

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Central Corridor Management Committee

April 30, 2008

Members Present	Peter Bell, Chair	Toni Carter	Kathleen O'Brien
	Mary Hill Smith	Rafael Ortega	Peter McLaughlin
	Chris Coleman	Jim Westerhaus	Bob McFarlin
	Tom Hanson (Norm Foster – alt)		R.T. Rybak
Members Absent	Paul Krause	Reynaldo Aligada	

1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present Chair Peter Bell called the April 30, 2008 regular meeting of the Central Corridor Management Committee to order at 12:10 pm at the Metropolitan Council offices at 390 North Robert St., St. Paul. Bell stated that this is a very full meeting agenda today and anticipates longer meetings needed next month. Bell stated that the May 14, 2008 CCMC meeting will be moved to May 21, 2008 and will be a duration of 4 hours: 12-4:00 pm.

2. APPROVAL OF 04/30/08 AGENDA AND 04/09/07 MINUTES

Motion was made by Coleman, seconded by Carter to adopt the agenda for the 04/30/08 meeting and motion was made by Coleman, seconded by Westerhaus to the approve minutes of the 04/09/08 meeting. The motions carried.

3. FTA NEW STARTS UPDATE

Mark Fuhrmann stated that he attended the FTA New Starts roundtable last week and had a chance to sit with project competitors for the funding. Fuhrmann presented a list of peer New Starts Projects nationwide and explained the competition for the scarce New Starts funds. The competition becomes intense as projects advance to the Full Funding Grant Agreement Phase. Fuhrmann answered questions from committee members regarding FTA cash flow.

4. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA'S NORTHERN ALIGNMENT

a. Decision Process and Timeline for Northern Alignment

Chair Bell stated that on February 27, 2008, the CCMC took action to approve the Washington Avenue alignment with the understanding that the U of M is underwriting the cost of the Northern Alignment Study. The next meetings will be for updates and addressing unanswered questions about those alignments. If the Northern Alignment were to be chosen, Bell expects the bar to be set very high. The Metropolitan Council will make the alignment decision with the advice from the CCMC. Bell expects that a "side-by-side" comparison between the Washington Avenue at-grade and Northern Alignment (ridership, timing, CEI, project impacts, cost estimates, etc.) will be presented at the 5/21 meeting for a decision that same day. A decision must be made in order to keep the project on schedule and to submit the application for Final Design by Fall 2008.

b. Northern Alignment Overview

Kathleen O'Brien, U of M, set the context and introduced Michael Monahan from SRF, consultants hired by the U of M for the Northern Alignment study. Monahan briefed the committee on the alignment and the feasibility study analysis that has been completed so far, and analyses yet to be performed.

Some key points from Monahan's presentation:

Bridge #9 is fracture critical, would need to be replaced to accommodate LRT; bike trail would also need to be replaced. Approvals will be needed from the National Park Service, State Historical Society, Army Corps of Engineers, Historical Preservation of the City of Minneapolis, among others.

Trench section may be difficult for snow removal, emergency/fire situations, maintenance.

Possible removal of 4 housing units and a "tot" lot at 21st and Bluff St. and the LRT close proximity to housing

(40’).

Complexity of obtaining necessary permissions from private owner of railway in a timely manner. O’Brien stated that this presentation today is a status report of the feasibility analysis. The U of M expects the Northern Alignment feasibility analysis of the ridership and CEI to be complete mid-May. The U of M will continue to work with Central Corridor Partners on Washington Avenue mitigations and funding plans.

Bell requested an opportunity to appear before the U of M Board of Regents to brief them on all options prior to any further action being taken by the Board of Regents. O’Brien agreed.

c. Northern Alignment Outstanding Issues

The committee discussed the outstanding issues for the Northern Alignment and the need to make a decision to avoid delay. At Bell’s request Mark Fuhrmann addressed the group with his opinion that the Northern Alignment range of estimated savings is reasonable, based on the study and on the current alignment and scope. However, there are risks and exposures not yet addressed that could have financial impact such as: environmental issues, design issues, constructability issues, operation & maintenance issues and railroad issues as well as ridership numbers and CEI. Fuhrmann stated that the Central Corridor project would be delayed by 1 year by choosing and pursuing the Northern Alignment. At this point in time O’Brien could not agree that the project would be delayed a year because more information will be available at the 5/21 meeting. Inflation cost estimates for a year delay are approximately \$40 M.

Bell opined that no further analysis is needed to prove that the Northern Alignment does not delay the project a year and a significant amount of staff time and costs have been expended to study the Northern Alignment thus far. Rybak stated that the mitigation issues on the Washington Ave. alignment have not been resolved. Bell suggested that the Central Corridor Project Office, Hennepin County, Cities of Minneapolis & St. Paul, Ramsey County, and U of M staff redouble their efforts to address mitigation issues and that the CCMC work toward agreeing on a framework to approach mitigation issues along the entire corridor alignment.

d. Central Corridor Timeline with Northern Alignment

Fuhrmann stated that the Municipal Consent Preliminary Engineering, Preliminary Design and Engineering package was delivered to technical staff of the partners this week. This will be used as a basis to conduct the statutory required public hearings at the end of May and into June 2008. This was the direction taken at the 2/27/08 CCMC meeting. Also, the Final Supplemental DEIS was provided to FTA on 4/29/08. Fuhrmann went over the remaining schedule dates for the preferred Washington Avenue alignment. In his judgment, as head of the Central Corridor Project Office, he stated it is reasonable that choosing the Northern Alignment would delay the project a minimum of one year.

Bell outlined his expectations for the 5/21 CCMC meeting. He requests that a “side-by-side” comparison of the Washington Avenue and Northern Alignments be presented, and the professionals involved (Central Corridor Project Staff, Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis and St. Paul traffic engineers, SRF Consultants, etc.) be asked their assessment as to the better alignment, to guide the CCMC in their decision.

5. WASHINGTON AVE. TRANSIT/PEDESTRIAN MALL

a. Bus Scenario Operational Costs

b. Traffic Study #4 Update

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

6. UNIVERSITY AVENUE DESIGN ELEMENTS

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

7. MUNICIPAL CONSENT CALENDAR

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

8. INFORMATION SHARING BY CCMC MEMBERS

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

9. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, May 21, 2008 Noon – 4:00 pm

10. ADJOURN– Chair Bell adjourned the meeting at 3:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary