



DISTRICT COUNCILS COLLABORATIVE of Saint Paul & Minneapolis

Monthly Update — March 14, 2008

651-249-6877 • www.dcc-stpaul-mpls.org

Next Governing Council Meeting: Wednesday, April 9, 2008 • 7 to 9 PM • Central Corridor Resource Center

ACTION ALERT — Comment on SDEIS Work Scope

The Met Council and Federal Transit Administration are inviting the public to comment the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) work scope. Although the Met Council has already undertaken much of this work, this is an opportunity to urge the Met Council to further study the Stations at Western, Victoria, and Hamline, a station at Cleveland Avenue, reduction in the Route 16 bus service, feeder buses to LRT stations, the Washington Avenue Pedestrian/Transit Mall, and the “Northern Alignment” around the University of Minnesota. The **deadline** for submitting comments is **Wednesday, March 26**. For more information, go to: www.dcc-stpaul-mpls.org or www.stopsforus.com

Met Council Major Scoping Decision for Central Corridor

On February 27, the Central Corridor Management Committee and Met Council agreed on the following project components for the Central Corridor. This project scenario meets the CEI and target budget.

- ❖ **Washington Avenue East Bank**—LRT would run at street level on a transit/pedestrian mall; reinforce Washington Avenue bridge as needed
- ❖ **Stations at Western, Victoria, and Hamline**—build infrastructure for all 3 stations; building at least 1 station is priority if CEI changes and/or funding becomes available
- ❖ **University Avenue Reconstruction**—resurface street, rebuild curbs, gutters and sidewalks
- ❖ **Public Art**—\$3.7 million as originally planned
- ❖ **Downtown St. Paul-Cedar-Fourth Intersection**—a diagonal route from Cedar & Fifth to Minnesota & Fourth Street; 2 proposed stations will be combined into 1
- ❖ **Union Depot**—station in front of Union Depot
- ❖ **Platforms**—build 3-car platforms to allow for future expansion; line will open operations with 2-car trains
- ❖ **Union Depot Vehicle Maintenance Facility**—build east of Union Depot Concourse; allow for future concourse station

Central Corridor Issues and DCC Activities

Washington Avenue Transit/Pedestrian Mall, At-Grade Alignment and “Northern Alignment”

The DCC voted to send a Letter of Concern to the Met Council regarding the proposed Transit/Pedestrian Mall. Further study of this issue and the “Northern Alignment” were identified as the highest research priority.

Minneapolis member organizations expressed their constituents’ concerns about neighborhood traffic issues that would result from closing Washington Avenue to vehicular traffic and converting the street to a Transit/Pedestrian Mall. They also expressed frustration that neighborhoods have not been adequately engaged in discussions regarding mitigation strategies for the Washington Avenue Transit Mall option.

Advocacy for Stations at Western, Victoria, and Hamline

The Transportation Equity and Stops for Us Campaign successfully engaged the community in the Met Council “Listening Sessions.” Over 300 people attended the four Listening Sessions and 88 people spoke (not all attendees and speakers were associated with our campaign). Our written petition had over 130 signatures and over 60 people emailed the on-line petition on the Stops for Us web site. The Met Council received 126 comments in support of additional stations. Inclusion of infrastructure for the three stations in the project work scope was the notable outcome of the campaign. However, campaign members continue to work to ensure build out of all three stations as part of the line when it opens in 2014. Next steps in the campaign include Watch Dog activities and engagement of elected officials, continued community outreach and engagement, further investigation into Environmental Justice opportunities, and maintenance of the web site and other communications.

DCC to Prepare Comments on Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) Work Scope

The DCC will prepare comments on the proposed work scope for the SDEIS. Comments will reflect resolutions passed by the DCC and include appropriate research and community reports. Among the issues we will comment on are: additional stations at Western, Victoria, Hamline, and Cleveland; the Washington Avenue Transit / Pedestrian Mall; bus service needs, including frequency of the 16 after the line opens, and feeder bus system; street-scape improvements on the Corridor; and public participation processes.

DCC Updates Priorities and Work Plan

In addition to maintaining the Transportation Equity and Stops for Us Campaign, over the next six months the DCC will place priority on the issues below. Although we will work on all issues, the Washington Avenue alignment will be the highest priority.

- ❖ University of Minnesota/ Washington Avenue alignment options and mitigation strategies
- ❖ Neighborhood mitigation needs
- ❖ LRT and implications for parallel and intersecting bus routes
- ❖ Station design (including pedestrian access, public art, safety, and security) and public participation process

Report on Pedestrian Environment Survey Tool for Neighborhoods

Josh Tolkan, research assistant through the University of Minnesota’s CURA/Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization Program, presented findings of his fall research project. His project focused on development of tools neighborhoods can use to evaluate the pedestrian environment in the Central Corridor. He developed and tested a two-part audit. One component relies on Geographic Information Systems software and geo-coded data and the other component is a field survey of the pedestrian environment. The evaluation tool was tested on two different intersections and revised twice. Next steps for the DCC might include working with member organizations and other community partners to gather more data, analyze segments of the corridor, develop specific recommendations, and put in place a strategy to monitor and track improvements over time. For more information about the study, go to our web site: www.dcc-stpaul-mpls.org.

CCLRT Planning Process and the Met Council

- ❖ **CC Management Committee (CCMC)**—The CCMC met twice in February to work out agreements about the project scope described earlier. Ramsey County representatives, the Mayor of Saint Paul, and the Community Representative Reggie Aligada worked hard to advance the inclusion of stations at Western, Victoria, and Hamline. Chair Bell was adamant, however, that at this time inclusion of infrastructure was all that the project budget could bear given uncertainties surrounding mitigation needs and costs. The March CCMC meeting was canceled.
- ❖ **Met Council**—On February 27, the Met Council voted on the project scope described earlier. A few member spoke of their desire to include construction of the additional stations, but felt that the project could not afford them at this time. The Council agreed that the minutes should reflect build out of at least one station as the highest priority.
- ❖ **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**—The February meeting of the CAC focused on the different project scenarios under consideration. CAC members were asked to complete a written survey about the scenario options. When asked for verbal comments, a majority of those present expressed support for the additional stations. A few members expressed frustration that Environmental Justice issues have been given so little attention in CAC meetings when many members have identified this as one of their top issues of concern.
- ❖ **Upcoming Met Council/Central Corridor 2008 Critical Milestones**

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Central Corridor LRT							
Circulate SDEIS							
PE Plans to 30%							
City/County Approval of PE							
Update cost estimates							
Request to enter Final Design							

DCC Executive Committee and Staff: Anne White, Chair, District 13; Steve Wilson, Vice Chair, Summit-University, Frank Schweigert, Secretary, Hamline-Midway; Ron Lischeid, Treasurer, University District Improvement Association; Phil Anderson, Member-at-Large, Prospect Park/East River Road Improvement Association; and Carol Swenson, Community Liaison.

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