

Southwest Transit Corridor – Collaborative Planning Workshop II  
December 16 - 17, 2009

**Morning Session - December 16, 2009:**

**Introduction: Caren Dewar**

Overall objectives of the workshop includes building on what was learn last time and end the workshop with a work plan to move forward.

Hennepin County – unanimous resolution for Community Works project

- County staff to take three months to plan what will be accomplished through the Community Works project with cities along the corridor.
- Determine the goals of the Community Works project.
- Coordinate efforts for TOD, economic development and investments along the corridor.

Distinguish corridor – first corridor that is going through multiple jurisdictions

- Partnership is significant
- Key to get ahead of the engineering of the line – so have a shot at informing the design of the rail.
- Opportunity to work in pedestrian and development opportunities in the engineering conversation.

**Corridor Performance Objectives: Cathy Bennett**

Bennett provided a summary of the data gathering efforts and survey of sites after bus tour that was coordinated by the County with the cities.

- Question on the 35 du per acre average – planned or just happened? Latter.
- Discussion of corridor data for residential, office, mixed use, jobs.
- Comparison of station area plans with market study; residential and office higher in station area plans.

From Bennett’s slides – not one size fits all; each extremely different; starting in very different places but yet an overarching commonality; strength gained by working together for common purposes.

**What is it you are trying to achieve; Recommendation on how to achieve results; Critical questions. Ken Greenberg – (Refer to attached notes prepared by Ken Greenberg).**

**1) What things are common?**

Each of the stations have the potential to create a hub – potential to be a focal point in the communities in which they occur.

Be a demonstration of what it means to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Shift from complete auto dependence.

Mixed use; doing multiple things in one place. Economically in terms of synergies.

Station areas should be seen as completely mixed use – grain may be different;

Vary within buildings? Uses in a neighborhood?

Integration within surrounding neighborhoods. Introduce new things to established patterns.

Alternative mobility – first walking, primary alternative; cycling;

Question about whether to focus some alternatives at some stations. Targeting uses and amenities.

**Question/Discussion –**

- Do we need a typology for the stations? Knowing what types they are ...
- Corridor planning has done some of this.
- String of pearls metaphor - each has something to offer to the whole.
- Mixed of daily needs and one-of-kind role.

**Demographics** -- Aging in place; ideal places for the suburban SF resident to move into something in their community to give them greater mobility as they get older. Making these places kid-friendly – for families that don't want a car per adult.

**Economic stimulus.** Employers to be looking to position themselves near transit lines. Gives potential employees multiple ways to get to work.

**Working creatively with time?** Running out of cheap oil; Market studies today don't show that there is instant demand. Think instead of how these places are going to evolve over time; how to build and support them over time. Allow something to grow a little more organically, responding to market. Template for the perfect may be the enemy of the good.

**Three scales at once:**

1. **The whole line** – to avoid competing with each other in unhelpful ways; undercutting each other incentives; optimize the capture of housing and jobs for and from the region; market the whole line/corridor to the larger region.

2. **The hubs** – 10-15 minute walk around the stations.
3. **The immediate station** itself.

Every single thing that gets done needs to contribute to the whole. Think about how to take the initial decisions about station design, the first development projects, the first community investments so that they are working to a larger whole.

Need most reliable set of numbers for market absorption for the corridor; playing from the common playbook.

- Be a two-way system; what's the right balance between employment and housing.
  - This includes the Minneapolis stations that were not currently part of the data-gathering because they decided corridor alignment recently.
- The mix of housing itself – elderly, kid-friendly, i.e. age cohorts being served.
- How ensure that the shopping, services, schools, libraries etc. that actually make complete communities also are being built into the mix. Community services will also make these places attractive to developers – i.e. the attraction of a good grocery store.
- Arts, culture and connections to natural resources/recreation.

**Testing of the market reality** – keep going back and forth.

**Building types** – transit hubs – showcase high quality architecture; urban design; should be demonstrated in every building type. Use architectural competitions. Quality of life supported with quality of architecture and landscape.

***Comment: Need for images to share with planning and zoning commissions. Powerful examples of images with projects that are successful.***

**Parking:** is a key chess piece; especially structured parking. Make part of the solution – wrapping, first-floor, flat floors so can be converted, green energy production incorporated, accept them as a crucial part of the strategy.

**Art of place-making** – not how dense you make; how you make it dense; playing chords, not notes.

**The cool factor** – stations as marketing tools for the new neighborhood, community, connection to the public realm. Funding needs to cover more than just “the basics.”

## 2) **How to do this?**

Precinct Plan – beyond the station area plans

- Need to deal with the three scales.
- Overview of the piece of the urban world through which this corridor is passing
- Plus fifteen minute walk around stations
- Invitations rather than prescriptions; vision but not specifics.

**Key definitions:**

Precinct or hub = 15 minute walk

Station area = station itself and immediate support facilities

Greenberg's notes refer to the components of the plan. More or less a hybrid between a corridor plan/station area plan.

Who implements? Needs to be imbedded in multiple groups – engineering/planning together within the municipalities, county, metropolitan council.

Consider the need for a development agency that can purchase, own, expropriate etc. that broadens authority to make change. Expands on comprehensive planning and zoning – what are the trade-offs for no action – less integrated, delay, loss of opportunity to stimulate and shape development; loss of potential ridership; loss of potential government revenue.

*Question:* regarding the scale up – do we need to look at entire system, coordination of the entire system? *Discussion/Response* – yes, to address unhelpful competition; defense of the resources and identity for working at the corridor level.

**3) Tools and Strategies**

Themes – needs carrots and sticks. Highlighted issues with some discussion.

Land use – set targets for the entire line – growth in residential and employment use. Identify how it is distributed among the stations.

- Further broken down by demographics.
- Retail too; break down by types and connect to needs.
- Sustainability targets – especially an area for coordination, create a set for the corridor.
- Public space and recreation – where are the connections?
- Financial tools – how do you develop a package that is available for each station of the line – consistent so that developers (investors) only have to deal with one set of financial incentives for whole corridor. *Discussion* – theme for the ongoing planning group; need for new tools in Minnesota.

Getting the DNA right from the outset: from the first day, have the nucleus of things that represent the whole.

- First coffee shop open at the same time with station
- Information for community
- Station sends the right signal from day one.

Questions that the group needs to answer

- Who coordinates?
- Are tools adequate?

- What are the opportunities and/or ability to leverage funding through the Community Works resources?

*Discussion:*

- Corridor layer and precinct layer; what belongs in corridor plan? Map with natural systems, stations, targets, parking strategies.
- Potential tool: joint-powers agreement. Any tools a municipality has can enter into a joint powers agreement with. Coordinate with Community Works project.
- Think about what things the group can do together and what will be keep local. What are the advantages of working together?

**Central Corridor Presentation (presentation on ULI MN website)**

**St. Paul Central Corridor Funders Collaborative - Jonathan Sage-Martinson.**

What is the Funders Collaborative?

- Been around about 1.5 years, train still five years out.
- 11 non-profit foundations that came together to see central corridor as a great opportunity for the local neighborhoods. Some national, some local.
- Theme – Investing beyond the rail.
  - Strengthen the regional economy
  - Make the adjacent neighborhoods better places to live and work
- Outcomes: affordable housing, strong local economy, transit-oriented places, coordination & collaboration.
  - Affordable housing
    - Long run – mixed income, maintain affordability.
    - Minimize short term displacement.
  - Strong local economy – again minimize business displacement. Access to construction jobs and access to regional job market.
  - Vibrant TOD
  - Communication and Collaboration.

Create and implement corridor-wide strategies: promoting learning, building shared solutions, investing resources.

Catalyst Fund in addition to funders typical spending.

- Goal of \$20 million over 20 years; raised \$5 million in three years.
- Operating: Couple \$100,000 for convening's, etc.
- Early projects:
  - City of Saint Paul/CTOD: Central Corridor Development Strategy, Financial Feasibility Analysis
  - MCCD (Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers): Central Corridor Business Development Task Force – during construction and then after; how thrive in the changing marketplace
  - Frogtown/Rondo Action Network: World Cultural Heritage District (signage, marketing, enhancing sense of place)

- With Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities sent community leaders to Rail—Volution 2009.

Long-term investment framework put together by municipalities and counties. [Learning page on the web site.]

*Questions:* Would funders be interested in southwest corridor since it is such a different corridor – suburban, wealthier? *Discussion:* Some would from the regional perspective, regional affordable housing and job creation perspective.

### **Lessons Learned in Central Corridor – Lucy Thompson, City of St. Paul (presentation on ULI MN website)**

Two separate tracks –

- Met Council LRT transit improvements, station design/location/art; CCPO = Central Corridor Project Office
- City of Saint Paul – from the curb back.

Started with Central Corridor Development Strategy

- Split corridor in two sections with two citizen task forces. Strategy for how to grow and change; plan adopted into comp plan.
- LRT planning became a focal point for a lot of issues that the city is dealing with; small business development; mixed income housing; gentrification; realized work-horse line, no park-n-ride, current express bus between downtowns will be faster option.
- Completed individual station area plans for the 7 in St. Paul. Now working on up to 11 station area plans. Station areas = 15 minute walk.

#### **Lessons learned:**

- Collaboration – corridor-wide approach really important. Did central corridor strategy first which worked to inform station area plans. Aired and framed some of the fundamental issues with the project that were larger than just a station: gentrification; small business development and affordable housing.
- Timing of planning: best done ahead of preliminary engineering and/or with it. Pretty good involvement with transit development staff. Good relationship.
- Community organizing: District Councils Collaborative (neighborhoods) to bring communities together to have a unified voice.
- More than a train: framed that more than just a transit-investment; LRT’s role in place-making and city-building.
- Political clout: everybody has to be at the table; losing at some things; need be more politically astute.
- Partnerships are critical.

#### **Land Use:**

- Diversity throughout the corridor. Every station not need be loaded up with every mix of land use.

- Getting real TOD: master planned significant TOD densities; anxious that market may not be ready to built when we need it. Need to think about interim development that does not close off future opportunities. Speculative TOD development is unlikely until the rail is in the ground.
- Paradigm shift – economy – even planning and regulatory tools in place; still anxious about market.
- Parking – loss of on-street parking is a problem; thinking through parking took a lot of energy; how deal with loss and rethinking parking; most difficult part of the paradigm shift.
- Delineating areas of change and areas of stability: for those anxious that the LRT will hurt them. Only a narrow strip targeted for change; marked on the maps as areas of stability.

**Design matters** – City planning didn't push hard enough early on to get budget for design; base budget versus amenities/enhancements – there is a large gap. Base budget versus betterments. The cost effectiveness index does not recognize the benefit of good design. Doesn't recognize the streetscape issue. Created a gap of \$22,000,000 for the streetscape that needs to be raised to implement.

### **Citizen engagement**

Early, honest, meaningful; clarity – what is the city and what is the Central Corridor Project Office (CCPO) – who helps with what; Outreach by the CCPO; face on the street for the Met Council – but don't always know the engineering answers – should be aligned.

### **Other**

- Working with small businesses; CCPO only set up with construction mitigation; not full service for business assistance services.
- Fitting in – complicated physical, economic, social system; touch one component everything kind of fits.
- LRT is only the beginning → triggered a whole bunch of community conversations.

Parking strategy – prohibits single-use parking in downtown; putting in parking cap downtown; right now no parking requirements, but lots of parking; this is the recommendation getting the most heat in the downtown station area plan.

*Discussion* – How is the City dealing with the gap in the budget, especially for good design? Staff level understands the need; but not aligned all the way up the hierarchy. If we had our ducks in a line earlier, could have been avoided or anticipated better. Advice: treat it not as budget issue, but as a return on investment issue.

## **Afternoon session - December 16, 2006**

### **Presentation on TOD Development - Marilee Utter's, Citiventures– (Available on ULI MN Website)**

Key point – TOD value premium comes from walkable place-making. Don't forget the jobs – key part of the mixed use development patterns.

Four tests – how to use these tests for the station areas?

Deal-breaker scan: Vision, Market, Land, Leadership (public, private, non-profit)

Steps ...

