked that CAC members turn in their comments sheets and adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Prepared by Robin Cauffman, Manager of Public Involvement

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. Handed out new DBE brochure and notified CAC that DBE links added to website, 3/20/08.
- 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) Discussed at 3/20/08 CAC meeting
- St. Paul's Development Plan (4) Presented at 5/17/07 CAC meeting.
- EIS Presentation (3) Presented at 7/19/07 CAC meeting. Presented review of SDEIS on 11/15/07. Noted SDEIS timeline at 3/20/08 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. Discussed West Bank at 11/15/2007 CAC.
- Timelines with deadlines for decisions (3) Presented issues matrix at 9/20/07 CAC. Noted SDEIS timeline and municipal consent dates at 3/20/08 CAC meeting.
- 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) Outreach staff reported at 3/20/08 CAC meeting that they received safety certification and will be putting together a safety program.
- Signal pre-emption or prioritization for LRT (2) 1/17/08 CAC presented initial traffic signalization and street crossing plans. Talked about signalization at 3/20/08 CAC.
- Summary Report on RFP process (procedure) (2)
- Access to line (1) Discussed pedestrian access at 1/17/08 and 3/20/08 CAC meetings.
- 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. Showed visualization of 5 block segment of corridor with potential design elements at 3/20/08 CAC meeting.
- 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 2: Responses

Given the mandatory constraints of maintaining 2 lanes of vehicle traffic in each direction, station location, platform configuration, and longer turn lanes at signalized intersections, what are your suggestions for balancing the following:

- On street parking
- Non-signalized pedestrian crossings
- Secondary platform access
- Lane shifts
- Interim use of infill stations

Following is a summary of the CAC comments:

Lane Size Issues and Comments

- I do not accept that two 11' lanes in both directions are mandatory. This is a 100 year project and we need to be giving as much space as we can to the pedestrian realm, not vehicles. Claiming that 2/11' lanes is mandatory, takes away space that could go to sidewalks.
- I've driven on 10 foot lanes and given how busy University Avenue is, I would not recommend them. It can be very uncomfortable driving. I try to avoid these streets.
- I have read and heard about areas around the country that are reducing lane widths to 10' and reducing travel lanes to a single lane in both directions, with turn lanes – at traffic volumes above 20,000 vehicles.

Pedestrian Crossing Issues and Comments

- Serving the pedestrian realm is going to do the most to create a vibrant avenue and that should be the priority, not moving people in cars. If traffic becomes more congested, maybe more people will get out of their cars and use the LRT as well as buses, bikes and walking.
- You should consider posting signs along the avenue near the non-signalized crossings that way “State law requires motorists to stop for Pedestrians in the crosswalk”. You need pedestrian crossing every block to keep from alienating one side of the avenue from the other side! The median/divider that keeps people from crossing when not at a crosswalk should be safe and attractive. Rather than a concrete barrier, make it an ornamental (short) fence.
- . Non-signalized pedestrian crossing, it would be a good idea to work them into the plan. Secondary platform access, if necessary, work them into plan.
- Non-signalized pedestrian crossings, we would need less parking if there were more stations or better access to public trains. Secondary platform access; is this safe, considering how crazy people can get when racing to catch their train. The secondary platform access might encourage this kind of behavior.
- Non-signalized pedestrian crossings, is very important
- Secondary platform access should be evaluated on high use stations(i.e. Rice, Snelling and Dale, etc.)
- I encourage frequent Non-signalized pedestrian crossings. Human nature and a disregard for pedestrian rules may stimulate people to cross any where that they want to. Only law enforcement “ticketing” could possibly stop “Jay Walking” or crossing anywhere. Secondary platform access is a great idea. I encourage as much flexibility as possible in station access and design.
- Need to balance and have enough signalized crossings, especially focusing on those with physical challenges.
- Maximize Non-signalized pedestrian crossings as well as Secondary platform access. Non signalized crossings are important and should be maximized. Secondary platform access is very necessary and should be maximized.

Parking Issues and Comments

- Concerning the following issues, On-street parking, look at nearby parking & distance between available parking.
- Lane shifts, I don't think lane shifts will be a problem, and people will get used to it. Interim use of the infill station, just make sure it works.
- Concerning On-street parking, I would prefer to see that the engineers minimize the possibility of accidents than have on-street parking. Meaning, I would rather forego 1 or 2 parking spots and keep the flow of traffic running smoothly and minimize the number of pedestrians getting in and out of cars.
- In talks with the city, seriously explore adding city owned off street parking (where need pays), like Lake Street and Lyndale in Minneapolis.
- When and what type of street parking? What is the compensation for parking lost? Break down of parking – residential, business, visitor and customer?
- A high priority should be given to providing as much on street parking as possible in areas where small business exist that are along Union Avenue. Less priority in areas where off street parking exists.
- Less emphasis concerning On-street parking;
- Maximize parking with used lane shifts, but make it expensive to park. Make sure pedestrians are sufficient and safe. Look at Portland Oregon for their use of parking meters.
- University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute has good chunk of federal monies for Innovative parking pricing. (Contact Dave VanHattum for more information.) Start now with city to aggressively pursue better parking pricing.
- On-street parking - Major changes on parking use could be implanted as the project gets built
- Please do not take away on street parking in front of subway at 2121 University Avenue St Paul.
- Please do not put parking meters along the avenue. (GABA just voted it down)
- On street parking &/or Bike lanes serve to buffer the sidewalks from moving traffic and therefore improve the pedestrian experience.

Lane Shifts Issues and Comments

- Lane shifts, I think the fewer lane shifts the better. The biggest concern is safety of pedestrians, especially with regard to the elderly, mothers with baby strollers and the disabled. The biggest concern is safety of pedestrians, especially with regard to the elderly, mothers with baby strollers and the disabled.
- I foresee problems with lane shifts. A driver will have to be paying close attention 100% of the time to be aware when lane shifts. In a snow storm, when painted lane markers get covered, traffic will be severely hindered. The lane shifts will encourage people to drive slower.
- Minimizing lane shifts seems to be best solution.
- Lane shifts, I have no problems with, but curb height should be high enough to keep cars off tracks.
- Allowing temporary parking for x number of years would be great use of these areas.
- I would use the area at proposed infill stations in the same manner as if the station never existed because there is no guarantee that the infill stations will ever be built. That is pessimistic, but if rosier economic times return between now and when it opens.
- Interesting concept- need more traffic signals and not the additional stops. I think we didn't learn much from Hiawatha where a major complaint was that traffic was really hindered. Some concern that there is stone Walling, hope this is not so. Maintenance issue from the business trash removal.
- The plan outlined seems to be the most efficient temporary use of infill stations.

Misc. Comments and Questions

- Education around using LRT.
- Suggest walking tours from Snelling east should be done.
- Do the walking tour as suggested by metric.
- No strong opinions.
- Design team's approach and strategies to get community input, even block-by-block seems sound.
- Is University West (Mpls) past Hubbard Broadcasting the same with 120 feet width? Who is the owner of University Avenue – Ramsey County or St Paul?
- Public Education and enforcement.
- Snow removal system.
- Alley maintenance directly north and south of University Avenue?
- I'm not sure landscaping would be practical in the small amount of area available.
- It would be interesting to have a presentation on whether or not the traffic counts have decreased along the Hiawatha line and whether it can be attributed to move people riding the LRT versus driving.

Attachment 3: CAC meeting March 20 17, 2008 – Meeting Feedback

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
	4	4
	4	4
	4	4
	4	4
	4	4
	4	4
	4	4
	3	3
	3	3
	4	3
	4	4
	4	4
	5	5
Average	3.9	3.8
Number of respondents	13	13

2. Comments

- Good Job!
- The videos of traffic moving were more effective in understanding the pavement, crosswalks, road shifts and parking then the plans.
- Important information. Questions were great. Would like to have more questions answered.
- Real dialogue! We need to address some of the issues previously brought up in terms of access to the anticipated economic growth and development. We need to have more conversations where the committee can provide input and the council can respond and interact with members.
- Timeline needs to be sensitive to people/community versus just what the Metropolitan Council agenda is.