



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

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Date: September 20, 2011
To: Planning Commission
From: Transportation Committee
Subject: Review of public hearing comments on Lower Afton Station Area Plan

Background

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Lower Afton Station Area Plan on September 2, 2011. No one testified. Staff received a letter from District 1, and an email from Joanne Katz, a resident of 497 Burlington Road. Both documents are attached. This memo summarizes the issues raised.

The public hearing draft of the plan is available online at bit.ly/redrockplan

Overview of public hearing comments

District 1 wrote in support of the plan's adoption.

Ms. Katz listed the following concerns regarding the siting of the station. Staff response is in italics.

1. Lower Afton Road and other neighborhood streets will not be able to accommodate park and ride traffic. *Consultants analyzed traffic changes with the cooperation of city, county, and state engineers. Moving the site to the north side of Lower Afton should benefit traffic flow on Lower Afton, enhance connections to the new Lower Afton trail, and provide safe pedestrian access. Enhanced local feeder buses would also help bring commuters to the site.*
2. Development pressure will follow the park and ride placement. *Due to major constraints on this site, the plan does not recommend any changes to land use or zoning through the year 2040. Additional development is not viable and not recommended here in the foreseeable future.*
3. The station should be moved south to Bailey Road or to the 94 corridor. *The station location was determined during the Alternative Analysis in 2007, and is outside the scope of this plan.*
4. A quarter-mile is too small of an area to see full impacts. *A half-mile radius was used as the planning area. Due to physical constraints like Battle Creek Park, the bluff, and Pigs Eye, any impacts are generally confined to a small area at Lower Afton and Highway 61.*

Committee Recommendation

The committee recommends approval of the Lower Afton Station Area Plan.

To: Saint Paul Planning Commission
2011
From: District 1 Community Council

August 31,

Re: Red Rock Station Area Planning

The District 1 Community Council sent its Executive Director as its representative to the Red Rock Corridor Station Area Planning Citizens Advisory Committee. Over the time the CAC was meeting, our organization assisted with gathering input from affected Saint Paul residents about the future Lower Afton station and kept them informed of the developing plan. Several community meetings were held, articles were published in our neighborhood paper and on our website, and discussions among residents took place in other, less formal settings. Although opinions about the project were not unanimous in the district, everyone recognized that the park and ride station has a strong impact on the community, and that its future design could affect a broader area of our district than a half-mile radius. The design you see in the draft plan is a result of integrating resident input with the unique character and limitations of the surrounding neighborhood. The design respects the Mississippi River Critical Area, our local small area and community plans, the regional parks, and the residential quality of the area around the station. It also increases amenities for residents as well as commuters and visitors to the regional park. We hope that it will also increase bus service as a feeder system to the park and ride is expanded.

The District 1 Community Council stands in strong and unified support of the resulting station area plan for Lower Afton.

Participation in the planning process has already yielded benefits to the immediate vicinity of the current park and ride lot. Residents were empowered, as a direct result of the station area planning, to address issues with potential expansion at the current site. Being able to envision a long-term plan has helped them to identify more immediate needs and to express solutions that will meet those needs.

The District 1 Community Council urges the Planning Commission to adopt this station area plan for the Lower Afton Park and Ride lot of the Red Rock Corridor.

From: <jomkatz@comcast.net>
To: <christina.morrison@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Date: 9/2/2011 10:29 AM
Subject: Lower Afton Station Area Plan for Red Rock Corridor

Ms. Morrison

I would like to express some concerns with the siting of the Lower Afton Station for the Red Rock Corridor.

First, I am concerned about the impact a station will have on traffic flow on Lower Afton Road and the neighborhood use of feeder streets of Burlington Rd, Battle Creek Road and Pt. Douglas. Because Lower Afton Road is the stated main tributary for commuter use for the proposed station, increased traffic on it must be considered. Has traffic flow of nearby streets been addressed? How will the rush hour pressure of 275 cars trying to enter/exit the facility and their impact on the side streets be handled? Already at this time traffic flow east/west on Lower Afton causes issues for neighborhood access. Burlington Road and South Pt. Douglas Road residents have no alternatives.

I am also particularly concerned with the pressure of peripheral development that will naturally follow the construction of a park and ride facility. Although the plans do not currently show development - once a structure is built, the pressure to add more services and conveniences for the sake of the ridership will follow. Current zoning regulations may look strong...but too much pressure can void the current guidelines.

Siting the Red Rock Corridor station farther south perhaps at Bailey Road seems to make more sense in serving the targeted commuters.

Or, if in fact, the majority if not all, commuters using the station are travelling to Minneapolis, and are coming from "the east via Lower Afton Rd" why not site stations along the I-94 corridor where more property is available and open to peripheral development?

Although I am generally in support of park and ride commuter transit, I object to the siting of this enlarged station at Lower Afton Road. The local impact is not fully being considered (1/4 mile is too narrow an impact area) in light of traffic patterns and development pressure. I suggest that siting and focus of commuter transit to serve the South Maplewood and Woodbury users be directed toward the I-94 corridor. A small park and ride surface lot is sufficient for the St. Paul Highwood neighborhood users.

Sincerely,

Joanne Katz
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