

Metropolitan Council

Metropolitan Council Chambers, 390 No. Robert St., St. Paul, Mn. 55101

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**Meeting of the Central Corridor Management Committee**

**January 23 2008**

Members Present	Peter Bell, Chair	Toni Carter	Kathleen O'Brien
	Tom Hanson	Rafael Ortega	Peter McLaughlin
	Reynaldo Aligada	Jim Westerhaus	Bob McFarlin
	Chris Coleman	Mary Hill Smith	R.T. Rybak (Peter Wagenius-Alt)

Members Absent      Paul Krause

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum being present Chair Peter Bell called the January 23, 2008 regular meeting of the Central Corridor Management Committee to order at 12:15 pm at the Metropolitan Council offices at 390 North Robert St., St. Paul.

**2. APPROVAL OF 01/09/08 AGENDA AND 12/12/07 MINUTES**

Motion was made by Smith, seconded by Ortega to adopt the agenda for the 01/23/08 meeting and motion by Ortega, seconded by Smith to approve the minutes of the 01/09/08 meeting. The motions carried.

Bell stated that requests were made at the last CCMC meeting, that the CCMC vote and make recommendations to the Metropolitan Council. He stated that, after consideration, he has decided that the CCMC will indeed vote on items. The manner of presentation to the Metro Council will be decided at a later time.

Prior to the information items presentations there was discussion regarding the following:

McLaughlin – concern with the \$840 M figure and where that figure comes from, as it will determine decisions of the project scope. It would be helpful to have that information for guidance and to bring back to staffs. He expressed the need for parameters and adequate information.

Fuhrmann – the \$840 M is the estimate to build the project as it was scoped in the DEIS and assumed 2.7% inflation per year until project delivery. The number to \$932 M is to extend the inflation to mid 2011. The CEI is dictated by what is included in the \$840 M cost, the Federal Government has forced more contingencies on the project.

Bell – asked staff to return to the 2/13 meeting with the relationship of the CEI to the \$840 estimate.

O'Brien – questioned how artificial the \$840 M number is as a boundary in setting parameters. The U of M has been working for 3 years on modeling at grade. They have not seen modeling at this meeting to see if it works, and we are very close to the Metro Council needing to make decisions.

Wagenius (Rybak alt.) agreed with O'Brien that progress must be shown on the traffic analysis at grade at the U of M and there is a need for mitigation plans. A mitigation package must be designed and may be costly.

Ortega reminded committee and staff of his request from last meeting to have a comprehensive list of options/CEI/costs/ridership so that members can get a sense of how different options relate to the \$840 M estimate. Bell said staff is working on this and may be able to present some scenarios at upcoming meetings. Bell stated that the initial principles and points regarding mitigation, based on July 2007 facts, have been discussed with O'Brien and will be further along at upcoming meetings, but may not know all of the details

before the 2/27 meeting.

McFarlin stated that much information has been presented about the CEI, cost and ridership figures in previous meetings. The information has shown the target, original DEIS & figures, and new DEIS estimate and newly calculated CEI and target. Previous information has shown different components and how they fit into the formula and there is much trimming of the project required to meet the FTA criteria. To suggest there has been no information shared is not an accurate statement.

Bell reminded the committee members of the reason for the 2/27 timeline for Metropolitan Council to make scope decisions. If the decisions are not made then, it will delay the project a year at about 5% increased cost. The \$1.2 B cost that has been mentioned in the media and by others is the estimated cost of the project if everything were to be included in the project.

### **3. CCLRT MAJOR SCOPE ISSUES – Information items**

Mark Fuhrmann reminded the committee that no decisions are being made today; the meeting will consist of presentations of various alternatives as a basis for making decisions. Fuhrmann reported on the following with a presentation:

#### **Hiawatha Connection**

Options were reviewed, and discussion followed about concerns with crossing Hiawatha track, at grade approaches, access to I 35W and traffic calming stoplights. O'Brien said the U of M is trying to look at what brings neighborhood(s) together and not divides them further, and is also looking at the economics of a neighborhood.

