

Meeting of the Central Corridor Community Advisory Committee
September 17, 2009
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Kirstin Sersland Beach, Margot Imdieke Cross, Anne Finseth, Steve Grans, Brian Hanninen, Richard Hanson, Karl Karlson, Jackie Lunde, Rozanne Severance Jim Thalhuber, Keith Thompson, Chip Welling, Anne White,

Others Present: Laura Baenen, Joey Browner, Robin Caufman, Jessica Hill, Shoua Lee, Tori Nill, Hue Pham, Rita Rodriguez, Dan Soler, Mary Richardson

1) MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

CAC Chair Kirstin Beach called the meeting to order at 5:04 and asked if anyone had changes to the August meeting minutes. There were no changes.

2) REPORTS

Chairs Report

Determined that the FEIS was adequate and met requirements, approval of the final project scope, awarded construction contract for the 4th Street advance utility relocation. City announced commitment to secure \$5.2M for an infill station. We do not yet have a plan or schedule for selecting which station.

CAC Reports

None

Christina Morrison, City of St. Paul Planner, introduced herself and handed out a 1-page piece of information about new parking program that will start up some time this fall.

Anne White asked how the City is promoting the program. Christina said that the city was distributing the information via community groups. The grant application will be made available later this fall. Chair Beach noted that the local papers have covered the program. Ms. Caufman also indicated that the Central Corridor Project Office is planning to do another business mailing in early October that would include the City's parking program information along with booklet about construction communication strategies.

Rozanne Severance said that parking was in important issue to the ADA community and asked that the City enforce the zoning requirements to make sure that handicapped parking is available. She also suggested that any project that receives a grant would be required to go through a site plan review process, which will require them to comply with ADA requirements. In some cases they will actually be able to upgrade or come into compliance.

Chip asked what the difference is between a grant and forgivable loan. Every year 1/7 of the loan will be forgiven over a 7 year period.

Chair Beach thanked the City for making the announcement and the City for working very hard on this issue.

COC Reports

Jessica Hill talked about various activities that took place this summer starting with the Prospect Park Ice Cream Social and Carnival where approximately 1,500 people attended from all over the metro area. Jessica met with their neighborhood association board to discuss the rebuilding and designing of their pork chop which is a traffic island which Tower Hill has on either side.

Joey Browner reported on a series of community events and fairs that we attended including National Night Out, Rondo Days, State Fair, Selby Avenue Jazz Fest and India Fest. At these events we had an opportunity to talk to people. We wore bright color Central Corridor shirts to draw attention, meet and talk to people.

Rita Rodriguez gave an update on another outreach strategy we did in August where we rode the route 16 and talked to people on the bus and at the stations. Ms. Rodriguez also talked about the final and largest parking workshop at the Raymond Avenue Area. It was a good event that brought people together and got them talking. In fact, one business owner called today and said that he is now willing to share parking with his neighborhood. Also as a result of the workshops, we were able to build more trust with the community.

Jackie Lunde asked about the next steps. Christina Morrison said that the City is working with the St. Paul Design Center to compile the data, finalize the drawings and prepare the write ups. They are hoping to get the workshop summaries to the businesses in the next few weeks.

Anne White asked if the City is able to staff the Central Corridor Resource Center. Ms. Morrison said that the City used to staff the resource center but found that there wasn't enough traffic to justify the staff time but that she could take the suggestion back.

Richard Hanson indicated that this project is very complicated and that having someone available to answer questions could be helpful.

Chair Beach asked Rita what questions and concerns did the public have when she and Joey were out along the corridor. Some of the questions and concerns were Can I use the same ticket to ride the train? What is the timeline? What are the impacts to businesses? Many people that we talked to seemed very excited about the LRT. We also got to talk to the senior population that remembers the streetcars. In a 3 hour period I talked to over 60 people and the team handed out 200 packets of information.

Anne noted that she rode the Hiawatha LRT and that there were very long lines after the event. Ms. Caufman noted that Metro Transit provides event tickets so that people don't have to buy a ticket for the return trip.

Hue Pham reported on activities in her sector. She has been working with property owners that have areaways to survey the condition and develop engineering/design solutions. We participated in Dragon Fest which had very good turn out. A common question was how come it takes so long to construct.

Richard Hanson asked for more information about areaways. Dan Soler clarified that an areaway is an area under the sidewalk and within the public right of way. A common situation we find on University Avenue is former coal shuts or delivery area. They have been converted to other purposes like storage or even a music studio.

Shoua Lee talked about the Aug. 22 Center for Hmong Arts and Talent Art Fest. There were lots of positive comments, a few concerns and a suggestion to connect with the new Frogtown online forum to share information. Ms. Lee also worked with the three Hmong business Hmong and Asian community to hold a workforce and DBE event. Ms. Lee also noted that Joey Browner is talking the lead on a DBE and workforce event

Richard Hanson asked where the CHAT art fest was held, the Shoua state that it was held at the Western Sculptural Garden across from Sears.

Anne White noted that the DBE goal is 15%. Does the Met Council have a goal to increase the number of registered DBE firms.

Ken Rodgers asked if DBE program applies to businesses owned by persons with disabilities and if only ethnic minority businesses are eligible for the DBE program.

Ms. Caufman explained that it was her understanding that the program is geared toward small businesses that are minority or women owned with a net worth of less than \$750 thousand. Ms Caufman noted that she would ask Roderic Southall to follow up on these questions at the October meeting. The FTA is in town for a 3 day training related to civil rights issues including DBE, so Roderic is not here tonight.

Dana Happel talked about all the construction activities going on in downtown St. Paul. She mentioned the weekly construction update and how people can sign up for it online. Dana also mentioned the Construction Communication Committee that we are forming for the downtown area.

Ken Rodgers noted that he works at 4th and Minnesota in downtown St. Paul. He indicated that he was unable to cross because of barriers blocking the sidewalk and noise.

Dana talked about how we are trying to resolve issues. Ms. Caufman indicated that the purpose of the CCC it is our intent to be more proactive and guiding the contractors in changes and awareness of sensitive issues that may arise during construction.

Anne White complimented us on the construction updates but indicated that we need to get the information out more broadly, including to the disability community.

Margot Imdieke Cross asked who is responsible for making sure that we are in compliance with the law.

Rozanne Severance said that there should be clear signage letting people know where they can walk.

Jackie Lunde suggested that the construction updates should be distributed to more people. Ms. Caufman noted that we had been focusing the distribution to downtown stakeholders but asked for feedback from the committee.

Ken Rodgers said it is so important that everyone should be getting the construction update. If they don't want it they can opt out. Other CAC members indicated they agree; Ms. Caufman noted that we will start sending out to our entire distribution list.

Chair Beach asked if this is on MnDOT website. Ms. Caufman noted that we've talked to City and MnDOT staff about adding road closure information to their websites and said this was good reminder to follow up.

Dan Soler followed up on Rozanne Severance's comments and stated that it is the Metropolitan Council's responsibility to ensure we comply with accessibility requirements. Right now there is a wide range of organizations doing work. It is the Resident Engineer's responsibility to make sure that everything is in place, that obstructions are removed and signage is clear.

2) PROJECT UPDATES

Right of Way

Dan Soler presented the presentation on Right of Way. The 16 fee title acquisitions are for the traction power substations or signal bungalows.

Jackie Lunde asked if there is a difference in price between a temporary easement and outright purchase. Generally the price is similar.

Anne White asked what happens if a property owner refuses to provide a temporary easement. Met Council will start by conducting an appraisal. Property owners do have rights under law to get their own appraisal and then negotiate a fair market value price. If not, government agencies have condemnation authority.

Dan Soler noted that Mn/DOT is under contract with the Met Council to conduct the acquisition process.

Ann Finseth asked if the easement is being acquired because we need space to build the track. In most cases the tracks are in the center of the street; so most work will be done in the public right of way.

Jackie Lunde asked if temporary easements will be needed for reconstructing driveway accesses or aprons. Dan explained that in most cases, we'll be redoing the driveways, but this activity does not require easements because the curb and grade are not changing much.

