

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee

February 19, 2009

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kirstin Sersland Beach, Fredrick Blocton, Ann Finseth, Missy Gettel, Steve Grans, Richard Hanson, Jackie Lunde, Ken Rodgers, Rozanne Severance, Keith Thompson, Jessica Treat, Kevin Wendt, John Wicks

Others Present: Laura Baenen, Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Mark Fuhrmann, Dana Happel, Jessica Hill, Linda Jungwirth, Shoua Lee, Kathryn O'Brien, Rita Rodriguez, Rich Rovang, Joe Scala, Dan Soler, Roderic Southall, Carol Swenson, Eve Vang,

1) MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

Richard Hanson stated his changes to the January minutes. Those changes were made. He also asked if busses and LRTs have separate maintenance policies.

Kirstin Beach answered that there are separate maintenance crews for LRTs and busses. Mark Fuhrmann added that all maintenance crews fall under Metro Transit policy, but different crews are assigned to LRT and busses. There are 17 LRT stations and 15,000 bus stops. Our funds must be distributed among all efforts to maintain the LRT stations and bus stops during the winter. Due to the large number of bus stops, we need to prioritize which stops to clear.

Keith Thompson commented that there are bus stops on Marshall Avenue that have private advertising on them and are maintained by a private company because they are not a part of Metro Transit.

2) REPORTS

Chair's Report

Chair Beach welcomed new CAC member Harriet Mednick representing sparco.

Chair Beach announced that Metropolitan Council Member Mary Hill-Smith resigned at the end of 2008. She was the chair of the Council's transportation committee and sat on the Central Corridor Management Committee. Council Member Annette Meeks is the new Transportation Committee Chair; Council Member Robert McFarlin is the Vice-Chair and will be the delegate to the Central Corridor Management Committee.

Chair Beach talked about the transportation summit, "Advancing Transitways" held in January with attendees from the Federal Transit Authority and from projects all across the country. After speaking to others who have had the experience in their own projects, we received positive feedback on our handling of planning and communication at Central Corridor.

Community Advisory Report

Ms. Beach asked for any reports from the CAC members. Jessica Treat expressed that the community on the St. Paul side is frustrated with the streetscape design. The baseline is only going to replace what is already there. Ms. Treat reported that the University Avenue Business Association (UABA) held a meeting last week on parking issues and strategies. The meeting was broken down into small groups to

discuss other projects around the nation. One of the major concerns heard from the businesses at that meeting was about green space in the middle of the road and maintenance requirements. Jessica suggested the median space be transferred to the sidewalk side of the street to create a meander to slow traffic as well as provide more space for boulevard green space, trees, on-street parking etc....

Ms. Treat also announced that on March 7th and 8th, there will be a Community Summit to share community visions and identify potential solutions.

Outreach Coordinator Report

Robin Cauffman, manager of public involvement, gave an update on the artist contracts. It is taking longer than expected to get them signed. Once that occurs, we will set up visioning sessions with the artists to receive input from the community about history, culture, etc...that the artists can use as they create the station art. She thanked the CAC members for their patience.

In addition to the Public Art, we have met with the District Councils to discuss the location of the TPSS sites. We will be holding a follow-up meeting in March.

Ms. Cauffman made two more announcements:

- 1) The Central Corridor Project Office's Community Outreach team was awarded the Rosa Parks Diversity Award from the Minnesota Chapter of the Women in Transportation Seminar and is being forwarded on as an international award nominee.
- 2) We will be inserting a blurb about CCLRT into the hanging fliers on the Metro Transit busses to inform bus riders about CCLRT.

Richard Hanson asked to clarify if this was the flier available on the busses? Yes, it will be the March 2009 flier hanging inside the bus for patrons to take.

3) TECHNICAL REPORTS

New Starts Update

Mark Fuhrman gave an update on the New Starts Update detailing which projects in the nation have recently advanced. He presented slides 4 through 9 of the presentation. Mr. Fuhrmann mentioned that there are not sufficient funds remaining in the SAFETEA-LU bill to fund Central Corridor. Funding of Central Corridor is contingent on Congress appropriated additional or new funds.

Richard Hanson asked what SAFETEA-LU stands for? Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation, Equity Act: A Legacy for Users.

Steve Grans asked, is it guaranteed that Congressman Oberstar is going to get a the bill passed? Congressman Oberstar has indicated that he looks forward to working with the new Executive administration to get the bill passed.

Baseline Cost Estimate Update

Next, Mr. Fuhrman gave a review of the Baseline Cost estimates, slides 10 through 20 of the presentation. He reviewed changes made in the project scope that have affected project costs, as well as changes in material costs.

CAC members asked if this fluctuation in baseline cost estimates common around the nation or is it unique to our project. It is common and expected. As the project progresses through engineering, the fluctuation decreases as details become clearer.

Anne Finseth asked if the mitigation costs for Cedar Street noise and vibration impacts are included. Yes, they are included in the February estimate.

Keith Thompson asked why we reduced cost for the track cross sections by reducing cut and backfill by 1foot. Rich Rovang answered that as you go further into design, specific details of track design are developed. As we got further along in design we were able to tell what the minor settlements were and found that we have to remove and replace the area under the trackwork.

Ms. Treat asked to clarify “duplicative scope for traffic mitigation”? Mr. Fuhrman replied that it is an item that was in two places of the budget—in the construction packages and mitigation.

Mr. Grans asked when Hiawatha LRT was built did the project construction require the use any of the contingency costs? Yes, however not all of it. We have 3.2 million dollars remaining, but it is programmed to make final close out payments for design-built contracts.

Ms. Beach stated that Met Council will be very careful with spending contingency dollars.

Before moving on to the FEIS update, Ms. Beach welcomed a new CAC member, Julie Washenburger from the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living.

FEIS Update

Kathryn O’Brien updated the CAC on the FEIS, reviewing slides 21 through 23 of the presentation. She reviewed the schedule, noting that an administrative draft of the FEIS was shared with the FTA, we anticipate their comments in March. The FEIS will be submitted to the FTA for review on February 9th and will receive comments on the document by March 11th. We hope to publish by April 20th. There is a 30-day review period that follows. June 3rd 2009, we will receive the Record of Decision, which is our legally binding document that commits the Met Council to the identified mitigation.

She gave a recap on Noise and Vibration studies, slides 24 through 26 of the presentation. Ms. O’Brien also gave an update on the work being done to address vibration and noise concerns. She stated that we have asked external consultants to look at the noise and vibration issue with MPR.

Mr. Hanson asked what WIA memo refers to? It is the acronym name of the UofM’s consultant.

Mr. Hanson also asked if it is too early to say how things are going with the UofM and MPR. We are working with them

Construction Packages

Rich Rovang gave an updated the project schedule and construction packages, slides 27 through 31 of the presentation. We will be coordinating traffic improvements with the UofM construction projects in early 2010. Mr. Rovang also reviewed the general timeline for the seven anticipated construction contracts:

- Civil east
- Civil west
- Light rail vehicles
- Operation and maintenance facility
- Systems
- Fare collection
- Washington Avenue Bridge

Jackie Lunde asked what the split is for civil east and civil west. The city limits—Emerald Street.

Rozanne Severance asked what the timeline is for the Washington Avenue Bridge. She noted she's heard there are improvements currently underway? The retrofit is happening now to support the deck. The project will be doing the retrofit to the lower deck structure starting in 2010.

Mr. Hanson asked about the sequence of the construction. For example will civil west happen first and go east? Mr. Rovang stated that we will have a logical sequence in place for construction. We are discussing that with potential contractors. Most likely, we will be starting in several locations.

CAC members asked if we'll be maintaining traffic flow during construction. Generally, one lane in each direction on University Avenue and intersections of north-south road will be maintained. Pedestrians will be able to cross the street at intersections. However, there may be unique situations that require closing lanes at night or on weekends.

Ms. Lunde asked if traffic cops will be out to keep traffic moving during construction. The contractor will be expected to manage traffic.

John Wicks asked if contractors will work over the cold winter months. Typically, no. If their work is inside a building like the Operations and Maintenance Facility, they can work through the winter season.

Anne Finseth asked what will be done to minimize traffic diverting into neighborhoods during construction. For the UofM, Civil West contract will include traffic mitigation in early spring 2010. We will keep traffic running in both directions on the side of the street where construction is not occurring.

Jessica Treat added that she thought University Avenue should only have a single lane of traffic when the design is finished. Is there a plan for doing a single lane analysis?

Dan Soler answered that while University Ave is under construction, we will keep an eye on where the traffic diverts to and how it affects parallel streets nearby, i.e....Sherburne, Aurora, Minnehaha, Marshall, etc...

Missy Gettel asked if the single lane during construction will be shared by cars, trucks, busses and bikes. During construction, it'll be a single lane with busses, cars, and trucks.

Ms. Lunde asked if there will be room for left turns during construction and whether there will be bump outs for access to business on the side where construction is happening. We will work with businesses to maintain access during construction and signage will direct traffic and pedestrians.

Ms. Lunde asked for definition of fare collection contract. Contract for ticket vending machines.

Ms. Lunde added an observation that she could hear the LRT approaching the intersection when she stayed at the Airport Embassy Suites on 34th avenue.

Mr. Rovang responded that we are exploring changes to the horn and bell policies to minimize noise impacts.

5) ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Beach adjourned the meeting at 6:27PM. She reminded people to turn in their comment cards. **Next meeting: March 19, 2009, 5:00-7:00pm.**

Attachment 1: CAC meeting February 19, 2009 – Meeting Feedback

1. Suggest communication strategies for sharing construction information such as schedule with the community once it is available.

- Place photographs with descriptions of work on internet site.

Business Community:

- I think the outreach coordinators are already well aware of the various entities – district councils, business associations, the key is to notify early.
- Personal visits with information handouts.
- Call or email businesses with how to access online or imprint.
- Written correspondence & Web
- Collect email addresses of all businesses along Union Avenue and other volunteers and send them updates of work in progress along with other imprint information.

Residential Community:

- Leafleting of all affected housing.
- Send out post card sized mailers with how they can access online and imprint construction information. Make available at libraries.
- Newspaper notices and Web.
- Continue to inform CCAC members and distribute information through website.

2. What topics would you like to cover at upcoming CAC meetings?

- Accessibility plans – may have been presented at earlier meeting I've missed. Thanks!
- West bank/East Bank station design/street configuration.
- More detailed information on the scheduling of construction of the project.
- Signalized and non-signalized crossings – Notice that train is coming.

Attachment 2: CAC meeting February 19, 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
	4	4	4
	4	4	4
	5	5	5
	4	3	5
	5	4	4
	4	4	4
Average	4.3	4.0	4.3

How can we improve?

- Mostly time lines today. I didn't feel like I learned much.
- Keep doing what you are doing