



West Broadway Transit Study Community Advisory Committee

October 20, 2015 6:15 – 8:15 pm

North Memorial Hospital

3300 Oakdale Ave N, Robbinsdale, MN 55422

Pinecrest Conference Room/Plaza Level

CAC Member and Alternate Attendees

Co-Chair Alexis Pennie

Cathy Spann

Charmaine Wahlstrom

Dacia Durham

Kristen Murray

Harry Maddox

LaShella Sims

Rob Hanson

Scottie Tuska

Susan Warner

Will Lumpkins

Other Attendees

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit

C Terrance Anderson, Metro Transit

Lyssa Washington, 4RM+ULA

Mona Elabbady, SRF Consulting

Sara Allen, Zan Associates

Charleen Zimmer, Zan Associates

1. Introductions

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

2. Update on Policy Advisory Committee

- Mona provided a brief update on the last PAC meeting.
- The same content that was presented to the CAC in September was also presented to the PAC.
- The PAC had a lot of questions on the ridership and economic development results.
- The PAC also asked the project team to complete some additional ridership “what if” tests. These include looking at the alternatives with the Nicollet/Central streetcar in place, and a combination alternative that combines streetcar and an alternative version of BRT.

3. Update on Community Outreach

- Kristen Murray presented a summary of the second phase of community outreach for the West Broadway section of the corridor. The second phase of outreach was started in early September and will continue through October. This phase of the outreach focused on two questions. The first was a question related to priorities among the project goals. The second was a question related to priorities among proposed station area improvements. Other comments and questions were also recorded. Five engagement activities have been held to date and about 150



people have been engaged. The results line up well with what we heard during the first phase of engagement. Priorities are:

- More vibrancy, local businesses and family activities in the corridor
- Safety was the most important issue raised but people had different ideas about how to achieve more safety
- More non-peak service is desired for people who work different hours
- Charleen Zimmer reported on outreach in the downtown area and at North Memorial Hospital. About 200 people were engaged at four events. The same exercises were used and similar priorities were reported although safety ranked lower in these segments than in the West Broadway segment.
- Comments/Questions:
 - Did you go to locations off West Broadway such as to churches and other locations?
Response: Not for these activities. However, we are doing that for announcements for the November 3 video premiere and open house.
 - Will we have access to the data? *Response: Yes, a summary will be prepared and will be made available to the CAC and PAC.*
 - Alexis noted that he and C Terrance had discussed do some door knocking and he thinks this is a good way to do engagement based on what was done recently for the Greenway.

4. Update on Technical Evaluation

- Mona Elabbady reported that there had been good feedback at the last CAC meeting regarding the scoring of alternatives. The staff team also had a discussion with PAC Chair Gary Cunningham to get his input. As a result, scoring will no longer be presented. Instead, the technical information will be presented in a matrix with no interpretation of the data. Then each person can answer for themselves how well each alternative meets each goal and performance measure. The matrix was handed out and discussed.
- Comments/Questions:
 - Why is there higher population growth for arterial BRT when there is more housing for streetcar? *Response: Population is based on a regional forecast; housing is based on the economic impact analysis. BRT goes farther into Robbinsdale and, therefore, has a larger service area.*
 - Are these projections based on adopted comprehensive plans or do they also include the economic growth projections? *Population and employment forecasts are based on the adopted comprehensive plans – they do not include the incremental increase identified through the economic development analysis.*
 - This is very confusing – the data seems to show that BRT is doing a better job of population growth but it is actually because it is a longer line.
 - This doesn't tell much about population or employment growth because it will happen regardless.
 - Does the same hold for true for travel time? *Response: Yes, travel times reflect the same issue with the terminus for streetcar at North Memorial and the terminus for BRT at downtown Robbinsdale.*



- How were population and job numbers generated? Why is there such a big increase in population and such a small increase in employment? *Response: Population and employment were generated based on adopted comprehensive plans. Jobs were also estimated based on the economic development impact assessment. For total job growth, you have to add the employment forecast and the number generated through the economic development assessment.*
- What is the difference between jobs in the corridor and access to jobs? *Response: Jobs in the corridor are within ½ mile of the alignment. Access to jobs is based on number of jobs within a 45 minute transit ride.*
- Do these reflect growth in 2030 or 2040? *Response: The Metropolitan Council has a 2040 regional growth forecast. The cities have just been notified of their expected share of regional growth. The cities are currently updating their comprehensive plans to reflect this information.*
- **Action: The consultant team will check the year of the adopted comprehensive plans and explain how this relates to the regional 2040 forecasts of population, employment and transit ridership.**

5. Update on Funding

- Mona Elabbady provided an update on funding, noting that the corridor is not in the current revenue scenario or the adopted and currently funded plan in the regional Transportation Policy Plan. However, it is noted in the plan as an accelerated project. It is uncertain at this time how long it would take to obtain funding. It is anticipated that streetcar would require federal funding but arterial BRT would not. This is why the timeline for implementation of streetcar is shown as longer than BRT but approximately two years.
- Comments/Questions:
 - Wasn't FTA Small Starts funding going to be applied to both streetcar and arterial BRT – this was mentioned in an earlier meeting? *Response: Other arterial BRT projects haven't gone through Small Starts. Local dollars have been found so far because the arterial BRT projects are less expensive.*
 - Wouldn't it add 1 ½ year to the schedule for federal funding for arterial BRT? *Response: There are 29 projects in the Small Starts queue. Therefore, takes time to get this money. This might be worth the time and cost for a larger project that could obtain the maximum \$75 million federal grant. It might not be worthwhile for smaller amounts since the federal share is based on a maximum percentage of the project cost.*
 - Do you have to have all of the engineering done before entering into federal project development? *Response: Bigger federal projects have a three-step process which is a much longer process.*
 - When would an application be sent to the FTA for this project? When would it be a "go"? Is this a different pot of money from LRT? If money was obtained, could this be finished before the Blue Line Extension? *Response: Small Starts is a very competitive source of funds. It is not likely that this project could be completed before the Blue Line Extension. You have to be able to demonstrate that you have local funds in order to enter into Project Development and all funding has to be identified before you can enter into a full funding agreement.*



- Couldn't CTIB make this project a priority? *Response: CTIB currently has not identified arterial BRT or streetcar projects as eligible for CTIB funding except for a couple county-led projects. Both are legally eligible.*
- Which projects are competing for the same pot of money in terms of state funds (for example, Orange Line, C Line, Blue Line Extension, Gateway Corridor)? *Response: All projects compete for the same money locally and at the state level but not at the federal level. Projects are more successful federally if they have more local funding. There is an expectation that the percent of local funds will be higher for Small Starts projects.*
- If streetcar is chosen as the preferred alternative, will West Broadway be dependent on Nicollet-Central being built or could it go forward alone? *Response: It would be more expensive to build West Broadway if it were built as an independent line. The PAC wanted to assume that Nicollet-Central would be there first.*
- What about the Promise Zone? Does that put us at an advantage for federal funding? *Response: Technically, no, but it would aid some of evaluation factors. Local funding is critical as well as having a project champion.*
- How long will the study results hold value – does it just have to be done again? *Response: This study will establish the transit vision that the community has for the corridor. FTA is looking for sound planning that reflects the local community. This project should establish the long-term (2040) answer for the corridor.*

6. Goals Exercise and Discussion

- Mona Elabbady reported that the PAC would like to understand the opinions of the CAC and the people engaged in the outreach effort regarding project goals and modes.
- Lyssa Washington and Charleen Zimmer led the CAC in a priorities exercise about the project goals, similar to the exercise used during public engagement activities. Each CAC member was asked to identify their top three priorities, using the goals and measures in the matrix. The results are shown below:
 - Goal 1: Catalyze and support housing and economic development along the corridor – 10 votes
 - Goal 2: Improve local and regional mobility and improved access to jobs and activities – 7 votes
 - Goal 3: Address equity issues in the West Broadway Corridor to ensure that corridor residents as well as patrons of area businesses and institutions have access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life – 7 votes
 - Goal 4: Build upon the vibrancy and diversity of the corridor by supporting healthy, active communities and the environment – 4 votes
 - Goal 5: Improve upon existing transit service in the corridor – 4 votes
 - Goal 6: Increase transit use among corridor residents, employees, and visitors – 3 votes
- Comments/Questions:
 - Goals 2, 5 and 6 seem to be very similar. *Response: Goal 2 is about jobs. Goal 5 is about transit service and facilities improvements. Goal 6 is strictly about ridership.*



- What's the difference between Goals 3 and 4? *Goal 3 is about opportunities for people. Goal 4 is about the physical characteristics of the corridor.*
- The goal statements on the matrix are hard to understand. The shorter versions used for public engagement are easier to understand.

7. Discussion about Goals

- The following comments were made during a group discussion about the goals. Much of the discussion focused on economic development.
 - Can we get more types of businesses and different types of businesses – we don't need more of the same thing? Can we get something that will attract more people to come to the corridor?
 - We need to rebrand West Broadway – something like was done on Central Avenue or Nicollet Avenue.
 - I love the art component – painting of older buildings – how can we take that and take it up another level?
 - Would like to encourage more business diversity in the neighborhood; especially more restaurants.
 - Would like to see us build on what's happening in North Loop.
 - I think Lake Street is more like West Broadway. How can we get that kind of change here?
 - We are dealing with that old image of West Broadway or North Minneapolis – would streetcar or BRT be more of a catalyst to transformative change in our neighborhood?
 - Penn Ave and West Broadway are disjointed – LRT goes around North Minneapolis. The suburban cities are planning big development and big park and ride structures – at a cost of \$23,000 per space – money is going there rather than here. What is Minneapolis getting out of this? This project is an opportunity that is opening up for North Minneapolis.
 - We need to reimagine and rebrand West Broadway. We have to maintain relationships so that businesses don't lose leases and do things like that which are meaningful.
 - It is hard to argue that streetcar wouldn't create more economic development but it might also cause gentrification. BRT might be a slower space and that might result in less gentrification. I'm not sure that streetcar gives more benefit if BRT has the same stations and same everything else. If we could use those same dollars over a larger system, then we might generate benefits for more of the metro area.
 - BRT is just keeping the status quo – the streetcar/BRT mode discussion is more about economic development than about transit service. I think this is something that could be a game changer for North Minneapolis.
 - From an equity perspective, streetcar is the way to go. But I am afraid of gentrification. This has to come with other policies. Streetcar gives a chance to show the rest of the community/nation that economic development can be done without displacing people.
 - More economic diversity would be helpful too.



- We cannot attract and retain businesses because of crime. Volunteers and people are afraid to come into North Minneapolis. Have we talked to businesses that are willing to come back into this neighborhood? If we don't address the crime, businesses are not going to stay.
- How can we know for sure that streetcar is going to actually make a difference?
- People can't see the bigger vision – they can't see beyond the day-to-day problems.
- We don't want to waste the \$250 million.
- New immigrants were willing to take the chance on Lake Street; why not in North Minneapolis?
- We can't diminish North Minneapolis voices – this is an opportunity for us –the hard part is getting businesses to stay. What about vacant houses and lots – what can be done about that?
- More investment and job training should be a part of the plan. New programs can make a big difference in creating new jobs – for example, training north Minneapolis residents for new technology jobs.
- How important is it to do something now?
 - The transit system can get people to jobs. More access to jobs with BRT over streetcar – not something to ignore – also can be built more quickly.
 - We don't need to be in a hurry.
 - I'd take something now! It only takes one successful restaurant (like Travail) to make something great start to happen.
 - We need to start taking some steps now so people in the community can see that something is happening – baby steps can lead to giant steps.
 - I feel like streetcar is the economic development tool. BRT is just a better transit system. It doesn't seem right to say we have to make this choice.
 - It seems like we have other transit things going on but not much economic development.
 - We don't need \$250 million to make people feel good about where they live. A lot of the crime issues are because of poverty.
 - Change can feel intrusive. The easy things to do are the baby steps.
 - It is evident that both better transit service and economic development need to happen along West Broadway.
 - Streetcar is successful in certain situations, not every situation. Arterial BRT has just not been around long enough to say what will happen.
 - Historically, West Broadway as THE street to be on. What happened? There was streetcar then.
 - Is there an option for a dual solution on West Broadway?
 - Could you build a BRT system first and have it ready for streetcar later?



8. Video Premiere/Open House – November 3

- There will be a video premiere/open house on November 3, 6:00-8:00 p.m., at the Capri Theatre.
- All CAC members are asked to attend to assist with talking with people and helping the event go smoothly. Please let Lyssa Washington or Charleen Zimmer know if you will be able to attend and would like to assist at the event.
- The event is being advertised online; news releases are being sent out; a flyer is being distributed; and an electronic flyer has been sent to PAC, CAC, TAC and city communications and elected official offices. Assistance from CAC members in getting the word out would be appreciated.
- The flyer will be sent out again to CAC members. Alexis Pennie, LaShella Sims and Harry Maddox requested paper copies.

9. Next Meeting

- The next CAC meeting was postponed until early 2016.