

Location: HERC Admin Building
435 5th Street North, Minneapolis, MN 55401

Client: Metro Transit

Date: July 7, 2015

Subject: West Broadway Transit Study
TAC Meeting #5

Attendees: Jim Voll, City of Minneapolis; Steve Hay, City of Minneapolis; Casey Dzieweczynski, City of Minneapolis; Emily Goellner, City of Golden Valley; Marcia Glick, City of Robbinsdale; Charles Carlson, Metro Transit; Michael Mechtenberg, Metro Transit; Kelly Hoffman, Hennepin County; Mona Elabbady, SRF Consulting; Adele Hall, SRF Consulting; Kyle Vangel, HR&A Advisors; Erin Lonoff, HR&A Advisors; Martin Leung, HR&A Advisors (HR&A by phone)

1. Introductions

2. Market Conditions Memo

- Erin reviewed market conditions in the five submarkets of the corridor. Submarkets were established using a ½-mile radius of the corridor, but most real estate development impacts are expected within ¼ mile of the line. Two economic development impacts are expected: improved access to jobs for residents living along the line, and creation of new development and therefore new jobs within the corridor.
 - North Loop: The North Loop is on track to fully develop over the next 15 years, regardless of transit build-out. Residents in the area have high incomes and low unemployment; most residents have access to cars, so transit is not critical to reaching jobs.
 - North Washington Jobs Park: The market for new office is small, but the area could gain momentum as the North Loop builds out.
 - West Broadway: This sub-market includes the four neighborhoods of North Minneapolis, which were found to have similar market dynamics. Unemployment is high, income is low, and there are many transit-dependent people, so the impact of transit on quality of life could be significant. There has been some new development in the area, but all is subsidized at 50-60 percent of area median income.
 - Robbinsdale: This area is higher income and has lower transit dependency. There has been limited new development over the last 15 years, but there is modest market-rate and affordable housing demand. Market-rate development is close to feasible in this area.

- Golden Valley Road: There are high incomes and high car ownership rates in this submarket. The area is zoned for low-density development with no plans for change, so no new development is expected. The Golden Valley Road market conditions assessment was done before the Golden Valley alternatives were dismissed. Further analysis of Golden Valley is not intended beyond the market conditions work.
- Kelly asked if there is information available regarding how many people in the corridor work in downtown Minneapolis or elsewhere, and how many choice riders are in the North Loop. Kyle responded that most North Loop residents have access to cars, so most people who take transit are choice riders. Kelly also questioned whether transit-dependent residents stop using transit and buy a car as soon as they can. Adele responded that while that is possible, it's also possible that people would continue to use transit for some trips, especially to places where parking is at a premium.
- Kelly noted that even projects in hot markets have been subsidized, and that the report should be cognizant of its tone when describing conditions in North Minneapolis. Jim agreed regarding the tone of the report, and noted that there seem to be discrepancies when describing the conditions in North Minneapolis and Robbinsdale. He added that there have been several developments in the North Washington Jobs Park that were not included, and expressed disappointment that the report did not provide any new information. Kyle reminded the group that because this is an existing conditions report, its findings would likely not be new information to anyone familiar with the corridor. He noted that developers that HR&A interviewed think that there are opportunities in North Minneapolis, but that given the other places to develop in the city, West Broadway does not compare favorably.
- HR&A will follow up and review the report for tone. Currently developers need to command \$1.85 to \$2.00 per square foot to build unsubsidized developments. North Loop rents are higher than \$2.00, Robbinsdale's are approximately \$1.70, and West Broadway rents are at about \$1.40 per square foot. HR&A will add the rental rates that support their findings to the executive summary.

a. Case Studies for Market Analysis

- As part of their scope of work, HR&A will provide two case studies of development along peer rail lines, and two along peer BRT lines. They have gathered several of each type of project and would like the TAC's input on the case studies that they should use. Possible rail studies include:
 - Portland Yellow Line LRT
 - Tucson Sun Link Streetcar
 - Salt Lake City Sugar House Streetcar
 - Denver W Line LRT
 - Denver D Line LRT

- Seattle South Lake Union Streetcar
- The TAC discussed and agreed that it was most important that the transit lines used as case studies pass through neighborhoods with comparable demographics as West Broadway, that there is public policy support for economic development around transit lines, that there is ample evidence on which to form a case study, and that the lines serve the downtown of their city. The group also discussed whether it is important for the rail case study to specifically be about a streetcar line, and agreed that the character of the neighborhoods were more important. Charles reminded the group of PAC Chair Cunningham's interest in the Denver D Line.
- The TAC agreed to pursue two LRT line with similar socio-economic conditions for the case studies: the Portland Yellow Line LRT, and the Denver D Line LRT, with the caveat that HR&A will need to check to see if they can obtain more information on Denver. It is understudied and there is not a lot of secondary literature available on that line.
 - Possible BRT studies include:
 - Boston Washington Street Silver Line
 - Pittsburgh MLK East Busway
 - Eugene EmX Franklin Corridor
 - Los Angeles Orange Line
 - Cleveland Health Line
 - Kansas City MAX Main Street Line
- Mona reminded the group that building rail represents a major investment whether it is streetcar or LRT. BRT is different in that arterial BRT would be implemented with far less capital investment than BRT lines like the Orange Line and the Health Line.
- Mike noted that Seattle's BRT system is the model for Metro Transit arterial BRT. It would be ideal to include a Seattle case study. Kyle noted that there is very little evidence available on Seattle. The Troost Line in Kansas City would also be a good comparison.
- The group was comfortable with including the Boston Silver Line. HR&A will follow up to see what kind of information is available for Seattle and Kansas City.
- Kyle added that while a certain amount of information is needed to write the case studies, information gathered from other systems will also be included in the literature review section of the report

3. Methodology Memos

- Mona briefly reviewed the content of the methodology memos.

- The Environmental and Community Impacts memo will include a high-level analysis of potential impacts to resources in the corridor, much like a pre-environmental/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. The business impacts or transportation impacts section of the report will include on-street parking impacts. Jim added that if the City of Minneapolis has an updated surface lot space inventory, he will provide this to complete the analysis.
- A Title VI analysis is done to investigate the impacts of service changes to people of color and low-income populations. They are usually done when the service plan is complete and the project is a couple of years from implementation; for example, the Title VI analysis on the Blue Line and Green Line Extension projects will likely be done this year. A high-level analysis will be done for this project.
- The Capital Cost Estimate will use standard FTA cost categories. The consultant team will need input from Metro Transit regarding assumptions for the operations and maintenance facility and the assumptions of the Nicollet-Central streetcar.
- The Ridership Methodology is provided mostly as an “FYI” to the TAC. The consultant team is working directly with the Metropolitan Council forecasters on the model. The TAZ allocations used for the Blue Line Extension project were used, then refined for this project. The cities have reviewed the TAZ allocations.
- The Traffic Analysis will not be a differentiator among the two alternatives because their assumptions are similar. However the analysis will reveal the potential impacts of the project on traffic. Eight intersections will be modeled using VISSIM. The eight shown are proposed, but the team is open to change. Casey suggested that instead of analyzing the three clustered intersections at Emerson, Fremont, and Girard, perhaps the analysis could include an intersection near North Memorial Hospital. Mona responded that she would bring this suggestion to the traffic engineers who will do the analysis and follow up with the group. The TAC then discussed briefly how streetcar would transition from West Broadway to Oakdale Avenue. A center-running configuration was originally proposed. The PMT will begin reviewing concepts at their next meeting.

4. Downtown Alignments Update

- The consultant team is working on a memo that will outline the pros and cons of two-way operations on Washington and a one way couplet on Washington and 2nd Street N. The PMT reached consensus on using 10th Street instead of Plymouth Avenue as a transition between Washington Avenue and 2nd Street. The memo will also document the reasoning behind that decision. The PMT will review the memo at their next meeting, and Minneapolis staff will use it to further the City’s discussion of the two-way and couplet options.

5. Station Locations

- At the most recent PMT meeting the group arrived at consensus on station locations. These are shown on the map and listed in the PowerPoint. The group also decided on specific locations—near side or far side—for each intersection. The consultant team will prepare the alignment concepts and ridership forecast using these station locations.

6. Next TAC Meeting: Tuesday, August 4, 2015

- The next two PMT meetings will be dedicated to sharing concepts and the results of the technical analyses. These items will be presented at the next TAC meeting, as well as an outreach update.
- Outreach is well underway, with consultant team staff at events every week during the summer. The focus is on gathering input on transit-riding experience, destinations, etc. In the fall the focus will shift to sharing the results of the technical analyses.
- The results of the technical analysis will be shared at the TAC, CAC and PAC meetings in September. The CAC chair has suggested adding an additional meeting in October or November to give members time to digest all of the information before the TAC, CAC, and PAC make the LPA decision in December.

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