



## West Broadway Transit Study Community Advisory Committee

March 22, 2016, 6:15 – 8:15 pm

YMCA

1711 W Broadway Ave, Minneapolis

### CAC Member and Alternate Attendees

Co-Chair Alexis Pennie

Co-Chair Angela Williams

Cameron Downey

Catherine Fleming

Dacia Durham

Kristen Murray

LaShella Sims

Rob Hanson

Scottie Tuska

Sean Fahey

### Other Attendees

Faith Xiong

Christopher William

Harry Maddox

Will Lumpkins

Metro Council Member Gary Cunningham

### Staff Attendees

C Terrence Anderson, Metro Transit

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit

Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Council

Lyssa Washington, 4RM+ULA

Mona Elabbady, SRF Consulting

Charleen Zimmer, Zan Associates

## 1. Introductions

Co-Chair Angela Williams opened the meeting, and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

## 2. Study Results and Updates

Mona Elabbady, SRF Consulting, walked through a PowerPoint handout summarizing previous findings and additional work completed to answer questions raised by the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). A copy of the handout is attached to the meeting summary.

### Extension of West Broadway Service to Lake Street

Mona Elabbady described a sensitivity test done regarding the extension of West Broadway streetcar service to Lake Street via Nicollet Avenue. This connection would add about 100 riders per weekday on the West Broadway streetcar. Metro Transit did an analysis of transfers (using GoTo cards) between existing Route 14 (West Broadway) and existing Route 18 (Nicollet Avenue) and found that there are only 40 transfers per day between these two routes. This information helped to validate the forecasting results. CAC member comments and questions were:

- Rob Hanson asked if this meant two different streetcar routes operating on Nicollet. Mona responded that it assumed that the Nicollet-Central streetcar line would be built. Charles Carlson, Metro Transit, clarified that the West Broadway Study did not assume that the Nicollet-



Central streetcar line would be built because it is not in the approved fiscally constrained regional transit plan. This was a “what if” question asked by PAC.

- Sean Fahey ask what percentage of riders today use GoTo cards. Charles Carlson responded that about 60% of riders on local buses use the cards; about 90% of riders on express buses use the cards.
- Scottie Tuska asked if the low frequency of existing Route 14 impacted the ridership forecasts and if ridership would increase with better service. Mona responded that future service changes and planned frequencies were included in the ridership modelling; the future ridership was not based on existing service.
- LaShella Sims asked if the ridership was based on peak hour only because there are other times of the day that have more riders. Mona responded that the ridership forecasts are for all day, weekday ridership.
- Catherine Fleming asked if increases in population and future growth in the corridor were consider in the ridership forecasts. Mona responded that future growth in both population and jobs was included in the forecasting.
- Scottie Tuska asked where existing Route 14 current ends. Charles Carlson responded that some buses go as far south at 66<sup>th</sup> Street in Richfield while others end at 38<sup>th</sup> Street. Scottie also commented that Eat Street is a draw for riders. He mentioned that the Mall of America, Midtown Global Market and the hospital area are draws for Route 5.

### Economic Development Impacts

Mona explained that the PAC questioned whether the economic impact of Arterial BRT was overstated. The team reviewed the assumptions for the economic analysis and adjusted the forecasted real estate values and forecasted job growth down slightly from the previous forecasts. There is still growth in both real estate values and number of jobs for Arterial BRT but the growth is slightly less than previously estimated. No change was made to the economic forecasts for the streetcar alternative. CAC comments and questions were:

- A question was asked about the basis for the economic impact change. Mona responded that it was based on a comparison of bus service frequencies today to future bus service frequencies with Arterial BRT. It was determined that the future bus frequencies were similar to the frequencies today so the expected economic benefit tied to mobility was reduced from the previous estimate.
- Angela Williams asked about whether parking would be included with new development and how changes in parking (for example, more parking in the neighborhoods) might impact poor people in the neighborhoods. Mona commented that most riders in this corridor are expected to be walk-up riders, rather than park-ride riders. These impacts are important, but were not a consideration in the economic impact analysis.
- Scottie Tuska commented that structured parking is going up at Penn and Broadway. He would like to see if the parking lane could be dedicated to streetcar or BRT and move on-street parking into parking structures. He believes that this would make streetcar a better transit amenity and would make it have greater economic benefit for the community. Transit speed would be greater. He was concerned that this option had not been considered in the study. Alexis Pennie asked if this could be studied. The response was that this might be something that could be looked at during a future phase of study.
- Scottie Tuska commented that Detroit is using at battery operated streetcar and asked if this might be a better option for West Broadway? He noted that this is a more expensive vehicle but maybe less expensive infrastructure. The response was that there are other systems that are



using off-wire streetcar for short distances – this is a new technology that is just starting to be used.

- A question was asked about whether available land for redevelopment along West Broadway had been considered in the economic impact analysis. The response was that the economic development impact analysis was based on the development expected as a direct result of streetcar or BRT.
- LaShella Sims asked about whether the ridership was based on averages or reflected special events? The response was that the ridership is based on projected population and jobs and did not include assumptions about future special events.
- Rob Hanson asked if the forecasts assumed that other transit projects would be built. The response was that all transit projects in the fiscally constrained regional transit plan were assumed built. Projects not in the fiscally constrained regional plan were not assumed.
- Gary Cunningham noted that whatever is done in the corridor, whether BRT or streetcar, will reshape the corridor. This will not happen easily because there is not enough money but the Metropolitan Council is working on that. He stated that, if everyone in North Minneapolis stopped riding the bus, there would not be a transit system. We have to treat the people who use the system well and have to invest fairly. North Minneapolis needs to get its fair share of transit resources. Metro Transit is doing a good job of getting bus stops in better shape but there are many inequities that have happened over the years. Other communities have seen remarkable change when streetcar or BRT is built. It makes good economic sense. This is where our customers are, so this is where investments should be made. He noted that about \$1 billion is being spent on the Green and Blue line extensions, each with about 30,000 passengers a day. In comparison, the C Line arterial BRT project will cost about \$30 million with 15,000 daily riders.
- Catherine Fleming stated that even \$250 million (streetcar cost \$239 million) is not a fair share compared to other investments.
- Scottie Tuska asked if Metro Transit would update the entire Route 14 in the long-term. Charles Carlson responded that the project was to improve transit along West Broadway, not to improve Route 14. He also clarified that arterial BRT will run to the U.S. Bank Stadium while streetcar will turn and run on Nicollet Mall.

### 3. Community Engagement

Lyssa Washington, 4RM+ULA, summarized the community engagement activities for the project, noting that Phase 1 focused on assets and barriers, while Phase 2 focused on the relative importance of goals and transit improvements. Overall, the top project goals were: (1) better public transportation to jobs, activities and other places I need to go, (2) more business and affordable housing, and (3) more access to opportunities for people of color living in the corridor. Kristen Murray noted that there are 10-12 video interviews with CAC members and community members on the project website. She also stated that, when looking at just the West Broadway section of the corridor, the priorities are slightly different: (1) more business and affordable housing, (2) access to opportunities for people of color living in the corridor, and (3) better public transportation to jobs, activities and other places I need to go. The top three goals were the same but the relative priority of those top three goals was different. CAC member comments and questions were:

- LaShella Sims asked if people went into the neighborhoods door-to-door or just stayed on West Broadway, and noted that the responses might have been different from people in the neighborhoods. She also asked if the surveys were written or verbal. Lyssa responded that most of the outreach activities were focused on West Broadway although most of the people who participated were people who also lived in the corridor. People were engaged in a variety



of ways including through informal conversations and a variety of games and interactive activities.

