

# MEETING SUMMARY

## COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #4

**Date:** August 25, 2022

**Time:** 5:00-7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Virtual

## ATTENDEES

### Committee Members

| Name                     | Community of Residence or Affiliation | Present |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Committee Members</b> |                                       |         |
| Safiyo Ali               | Saint Paul, Ward 5                    |         |
| Abenezer Ayana           | Saint Paul, Ward 3                    |         |
| Katherine Bell           | Saint Paul, Ward 3                    |         |
| Daniel Bruggeman         | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    | X       |
| Sam Burns                | Saint Paul, Ward 1                    |         |
| Stephany Carpenter       | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    | X       |
| Hanna Debele             | Saint Paul, Ward                      |         |
| Jason DeBoer-Moran       | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    |         |
| Cristina Diaz            | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    |         |
| Eric Ecklund             | Bloomington                           | X       |
| Amelia English           | Bloomington                           |         |
| Kevin Gallatin           | Saint Paul, Ward 3                    | X       |
| Diane Gerth              | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    |         |
| Sylvie Guezeon           | Saint Paul, Ward 1                    | X       |
| Mary Hogan-Bard          | Saint Paul, Ward 1                    |         |
| Meghan Kress             | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    |         |
| Matthew McMillan         | Saint Paul, Ward 4                    |         |
| Negatu Merkuria          | Saint Paul, Ward 3                    |         |
| Bill Lindeke             | Saint Paul, Ward 1                    |         |
| Corrinne Ollman          | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    | X       |
| Lawrence Richardson      | Saint Paul, Ward 3                    |         |
| Jay Severance            | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    |         |
| Bob Whitehead            | Saint Paul, Ward 3                    |         |
| Amanda Willis            | Saint Paul, Ward 3                    | X       |
| Adam Yust                | Saint Paul, Ward 2                    |         |

| Project Team Members and Other Attendees |                                  |   |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Jennifer Jordan                          | Riverview Corridor Project Team  | X |
| Mike Rogers                              | Riverview Corridor Project Team  |   |
| Kevin Roggenbuck                         | Riverview Corridor Project Team  | X |
| Jessica Laabs                            | Riverview Corridor Project Team  | X |
| Mona Elabbady                            | Riverview Corridor Project Team  |   |
| Lyssa Washington                         | Riverview Corridor Project Team  | X |
| Haila Maze                               | Riverview Corridor Project Team  | X |
| Grant Wyffels                            | Riverview Corridor Project Team  |   |
| Ebtehal Bahnasy                          | Riverview Corridor Project Team  |   |
| Jay Demma                                | Riverview Corridor Project Team  | X |
| Michelle Terrell                         | Riverview Corridor Project Team  |   |
| Laura Michlig                            | Riverview Corridor Project Team  |   |
| Joe Landsberger                          | Station Area Planning Task Force | X |
| Melissa Barnes                           | Visitor – MnDOT Metro            | X |
| Dan Pfeiffer                             | Visitor                          | X |
| James Schoettler                         | Visitor                          | X |
| Jerome Johnson                           | Visitor                          | X |

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

### 1. Welcome

Kevin Roggenbuck welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Riverview Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and read the land acknowledgment.

### 2. Introductions

Ramsey County staff, participating members of the consultant team, stakeholders in attendance and the committee members introduced themselves.

### 3. Housekeeping Items

Kevin Roggenbuck reviewed several items with the committee including the group agreements and virtual meeting procedures.

### 4. Highway 5 Mill and Overlay Project Overview

Melissa Barnes, Area Manager for MnDOT Metro’s North Area, provided an overview of the Highway 5 / West 7<sup>th</sup> Street Resurfacing Project. This project will make improvements to West 7<sup>th</sup> Street in 2027 from Munster Avenue to Saint Clair Avenue, and in 2028 from Saint Clair Avenue to Olive Street. This project has been in the planning stages since 2016, involving MnDOT, City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and others. Public input via a survey has indicated concerns regarding walking across the street, vehicle speeds, and bicycle safety. Improvements may include sidewalk repairs, ADA accessibility, crossing improvements, restriping, traffic signal

replacements, and lighting improvements. The project is currently in environmental review, with the design phase planned for 2023-2026, with construction starting in 2027.

