

## Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee January 15, 2009

### Meeting Minutes

**Members Present:** Kirstin Sersland Beach, Veronica Burt, Larry Englund, Ken Erickson, Ann Finseth, Missy Gettel, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hanson, Margot Imdieke Cross, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Chip Welling, Anne White

**Others Present:** Laura Baenen, Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Donna Drummond, Dana Happel, Jessica Hill, Linda Jungwirth, Shoua Lee, Kathryn O'Brien, Sarah Penman, Rita Rodriguez, Joe Scala, Dave Showalter, Eve Vang, Alicia Vap

### 1) MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Kirstin Beach called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM and asked if anyone had changes to the December meeting minutes. No changes were made.

### 2) COMMUNITY REPORTS

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

Ann Finseth made an announcement from the Central Presbyterian Church regarding noise and vibration (see Attachment 3 for the letter Ms. Finseth read).

Larry Englund stated that after the TPSS sites were presented downtown, the suggestion for alternate sites for signal bungalows and traction power substations was brought up. Those suggestions have been submitted to the project office.

Anne White expressed interest in a presentation to the District Council Collaborative. Ms. White also asked if we can attach resolutions or letters presented at the CAC to the minutes. Yes.

### 3) TECHNICAL REPORTS

#### Operation and Maintenance Facility Update

Dan Soler discussed the Operation and Maintenance Facility location by reviewing slides 4-12 of the presentation.

Veronica Burt asked how many trains can be stored in the OMF. The OMF will have the ability to store 12 three-car trains at maximum capacity.

Chip Welling asked if the LRVs are the same as on Hiawatha LRT's? Ms. Beach stated that we can get back to you on that. Mr. Soler inserted that we can purchase LRVs from any entity as long as the LRVs are compatible with the ones on Hiawatha LRT.

Anne White asked if there is still a possibility of connecting CCLRT back to the Union Depot. Yes, while the current project includes a stop on 4<sup>th</sup> Street at the front of the Union Depot, there is still the possibility of extending the track to the back of the Union Depot at a later date. Ms. White also asked about having a store front space in the OMF building? There has been discussion about at least improving the façade of the building.

Ken Erickson asked if there are any issues with the bridge construction with the current location of the OMF. No, we'll have a storm water feature under the bridge, but no building.

Mr. Englund stated that Capitol River Council has experience working with developer and asked if we will be seeking community input on the OMF site? Yes, we certainly will have community input.

Why is there a two track lane on 4th street? We need to get the trains to and from the OMF; therefore we need two tracks in each direction.

Missy Gettel asked if the Diamond Products building is vacant. Yes.

Jessica Treat stated that the new OMF site is still over budget. Where is the money coming from? Mr. Soler stated that the total cost of the OMF is \$3 million less than the initial cost estimate because the track length to access it is less than the initial site between the Mississippi River and Kellogg.

Ms. Treat stated that redevelopment should be considered in this discussion because PED at the City of St. Paul has designated this area for housing, etc... Mr. Englund added that with the OMF, it will change the area and create challenges for redevelopment.

Chip Welling stated his concern for the number of vacant store fronts currently existing in the downtown area and said he'd like to see the vacant space leased before building more new space, given the current economy.

Ms. Burt asked what kind of maintenance occurs at the OMF and are there job opportunities? Daily maintenance of the LRVs occurs such as washing and cleaning, which may generate around 150 jobs.

### **Noise and Vibration**

Kathryn O'Brien talked about the work the project office is doing on noise and vibration issues by reviewing slides 13- 35 of the presentation.

Anne White pointed out the 107 moderate noise impacts in Midway East corridor (Snelling to Rice Street) and asked what that is telling us? Ms. O'Brien stated that moderate impact is measured in decibels; of the 107 moderate impacts most are less than 3 decibel increase over existing noise levels which is not detectable to most individuals.

Missy Gettel and Veronica Burt asked about the source of the noise. The noise is an aggregate of wayside noise due to bells or the train moving along the track.

Ms. Cauffman stated that the noise and vibration reports are on the website. We can send the link to the CAC members.

Richard Hanson asked if you have taken into account private homes as opposed to businesses on the corridor. Yes.

Ann Finseth asked if they have simulated the noise and vibration testing using the actual Hiawatha LRT. Yes, we simulated the bells and horns as it would run along Cedar Avenue in St. Paul by loading Hiawatha LRT equipment onto a pickup truck

Ms. Gettel asked what resilient fasteners are? They are fasteners that are placed under the rail to keep them fastened to the ground to alleviate vibration. Ms. Gettel also asked if studies were done near Sheppard Labs? Yes.

## **Streetscape**

Alicia Vap introduced the streetscape plans for reviewing slides 36-55 of the presentation.

Anne White asked if the barriers along the corridor are necessary. Ms. Vap answered that the goal is to have an aesthetically pleasing barrier for safety at the stations.

Ms. Caufman clarified that the walled barriers would only be along the secondary access between the station and non-signalized pedestrian crossing. Ms. Beach asked if the bollards and chain would be similar to those at the Hiawatha LRT Government Center Station in downtown Minneapolis. Yes.

Jessica Treat asked to clarify where the inner track post, chained fence, and curb wall is and if there is sufficient width?

Ms. Vap pointed them out on the power point. The bollards and chain will be between the tracks. The curb wall will serve as a safety feature and buffer between the secondary station access walkway and the street.

Margot Imdieke stated ADA requires 4-5 feet to allow for wheelchair crossings on the walkway; the proposed width exceeds ADA standards.

Ms. Burt asked if we can add more greening and aesthetic features to the streetscape. Can we incorporate greening features into public art since it already has a budget allocated?

Ms. Vap noted that more landscaping and sidewalk features beyond the baseline plans would have to be paid for outside of the project budget. The Cities are looking for funding sources.

Richard Hanson commented that there is an existing problem with pedestrians crossing University Avenue.

Chip Welling asked if there is going to be challenges for some of the features on streetscape when the snow comes in? Ms. Vap stated that we will have to work with Metro Transit to figure out how to maintain station access and address snow removal.

Anne Finseth asked how people access the Dale Street station. People can enter the station from both the north and south sides of the intersection at the crosswalk.

Mr. Welling noted that the City of St. Paul is requesting \$10.5 million of stimulus dollars and suggested the City look into requesting money for streetscape too. Donna Drummond, City of St. Paul planner, stated that the \$10.5 million is for projects that are shovel-ready and can be executed within the next 90 days.

Ms. Burt reiterated that the baseline plan should include more greenery.

Ms. Drummond stated that the brick pavers would look better long-term and can be maintained for longer term. You could potentially add some hanging baskets.

Ms. Burt asked what percentage of the betterments would be assessed from the property owners.

Ms. Drummond answered that we will first need to find some funding sources. Exact costs are not yet known and assessments could fund part of the streetscape.

Richard Hanson stated that brick in below zero degree weather is hard to maintain; they fall apart, creating hazardous cracks. Margot Cross agreed.

Ms. Drummond stated that the brick pavers in the roadway need more maintenance, but the ones we've put in parks are fine.

Ms. White asked if the street and sidewalk treatment extends all the way to Minneapolis. The concepts reviewed at today's meeting are the plans for University Avenue in St. Paul. We are working on other streetscape plans for downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Ken Erikson asked to clarify what is happening in terms of lighting from Marion Street to downtown Saint Paul? Ms. Vap stated that the Capitol Area planners want the lighting poles to be consistent with what's out there right now. We are still working on streetscape plans for this area.

Ms. Cross asked if they can meet with Alicia Vap to talk about what's accessible to the disabled community in terms of streetscape. Ms. Cauffman inserted that we have plans to present streetscape at a future Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee but can also meet individually.

Ms. Cross asked what kind of scoring will be on the sidewalk itself. It would be a typical brush finish.

Mr. Thompson stated that it is a good idea to shield pedestrians from traffic, regardless of what that will look like.

Ms. Burt asked if we can insert those elements into public art. Ms. Vap answered that we'd like to keep the art applications focused on the station.

Ms. White asked if we can apply for Capitol Region Watershed dollars for stormwater infiltration into our work. Mr. Soler stated that the project office was working with the watershed district on a stormwater plan.

Ms. Burt asked where the snow will go in the winter. It will get pushed out on to the street by the LRVs to get plowed. Kirstin Beach inserted that if you look at the Hiawatha LRT, maintenance crews are out there all the time.

Mr. Hanson commented that snow maintenance for transit can always be improved. LRT stations are very clean. Bus shelters, particularly east of Snelling Ave, are not kept clean of snow and ice. Different riders treat the waiting areas differently, which is part of the reason why people prefer to ride LRT and not busses.

## **5) ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Beach adjourned the meeting at 7:01PM.

**Next meeting: February 19, 2009, 5:00-7:00pm.**

## **Attachment 1: CAC meeting January 15, 2009 – Meeting Feedback**

### **1. What do you see as issues and benefits of the revised Operation and Maintenance facility location in the Diamond Product building?**

#### **Issues:**

- Eliminates development potential
- Need to pay attention to façade treatments to open the facility up to the community (windows). Need to work with the community to determine how the facility can fit into the fabric of the existing and proposed development. Unfortunate to lose development acreage of the full Diamond Products site.
- Farmers Market access beyond Union Depot station. Not clear plan for connection to railroad station.
- Will issues come up other than mentioned ones?
- Other sites outside of Lowertown not yet considered. Community must be involved in design right now. OMF will mean that residential development will never occur on this site. Difficult to imagine that a developer will want to use the North building.

#### **Benefits:**

- Seems to be a reasonable plan
- Direct line to facility enclosed.
- Reduced cost, better facility (not just roof but sides too).
- Existing building costs; fits into existing structures in area. Reduced costs.
- Enclosed away from Lafayette Bridge, close to Union Depot.
- Uses on empty building.
- Used building better than abandoned.

### **2. If there is one thing you could change about the baseline streetscape plan, what would it be and why?**

- Ask the city of St Paul to shift some of its investments from parking to making improvements to the streetscape for pedestrians, i.e., transit riders and other people.
- Eliminate some of the fencing barriers.
- Greener and wider sidewalks.
- Remove all billboards. Buy them out or ban them for the sake of urban beautification look in St Paul's proposed betterments.
- More greenery in St Paul.

- **Attachment 2: CAC meeting January 15, 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
	3	3	3
	3	3	3
	4	3	3
	5	5	5
	3	4	4
	5	5	5
	4	4	4
Average	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>

**How can we improve?**

- Please report on storm water management plans & any greening ideas such as solar panels on stations.
- Too much on agenda, wanted more time for vibration noise questions.
- Much better control of questions tonight.
- Always save questions till section end.

### Attachment 3: CAC Member's Reports

To the CCLRT Community Advisory Committee meeting:

Central Presbyterian Church continues to have several areas of concern that yet need to be resolved:

1. The communication process and the release of timely, written, accessible information.
2. Vibration and noise effects
3. Access for handicap, funerals and weddings
4. Pre-construction and construction impact on the church structure and access to the front of the church.

#### Communication

Peter Bell, chairman of the Met Council, has been quoted frequently since mid-December that extensive testing proves that vibration and noise effects can be mitigated for MPR and the churches.

However, the Vibration Measurements and Predictions for Central Corridor LRT Project report dated December 19, 2008 from ATS Consulting was not released to Central Presbyterian church until Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> after 5:00 PM.

Where as the church requests that as studies are completed, the written results be made available quickly to the affected parties.

#### Vibration and noise effects

The Vibration Measurements and Predictions for Central Corridor LRT Project report dated December 19, 2008 from ATS Consulting recommends the use of floating slabs on Cedar Ave. to get vibration within acceptable range. On page 18, "Floating slabs are very effective at reducing vibration levels; however, **they are also very expensive.**" (emphasis added).

Page 18 of the report goes on to say, "Potential problems with at-grade floating slabs in areas with a relatively severe climate such as Saint Paul are the effects of freeze-thaw cycles and the potential for foreign material to get into the gap under the floating slab and short circuit the vibration isolation."

Where as we request that the answers to the following questions be provided in written format prior to any pre-construction work in St. Paul

1. What is the budget for mitigation?
2. What are the guarantees that mitigation will not be left out of the project at the very end?
3. What happens to mitigation if there are cost-overruns or a budget shortfall for the project?
4. When will there be additional discussion on how to avoid, reduce or monitor these potential problems with the at-grade floating slabs?
5. We have been very concerned about the failure or wear of mitigation techniques. How will the mitigation techniques be monitored, including frequency, What are the plans for rebuilding when wear and tear justifies? What organizations would be responsible for the rebuilding costs?
6. What remedies will be available to the church and at whose cost in the event that noise or vibrations becomes a problem at any point during construction or during operation of the CCLRT?

In conclusion, the above seems to prove the opposite of Peter Bell's quote – despite the extensive testing, there is no guarantee that the use of floating slabs as a mitigation technique will work in St. Paul's climate, especially for the duration of the decades that the LRT will exist.

#### Pre-construction / construction

Where as the church requests written answers in a timely manner to the following construction questions:

1. How far east of the track will digging, pile driving, drilling and or other construction take place and how deep? What impact will these activities have on the foundation and front steps of the church?
2. How much of the sidewalk on the east side of Cedar in front of King Louis and Central Presbyterian church will be in the construction zone?
3. What precautions will be taken to prevent soil erosion and wash outs during rain storms and the freeze thaw nature of winter/spring?
4. Where will funeral processions be able to assemble?
5. Where will weddings be able to assemble?
6. What will be the handicap access?
7. What will be the traffic flow on Cedar Ave.

In the interest of time, the above list is just a sample of the questions related to construction. What is the time table for addressing construction related questions?

Submitted by Ann Finseth