



Snelling BRT Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Wednesday, May 15, 2013, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Macalester College
Weyerhaeuser Hall
The Weyerhaeuser Board Room
62 S Macalester Street, St. Paul, MN 55105

Meeting Summary (DRAFT)

Meeting began at approximately 6:05 p.m.

Organization	Representative	5/15	8/21	11/20	2/19/14
City of Falcon Heights	Wendy Noble	X			
City of Roseville	Lisa Laliberte	X			
District 10 Como Community Council	Kathy Stock	X			
District 11 Hamline Midway Coalition	Rachel Wiken	X			
District 11 Hamline Midway Coalition	James Lucken Hills	X			
District 13 Union Park District Council	Ryan Wilson	X			
District 13 Union Park District Council	Colleen Beagan	X			
District 14 Macalester Groveland Community Council	Joyce Krech	X			
District 14 Macalester Groveland Community Council	Dave Pasiuk	X			
District 15 Highland District Council	Charles Decker	X			
Longfellow Community Council	Nadya Trytan				
Longfellow Community Council	Kevin Baumgartner	X			
Minneapolis Ward 12	Polly Millea	X			
Saint Paul Ward 1	Jim Barton	X			
Saint Paul Ward 4	Matt Lang	X			
Macalester College	Daniel Knickelbein	T. Welna			
At-large Committee Member	Triesta Brown	X			
At-large Committee Member	Lisa Larges	X			
At-large Committee Member	Annette Rondano	X			
At-large Committee Member	Carole Chabries	X			
Metro Transit	Katie Roth	X			
Metro Transit	Jill Hentges	X			
Metro Transit	Kate Christopherson	X			

NOTE: There is still room for a Hamline representative and a representative from the Highland Business Association.

1. Introductions – All (10 min)

Attendee	Impressions of the Snelling/Ford Parkway/46 th Street Corridor
Lisa Larges	Is visually impaired. Wants to make sure that BRT is accessible to the visually impaired. Excited about what Metro Transit is doing currently to address all needs.

Annette Rondano	Lives in Longfellow and owns a business in Highland. Interested to see how the BRT gets through the bottleneck. Interested in complete streets and is concerned that BRT will make streets more dangerous.
Joyce Krech	Recognizes that her current stop will not be a BRT station. Is interesting in the service to existing stops in the corridor and local service after the implementation of BRT.
Colleen Beagan	Does not own a car and would like to see improvements to connections with LRT (specifically timed transfers). She wants to make sure Route 84 service continues after BRT is in place.
Jim Barton	Hoping that BRT will make it easier to get around town. Looking for more customer wayfinding and directional signage.
Rachel Wilken	Avoids Snelling on bike because it is too busy. Not a good street to cross.
James Lucken Hills	Does not own a car. Acutely aware of being isolated. Wants to make sure low income, transit dependants have good access and options.
Lisa Laliberte	Public safety for people walking and crossing (particularly near HarMar). Is also concerned about security in Rosedale and the mix of transit and retail customers.
Kathy Stock	Look forward to getting on and off easier and getting to destinations faster.
Dave Pasiuk	Anything we can do to get people out of their cars - most important part of this project.
Triesta Brown	Knows a lot of business people and reports they are interested in knowing more about station locations. Excited about the possibility of new security features but concerned about station area space.
Kevin Baumgartner	Primarily uses LRT, excited about BRT.
Matt Lang	Transit, bike, walk important project to family - too many cars going way too fast.
Charles Decker	Uses bicycle in concert with transit.
Wendy Noble	Public safety, pedestrian safety, not a transit user lately. She home schools and works from home.
Katie Roth	Connections to LRT are good, could be better.
Kate Christopherson	Not a lot of bike opportunities.
Tom Welna (in place of Daniel Knickelbein)	Very excited at Macalester with many visitors and students - access to alternative modes is very important to the campus.
Ryan Wilson	Business owner interested to see what happens with connectivity with LRT. Wants to ensure fast accessibility to the LRT. Understands the delay factors, sees need for speed.
Carole Chabries	Takes Route 84 to work and errands. Executive director of ACTC, wants to get rid of the circulator - college students should be using local transit. We need to help connect colleges to one another.
Jill Hentges	Thinks about the State Fair, Ginko Coffee, wants to walk in the corridor, wants transit to be simple and easy for people to understand and use.

2. Shared impressions of the Snelling/Ford Parkway/46th Street Corridor - All (10 min)
(SEE GRID ABOVE)
3. Project overview – Katie Roth (30 min)
 - i. Arterial BRT Concept Background
 - ii. Snelling Avenue Corridor Concept
 - iii. Break for Questions
 - Q - Annette Rondano: Will there be any bus routes that will be cut as a result of this project?

- A - Katie Roth: No, the only bus affected is Route 84. However, there are some changes that are associated with the METRO Green Line opening in 2014, including the replacement of the Route 144 with the expanded service on the Route 84 and the connection to the METRO Green Line.
- Q - Colleen Beagan: Currently the Davern branch does not run on Sundays, what is the plan with this project?
- A – Katie Roth: Davern branch will run every 30 minutes on Sundays. BRT will run every 10 minutes on Sundays.
- Q - Lisa Larges: How many stops will be eliminated?
- A – Katie Roth: None will be eliminated. Route 84 will continue every 30 minutes from current bus stop locations. BRT will stop at stations located at about one out of every four existing stops.
- Q - Colleen Beagan: Will the buses be hybrid buses?
- A – Katie Roth: No, they will be clean diesel.
- Q - Carole Chabries: What is the roll out process for fare media?
- A - Katie Roth: For GoTo users there are no changes. Although we are still working out the details, essentially you will be able to get on to either the BRT or the Route 84 from the station.
- Q - Carole Chabries: Bus Riders might end up paying in three different ways potentially?
- A – Katie Roth: Yes, getting on (aboard the bus), getting off (aboard the bus), or before getting on (off-board at ticket vending machines or with card readers).
- Q - Dave Pasiuk: This is going to be confusing for people who don't ride the bus now? Will there be instructional videos? What is our education process like – how can we make this instructional at the stations?
- A – Katie Roth: Yes, we always plan education with the introduction of new service and especially with new modes of transit. Videos are a good tool and we use them for “How to Ride” instruction and various other “How To”-style instruction. We will need immediate instruction for how the BRT station will operate. Hope to get at this during the summer so we can gear it up/ prepare people for service in 2015.
- Q - Dave Pasiuk: People are asking how much it is. Confusion about fare payment slows the service down.
- A – Katie Roth: Absolutely agree. We're taking all the fareboxes off the BRT buses.
- Q - Charles Decker: What is the market penetration for GoTo cards on this route?
- A - Katie Roth: In 2010 it was 33%. Usually, on urban routes, it's about 40%. Transit ticket vending machines at every station will sell GoTo cards. We are hopeful that availability of cards increases usage rates and helps convert customers to the GoTo card.
- Comment - Charles Decker: Once you get initial market penetration, rates of use should increase on GoTo quite a bit.
- Comment - Annette Rondano: Loading a minimum amount on GoTo cards is a barrier to use for people. Also, I wish while I was at my desk I could print out a ticket, since sometimes I know I don't have enough value stored and using cash is a hassle. It would also be nice to get rid of GoTo cards altogether and use Smart phones or other technology that people already have and use.
- Q - Matt Lang: Is there any money in the budget for public art?
- A – Katie Roth: It is something that is specifically programmed into the budget but we are certainly looking for ways to improve the stations, including the inclusion of unique or artistic elements.
- Comment – Matt Lang: Stuff to do at the stations can really improve waiting experience. Somewhere in Europe (Milan) uses bubble wrap. There is bubble wrap placed at stops and customers pop bubble wrap as they wait. It distracts them from the wait time.
<http://grist.org/list/bubble-wrap-bus-stop-installations-make-waiting-for-late-transit-a-lot-more-fun/>
- Comment - Polly Millea: Like the toys at the stations at the start of the Hiawatha Line.
- Q - James Lucken Hills: Can you talk to me about the HHH Job Corps Center? Have we looked at that area for a station area? Folks in colleges are in a better position usually than folks at job corps.

- A – Katie Roth: We looked at the area and evaluated the existing conditions -- they make it tough because there are no sidewalks; moving the station north or south while remaining close to the job core put the station too close to other stations. Also not high ridership there today.
- Q - Lisa Laliberte: Has there been any discussion of continuing service farther north to Northwestern College?
- A – Katie Roth: The preliminary service planning work is primarily based on existing strong performing service. It's possible there could be an extension in the future, or more likely another kind of transit improvement.
- Q - Jim Barton: Is the ridership increase net or total ridership? Where are the new riders coming from? How are people going to get to the stations? Are we looking at improving pedestrian connections in the neighborhoods? Can we look to the Hiawatha experience for lessons learned?
- A1 – Katie Roth: Future ridership, based on today's patterns and on areas with existing connections, ½ of all people get on or off the bus at Snelling and University; METRO Blue Line 46th Street Station is another big one; Larpenteur and Ford/Finn also offer important connections.
- A2 – Katie Roth: Pedestrian connections are important. Not necessarily as a part of our project alone but the Snelling Multi-modal study has been focusing on this issue more intensely. Our project improvements will be complementary but focused more closely on immediate station areas. Other partners and cities and counties are seeing opportunities to pursue parallel paths with supportive projects.
- Q - Triesta Brown: The fact that ½ of all riders get on or off an Snelling and University raises issues that the business community has been thinking about for a long time. Will stations be compatible with limited room that currently exists for people getting to/from businesses? They are asking/will ask, "Where are the stops going to be and is it going to block my business?" Many are hanging on for dear life, this could really impact them. What very specific and targeted outreach are you going to have for the important nodes for the people right next to this?
- A - Our targeted outreach for those most impacted by the transit improvements at the station locations will be the focus in the effort to engage people nearest each intersection (station area). We understand that talking with business owners and managers (staff) in person is essential to proper communication regarding critical issues like station location, spacing, space available, access to business and safe transit boarding.
- Q – Will there be noisy, automated voice announcements at the intersections and in front of business?
- Comment – Katie Roth: Lisa can tell us about the enunciators and how they work.
- A - Lisa Larges: Enunciators are usually quiet, and activated on demand.
- Comment - Tom Welna: Bringing more people to that corner (University and Snelling), faster, is a valuable improvement. There is a huge payoff coming.
- Comment - Triesta Brown: Green Line construction has had a serious impact on business. Hopefully there will be a better coordination effort on this project.
- Comment - Carole Chabries: both Tom and Triesta raise an important point. We need outreach to people to promote the value of being a pedestrian in urban spaces. Snelling currently is a barrier to this, how can we improve it and make it a great street.
- Comment – Katie Roth: I think we have some room to use the video to communicate the pedestrian/user experience.
- Q - Wendy Noble: Will MnDOT be involved in signal timing? There are a lot of cars on this corridor.
- A – Katie Roth: Yes, working closely with MnDOT and they are involved in our traffic study and possible changes/signal improvements on the corridor.
- Comment - Lisa Laliberte: Snelling and Roselawn is a mess, very confusing for people.
- Comment - Wendy Noble: Snelling is a challenge for people to use when not in a vehicle.
- Q - Lisa Laliberte: Is there a place for ads (on vehicles)?
- A – Katie Roth: Yes, we have ad space available on vehicles.

- Q - Ryan Wilson: There \$7 million identified for vehicles. What is existing vs. replacement?
- A – Katie Roth: BRT prices per vehicle are similar to the standard buses we use today.
- Q - Dave Pasiuk: I understand ten minute frequencies on BRT, what about other buses? Will they wait for connecting buses? It is the worst feeling to arrive just after a low frequency bus departs. Other buses should understand that they run low frequency and should wait a bit for connections.
- Comment: Katie Roth: You make a good point. If we are going to get these buses to be more reliable, we must have a keen focus on how the schedules work together and better coordinate the connecting service.
- Comment - Dave Pasiuk: Drivers should wait for the BRT bus, rather than driving away as bus is arriving.

4. Community perspective to project overview – Jill Hentges/All (20 min)

Exercise to solicit feedback on the Presentation from Katie Roth

- ❖ 3M sticky notes on the various aspects of the presentation as displayed on large paper and hung on the walls.
- Green (circle) stickers for aspects of the project that should be “full speed ahead”.
- Yellow (circle) stickers for aspects of the project that are “whoa, there are some issues here”.
- Green and Yellow stickers were numbered 1-3 to indicate urgency (1 = strong urgency)

RESULTS OF EXERCISE

TODAY: Travel Pros

- ❖ “Lots to get to!”
- ❖ “Many buses to connect too”
- ❖ “Many options”
- ❖ “Best way to get to the State Fair!”

TODAY: Travel Cons

- ❖ “Traffic volume at intersections”
- ❖ “Snelling is ugly”
- ❖ “Sidewalks are too narrow which discourage transit use. Also inefficient buffer between auto traffic”
- ❖ “Not attractive or safe for peds”
- ❖ “Snelling is not user-friendly. Parking is hard. Traffic is heavy. Walking is unpleasant.”
- ❖ “MTransit does not clear snow from bus stops. This is a HUGE deterrent to busing in winter. Makes busing dangerous.”
- ❖ “Bus stops have too much air flow. Space at ankles. Fully enclosed shelters are warmer.”
- ❖ Ditto
- ❖ “46th and 46th is cccold! And windy! You could move it ½ block west (or more). It’s amazing that 30 feet matters.”
- ❖ “Trash. Dirty. No lights. No security.”
- ❖ “Too much time between connections”
- ❖ “Sunday too infrequent”
- ❖ “Ped crossings difficult. Not safe.”

CORRIDOR: Snelling, Ford Parkway, 46th Street

- ❖ “2 segments of constructions phase in winter (end 2014/start 2015) possible?”
- ❖ “Consider adding N and S stops @ Hoyt (more room) or N only @ job corp”
- ❖ “Better understanding how the “new” 84 would work”
- ❖ “Would like to see the route extended to Northwestern College at the north end”
- ❖ Ditto

Varying Station Contexts

a. Expressway with bus-only shoulder

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 2	#2 = 0	#3 = 0	#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

- ❖ “What about people in wheelchairs?”
- ❖ Where will people with bikes wait/be out of the way of others?”
 - Where will the snow go?

b. On/Off ramps

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 1	#2 = 0	#3 = 1	#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

c. 4-lane section with parking

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 1	#2 = 0	#3 = 0	#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

Streetscape

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 0	#1 = 0	#2 = 2	#3 = 1

- ❖ “Human presence at opening”
- ❖ “Safe place to board and get off”
- ❖ “Predictable station placement and tactile guide from sidewalk to station. Nearby safe crossing”
- ❖ Where will the snow go at and around stations?”

Project Funding

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 1	#2 = 1	#3 = 0	#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

- ❖ “Major hurdle”
- ❖ “Yes!”
- ❖ “Ditto!”
- ❖ “Feds?”
- Much concern around Federal funding availability and likelihood of funding coming through.

Branding

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 2	#2 = 1	#3 = 0	#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

- ❖ “Too small” (arrow drawn to the word “Direct” in Metro Transit Direct)
- Direct logo on the bus should be larger. Make it bigger than metro transit
- More bold and simple design needed
- Blue-green color blind? Dark see only black, should be some physical distinguisher other than color
- Overhead signs are helpful – lets incorporate they LRT style
- Comment - Triesta Brown: People are really anxious about getting on the right bus, they rely on the overhead signs and want to know exactly where the bus goes.

Project Process

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 1	#2 = 0	#3 = 0	#1 = 1	#2 = 1	#3 = 0

- ❖ “Must do extensive outreach to businesses early”

Family of Vehicles

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 1	#2 = 1	#3 = 2	#1 = 0	#2 = 1	#3 = 0

- ❖ “More bold and simple design needed”

- ❖ “Little rolling boxes. They all look just the same”

Service Levels

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 5	#2 = 1	#3 = 0	#1 = 1	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

- ❖ “Fewer stops = more walking. Can be more difficult for some”
- ❖ “Extend wait time for those who ½ mile a challenge”
- ❖ “Loss of stops need to be explained better. How far to walk?”
- ❖ “Connections to routes crossing BRT need coordination. Signalization coordinated with green line”

Off-board Payment

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 2	#2 = 4	#3 = 1	#1 = 1	#2 = 0	#3 = 2

- ❖ “Making payment obvious”
- ❖ Ditto
- ❖ “Smaller machines needed and simple”
- ❖ “Mainstream. Like idea with app/print ticket”
- Comment - Charles Decker: We need smaller TVMs. They take up too much room in nice pedestrian areas
- Payment enforcement will be important

All-Door Boarding

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 3	#2 = 0	#3 = 3	#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

- ❖ “Good if you can enforce payments from riders”
- All door-boarding is popular

Geometry Changes

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 2	#2 = 1	#3 = 0	#1 = 0	#2 = 0	#3 = 2

- ❖ “All of these are so important to disabled community. Input is important.”

Signal Timing and Priority

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 0	#2 = 3	#3 = 2	#1 = 0	#2 = 4	#3 = 0

- ❖ “How will this affect cars? Good for transit”
- ❖ “Cross traffic (cars; congestion) and pedestrian crossing concerns”

Identifiable, High-amenity Transitway Stations

Green			Yellow		
#1 = 2	#2 = 1	#3 = 2	#1 = 4	#2 = 0	#3 = 0

- ❖ “Better concept”
- ❖ “I see a bike, but will there be bike parking at stations?”
- ❖ “Second idea”
- ❖ “Loss of parking for stations. Ugly stations – can’t we make them look less “modern”?”
- ❖ “Will there be a route map with landmarks labeled?”
- ❖ “Where is the Nextrip sign?”
- ❖ “No loss in parking important. If so, explain great use of space”
- ❖ “Ped enhancements?”
- ❖ “Seems big for urban environment”

- ❖ “Greater space? Parking lost?”
- ❖ “Not much shelter from MN weather. “
- ❖ “Looks good but will be cold in the winter”

Shelter

- Be sure to adapt to weather – heated shelters are rarely warm. Make it MN friendly
- Bike racks – how much space will they take up?
- Make the information very obvious to people
- Comment – Jill Hentges: What I am hearing is that the station design, how it will function and feel, is important to the community.

Service Plan / High Frequency Transit Service Network

- ❖ “Would the hi-freq go away? Or incorporate into the new brand?”
- ❖ “46th Street Station. Route 74 connection”
- People are excited about the increased service
- Want to coordinate with green line
- Worried about the limited stop aspect and increased walking

Cross-streets

- ❖ Make sure that they are still crossable – Hiawatha there is a lot of delay
- Make sure there is a tactile guide to the stations and nearby safe crossings

5. Community engagement strategies – Jill Hentges/All (15 min)
There was extensive conversation around outreach throughout the meeting. Special attention was drawn to engagement of full communities of people, including those who do not participate in traditional outreach strategies (open houses).
6. Coordination with other projects and events – Katie Roth/All (10 min)
 - Comment - Dave Pasiuk: They are planning on redoing Randolph in 2014-15. There will be a lot of detours and construction which could interfere with this project and compound the problem.
7. Open Forum (Visitors) (10 min)
NOTE: Community members interested in the project are welcome to attend CAC meetings. The CAC will hold time at the end of the agenda for comments and questions regarding agenda items from visitors to the meeting. Comments and questions should be limited to 3 minutes until all those interested in speaking have spoken.
 - No visitors.
8. Closing thoughts or remarks (Round-the-Table) – All

Attendee	Closing Thoughts
Lisa Larges	Overall this is a great project; appreciate the thought put into it and the meeting.
Annette Rondano	Been really excited about this. Has been taking the bus for a long time and this is the first time she’s been able to talk to someone at Metro Transit who cares. Feels that this is where she can have an impact. This is typically a frustration for her and she has had poor experiences in the past. She believes people generally don't want to call because they don't think anything will improve.
Joyce Krech	Pass
Colleen Beagan	Is happy to be a part of the conversation as a transit rider.
Jim Barton	Intriguing concept. Encourages us to get creative to attract new riders, avoid the temptation to fit the mold, you should stretch the envelope.

Rachel Wiken	Would like to hear more about how this project will coordinate with City of St Paul, MnDOT, etc. to improve pedestrian experience.
James Lucken Hills	Buses and transit are the last option for a lot of people. Believes we need to keep these people in mind and improve service to them.
Lisa Laliberte	Learned a lot. As an example, she initially thought it was a dedicated lane concept.
Kathy Stock	Pass
Dave Pasiuk	Businesses should take advantage of bus routes and advertise them. Ads on buses should tell people what bus route the business is on. Bus and stations are a continuum of a journey not just a destination.
Triesta Brown	Local bus takes a really long time, excited for the limited stop bus.
Kevin Baumgartner	We can improve our communication about why BRT is an improvement. There are a lot of other benefits than just faster. Wishes local buses would not continue on Snelling if they are not BRT because of brand identity.
Matt Lang	Station consistency is really important. Keep this in mind when you have the tough battles like Snelling and University.
Charles Decker	Concerns that the tough decisions need to be explained better. Acknowledge the negative but explain the positive benefits clearly and address them.
Wendy Noble	Q – What is the stop configuration of Larpenteur? A – Katie Roth: We will retain the existing stop configuration.
Kate Christopherson	Pass
Tom Welna (in place of Daniel Knickelbein)	Wants to see public art supported in this project. Even if it can't be afforded in the short term, design for it. Let communities around stops take ownership over it.
Ryan Wilson	Hopes for better planning than light rail.
Carole Chabries	Think about how you can use college student to improve the project. College passes as IDs are really useful. We can help with orientation for new students. In Seattle the bus ran a poetry contest.
Jill Hentges	Pass
Polly Millea	We're really excited to have the public art at the 46 th Street Station (she works for the development nearest the station and they have invested in public art for their plaza area). Comment – Tom Welna: These stops are about creating place.