



West Broadway Transit Study Policy Advisory Committee

May 8, 2015 10:00 – 11:30 am
Davis Center, Minneapolis Public Schools
1250 West Broadway Avenue, Minneapolis
Room N5083

PAC Member and Alternate Attendees

Chair Gary Cunningham, Metropolitan Council
Member

Pat Backen, City of Robbinsdale Member

Betsy Hodges, City of Minneapolis Member

Blong Yang, City of Minneapolis Member

Larry Fonnest, City of Golden Valley Member

Paula Pentel, West Broadway Business and Area
Coalition Member

Peter Wagenius, City of Minneapolis Alternate

Sean Broom, City of Minneapolis Alternate

Heidi Ritchie, City of Minneapolis Alternate

Joanie Clausen, City of Golden Valley Alternate

Tina Sanz, Hennepin County Alternate

Alexis Pennie, CAC Co-Chair

Angela Williams, CAC Co-Chair

Other Attendees

Shelley Miller, Metro Transit

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit

Michael Mechtenberg, Metro Transit

Karen Lyons, Metropolitan Council

Steve Hay, City of Minneapolis

Jim Voll, City of Minneapolis

Emily Goellner, City of Golden Valley

Mona Elabbady, SRF Consulting

Adele Hall, SRF Consulting

James Garrett, 4RM+ULA Architects

1. Introductions

- Councilmember Cunningham opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. CAC Update

- Alexis Pennie provided an overview of the first Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting held on April 14 at North Memorial Hospital. The co-chairs thought the meeting was well-run and liked breaking into small discussion groups.
- The CAC has several comments and concerns about the project:
 - The group suggests doing something like a Christmas bus that promotes businesses on West Broadway.
 - They are interested in how the project will affect the community. For example, if there will be a loss of parking on West Broadway.
 - Eventually, they would like to see minority contractors to be hired for construction jobs.



- The CAC will hold their next meeting on May 18, 2015.

3. Overview of Transit Modes

- Mona Elabbady presented the characteristics of arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) and modern streetcar, and showed a video produced by Metro Transit that depicts how arterial BRT will operate when it opens on Snelling Avenue (A Line) later this year. Arterial BRT on Penn Avenue (C Line) and Chicago Emerson-Fremont Avenues will operate similarly.

4. Alignment Options and Screening of Alternatives

- Adele Hall reviewed five alternatives under consideration, as well as the potential changes to local bus routing and frequency that could accompany each of the alternatives. The purpose of this PAC meeting is to present the alternatives and the preliminary technical recommendation, give PAC members a chance to discuss and ask questions, and then at the next meeting, after the CAC and community members have had a chance to weigh in, the PAC will take action to select up to three alternatives to be carried forward and studied in greater detail. The five alternatives under consideration are:
 - Alternative 1: Arterial BRT from downtown Minneapolis to Robbinsdale
 - Alternative 2: Streetcar from Nicollet Mall to North Memorial Hospital
 - Alternative 3: Streetcar from Nicollet Mall to Courage Kenny
 - Alternative 4: Arterial BRT from downtown Minneapolis to Courage Kenny
 - Alternative 5: Streetcar from Nicollet Mall to Courage Kenny via McNair Avenue
- Joanie Clausen commented that while the Golden Valley alternatives say that there are no planned land use changes in Golden Valley, the project is long term and the city could change land uses in the future.
- Pat Backen asked if it is certain that the Golden Valley Road Station will be built as part of the Blue Line Extension LRT. Larry Fonnest responded that Golden Valley supports both the Plymouth and Golden Valley Road Stations; they are both currently included in the LRT project.
- Larry Fonnest asked the PAC to consider an alternative that extends the Golden Valley alternatives to the park and ride at Highway 100, near Honeywell in Golden Valley. Tina Sanz noted that Hennepin County is excited about the potential to connect to regional jobs. Betsy Hodges responded that while bringing people to jobs is important, the City of Minneapolis is more focused on bringing jobs to people through economic development in North Minneapolis; it would be challenging to achieve these goals through the Golden Valley alternatives.
- Paula Pentel commented that she would be happy to see the McNair alternative eliminated from further consideration, since it is a residential street. She added that she is a proponent of streetcar, but it appears that arterial BRT provides more coverage and regional connections for a lower cost.
- Joanie Clausen noted that Golden Valley encourages more transportation in these areas. If the alternatives do not work in a certain area, it is still important to provide other transportation options.
- Gary Cunningham reminded PAC members that though it is not shown on the map, the streetcar alternatives would connect to the Nicollet-Central Streetcar line in downtown Minneapolis.



- Peter Wagenius commented that Minneapolis is interested in streetcars because they provide the economic development power of rail with fewer right-of-way and parking impacts than LRT.
- Charles Carlson noted that as part of transitway planning Metro Transit will do a comprehensive evaluation of all transit routes and connections. Charles then reiterated the proposed changes to local bus service that would accompany each of the West Broadway build alternatives.

5. Discussion

- The PAC reviewed each of the five alternatives for additional questions and comments.
- Alternative 1: Arterial BRT from downtown Minneapolis to Robbinsdale
 - Frequency on arterial BRT and streetcar will be approximately every 15 minutes; span will be approximately 18 hours. Paula Pentel commented that a longer span of service may be necessary to serve the hospital shifts.
- Alternative 2: Streetcar from Nicollet Mall to North Memorial Hospital
 - Project team staff met with North Memorial staff this week; the Hospital has been very supportive of the project and has issued a letter stating its support. North Memorial has approximately 3,500 employees, a strong anchor for a transit line.
- Alternative 3: Streetcar from Nicollet Mall to Courage Kenny
 - Blong Yang asked whether Courage Kenny would provide a similar anchor, as many of its employees and visitors use transit. Mona Elabbady responded that Courage Kenny is much smaller than North Memorial; staff estimates that they have approximately 200 employees.
 - Gary Cunningham stated that he is not in favor of this alternative because it does not serve West Broadway. Blong Yang agreed, emphasizing that connecting to Penn and West Broadway is essential.
 - Don Samuels expressed his lack of support for this alternative, noting the momentum behind West Broadway and the need for this project to focus on it.
- Alternative 4: Arterial BRT from downtown Minneapolis to Courage Kenny
 - Gary Cunningham asked if there are ridership estimates that can predict whether this connection is warranted. Mona Elabbady responded that ridership forecasts have not yet been prepared.
 - Larry Fonest asked whether two alternatives could be pursued, since arterial BRT is more affordable. Gary Cunningham responded that the project is not funded at all, so it's not a pressing question for now.
 - Gary Cunningham noted that he is also not in support of this alternative, as it bypasses much of West Broadway.
- Alternative 5: Streetcar from Nicollet Mall to Courage Kenny via McNair Avenue
 - Alexis Pennie commented that he thought this alternative was a good compromise.
 - Paula Pentel noted that the alternative would use a residential neighborhood street then have to cross Theodore Wirth Parkway.
 - Gary Cunningham questioned how many houses would need to be removed. Staff showed some pictures of McNair Avenue. The street width varies from 22 to 25 feet; the total right of way of the street is approximately 50 feet. Streetcar needs 24 feet to



operate; arterial BRT needs two 11-foot lanes. While the need for acquisitions is uncertain at this point, it is clear that operating transit service on McNair would change the character of the street.

- Peter Wagenius commented that this alternative was suggested as one that reaches Penn and West Broadway and still serves the LRT line. If the alternative connects to other transitways and there are changes to local bus service, the connection to LRT may not be essential.
- CAC co-chairs expressed their desire for a tour of the alignments. Staff will follow up with the CAC.

6. Community Engagement Update

- James Garrett updated PAC members on upcoming engagement events. The first project open house will be held on May 21 from 5-7 pm at the YMCA in conjunction with their family night. The open house will be held on a Metro Transit bus.
- Outreach at bus stops begins next week and continues at festivals and events throughout the spring and summer. The outreach team will be asking three questions of attendees:
 - Asset mapping: where are the destinations in the corridor people need to reach
 - Obstacles: asking what makes using transit to reach these destinations difficult or easy
 - Best practices and experiences from other places: the team will share these and let people decide what could be a good fit for the corridor.

7. Next Meeting Date

- The PAC will need to meet again in early June to select the alternatives to advance. Metro Transit staff will send a doodle poll to the group to find a time for the next meeting.