

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee August 21, 2008

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kirstin Beach, Denise Fosse, Larry Englund, Ken Erickson, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hansen, Jackie Lunde, Rozanne Severance, Tim Schwarz, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Chip Welling.

Members Absent: Fredrick Blocton, Veronica Burt, Doug Carlson, Bill Carter, Mohamed Egal, Ann Finseth, Readus Fletcher, Missy Gettel, Metric Giles, Steve Grans, Doug Hennes, Maricruz Hill, Margot Imdieke Cross, Karen Inman, Karl Karlson, Richard Kleinbaum, Xiong Pao Lee, Ken Rodgers, Seng Tchaa, JoAnn Tesar, Pete Vang, Dave VanHattum, Kevin Wendt, Anne White, John Wicks, Chris Worthington.

Others Present: Robin Caufman, Joey Browner, Eve Vang, Shoua Lee, Jessica Hill, Dana Dellis, Rita Rodriguez, Kent Hranicka, Laura Baenen, Dan Soler, Jim Alexander, Gary Erickson,

1) MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Kirstin Beach called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM and asked if anyone had changes to the July meeting minutes. There were no changes proposed.

2) REPORTS

Chair's Report

Chair Beach welcomed the new CAC members:

- Karl Karlson represent CapitolRiver Council
- Pete Vang, Hmong Business Association
- Kevin Wendt, Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
- Ann Finseth, Central Presbyterian Church and St. Louie King of France Catholic Church

She announced the resignation of Patricia Carlson from District 6 and Dave Johnson from Snelling-Selby Business Association.

CAC Members Report

Ms. Beach asked what people thought about the special artists introduction meeting held on July 31st.

Jackie Lunde stated that she was impressed with a few of the artists. It was good to get familiar with the artists. She was concerned that we couldn't ask too many questions.

Richard Hansen commented that the process is fuzzy and intangible right now, but it is a good step forward.

Chip Welling noted that it was good to see a few landscape artists and hopes a one of them are selected.

Outreach Coordinators Report

Hue Pham introduced herself as the new Community Outreach Coordinator for the Snelling and Lexington stations and surrounding area. She has worked for Children's Home Society and Family Services in Vietnam and Thailand in adoption services as well as 9 years of experience with IBM and ATT. She has experience with the Vietnamese community and served as a consultant for Wilder and Saint Paul Foundations.

Robin Cauffman stated that Ms. Pham will be replacing Nkongo who left in May. The community outreach team is now complete with a total of eight outreach staff.

Dana Dellis report that she is working with the two historic churches in downtown St. Paul, the Central Presbyterian and St. Louis King of France Catholic Church. She took them on a LRT tour of Hiawatha, so they could see how it runs downtown Minneapolis. She also led a bus tour of the Central Corridor LRT route on the return trip back to their churches. Kathryn O'Brien, Mark Fuhrmann, and Jessica Hill also attended to answer questions about vibration impacts.

Chair Beach asked about the concerns they had prior to the tour. Ms. Dellis answered that most people were worried about pedestrian accessibility and vibrations at the 10th street station on the east side of the street in front of the churches. Chair Beach asked the opinions were after the tour? They were still a bit concerned about it being on Cedar Street and want to work on mitigation with Metropolitan Council.

Richard Hansen questioned the level of impact to the churches noting that the St. Louis Church has a large parking lot and a rear entrance and the Presbyterian Church has an alley and a front entrance with an alley.

Ms. Dellis continued with her community outreach report, stating that the outreach staff recently became certified with Operation Life Savers (OLS), which is a federal program specifically focused on addressing safety issues around trains, commuter rail and light rail transit. She showed an example of coloring sheets made by OLS that the outreach team has handed out at community fairs. We have also already started identifying schools on the corridor to work with them on developing a safety education program.

3) PROJECT UPDATES

Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Kathryn O'Brien provided an update on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We held meetings on August 4th at the Wilder building, August 7th at the Brian Coyle Center, and August 9th at Goodwill. About 70 people attended the hearings, which were formal and recorded. Comments will be published on the website. The most prominent themes heard at the hearings were: parking concerns, questions about project benefits, the three infill stations, Bus 16 frequency, negative gentrification effects, pedestrian safety, and having the LRT as something that unifies the community as opposed to divide. There are 42 comments received as of today. Comment period ends on August 25th.

Chip Welling asked if parking plays a big part of the scope project in the SDEIS? It's not one of the focus areas but it is discussed in Chapter 6 under the Transportation section.

Mr. Hansen asked when the number of parking loss first came out to the people of Saint Paul? Robin Caufman replied that we presented the numbers to the CAC and the BAC back in March of 2008. Ms. O'Brien stated that a large part of the parking loss is due to increased pedestrian crossings that were added based on community input as part of the DEIS hearings and more recent public meetings. Ms. Beach added that the 3-car platform also modified future available parking spaces.

Jackie Lunde asked where the substation would be located in Saint Anthony Park. Ms. Caufman noted that the engineers are preparing specific locations as part of the September submittal and design plans. We are currently working on a list of parcels and are planning to talk to property owners first before sharing the information publicly.

CEI/Budget Update

Rich Rovang provided an update on the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI). The CEI ratio is made up of different factors: the increase in annualized capital cost in addition to bus and rail operating costs divided by annual travel time savings. The 2007 threshold to be eligible for federal funding was \$23.99; however, the Federal Transit Administration raised it in June to \$24.49. The CEI currently exceeds the threshold therefore we will need to bring project capital costs down to reduce the CEI to meet the FTA guidelines. The CEI will be updated before the September deadline.

