

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Central Corridor Management Committee
August 27, 2008**

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Peter Bell called the August 27, 2008 regular meeting of the Central Corridor Management Committee to order at 1:10 pm at the Metropolitan Council offices at 390 North Robert St., St. Paul.

2. APPROVAL OF 08/27/08 AGENDA AND 08/13/08 MINUTES

A motion was made by Aligada, seconded by O'Brien to adopt the agenda for the 08/27/08 meeting and to approve the minutes from the 08/13/08 meeting. The motion carried.

3. SDEIS (Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement)

Mark Fuhrmann gave a summary of the number and type of comments received on the SDEIS during the public comment period. Some of the items of importance reflected in the public comments are: infill stations, loss of parking on University Avenue, bus service in the corridor, gentrification of the neighborhood, pedestrian/bicycle safety, safe /convenient access across University Ave.

O'Brien added that the U of M submitted comments on Monday 8/25 stating concern with research mitigation (the U of M has retained a consultant), neighborhood disturbance and neighborhood traffic. The U of M is concerned with disturbance, both during construction and operation of LRT, to the sensitive research labs which involves substantial federal grant money and rigid timelines. The U of M is working with the CCPO on this subject.

In answer to Ortega's question, Fuhrmann stated that a report from MPR has not been issued to date.

4. BUDGET/CEI

Mark Fuhrmann reported on the revised CEI from the FTA and the revised cost estimates for the project based on more detailed design development. Costs for materials and fuel have increased substantially since 2007.

Fuhrmann explained elements considered in value engineering, such as: redesign of track slab & station foundations, postponement of certain construction elements and purchase of some equipment, modifying portion of Washington Avenue alignment to eliminate ROW acquisition, and consolidating some traction power substations. In response to Ortega's questions, Fuhrmann detailed changes that have been made in the design of the maintenance facility at the Union Depot Concourse. Value Engineering design retained the infrastructure for infill stations, and installation of conduits for the additional ticket vending machines are included.

Fuhrmann answered questions and clarified value engineering components for committee members.

Bell commented that this is a very sobering presentation of how tight the CCLRT budget is, and members should be cognizant of this when responding to constituents and take forth the message that there are no additional dollars in the budget.

Discussion followed regarding the FTA requirement of carrying 30% of contingency through engineering, and the mitigation budget. If the FTA determines that there are mitigation costs not anticipated in the mitigation budget, the cost of the project could go up, something else in the project would need to be modified. The committee also discussed items that could be added when the contingency funds are released from the FTA as the project

progresses. Ortega stressed the need for the committee to have input in prioritizing the “add alternate” items for which contingency funds could be used, as the contingency funds are released and the need to make the prioritizations early on.

ADDITIONAL ITEM – ROUTE 16 ANALYSIS

In response to committee members’ requests, Fuhrmann presented the analysis of “Route 16 Overlay”, additional service between Downtown St. Paul and Fairview Ave. The result is increased bus operation and maintenance costs and decreased travel time savings, and an overall increase in the CEI.

5. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE AND ALIGNMENT

Mark Fuhrmann recapped the preferred alternative and alignment.

Motion was made by Hanson, seconded by Hill-Smith that the Central Corridor Management Committee recommends that the Metropolitan Council take the following actions:

- 1) To select the LRT mode as the Preferred Alternative for the Central Corridor, operating at-grade on Washington and University avenues, passing north of the State Capitol and turning south on Robert Street, turning west at 12th Street to Cedar Street and then continuing south on Cedar Street into downtown St. Paul turning diagonally at 4th Street and continuing east to end at St. Paul’s Union Depot with tail track leading to an operations and maintenance facility farther east; and
- 2) To direct their staff to submit to the Federal Transit Administration a New Starts application as part of the formal process of seeking permission to enter into Final Design in early 2009 providing information including preliminary engineering plans, ridership, operation and maintenance costs, a project budget of \$914.8 million and other information resulting in a cost-effectiveness index (CEI) for the Central Corridor LRT project of \$24.45; and
- 3) To continue to provide for active public involvement in all phases of the project; and
- 4) To commit to delivering this project on time, and on budget.

Discussion:

Coleman expressed disappointment that the community comments and concerns regarding the infill stations could not be addressed within the budget (the community has asked that one infill station be added now (between Snelling and Rice). Jackie Cooper stated concerns of Toni Carter, whom she is representing at this meeting. Carter sends her message of support for moving the project forward, however she requests that the Metro Council “work with all partners to design a community compact process for final engineering and beyond, a process that will allow the council and its partners to not only hear the community input it seeks through the extensive staff efforts already in place, but that also helps to make clearer how it expeditiously undertakes to value, process, respond to and incorporate this input as enlightenment to enhance its ongoing plans for Central Corridor, including additional stations and enhanced transit service.”

The motion passed unanimously.

6. NEXT MEETING – September 10, 2008, 1:00 pm

Chair Bell expressed his thanks to Mark Fuhrmann and his staff for the amount and quality of work they have done to respond to committee members’ requests in a timely manner.

7. ADJOURN

Motion by Coleman, seconded by Hanson to adjourn the 8/27/08 CCMC meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary