

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee December 18, 2008

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kirstin Sersland Beach, Veronica Burt, Larry Englund, Ken Erickson, Ann Finseth, Missy Gettel, Metric Giles, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hanson, Doug Hennes, Karl Karlson, Jackie Lunde, Ken Rodgers, Rozanne Severance, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Pete Vang, Kevin Wendt, Chip Welling, Anne White, John Wicks.

Others Present: Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Donna Drummond, Peter Hansen Roess, Kent Hranicka, Linda Jungwirth, Rita Rodriguez, Joe Scala, Dan Soler, Eve Vang.

1) MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Kirstin Beach, CAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM and asked if anyone had changes to the October meeting minutes.

Anne White requested that three issues be reviewed from last month's minutes: (1) the definition of "level of service F" under Downtown St. Paul Traffic Modeling on page three, paragraph two; (2) an explanation for "other spots can be dropped off" under University Avenue Traffic Modeling on page three, paragraph two; and (3) Jim Alexander's statement under Washington Ave Transit/Ped Mall on page four, paragraph five. Kirstin Beach stated that we will take that a look at those and make changes.

Chair Beach continued with the chair's report and welcomed Julie Washenburger from the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living to the CAC.

Next, Ms. Beach thanked the CAC members for volunteering to serve on the committee. She distributed certificates to the members in appreciation for their commitment and attendance at the meetings held this year. She reminded the members to share the information they receive at the CAC with the organizations that you represent. We have received a couple of phone calls from people stating that they haven't been given information and we encourage you to report back as a representative.

Missy Gettel asked if you would notify the CAC members if the organization they represent asks about their performance. Yes, and we have done so before. It's important that CAC members pass on to their organizations the most updated information about the project that you get at the CAC monthly meetings.

2) COMMUNITY REPORTS

Ms. Beach asked for any reports from the CAC members.

Jackie Lunde presented a letter from the St. Anthony Park Community Council regarding the TPSS/Signal Bungalow locations.

Robin Caufman noted that project office staff already talked to SPACC staff about the community concerns. Rita Rodriguez, the outreach coordinator for that area, and Dan Soler will be attending the January SAPCC meeting to talk about the TPSS and signal bungalows. .

Ms. White stated that the District Council Collaborative of Saint Paul will be requesting the project office meet with the district councils and the neighborhood associations regarding the placement of TPSS/Signal Bungalow structures. She added that she had met with Kathryn O'Brien regarding the FEIS and learned

that the document will acknowledge impacts on the eastern end of the avenue. She also asked that the community be involved in the process of identifying mitigation. She suggested that the process come through the CAC and the local communities, particularly District 8 and District 7, to come up with recommendations to include in the FEIS.

In response, Ms. Beach stated that we will add that to the future agenda.

Larry Englund stated the Capitol River Council's concern for the placement of the Operations and Maintenance Facility in lower town, in the midst of a residential area. He noted that the Capitol River Council will be holding a meeting about this.

Kevin Wendt stated that he felt that the design charrettes were not inclusive of the student body and asked why the second charrette canceled? Ms. Gettel added that she serves on the UofM's bike committee and noted that they prefer the option with bike space. She also said she was disappointed with the cancellation of the second design charrette, but thanked the project office for sending out representation from the project office to speak to our students about the project.

Dan Soler responded that we were unable to hold the second design charrette because the City of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Council, and the U of M have not reached a consensus on basic operational characteristics (i.e. busses running on the track or not). We will reschedule the second design charrette.

Missy Gettel, who is a part of the design charrette representing the bike committee at the U of M, asked to clarify what Option A and B were from the design charrette.

Dan Soler responded that Option A or B had different scenarios with elements of space for trains, emergency vehicles, bikes, and busses. The difference between A and B were how the stations were configured.

Peter Hansen Roess, a professional systems engineer, asked for an opportunity to address the CAC. He talked about energy efficiency for a light rail and utility relocation concerns in the downtown area.

Robin Cauffman reported that the station art committees are now formed. Confirmation letters were sent out today. We are still looking for a few more members for a few station locations. We hope to hold the visioning sessions in January. Ms. Cauffman also highlighted several public meetings that the outreach staff have held in regards to noise vibrations, OMF, and utility relocation to answer people's questions and concerns.

Eve Vang gave an update on the business listening sessions. Recently, we held a Hmong business listening session at CAC member, Pete Vang's building, Vang Dental Clinic. Many good ideas were shared including marketing strategies for minority-owned businesses, such as displaying merchandise to attract customers, etc... These ideas were prompted by a brainstorming activity led by Karri Plowman from the Central Corridor Partnership. We have compiled a list from all of the sessions and hope to distribute the at a future CAC meeting.

Ken Rodgers asked if we can talk about what is going on with MPR. Ms. Beach responded that we will be able to give you an update next month, but don't have any information that can be shared right now. Ms. Cauffman noted that there is a meeting taking place right now regarding a park between Central Presbyterian

Ms. White asked when the business mitigation plan will be ready.

Ms. Caufman replied that Karri Plowman is coordinating that effort and collaborating with a variety of groups, i.e....University Ave Business Preparation Corporation, Funders' Collaborative, etc...to come together to see who can do what, and work towards a coordinated mitigation plan. We were also waiting on wrapping up the business listening sessions in order to see what the needs are from the businesses and the community.

3) PROJECT UPDATES

Parking Update

Dan Soler gave an update on parking, reviewing slides 7 and 8 of the presentation . Parking is an issue that requires joint effort to come up with solutions. A Parking Solutions Team was formed. They have spent the last few months looking at "critical areas" based on a list of considerations and drafting a new report with recommended solutions.

Karl Karlson asked if the project office has talked businesses about the issue. Yes, outreach coordinators have personally visited, phone called, and mailed/distributed surveys to businesses and organizations on the corridor.

Chip Welling asked what the travel demand assessment was for each building? How many people walk, bike, drive, or take transportation to get to their destination? Will your study include this information?

Mr. Soler stated that mode of transportation is one of the considerations. Encouraging transit use for businesses or organizations that have clients or customers that may be able to take advantage of that is being looked at as a possible solution. However, some businesses or organizations have people that do not use transit as a mode of transportation and other areas where there is a large amount of parking.

Mr. Welling asked if there will be actual counts of usage. Those counts would be helpful in identifying potential areas where we could have some shared parking

Veronica Burt asked when the Parking Solutions Team will have a final report with recommendations ready for public view. A report with potential solutions will be done around February.

Anne Finseth asked if the report includes downtown. The report focuses on University Ave. where on-street parking is a larger issue; downtown's parking ramps will remain in supply and accessible for people. Ms. Finseth noted that without on-street parking people will have to pay for overnight parking in the downtown ramps

4) TECHNICAL REPORTS

Traction Power Substations & Signal Bungalows

Dan Soler reviewed slides 8-34 of the presentation regarding the Traction Power Substations (TPSS) and Signal Bungalows. Traction Power Substations house the electrical power. Signal Bungalows contain the electronic equipment that are used in operating the LRT.

Veronica Burt asked if they are located 500 feet or less from track or the stations. From the track.

What's the distance from a TPSS to another TPSS? They're located about a mile apart because if they are farther apart than 5000 feet, it loses its ability to supply electricity to the track.

Anne White asked what "vehicular access" means. It means a maintenance vehicle, usually a pick-up truck, has to access the TPSS at least once every day.

John Wicks asked what happens if the electricity goes out? Is there a battery back-up to help them move a certain distance out of the way? Ms. Lunde asked if there will be a generator in case the power goes out. There is no battery back up or generator. If only one TPSS is out of commission, the adjacent TPSS can provide sufficient power.

Ms. Finseth asked whether there will be enough power from the substations for the infill stations when they are constructed. Yes, there will be.

Veronica Burt asked for clarification, can the TPSS provide sufficient power for the infill stations, assuming that they are constructed? Yes.

Pete Vang asked if the TPSS or signal bungalows will be blend into the neighborhood. Will it be aesthetically attractive?

Mr. Soler used this question to transition into the next slide showing a picture of a standard substation: 14 feet by 45 feet, and 11 feet tall. The reason why the area around and including TPSS is 40 feet by 80 feet is because there needs to be room for the maintenance vehicle to park and includes a grounding area for electricity.

Ms. Burt asked if the TPSS will be encased in a building and if the electrical current of the TPSS and signal bungalows are dangerous to residents?

The TPSS and Signal Bungalows will be encased and screened, but design will be specific to their locations. For example, some areas have existing trees to screen and others may not. In response to the second question, Mr. Soler said we will report back to the CAC regarding safety.

Missy Gettel gave an example of the TPSS on Nicollet Island near a residential area. She doesn't believe there are hazardous electrical waves emitting from the TPSS when she walks by with her iPod and no reaction occurs.

Ken Erickson asked if there will be a lock to prevent people from breaking in. Yes, they are locked and secure.

Pete Vang brought up the potential problem of graffiti. Robin Cauffman stated that the metal material housing the TPSS is a surface that can be cleaned if graffiti occurs. Mr. Vang asked if a TPSS can be housed in another existing building or on top of a building. Yes, there are several TPSS on Hiawatha that are located in or order another building such as the Mall of America parking ramp.

Ken Rodgers asked how much noise TPSS make. Mr. Soler stated that there isn't much of a difference between noise from a TPSS and noise from an air conditioner. The noise is generated from the air conditioner attached to the TPSS for cooling.

Ms. Burt asked if the locations are final and whether project staff had talked to the property owners. Mr. Soler stated that we have chosen locations. We can work with the property owner on specific location within the designated property.

Ms. Gettel suggested putting warning signs around the TPSS and signal bungalows and asked if they could be screened with trees? Yes.

John Wicks asked what criteria was used in selecting the locations? Mr. Soler stated that the TPSS and signal bungalows are elements needed to operate the LRT. We located the TPSS in places where we would not have to acquire a building, a home or move residents. We chose areas that are underutilized, have existing screening and not out in the open. They also need to be close enough to the alignment in order to operate.

Doug Hennes asked if you can bury the TPSS and signal bungalows. They cannot be buried because they have to be accessible for maintenance.

Ken Rogers asked for the dimensions of the signal bungalows. Ten feet by sixteen feet by ten feet tall.

Anne White noted that on slide number 17, the signal bungalow is obscured by Cedar Ave. Bridge not the 19th Ave. Bridge. Typo noted and will be corrected for future presentations.

Ann Finseth asked if a signal bungalow can be located inside something. Yes, but it will still need room of about five feet on either side and people need to get into it for operation purposes.

Richard Hanson commented that the signal bungalow look more like sheds than bungalows.

Pete Vang asked if the signal bungalows can be located on top of a building. Mr. Soler stated that maintenance personnel may have a hard time accessing the roof of a building.

Ms. Burt asked what “co-locate” means? It means that the TPSS and signal bungalows are located in the same site.

John Wicks asked if you can use the TPSS location for the Hiawatha LRT near the Metrodome for the CCLRT also. Yes, it will be used to power Central Corridor where it shares tracks with Hiawatha.

Jackie Lunde asked about the location of the TPSS at Raymond and Territorial; is it going to be on the lower side or the upper side of the lot. The northern side.

Ms. Burt asked how much it would cost if you had to move the TPSS or signal bungalow. The further the new location, the more costly.

Kevin Wendt asked why isn't the TPSS at Raymond and Territorial co-located with the Raymond signal bungalow. The City of Saint Paul has asked to preserve any place that has potential redevelopment for the future. He expressed his concern that this particular TPSS is close to housing and the signal bungalow is not.

Jessica Treat noted that the signal bungalow at LaSalle and University Avenue is located on a corner which could interfere with future transit oriented development Mr. Soler stated that the location for TPSS still needs to be accessible for our maintenance personnel.

Jackie Lunde asked, once these are constructed, are they permanent? Yes.

Ms. Lunde asked if the property owner doesn't want it on their property, can the Met Council take the property. Yes, we can purchase the property or acquire it using eminent domain. Kirstin Beach answered that in order to acquire property or exercise eminent domain; it will be an administrative decision but is a long process. At the administrative level, we take that issue very seriously. Mr. Soler added that we will buy only what we need for the project. For example, a portion of the Saxon Ford site is needed for a TPSS; we will only purchase the piece of land necessary.

5) ADJOURNMENT

Kirstin Beach stated at 7:00pm that the meeting can only extend to 7:30pm. Folks can leave, but are welcome to stay behind for the rest of the slides on the TPSS and signal bungalows. We will cover the Operation and Maintenance Facility at the next meeting.

Metric Giles asked if the additional questions asked after 7:00pm will be shared at the next meeting and will the TPSS power point be available for the public? Yes and the power point is already posted on our website (www.centralcorridor.org).

Anne White stated that the District Council will be discussing the placement of the TPSS and signal bungalows, and CAC members are welcome to join in.

Ms. White asked if the TPSS at the Albert St. site would block the east-west street? No.

Ms. Beach adjourned the meeting at 7:18pm.

Next meeting: January 15, 2008, 5:00-7:00pm.

Attachment 1: CAC meeting December 18, 2008 – Meeting Feedback

1. What outstanding questions do you have about TPSS and signal bungalows?

a. TPSS?

- St Anthony Park Community Council is unhappy about the current location of a TPSS at Raymond & territorial. Please look at relocating it behind a building or elsewhere. The current location is slated in a study for make up parking for local businesses because of the loss of on street parking. The spacing from the TPSS 6 East of Prior Avenue suggests that the TPSS 5 at Raymond and Territorial can move ½- 1 block further west.
- I think the planning design people would set up design competitions so architects can submit new designs for the exteriors of these buildings. I don't think it is a reasonable response to say that these industrial items must have this appearance. That's a poor excuse for placing homely ugly things in the environment. If a location is found for a TPSS that is away from public view then it could be an unadorned TPSS, but if it is placed where people see it on a consistent basis then you should make an effort to improve its appearance. I suggest you work with Minneapolis and St Paul AIA's.
- At west bank station, I like that the bridges obscure view of it. Please maximize space available for development of surrounding land.
- Creative screening possibilities for both. Put these units into the community art committee. Let the neighborhoods dress them up.
- Need screening for almost all TPSS. Proposed Albert location unacceptable. Need to work with Union Park D.C.
- #10, nice redevelopment.
- Something needs to be done to address them aesthetically. Parking is an option, but even that could be offensive to those who actually live next to or near it.
- Mostly size and proximity. Some will be real issues and some might need to be below grade (that routinely is done with other power type structures around town).

b. Signal bungalows?

- Both TPSS & SB but more so TPSS need screening.
- Same comment as TPSS: Obscured view and maximize developable land.
- Need to cover or screen.
- MN/12 could it be under with skylight for viewing? The one at Washington and Cedar, 35W & 3rd, isn't that using green space we wanted to preserve?
- These should strongly be considered for relocating to the tops of buildings along University on east end as it would eliminate the necessity of another foot print and also saves money for aesthetics and security.
- Co-Locations? Possibilities for further co-locations, especially moving

2. What do you see as issues and benefits of the revised Operation and Maintenance facility location?

Issues:

- I would urge you to give significant consideration to the future implications of where you are locating the TPSS and signal bungalow. In the instance where it may conflict with the Central Corridor overlay/TAD guidelines regarding buildings at property or may conflict with local community land use plans or may conflict with property owners plans for the site.
- Not presented.
- I was disappointed that we did not get to this issue. The chair needs to control questions better to allow information be passed out.
- Prime redevelopment location.
- It's in the middle of a residential community. It seems little study has been done about enlarging the Hiawatha facility or using an area around 280.
- Must preserve deck.

Benefits:

- Area available for development.
- I filed questions about this from neighbors and would rather not wait a month or two longer.
- More direct route, enclosed.
- Avoid poor soils. What about cleanup of soils? As long as we're in there let's fix it.
- The ones you've described functionality, enclosed storage out of way of Lafayette bridge, east.
- There may be a small benefit to having it at east end of line only if it is absolutely necessary to start runs at east end.

Attachment 2: CAC meeting December 18, 2008 – Meeting Feedback

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.	Today's Meeting Format	Today's Meeting Content	Overall meeting performance
	4	4	4
	5	5	5
	5	5	5
	3	4	3
	4	4	4
	4	5	4
	2	2	2
	2	5	4
	4	5	3
Average	3.7	4.3	3.8

How can we improve?

- I am concerned that the locations of the TPSS and SB were not previously discussed with community councils before being published in the FEIS.
- I think the speaker provided as much information as was within his capability.
- Control the questions. Get written questions to Robin and have all questions at end of presentation. Too many interruptions.
- What about DC current? Put information on website.
- This isn't an Advisory Committee, it is a listening committee.
- You really need to cut down amount of time at the beginning, during reports and updates. We burned 35 minutes today and that hurt us later during the TPSS and Bungalow presentation. I would have had him go through his entire report and hold questions for the end. Too many question sand way too many interruptions.

Comment:

- My objection to option A for East Bank LRT station lies in the inclusion of the wasteful Amenity zones, in terms of cost and sidewalk space lost to its inclusion.