Richard Hanson asked to define Civil East and Civil West. Dan Soler explained that Civil contracts will include the construction work roadways, tracks, stations, utilities, traffic signals, signage, sidewalks, etc. Civil West will be the work in Minneapolis between the Hiawatha LRT connection and Emerald as well as the Washington Avenue Bridge reinforcement work. Civil East will be the work in St. Paul.

Operations and Maintenance Facility

Dan Soler presented the presentation on the operations and maintenance facility in Lowertown St. Paul. We will be using an existing building; consequently the first step was to analyze the condition of the structure. The building was built on piles and are in very good shape.

The Council agreed to make façade improvements and created an OMF Task Force made up of community members to seek input.

Karl Karlson asked what is happening to the northern portion of the building and the public art "Muscle". We are not proposing to use the north portion. We will need a temporary easement to sever utilities. The public art sculpture will be relocated by the City of St. Paul Public Works sometime next year.

Anne White asked whether access to the Bruce Vento trail will be affected. Unsure so staff will report back at the next meeting.

Anne White mentioned the CCMC proposed agreement for spending contingency dollars once they are released. She asked about how additional cars and other elements are prioritized. Chair Beach noted that there is a lot of discussion at the Met Council level about the definition of contingency.

Karl Karlson asked where the new Lafayette Bridge will go. Dan Soler explained that the new bridge will be to the east and not be over the building. It will be over the tracks.

Chip Welling indicated that there have been discussions about having rail transit continue east towards Washington County and wondered how the alignment would connect. Unsure of Ramsey County's plans.

4) NEXT STEPS

Chair Beach introduced the next agenda item by noting that we are transitioning from design to construction. She asked if anyone had feedback.

Anne White asked that we spend some time at the next meeting to discuss next steps as a group. Chair Bell noted the dwindling attendance as an indicator that it may be time for a change. Missy Gettel suggested that it would be helpful to discuss as a group.

Rozanne Severance said that she was impressed with the refinements of the public art.

5) ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kirstin Beach asked if any CAC members or general public wanted to make a comment. Hearing no one, she adjourned the meeting at **6:48 p.m.**

Attachment 1: Comment Card Feedback

1. Suggest topics for the October, November and December CAC meetings.

- How much is spent on each? Money spent on cleaning bus shelters versus cost of cleaning LRT stations.
- In October, report on results of this comment card.
- Possibility of charging for use of parking in the corridor and using at least some of that revenue for maintenance of side walks and other public infrastructure.
- Updates, infill stations, better pictures of station art, make color. Contracts, awards to contractors, making sure they are addressing community, disabled business concerns.
- Progress at U of M and bridge.

2. As we transition into the construction phase of the project, which would you recommend?

- a. Continue corridor – wide committee
- b. Break into smaller localized committees
- c. Other (describe)

b) – Why? With – we have spent much time on issues that are irrelevant (SP) to my constituency (r.e. U of M Construction) Minneapolis Outreach. How ever each community needs to know what is happening new on the line. They do not need to discuss it.

b) – Why? Probably the discussions will become more detailed. Three groups? 1) Minneapolis, 2) Capitol & Downtown, 3) University Avenue

a & b) – Why? Community Committees are necessary. Corridor wide committee is good to keep our reps informed. Both are necessary.

a & b) – Why? Both, not sure what would be best.

a & b) – Why? Need to include both communities of residents, businesses and people that come into the area.

a & b – Why? Continue working with mini-groups of district councils & property owners. We can learn from others experiences. A lot of the issues may be repetitive.

a)

3. Do you want to continue participating in a community advisory committee in 2010?

- Karl Karlson – NO
- Richard Hanson – Yes
- ??? – If localized, the West Bank CDC would probably participate. I might not because of a change in jobs.
- Missy Gettel – Yes! MSA does.
- Chip Welling – I probably would be willing to participate.
- Ann Finseth – Yes

- Jackie Lunde – Yes
- Rozanne Severance - Yes

Attachment 2: CAC 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	
	5	5	5
	5	5	5
	4	4	4
	5	5	5
	4	4	4
	4	4	4
Average	4.3	4.3	4.5

How can we improve?

- No comments