Denise raised a few questions regarding the calculation of the annual times savings. It was clarified that increased travel time savings in the denominator decreases the overall number, and the annual times savings can only be determined by knowing all the numbers. The CEI is a cost per hour of travel time savings.

4) TECHNICAL REPORTS

On-Street Parking Report

Robin Caufman gave an update on parking analysis by presenting the presentation that has also given to project partner staff, the business community leaders, CCMC, BAC, and DCC Executive Board.

Jessica Treat asked if we were going to redevelop surface parking lots. The City of Saint Paul's PED is looking at underground ramps and north-south parking options.

Ms. Caufman continued, stating that the community outreach coordinators are still accepting business surveys from the community. Please note that we have identified 1,170 businesses and received 220 surveys from those; however, there are situations where we talked to business managers in charge of large office buildings with smaller businesses within, like the Court International building. We recently attended a meeting held by Greater Frogtown and are continuously working with the city and business leaders on parking mitigation issues. As of August 2008, there are four critical areas that will have the most impact. We hope to post the report on parking analysis online soon.

Ms. Treat inserted that this study will be good for pedestrians as well.

Caufman added that the City of St. Paul put together a toolkit that includes: metering, short-term parking, and identified parking districts to discourage hide and riders. This has been well-

received by the businesses. We have also looked at the potential to take out pedestrian crosswalks, but that would only give back about 6 parking spots and will lose secondary access to the CCLRT. The Midway Chamber of Commerce has offered to help small businesses with the application process for variance. The BAC is working with the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative to try to come up with solutions to help businesses through some of their impacts.

Jackie Lunde is concerned about shared parking between business owners because there could be a cost associated with leasing spaces. Is there anything being done to offset that cost? There are no funds in the project budget to subsidize parking lease. Do we have an idea of how many businesses will have to go out and lease parking? No.

Kent Hranicka replied that we only have the number of businesses that don't have access to parking who have reported to us through the surveys. Ms. Caufman added that 85% of businesses have access to off-street parking.

Ms. Treat commented that we have done an excellent job with parking research; however, she is concerned that the parking loss will take away a buffer needed for the sidewalk environment in safety and daily pedestrian activities. Streetscape design will include a 4-foot part of the sidewalk to act as a buffer and 6 feet of walkway. Within the 4 feet will be the street lights, signage and bus shelters. There will also be a 2 foot curb and gutter to provide further separation.

Chip Welling stated that we did a good job and it seems like a lot of work and wanted to know how many parking spaces were needed in the 4 critical areas? Mr. Welling noted that the study shows all supply and not enough information about the demand. Ms. Caufman stated that research shows that there is some existing usage of the north-south parking.

Ms. Lunde asked the City to address and asked if they had money set aside to address parking issues?

Josh Williams from PED said that they are committed to helping with the problem and is taking the issue very seriously.

Mr. Welling stated that he believes that City of St. Paul should provide parking; given their investment in the CCLRT and that the project shouldn't be expected to carry all of the costs.

Rozanne Severance inserted that the City of Minneapolis has their own existing parking problems too, because of Hiawatha LRT, such as parking in the neighborhoods. The City of Saint Paul has already been looking at the problem of parking overflow into the neighborhoods and is working on that too.

Brian Hanninen commented that without public finance, businesses and residents will end up paying for underground parking. Over time, many of the businesses won't be here in 15 years. How far out are we looking for these businesses? The City's development plans are 20-30 year plans.

Traffic Study #5.1

Ms. Caufman reviewed Traffic Study #5.1 referring to the slides.

Ms. Treat commented that the result of "failing" intersections considers only automobile traffic, but doesn't include bikers or pedestrians.

Welling referred to the LRT line in Seattle where the train runs down the middle of the street and has two through lanes of traffic.

A question was raised whether some heavy posts or something substantial could be put between the through traffic and the sidewalk for pedestrian safety?

Ms. Treat added that other places in the nation have 20 feet sidewalks to have a good pedestrian environment. Putting in a wider sidewalk now will be less expensive than expanding it later due to demand.

4) ADJOURNMENT

Robin Caufman announced that the project office will hold a DBE mixer on September 25th at 3:00-6:00pm at the Central Corridor Project Office.

Mr. Hanson asked how much of the mitigation money went to the U of M? The U of M, the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and Metropolitan Council identified improvement needs. The funds were necessary for road improvements to mitigate traffic impacts due to the closure of Washington Ave. to general traffic and conversion to a transit/pedestrian mall. Some funds will also be used to mitigate vibrations and electro-magnetic impacts. The MOU was discussed at the July 17 CAC meeting; Ms. Caufman said she would distribute a copy to the CAC members.

Mr. Welling asked if the new CEI will be in the FTA submittal on September 5th. Yes. Ms. Caufman said she would send an email to CAC members updating them on the project cost and CEI.

Robin said that the community outreach department will be at the Minnesota State Fair again this year and asked people to stop by the Metro Transit booth in the Grand Stand.

Ms. Severance asked that for the next meeting please define abbreviations. We will bring the acronym sheets to the next CAC meeting.

Kirstin Beach adjourned the meeting at 6:47pm.

Next meeting: September 18, 2008, 5:00-7:00pm.