



University Avenue Business Association (UABA)

University Avenue businesses from capitol to campus

Our mission is to ensure that a viable and diverse business environment is sustained and enhanced on University Avenue. We are dedicated to the development of a strong collaborative relationship among the business community, residential community, local government, and the people we serve.

Plan / Partner / Prosper

UABA Call for Action Updates

Outstanding Issues & Concerns:

All parties accept *UABA* as one organized voice representing the needs of University Avenue small businesses and agree to communicate directly with *UABA*.

***UABA* requests a matrix / chart for public dissemination with a contact list outlining who is responsible for what issues.** List the people who are responsible for construction mitigation, business mitigation, parking, streetscape, maintenance, property taxes & special assessments, zoning & regulations, business planning, marketing & branding.

Karri Plowman Business Advisory Council (BAC), Robin Kaufman (Met Council), Jim Roth (BAC & First Friday Group), Dan Soler, Craig Blakely, & Christina Morrison (Parking Solutions Team), Cities, Counties, *UABA* & U7

Mitigation:

Construction mitigation and business mitigation funding for small businesses must be included in the Project budget. A comprehensive construction and business mitigation plan must be developed and implemented. A business support fund needs to be set up to help cover small businesses' loss of revenue due to the negative impacts of construction. A business survey of baseline data, including business demographics, needs to be implemented to establish existing small business conditions prior to light rail construction. The business survey should continue through construction and post construction to track the changes in small business conditions. Small businesses need resources for local and regional marketing / branding, technical assistance, and direct financial support to compensate for lost revenue during construction.

How much construction mitigation money is available in the Project budget for small businesses along University Avenue? How will construction mitigation money be allocated to regular businesses and property owners other than large organizations such as the University of Minnesota or MPR? Some of the construction mitigation money should be in the form of grants to create incentives for customers, additional advertising, or delivery services for small businesses.

Elected officials should allocate funding for a business support fund.

Peter Bell (Met Council), Karri Plowman (Business Advisory Council & Central Corridor Partnership), Jim Roth (First Friday Group), Jonathan Sage-Martinson (Central Corridor Funders Collaborative), Mike Temali (U7), *UABA*, Cities, Counties, State

Parking:

The proposed extensive loss of street parking is unacceptable. More street parking should be a priority. Temporary parking solutions during construction need to be clearly outlined to help businesses survive construction.

Will there be any relaxing of the zoning to allow for private development of small parking areas in and around the Central Corridor line? What temporary parking arrangements will be in place during construction? Can some parking be extended into the first block of residential property behind the alley? What will the neighborhoods do with the flow of traffic and parking one block off University Avenue during construction? What provisions have been implemented to address security of the parked cars, patrons, and residents?

Dan Soler, Craig Blakely, Christina Morrison (Parking Solutions Team), Met Council, Cities, Counties

Construction disruption:

Small businesses will experience a 20% - 60% loss of revenue during construction. UABA requests incentives to compress construction time and monetary bonuses for contractors based on periodic community evaluations. Multilingual public coordinators should be assigned to work with the contractors and property owners. UABA will work directly with public coordinators and contractors to ensure that construction will cause the least disruption to small businesses.

In other cities, how long were the street and / or sidewalk torn up in front of businesses? How much advance notice was given before construction started in front of each business? How many blocks were dug up at any one time? How many construction shifts? Was construction work done with one eight-hour shift or multiple shifts? Will the Project Office consider three 8-hour shifts in key areas? How many businesses failed to survive the construction phase?

Robin Caufman (Met Council), Contractors, Cities

Maintenance:

Maintenance of the public realm will benefit the small businesses.

How will the street be cleared of snow? What steps does Mpls. currently take in and around the Hiawatha light rail for snow removal? What additional maintenance is required in and around station areas on the Hiawatha line? What about trash and graffiti?

Cities, Met Council

Property Tax & Special Assessments:

Higher property taxes and special assessments will increase the heavy burden on small businesses. UABA requests a property tax study to gather data to determine whether or not property taxes are being fairly assessed.

Can property taxes be capped for small businesses? Can there be a property tax holiday for small businesses? Is it possible to reduce or freeze property taxes along the Central Corridor until the line is operational and the benefits are realized? Will property owners have to pay special assessments? If so, what kinds of assessments will be levied? When will the assessments come due? What are the options for payment? Can property owners receive public assistance to help pay for the assessments?

Cities, Counties, State

Zoning & Regulations:

Zoning and regulations will increase the heavy burden on small businesses.

Can the City relax parking requirements?

Cities

Met Council and City of Saint Paul Responses to UABA Call for Action:

All parties accept UABA as one organized voice representing the needs of University Avenue small businesses and agree to communicate directly with UABA.

Robin Cauffman (Met Council): The Central Corridor Project Office (CCPO) outreach team appreciates the efforts of UABA to engage the small businesses. The nine-person multilingual community outreach team is responsible for engaging all project stakeholders in the corridor and will continue to communicate directly with UABA. Since Oct. 2006 we have held over 1,600 meetings and engaged over 35,000 people.

UABA requests a matrix / chart for public dissemination of who is responsible for what issues.

Robin Cauffman: The CCPO community outreach coordinators (COCs) will be working closely with businesses on construction access and communication. A list of key contacts is available online at: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCcontacts.htm>. Additional resources are identified on the Frequently Asked Questions webpage: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ccfaq.htm>

Nancy Homans (City of Saint Paul): City of Saint Paul contact people:

<http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=8912>

UABA needs to receive information in a timely fashion in order to properly engage in the process and regular updates on the status of the overall project with important milestones, deadlines, a summary of decisions made, and those that are still pending.

Robin Cauffman: The CCPO outreach staff makes project information available to the public using a variety of means and also responds to requests. Monthly meetings provide opportunities for project updates such as the Central Corridor Management Committee (CCMC), Community Advisory Committee (CAC), Business Advisory Council (BAC), and the First Friday Group. These meetings are open to the public and meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations are available for review. The www.centralcorridor.org website is also updated on a regular basis with detailed information about the project including:

- Weekly construction updates:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/construction/updates.htm>

- Press releases and video clips: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ccnews.htm>

- Monthly newsletter: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCnewsarchive.htm>

- Upcoming meetings: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCcalendar.htm>

- Design and engineering drawings of University Avenue alignment:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/UnivAv.htm>

- Reports and technical memos:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ReportsPresentations/index.htm>

- Final Environmental Impact Statement:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/FEISJuly2009.htm>

- Record of Decision and Adequacy Determination: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ROD/RODAug2009.htm>

Mitigation: Construction mitigation and business mitigation funding for small businesses should be included in the Project budget.

Robin Cauffman: The Central Corridor Communication and Public Involvement Strategic Plan defines “Construction mitigation” as communicating to residents, businesses and property owners information about planned construction schedules, construction impacts, utility disruptions, property access problems, and other issues as directly related to the construction of the Central Corridor LRT. Construction mitigation and communication are the responsibility of the Met Council and are built into the project budget. The COCs and the resident engineers will be working closely with businesses on construction access and communication. “Business mitigation” is defined as providing marketing and business assistance to businesses along the LRT alignment. The responsibility of developing and implementing business mitigation plan lies with those agencies and organizations that have economic development and business expertise. Giving money directly to businesses is not an eligible project expense. Consequently there is no money in the project budget for grants to businesses. Met Council is coordinating with local organizations including the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC), Central Corridor Partnership (CCP), U7, and

UABA that are working on securing funding and providing resources to businesses. These organizations meet monthly to coordinate activities.

Nancy Homans: The City continues to explore the possibility of creating a business support fund to support businesses, although our emphasis continues to be on encouraging businesses to prepare financially for the impact of construction since, even if we are successful in raising the money, it is unlikely that any fund will be very large.

Parking: The proposed extensive loss of street parking is unacceptable. Preserving as much street parking as possible should be a priority. Temporary parking solutions during construction will help businesses survive construction.

Robin Cauffman: In September 2008, the CCPO and City of St. Paul created the Parking Solutions Team (PST). The PST spent 13 months going block by block to identify specific impacts and develop site specific and corridor wide solutions. Their report is available online at:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/ReportsPresentations/ParkingSolutionsApr09.pdf>

Information about their parking program is available on the City's website at:

<http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=2734>

The COCs and resident engineers will be working closely with businesses and property owners to prepare for construction including parking.

UABA: *UABA* hosted four community meetings in 2009 that addressed the proposed loss of on-street parking. In light of the Met Council's decision not to change the design and programming of the roadway to preserve more on-street parking, *UABA* adopted the following on May 21, 2009:

***UABA* Parking Position Statement**

Phase 1

Develop and implement parking solutions to survive construction.

Allocate \$ to fund off-street parking solutions in Parking Solutions Report.

Phase 2

Implement an origin / destination study, monitor traffic flow before, during, and after construction of light rail.

Phase 3

Support a re-evaluation of street programming in the future based on origin / destination study and goals for supporting a multi-modal, pedestrian friendly corridor.

UABA will engage and support partnerships to work on these phase projects. For example, *UABA* will work with Saint Paul Public Works for the Phase 2 projects.

The Parking Solutions Team Report identified 11 critical areas for addressing the loss of on-street parking. 11 workshops were held during the summer of 2009 with business / property owners in each critical area to develop off-street parking solutions to replace the proposed loss of on-street parking. The Saint Paul City Council, through the leadership of Council Members Stark and Carter, approved the Neighborhood Commercial Parking Pilot Program, which will offer \$500,000 worth of forgivable loans to help University Avenue businesses and property owners improve their parking lots, increase parking capacity, and work out shared parking arrangements. Overall, the city is spending \$1 million on the program, which also includes storm water management improvements in alleys, residential buffers, and other upgrades along the corridor. For more information: <http://www.universityavenuebiz.com/resourceinformation.htm>

Design: In order to preserve more space for street parking and streetscape, design the light rail line as narrow as possible.

Robin Cauffman: The trackway is designed as narrow as possible and still be operational. The public had multiple opportunities to review the design of University Avenue in 2008. The CCPO staff is available to attend meetings to explain the preliminary design plans, as approved through the municipal consent process by Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul.

***UABA* needs sample contracts – both locally and from other cities.**

Robin Cauffman: In response to specific questions, Hiawatha was Bid/Build. Central Corridor is using the Design/Bid/Build process. Preliminary bids have not been completed. Chapter 8 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement includes a summary of the cost estimate and is available for review at the Rondo Library and the Central Corridor Project Office as well as online at:

<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/FEIS/FEISChapter8.pdf>. The economic downturn has seen a slight drop in construction and materials costs; see the Feb. 2009 CCMC presentation for more information, which is available online at:
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCMC/2009/20090211presentation.pdf#page=10>.

Information dissemination during construction:

Robin Cauffman: This will be the key responsibility of the CCPO community outreach team. During the preliminary engineering phase of the project, the COCs have been responsible for gathering public input, sharing that information with the engineers and providing information on the project. During construction the COCs will be the key contact for businesses, residents, and organizations for information about construction. Construction communication strategies include weekly construction updates, a construction information website, online comment forms and emails, public meetings with contractors' outreach point person to provide construction updates, neighborhood and business organization updates, media, and emergency communications. People can sign up for the construction updates online at:
<http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCLRTSubscribe.htm>

Directional signage for access to businesses and business marketing signage should be in the Project budget. Directional signage is in the project budget as part of the construction contracts.

Construction disruption: UABA will give input to ensure that construction will cause the least disruption to small businesses.

Robin Cauffman: Incentives are not currently reflected in the project budget however the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of St. Paul indicates we will explore this option. The construction communication plan will direct the COCs to work with the contractors to make information available to the public, businesses, and organizations including *UABA*. The outreach staff will be available for the day-to-day contacts; contractors may be available periodically at meetings.