Fuhrmann presented a slide showing a timeline of the U of M northern alignment study and the current schedule.

O'Brien stated that the U of M had asked Ramsey County to study the northern alignment in 2001, but this was not done. The U of M does not wish to delay the project, but wants to make sure all viable alternatives are considered.

#### **West Bank Station Location**

The City of Minneapolis and MnDOT are looking at traffic calming (signals) on each end. This will be an opportunity to make a more pedestrian-friendly environment. The neighborhood groups favor the 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. location. A 2<sup>nd</sup> elevator/stair is proposed to be located at Cedar Ave.

#### **29<sup>th</sup> Avenue Station Location**

The DEIS alternative is problematic to businesses at this location and involves sizeable right of way taking. Wagenius stated that the proposed design is very satisfactory to the City of Minneapolis. Fuhrmann stated there is not much cost change in the new location.

#### **MCRR Bridge**

Amtrack and other RRs use this bridge. Proposal is to create new traffic lanes outside the outer pillars; this is a small savings to the project.

#### **Cedar and University Ave. Bridges**

Both bridges will require some retrofitting. Analysis shows \$ 2- \$2.5 M increase to retrofit both bridges.

#### **CAAPB**

The Capital Area Architecture and Planning Board supports the proposed change in alignment around the Capital and relocation of the Rice Street and Capital East Stations as proposed. In response to Aligada's question, Fuhrmann stated that responses from neighborhood and business organizations in the area have been both in support and in opposition. Fuhrmann explained the "cut-out" under the Cedar Street Bridge, the steep grade that exists now in that area, and the pedestrian tunnel underneath that location.

#### **2 or 3 Car Trains and Stations**

Fuhrmann stated there have been extensive discussions with the FTA about this subject. The FTA has agreed the LRT line can operate effectively when first opened with 2-car trains. The question before the committee is whether 3-car platforms should be designed and constructed now, to accommodate 3-car trains in the future. 3-car train platforms would add approximately \$15 M to the DEIS cost estimate for the project at the time of construction; this does not include retrofitting existing Hiawatha platforms.

Dan Soler, Central Corridor Project Office, reported on the next items:

#### Reconstruction of ROW

Soler gave a preliminary report on the analysis of the condition of University Ave. and the curb and sidewalk. He stated that portions of the Avenue can be saved, 85% of the curb and sidewalk would be affected - engineers recommend replacing all. In response to Ortega question, Bell stated that 15% of the cost of curb and sidewalk construction is expected to be from local partners. Ortega asked for the criteria for this and asked whether the local partners could be credited for items elsewhere on the line.

#### Traffic Signalization/Ped Crossings

Due to time constraints, the Ped. Crossings were not discussed at this meeting.

Soler presented a plan of the proposed traffic signalization recommendations, which includes some removal of traffic signals and some addition of signals. He also discussed the points where left turns only will be allowed on University and cross streets.

For future discussion on ped. crossings, O'Brien asked for information about bicycle crossings, R/W and fencing, and ped. access to cross to the other side of the street.

#### Design Criteria

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed at this meeting.

### **4. COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Reynaldo Aligada reported on the December CAC meeting that he attended. At this meeting the community heard information on the additional stations at Victoria, Western and Hamline. There were many questions on the ridership model and questions and concerns on future bus service and the need to maintain Rte. 16 service. Citizens do not wish to see a reduction in the Rte. 16 bus service.

### **5. BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT**

Karri Plowman reported that the BAC members are generally pleased with the proposed curb and sidewalk plans and the left turn lanes onto University Avenue.

### **6. NEXT MEETING: February 13, 2008 12:00 – 3:30 pm.**

Bell recapped the requests for discussion at the 2/13 meeting. 1) How the \$840 M figure was reached, and cash flow analysis with dates for sign-off; 2) Information known thus far on the traffic analysis near the U of M.

Smith and Ortega suggested providing meeting material to committee members prior to the meeting, so members can share with their constituents and possibly sending the meeting agenda out approximately a week ahead of the meeting.

### **7. ADJOURN:**

Chair Bell adjourned the meeting at 2.40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary

