



## West Broadway Transit Study Community Advisory Committee

May 18, 2015 6:00 – 8:00 pm

North Memorial Hospital

3300 Oakdale Ave N, Robbinsdale, MN 55422

Vance DeMong Classroom/Plaza Level

### CAC Member and Alternate Attendees

Co-Chair Alexis Pennie

Adrienne Doyle

Catherine Fleming

Hawwa Youngmark

Karen Rosar

Kristen Murray

LaShella Sims

Rich Mencil

Rob Hanson

Scottie Tusska

Sean Fahey

Susan Warner

### Other Attendees

Cheri Brady

Harry Maddox, Hm Transit

Pat Backen, City of Robbinsdale

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit

Michael Mechtenberg, Metro Transit

Jill Hentges, Metro Transit

Jim Voll, City of Minneapolis

Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale

Mona Elabbady, SRF Consulting

Charleen Zimmer, Zan Associates

## 1. Introductions

- Co-Chair Alexis Pennie opened the meeting, and asked attendees to introduce themselves and state their affiliations with and expectations for the project.

## 2. Overview of Transit Modes

- Mona Elabbady described the alternatives being studied using a PowerPoint presentation. ([link to PowerPoint](#)) The study will look at two transit modes: Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT) and Streetcar. A video of the Snelling Avenue (A-Line) Arterial Bus Rapid Transit corridor was shown. ([link to video](#)) Key points regarding the transit mode alternatives were:
  - Stations will be every one-quarter to one-half mile
  - Both streetcar and BRT will operate with traffic in the mixed traffic lanes
  - Streetcar operates with overhead electrical power like LRT while BRT operates using diesel or electric hybrid vehicles
  - Streetcar can carry 115-160 passengers per vehicle while BRT carries about 60-100 passengers per vehicle
  - Streetcar generally costs less than LRT but more than BRT – about \$30-60 million/mile



- Boarding time can account for 20-30% of travel time so near level boarding and all door boarding makes a big difference in overall travel time savings
- Mike Mechtenberg, Metro Transit, described proposed changes in the bus network, which would apply for all modes and alignments. Proposed changes to the Route 14 and Route 7 would clean up service that is confusing today.
  - Route 7 would continue north on Wirth Parkway and would replace the D branch of Route 14. This service would operate every half hour.
  - Route 30 would be a new West Broadway crosstown route. This route currently ends near Penn Avenue. In the future it would extend along Golden Valley Road to the LRT station. Frequency is currently every half hour; future frequency still needs to be determined.
  - Route 14 would operate just on West Broadway and would continue north to the Robbinsdale Transit Center.
- Comments/Questions:
  - Would streetcar and BRT stations be similar? *Yes*
  - Are these three routes alternative routes? *No, they are proposed modifications to local bus changes in addition to the transitway options and would be assumed for all transitway options.*
  - Is this information in the handout and can this be sent out in PDF? *Yes* ([link to PDF handout](#))
  - Would the changes in Route 7 and 30 result in increased service on Route 14, or does that depend on the outcome of the transitway study? *The changes would result in improved frequency on the northern section of West Broadway.*
  - Doesn't the Park Board object to buses on parkways? *Yes, we will have to work with the Park Board to make this change.*
  - What is the benefit of using Wirth Parkway instead of Xerxes? *We looked at Xerxes, but there are similar if not greater challenges on Xerxes – it is on a steep hill, is a narrow street, and is a residential street. It is usually difficult to get approval to operate on residential streets. Metro Transit restructured a lot of the bus service in this area in the early 2000s, and there was significant opposition to operating on Xerxes at that time.*

### 3. Overview of Alignment Alternatives

- Mona Elabbady presented the alignment options using a PowerPoint presentation, stating that the purpose of this CAC meeting is to make recommendations to the PAC on a screening of these alternatives. ([link to PowerPoint](#)) It is the desire of the PAC to have only 2-3 alternatives in the next phase of detailed study. Two BRT and three streetcar options were presented:
  - All streetcar options use Washington or 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and West Broadway to Golden Valley Road. From that point, the three streetcar options use: (1) Golden Valley Road to LRT station and Courage Center, (2) West Broadway and McNair Avenue to LRT station and Courage Center, or (3) West Broadway and Oakdale to North Memorial.



- The BRT options use Washington or 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and West Broadway to Golden Valley Road. From that point, the two BRT options use: (1) Golden Valley Road to LRT station and Courage Center, or (2) West Broadway and Oakdale to North Memorial and the Robbinsdale LRT Station.
- Mona Elabbady described the screening criteria as:
  - Potential for economic development and revitalization
  - Connections to regional transit network
  - Potential right-of-way impacts
  - North Minneapolis coverage
- Comments/Questions:
  - Why doesn't the streetcar option go up to 34<sup>th</sup> Street to connect to the Bottineau LRT station? This is the longest section of Bottineau LRT without any stations. *The streetcar option needs to have a capital cost of less than \$250 million to be eligible for federal Small Starts funding, and North Memorial is as far as it can go for this capital cost. There is no LRT station at 34<sup>th</sup> Street so it doesn't make sense to go there.*
  - Would there be a problem to extend further if locals provided the money? *That would be an option. There aren't any funds available now. We need to identify opportunities that would have the potential to lead to funding*
  - How frequently do you need traction power substations for streetcar? *About every mile?*
  - Can you use "gauntlet" track (single track) on a narrow street? *This is an option we could look at.*
  - This would significantly change the character of McNair. It would probably require taking all the trees along McNair.
  - Is there any reason why streetcar couldn't go all the way up to LRT station from North Memorial at some point in the future? *Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale responded that the city has recently made significant infrastructure improvements and would not want to rebuild the street again. She also noted that West Broadway is very narrow, it is hard to get to the station due to the street configuration at Hubbard, parking is needed along West Broadway for residential uses; the city has very many narrow streets, there are lot of technical challenges, and residents have opposed stations in this area in the past.*
  - What's the thinking in coming off West Broadway to use Golden Valley Road to get to Courage Center in Golden Valley? *We have heard that people want a streetcar option that connects to the Blue Line. We cannot look at any options that go north of North Memorial so we are looking for other options that could accomplish that objective.*
  - Most of the areas along West Broadway on the west end are residential, not just commercial. *The city's redevelopment plan calls for commercial development to 26<sup>th</sup> Street.*
  - It was the City's objective following the Bottineau DEIS to get streetcar to Penn and Broadway. The investment needs to be on West Broadway for economic development. If people are asking to connect to the Blue Line, then it is important to connect via Golden Valley Road.



- Is Hwy 81 off the table for streetcar? It seems like that is low hanging fruit. This would provide a connection to redevelopment opportunities at the Terrace Mall. *Hwy 81 doesn't have much potential for people to walk to a station. Also, there is more economic development opportunity off Hwy 81.*
- Perhaps the station at North Memorial could be put in a better location for a future extension.
- Do you have documentation that streetcar will spur economic development? *This will be part of the economic development study. We need to screen down the number of alternatives so we are better able to really answer this question.*

#### 4. Small Group Discussions

- The group broke into three small groups to discuss the alternatives and make recommendations on preferred alignments. Each small group reported out to the larger combined group.
- Group 1:
  - Important to reach Penn and Broadway
  - Not much opportunity for development along Golden Valley Road
  - North Memorial is a good transit destination
  - Missed opportunity not to get to downtown Robbinsdale
  - Important to expand opportunities moving forward
  - Look for some way to get to Hwy 81 – this is a “low hanging fruit” opportunity
  - Recommendations: (1) Streetcar to North Memorial, (2) BRT to Robbinsdale station, (3) Streetcar on McNair but there are a lot of challenges
  - Want to make sure all options are considered
- Group 2:
  - Stay on commercial corridors
  - Prevent tree loss
  - Improve bus service to Golden Valley
  - BRT might have better chance of funding and less right-of-way issues
  - It is important to have neighborhood circulation service that would provide connections between neighborhoods and to jobs
  - Recommendations: (1) BRT to Robbinsdale station, (2) Streetcar to North Memorial
  - No interest in Golden Valley routes but want better transit service to Golden Valley
- Group 3
  - Important to connect to Penn Avenue
  - Discussed comparative cost of streetcar and BRT; BRT is lower cost
  - Is it really true that there will be better economic development with streetcar?
  - Could we transition from BRT to streetcar in the future?
  - How will bikes function with BRT or streetcar?
  - Recommendations: (1) BRT to Robbinsdale station, (2) Streetcar to North Memorial; (3) McNair might be a third option
- Comments/Questions:



- Was there any consideration of a hybrid option of streetcar to North Memorial with BRT from there to the Robbinsdale LRT station and downtown Robbinsdale? *That would be a tough sell for those having to transfer at that point. There would be local bus service for this transfer.*
- Could we have dual options like the Midtown Corridor? *That is possible, but there is a lot of overlap and common segments between the two options in this corridor. We would need to look at them both before pairing.*
- What would be the process for Golden Valley transit service improvements? *Mike Mechtenberg, Metro Transit, responded that the Blue Line would come first, and then there would be local services changes to come after that, subject to additional funding for these types of feeder bus and circulator bus services.*
- Why would there be any willingness to go along McNair – why would we wreck this neighborhood?

## 5. Community Engagement Update

- A public open house is scheduled for Thursday, May 21, 5-7 pm at the West Broadway YMCA. CAC members were encouraged to take copies of the flyers and distribute it to their associates. Many flyers have already been distributed along the corridor.
- There are also “My West Broadway Story” cards available that can be completed and mailed back to the team or to elected officials. CAC members were encouraged to distribute these as well.
- CAC members should let the project team know if there are community engagement opportunities that come up.

## 6. Next Meeting

- The next CAC meeting is September 17.
- The CAC feedback obtained tonight will be shared with the PAC. We will let the CAC know after the PAC has decided which alternatives to study in detail.
- Comments/questions:
  - Is it possible to have information as we go along rather than waiting until the end when we have to make a decision in a two-hour meeting? *We only have two months to do the detailed technical analysis. We will provide the results of that evaluation in September but won't ask for a decision until the December meeting.*
  - I would like to know what people are saying in the neighborhoods in advance. *Summaries can be posted on the website and shared with the CAC during the summer months.*
  - There are many streetcar projects around the country that cost less than we are proposing. Why are our costs so much higher here for LRT and streetcar than in other cities?
  - Please email any other follow-up questions or comments to the project team.