Joe Landsberger stated he was surprised by this project coming up, and that it will take five years to be done. Why does it take so long to address safety needs? Melissa Barnes responded that the timing is due to need for right of way acquisition, environmental process, and other factors. This is complex area with a lot of needs. They are exploring pedestrian safety improvement possibilities in the interim, and if that's a possibility.

Joe Landsberger asked if the state has any role in controlling speed on 7th – he almost got hit crossing there, near Goodrich. Melissa Barnes replied that there was a speed study done to determine the speeds, but they are aware that people do exceed the speed limit at times.

In the chat, a participant stated that they have lived in the neighborhood since 1995 and are very happy to be part of the team and look forward to all the safety improvements along the project area.

Joe Landsberger also asked if width of streetcar is legal according to the state's standards (see below for additional explanation). Melissa Barnes replied she doesn't have expertise in length of streetcar and would have to defer to others.

Later on in the meeting, James Schoettler clarified: I think Joe may be referring to the width of the streetcar. In order to accommodate the Blue and Green Line stations, the streetcar must be the same width of the LRT vehicles, which is more than 8'8". The maximum width allowed on state highways is 8'6". This means that the streetcar running on West 7th will be wider than the trucks on the freeway. Back around 2016 Ramsey County excluded consideration of LRT for Riverview because LRT should have its own dedicated right-of-way. Jessica Laabs responded that the exact vehicle type hasn't been determined yet. Streetcar and LRT are different and are served by different vehicles. Vehicle model type and dimensions may change prior to the final decision for the project. They will be exploring options with Metro Transit.

## 5. Station Area Planning Task Force (SAPTF) Update

Jay Demma gave a Station Area Planning update. The focus of Station Area Planning Task Force meetings from April-July was on the Grand and Kellogg station areas. The task force has received community input, including results from an online survey, and reviewed preliminary concepts. Factors addressed included areas of change, public realm improvements, safer and enhanced connections, and pros and cons of possible station locations. By fall, the focus will shift to station areas west of I-35E, with a tour, area assessment, and community engagement.

Kevin Gallatin asked what the mauve colored buildings on the image on Slide 21 mean. Jay Demma explained it was an example of how to add development in station areas that fits with building form in the area. It also shows examples of integrating parking structures with development to address parking needs in these areas.

Amanda Willis asked whether the surveys had open-ended questions, and if so how were they summarized? Jay Demma said they were but had been organized into categories and common

themes. He also clarified that they are keeping the same style of survey over time and across station areas, asking almost identical questions to those asked for Otto/Randolph/St Clair.

## **6. Engineering and Pre-Environmental (EPE) Update**

### **Bdote/Fort Snelling Update**

Jessica Laabs provided an overview of issues being addressed through the Bdote/Fort Snelling Issue Resolution Team. This included coordination with Metro Transit about the Blue Line connection, tunnel operations, and event operations. It also included coordination with MnDOT on the Highway 5 traffic analysis and considerations related to the Highway 5 bridge.

### **Highway 5 Bridge Traffic Analysis**

Jessica Laabs provided an overview of the Highway 5 Bridge Traffic Analysis. The analysis included both a no-build option and an optimized scenario with two transit lanes and two vehicle lanes. Factors explored included trip types, traffic impacts to the bridge and surrounding roadways, location of traffic diversion, and potential for mitigation on other roadways.

### **Saint Paul West 7<sup>th</sup> Street Update**

Jessica Laabs provided an overview of issues being addressed through the Saint Paul – West 7<sup>th</sup> Street Issue Resolution Team. The team is currently developing a concept that optimizes transit operations and accommodates stakeholder priorities. This would include more reliable transit service, center platforms, and accommodations for bikes and pedestrians. As a next step, project partners will review the concept and provide comments.

Daniel Bruggeman stated that he still sees the CP rail spur at Randolph on the map and asked if that still an option for the streetcar route. Jessica Laabs responded that they are still going with West 7<sup>th</sup> Street as the Locally Preferred Alternative, so the spur alternative will not be pursued unless West 7<sup>th</sup> Street proves to be infeasible.