1. Deal-breaker scan
2. Assign a project manager
3. Get the land, 5+ acres → may be a landowner willing to be the first one to develop
4. Common vision, craft a “but for” story, but for this, look at we could do for this community. Why this is worth public development and community support.
5. Get users/developers – start with jobs, start with the big employers
6. Figure out the financing; expect layers and fees
7. Budget 5+ years to groundbreaking

START NOW!

### ***Questions and Discussion:***

***What type of market study to ask for?*** Most methods will start with the stations areas, and bring it up to corridor that will determine what is a reasonable amount of development for this area for 5, 10, 20 years. Should focus on the development capacity for this area for the next five years; 10-20 years is too far out for developers to react to.

***Met Council's forecast for the corridor is from 2003.*** Won't be updated for the next couple of years. Trying to make it more sophisticated for this type of projection.

***Market study to identify the market niche that this corridor/station area could fill.***

When first starting out, market study can't get specific enough; time line gets in the way; any market study today isn't going to deal very well with three-four year from now.

***What kinds of tools to incentivize the developer?***

- Any type of money helps – for a traffic lights, for parks, etc. Payment over time, with developer upfront financing. Any money or things that amount to money for them – clear process (time) and density.
- Regulatory – predictable process; get somebody who they can talk to; administrative approvals plus – avoiding the engaging political process; green-

taping – invent a point system - if you get X points you get expedited process (example in Austin, TX);

- If they can do what you want they get to be special – political leadership, community groups behind you.

***Get around federal rules***; transit agencies can't buy land until ROD; cities and foundations don't have that restriction; transit agencies can only use eminent domain for parking – not for development;

## **Implementation Exercise: Shady Oak Station Area (Hopkins and Minnetonka)**

*Ken posed the initial question* – Do you want to start with total knock-down of buildings?  
“Tabula rasa” - keep some of the industrial fabric with its cheap buildings/ spaces

- Jobs in the area important to maintain.
- Precedent – Del Ray Beach in Florida; example of 21<sup>st</sup> century remake of industrial.

### **Need for an incremental strategy.**

Determine the chess pieces; the station, the new 17<sup>th</sup> street, the structured parking ... how to use these chess pieces to delineate your vision for long term development.

How to help those employers who want to stay?

Deal with the phasing – what happens as building occurs over the long term?

How would the two municipalities work together?

- Joint study session coming up.
- Bare minimum to get the station in ... to talk to councils; phasing.
- Start with the basic infrastructure plan/public realm. The current station area plan is not getting it right. The new 17<sup>th</sup> avenue – continue to connect south. In 2016 what will it look like?
- Then show how it could grow. Do not need to nail down all the internal streets, etc. can have some of that appear organically as proposals come in.
- Show how the existing buildings, even if temporary, can attract intensification. There may be economic uses that just can't take place in new buildings.
- Make different from main street; recognize different niche.
- Ability to still lay the ground work, establish the process. Identify what are the problems/opportunities that working together will provide?

Need an open-ended compelling vision; work with people as they come along. Need a “station area plan” or “hub” plans that are more strategic.

How to take these ideas two or three more steps forward? Engineers, architects, market-perspective; landowners → create strategy and a new set of appropriate diagrams to Metropolitan Council, etc. Guide how we are going to dispose of the public land once done making the infrastructure improvements.

- How design/frame the presentation for the council. Not focus on end-stage plan, but on what is known. What are the immediate decisions and phasing options backed by a long term vision.
- How to interact with the single-developer currently now active, with big, probably unrealistic vision.

**Thursday, December 17 2009**

**Summary of what consultants heard that the group can work on together.**

There is benefit in having all cities work together on the corridor in certain areas:

1. Marketing the big idea of the corridor to the world.
2. Some consistency to the approach to the private sector.
3. Complimenting each other; not competing in unhelpful ways.
4. Generally having more clout.

**Areas where cooperating might be helpful:**

1. Focus on the initial investment, the chess pieces. Trying to overcome the problem that Lucy Thompson identified – to make sure that the project initial investment includes those things that will make it a catalyst.
  - Fund those things that join urban design to engineering.
  - Join urban design elements to the infrastructure investment.
  - Funding for betterments that are part of the project – define key betterments early.
  - Funding sources for other catalyst pieces that may not be included in the initial investment – define those catalyst pieces and prioritize and seek funding for initial investment.
2. Re-inventing and building on that information from the station area planning done so far; string of pearls metaphor: Mapping of a) natural systems, infrastructure, housing, **jobs**, major employers, opportunities for the entire corridor; b) phasing of development/redevelopment.
3. Identify who does what; who organizes/manages the project for the entire corridor rather than city by city.
4. Conduct market strategies for the entire corridor with niches for specific stations.
5. Develop a common approach to sustainability goals.
6. Determine and identify the corridor perspective for a range of public facilities along the line that make it more attractive as a whole.
7. Prepare an affordable housing strategy for the corridor to include a full range of housing choices.
8. Prepare a coordinated approach to development incentives and redevelopment tools.
9. Evaluate new methods for community participation.
10. Identifying champions for the corridor – for the transit and urbanization along the corridor.

Discussion of champions:

- Place to start – high tech and medical employers.
- Include the development community.
- Opus, United Health Care, Liberty Property Trust, Cargill.
- Local Chambers of Commerce have been very supportive.
- Metromsp.org – evaluate use as a tool that can track transit lines, employers, rents. SW Transit Corridor not on the tool yet.

- Include the engineers – need engineers who are champions of walkability, complete streets etc.

#### Next Steps:

- Now is the time to discuss whether stations can be fine-tuned by being moved, adjusted etc. and tied to urban design - preliminary engineering starting in mid-2010.
  - At about 10% engineering now, once get past 50-60% engineering, it gets much harder to make changes.
  - Met Council takes the lead from Hennepin County for preliminary engineering.
  - Met Council will act on the preferred alignment in January. Can begin preliminary engineering before New Starts grant. New Starts application will happen about by September 2010. Preliminary engineering process will extend to 2011.
- Now is also the time for local communities to think of ways they can support the line (right-of-way or other opportunities), so they can be incorporated into the preliminary engineering.
- Focus on No. 2 (areas of cooperation) above – mapping of all the natural, infrastructure, public facilities, employment, housing resources and other needs along the corridor.
- Align the corridor focus with the federal partnership for sustainability communities and federal livability principles.

Transitway impact research program – Univ. of Minnesota, studies of the Hiawatha corridor. Will be studying impact along other corridors. Metropolitan Council will provide information regarding the study and encourage the U of M to look at the South West Transit area now rather than after it is built.

#### Ideas for Community Works Project: 90-day timeline

1. Project Goals
  - Attraction/retention of jobs in corridor
  - Housing – full range along corridor
  - Collaboration
    - i. Among the cities
    - ii. With private sector; public-private partnerships
  - Marketing/branding/naming: "Green means Go"
  - Sustainability – maximize the benefit to the community and county; attract federal funding
  - “City” building/place-making – LRT is a huge investment that will be a tool for place-making.
  - Identify financing/funding resources.
2. Geographic Boundary
  - *Discussion:*
    - What is the appropriate project area to focus the planning?

- Not being limited too much because it is important to deal with networks as well as the line and station areas.
  - Question the thought that can have a rule that will capture all the possible variations: large destinations, economic opportunities, will have their own geographic logic that any rule will likely miss.
  - Discussion of project boundary – questions thinking of a simple line, instead a necklace with differently shaped chunky beads might be more accurate.
  - Settled on 14-miles long, one-mile swath, with fine-tuning at stations areas and key connections.
3. Participating Organizations
- Stakeholders and Leadership/Partnership: Start small with key leadership, add in specialized players when comes time to focus on them
- Cities
  - County
  - MinnDOT
  - Met Council/Metro Transit
  - Park District
  - Business
  - Watersheds
  - Non profits/advocates/foundations/intermediaries
  - Land Bank
  - Citizens
  - Green organizations
  - ULI MN
  - SW Transit
4. Organizational Structure
- Whose day job will it be to implement these pieces?
  - How will the CWP interface when there is a corridor management committee? How will it connect to the SW Corridor Project Office.
5. Work Plan
6. Budget

Other funding sources:

- Will the philanthropic community be interested? Some, but unlikely to be a focus for them.
- Will private sector and/or employers be interested? Public private partnership.

What should be the *name of the line*? Utilitarian, but conflicts with the Southwest Transit Line which is a bus corridor, creating confusion. Need new name.

Can the CWP focus on things that might fall through the cracks? Engineering process is going ahead; the cities are going ahead ... the list of ten things started with are a part of what might fall between the cracks.

***What do the cities need help with?*** Interim planning, project development; market strategies; station area strategies; development strategy - capture the short term opportunities that might be here even today.

***What is the message to take back to city councils?*** How to clearly explain the framework and benefits of participating in the Community Works Project. Not used to being asked: what do we want to make of it?

- County advised - coordinating to bring all the resources together for the corridor.
- Focus on the first couple of the list of ten coordination/cooperation activities?

### **Presentation on Citizen Participation Process – Stacy Becker**

- How do you know when you have maximized the community benefits?
- How to make decisions about trade-offs between your goals?
- If don't have crystal clarity going in, going to be bull-dozed by the engineering and budget constraints.
- Need to operationalize the goals – that's when the real discussions and debate happens.
- Community process needs to be set up with all the other planning and integrated throughout.
  - What do we want to know from our constituents (*If you don't know or want anything, then question whether to engage them – people can smell a fake process.*)
  - What are the perspectives that community members can bring to the table that will be valuable? What value does public participation bring?
  - What are the benefits to the constituents?
- About changing behavior. Motivations are tricky without being specific about the populations you are working with.
- Importance of clarity about trade-offs. Community members ability to go right to the heart of what matters because not so clouded by all the regulations, budgets, etc.

Stacy asked group to decide whether a citizen engagement piece needs to be part of the southwest transit corridor process because 1) want to know XYZ and/or 2) for these purposes ABC. And with these outcomes in mind, can discuss a scope of work. The Citizens League has funding to implement a unique community participation process if interested.

**Immediate next steps** – how to get ourselves a little more organized to take on the next steps. Cities -- need to get all this digested and then step back and figure how to get the rudiments of an organization put together. Need to bring along the city councils and the community in general.

How can ULI's team help you with the city councils?

Next meetings/opportunities:

- January meeting of corridor planning group; joint session of Minnetonka and Hopkins.
- Need for policy direction from councils, which will trigger additional calls for information – it will be a iterative process that plays out over time.

Attendees – SW Transit Corridor Workshop (December 16 – 17, 2009)

**City of Hopkins**

Tara Beard  
Steve Stadler  
Kirsten Elverum  
Nancy Anderson

**City of Eden Prairie**

Regina Herron  
Janet Jeremiah

**City of St. Louis Park**

Meg McMonigal  
Adam Fulton  
Kevin Locke  
Mike Rardin

**City of Minnetonka**

Elise Durbin  
Loren Gordon  
Lee Gustafson

**City of Minneapolis**

Amanda Arnold

**Metropolitan Council**

Guy Peterson  
Mark Vander Schaaf  
Karen Lyons  
Beth Reetz  
Paul Burns  
Jim Uttley  
Denise Egen

**Hennepin County**

Adele Hall  
Carol Lezotte-Anderson  
Katie Walker  
Kerri Pearce Ruch, Policy Aide for  
Commissioner Dorfman  
Commissioner Jan Callison  
Dave Nuckols, Commissioner Callison's  
aide

***ULI MN Leadership:***

Colleen Carey, Cornerstone Group  
ULI MN Chair

***Funding Partners:***

Elizabeth Ryan, Family Housing Fund  
Jeanette Blankenship, MN Housing  
Eric Muschler, McKnight Foundation

***ULI MN Staff & Consultants:***

Caren Dewar, ULI MN Executive  
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Cathy Bennett, ULI MN Housing  
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Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consultants  
Marilee Utter, Citiventures, Inc.  
Sarah Jo Peterson, ULI

**Other:**

Lucy Thompson, City of St. Paul  
Stacy Becker  
Jonathan Sage-Martinson