The COCs and resident engineers will be working closely with businesses on construction access and communication. The following notifications will be provided to affected property owners, businesses and residents:

- 30-day construction notice, schedule
- Weekly construction updates
- 72-hour notice for road, driveway closures
- Notice for utility shut off
 - 72-hours for businesses
 - 48-hours for residents
- Emergencies, as needed

More information about construction communication is available on the Central Corridor LRT construction webpage: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/construction/overview.htm>

Streetscape: Small businesses will benefit from a well-designed façade to façade streetscape with betterments.

Robin Cauffman: The project budget includes the following streetscape elements and quality improvements to the existing roadway: replacement of sidewalks and existing street lighting, in-kind replacement of boulevard trees, safety elements for LRT operation, upgrades to meet ADA requirements such as tactile warning strips, new curbs, gutters, street surface, striped pedestrian crossings, traffic signalization, station markers, wayfinding signs, LRT stations with amenities including security cameras, lighting, shelters, benches, ticket vending machines, and public art on the stations that reflects the community.

Nancy Homans: The City is strongly supportive of an attractive streetscape and is working closely with the Project Office through the design process while assembling the resources necessary to finance the proposed streetscape betterments. Features under consideration include: historic lantern lighting, boulevard pavers, street trees, structural soil and irrigation, median improvements, sidewalk furnishings, and upgraded overhead contact system poles. Possible sources of funds include: City Capital Improvement Budget, State bonding, and existing Tax Increment Finance districts.

Maintenance: Maintenance of the public realm will benefit the small businesses.

Robin Caufman: Metro Transit will be responsible for clearing snow from the platforms, similar to Hiawatha LRT.

Property Tax & Special Assessments: Higher property taxes and special assessments will increase the heavy burden on small businesses.

Nancy Homans: Since this is Saint Paul's first light rail transit corridor, it will be important to understand any impacts that LRT development will have on property values, assessments, and taxes within the Corridor and develop appropriate policies with respect to property assessments for public improvements. In almost all cases the City assesses property owners for a portion of the cost of improvements (e.g. Selby Avenue, residential street paving, etc.) with assessments paid on the property tax bill over 20 years. Under these unique circumstances, alternative approaches will be considered. Work on defining an appropriate policy should be underway within the next year. The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project elements (track, stations, baseline streetscape, road resurfacing etc.) will not be assessed to the property owners but are being funded as follows:

- 50% Federal Transit Administration
- 30% Counties Transit Improvement Board
- 10% State of Minnesota
- 7% Ramsey County
- 3% Hennepin County

Zoning & Regulations: Zoning and regulations will increase the heavy burden on small businesses.

Nancy Homans: The City will conduct a Central Corridor zoning study in two phases. The first phase will consider amendments to the City's Zoning Code regulations that are needed to implement the planning that has been done along the corridor with the *Central Corridor Development Strategy* and the station area plans. For more information go to: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=85> The study will address topics such as building heights and parking requirements. The second phase will consider actual property rezonings along the corridor. It is anticipated that the public process for phase I will begin fall 2009 and be completed by spring 2010. Phase II will follow with the intent of completing property rezonings by the end of 2010.

Acronyms:

Met Council:

- BAC: Business Advisory Council
- CAC: Community Advisory Council
- CCMC: Central Corridor Management Committee
- CCPO: Central Corridor Project Office
- COCs: Community Outreach Coordinators

CCFC: Central Corridor Funders Collaborative

CCP: Central Corridor Partnership

CDC: Community Development Corporation

LRT: Light Rail Transit

MCCD: Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers

PST: Parking Solutions Team

UABA: University Avenue Business Association

U7: Collaboration of Community Development Corporations

Helpful websites:

UABA: www.universityavenuebiz.com

City of Saint Paul: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=85>

Met Council: www.centralcorridor.org

For more information, contact Linda Winsor, linda@universityavenuebiz.com or 651.641.0334

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