Joe Landsberger noted that the presentation described conversations with stakeholders. He asked who they are because it feels like business associations have not been part of the conversation. Jessica Laabs said the reference to stakeholders means those on the Issue Resolution Team, including Saint Paul, Metro Transit, Met Council, and Ramsey County. A lot of technical conversations have happened to date. There has been some business outreach on West 7<sup>th</sup> Street that will be shared later. Ramsey County is working with the Issue Resolution Teams to develop an optimized streetcar and a best bus alternative by early 2023 to share with PAC and CAC and to provide for public input, before any major decision about what moves forward for consideration. Business outreach has included going door to door talking to businesses and getting feedback. Planning a more intense downtown engagement about routing in downtown. There will be continuing engagement throughout the project.

Joe Landsberger asked, does the 2040 date mean that is when the project will be done? Also, could there be an interim improvement for bus service before then? Jessica Laabs responded that 2040 is a traffic forecasting year. If all going according to plan, opening year for Riverview would be 2031-2032. Any possible interim solution will need to be coordinated with Metro Transit. There hasn't been a conversation right now on that topic, and Metro Transit currently is reducing bus service due to lack of drivers.

### **Saint Paul Downtown Update**

Jessica Laabs provided an overview of issues being addressed through the Saint Paul – Downtown Issue Resolution Team. This included exploring other alignment options in lieu of the Locally Preferred Alternative in front of Union Depot. The Issue Resolution Team is working on narrowing down options, based on forecasted ridership, cost, and other factors.

Jessica Laabs asked the committee for their thoughts on the downtown alignments. Kevin Gallatin asked if there any advantages/disadvantages around the potential West 7th alignment alternative downtown. Jessica Laabs responded that potential pros include that it may provide more access to development on the north side of downtown, can accommodate a variety of operations downtown, and may be less congested than 5th Street. In terms of cons, it is longer and therefore less direct. The project is still in the early stages of seeing if this is a viable option.

## **7. Communications and Community Engagement Update**

Kevin Roggenbuck provided an update on recent and planned engagement efforts. This included results from the Highway 5 bike and pedestrian survey, April updates to Saint Paul district councils, a June Highland bike and Sibley Manor food distribution event, June-July events at Café Astoria and Keg and Case, the start of door-to-door business outreach on West 7th Street and the August Highland Transportation Information Fair. Upcoming events include downtown and West 7th Street business engagement, August Shepherd Park music series, September event at Friedli Gallery, events at Café Astoria and Keg and Case, and a proposed Mall of America engagement. Business outreach has reached over 50 businesses on West 7th to date, with 70+ more planned for downtown outreach. A new video has been added to the project website, with more web content forthcoming. Also, a new transit awareness campaign will be launched this fall.

Sylvie Guezeon asked if there are plans to do engagement with Metro Transit on Route 54 buses. Kevin Roggenbuck responded that the team had talked about engagement on the Route 54 bus and would like to pursue it, but were delayed due to COVID. The transit awareness campaign will include posters at Mall of America and other transit stations, as well as engaging people directly on buses and at transit stops. The project team has spoken about this with Metro Transit and will need to convey when they want to do this.

Joe Landsberger stated, following up on local business engagement, if this is being documented, and what feedback are you getting from this. Kevin Roggenbuck responded that they are going door to door with businesses, recording who they are talking to (preferably owner

or manager), providing talking points and information to share, as well as asking a few questions – preferences on alignments, advantages/disadvantages, and so forth. All documentation will be included in periodic engagement summary, with the most recent version in draft form currently. The station area planning team is also talking to businesses that are adjacent to station areas being planned, including landowners with potential for redevelopment.

## **8. Next Meeting**

Kevin Roggenbuck stated that the next Community Advisory Committee meeting would likely occur following the next Policy Advisory Committee meeting, which had not yet been scheduled. This will be related to content being generated via the Issue Resolution Teams.

Corinne Ollman asked when they can anticipate hearing more about the best bus alternative. Kevin Roggenbuck responded that the team is currently working on the best rail alternative. Hopefully identify alignment by end of October. Additional work will follow, including via the Policy Advisory Committee and input from public engagement. After the streetcar concept is complete the team will start to work on the best bus alternative. Likely information on this will be provided to Issue Resolution Teams later this year.

The Community Advisory Committee meeting ended at 6:30 p.m.