- Catherine Fleming noted that she had never heard about or went to any of the outreach events. C Terrence Anderson, Metro Transit, responded that no event is intended to reach everyone. Engagement of 1,000 people is indicative of really good work. He noted that Metro Transit had also done some door knocking and would be continuing to do outreach. Lyssa Washington also commented that the Comcast rolling ads had close to 50,000 views and 122 clicks over to the project website.
- A question was asked about the activities that were most effective or engaged the most people. The response was that the bus stop outreach activities were very effective. Other effective activities included engagement with employees at North Memorial, activities during National Night Out, and some of the festivals (although not all). The use of the Comcast rolling ad was also successful.

#### 4. What's Coming Up This Year

Charles Carlson reported that it will take at least 10 years for these bigger improvements to happen. Metro Transit is doing a number of things to improve transit service and facilities over the next couple years, including:

- 150 new shelters will be installed across region this year. The installations will be focused in areas of poverty with greater than 50% people of color. There has been significant community engagement about this program. There is a map on the Metro Transit website that allows you to track what's coming and what's been done.
- Route 32 now runs on Sundays – Sunday service began a few months ago.
- As of last Saturday, Route 19 has increased Sunday frequency.
- Weekend service has been added on the new Route 30 – the route has performed very well.
- The C Line BRT project is advancing – the Metropolitan Council is expected to approve the project next month.
- 19 new shelters have been installed in North Minneapolis – all have lights. Lights are being added to 6 existing shelters.
- A Transit Police beat has been added along West Broadway. The beat was recognized by Transportation Committee recently for its excellent work. Work has focused on the top 10 hot spots, and these areas are no longer on the hot spot list.
- Signage upgrades are being made region-wide that include route maps and frequencies on the bus stop signs.
- Metro Transit is developing a smart phone app for real time information and a way to communicate quickly to Metro Transit if there is an issue on the bus or at a stop, including needed repairs.
- Heated shelters are coming to the North Side in 2016. The C Line will have heating in all shelters.

Comments and questions from the CAC included:

- Rob Hanson asked what type of outreach is done when service or routes are added. C Terrence Anderson, Metro Transit, responded that the Metro Transit outreach team works with the service planning department to develop and implement these changes.
- A comment was made that people really need to know about these changes because they have been conditioned that changes won't happen. Information needs to be provided in the neighborhoods, not just on the buses.



- A question was asked about whether notifications are put up at bus stops along the routes? C Terrence responded that sometimes this is done, and notifications are also put on the buses. Staff is actively working on changing current policies regarding notifications at bus stops.
- Will Lumpkins stated that he had seen the new shelters and noticed that Metro Transit is doing repairs more quickly when glass is broken. Charles Carlson noted that it helps considerably if riders or others call when they see that something that needs repairs.
- Catherine Fleming asked what the signs are made of, noting that they are not visible in the dark. Charles Carlson stated that Metro Transit will look into this.
- A question was asked about the type of heating. Charles stated that the heating is overhead radiant heat like the heaters at the LRT stations.
- LaShella Sims asked if the heaters could be placed somewhere other than the ceiling because they aren't very effective. The response was that they have to be placed in a location where they cannot be tampered with.
- A question was asked about the narrow sidewalks near the Oliver and Logan stop. Charles Carlson stated that Metro Transit is working with the Capri Theatre to improve this bus stop.

## 5. Group Discussion About Alternatives

Lyssa Washington led a discussion with the group about what they liked about each alternative, what they didn't like, and what additional information they would like to have about the alternative.

- Angela Williams stated that she liked the idea of streetcars but was worried they may not be safe. People have been getting hit by LRT trains. She doesn't like the economic impact because it will hurt people because of the parking impacts. She felt that community engagement could go further – maybe have a Santa bus or an Easter Bunny bus. She stated that Minnesota is a family friendly place so community engagement should focus on that. Perhaps businesses in the area could be featured. She felt that engagement has to get further into the community, particularly in pockets that are African American, and that more door knocking is needed.
- Catherine Fleming stated that safety, especially train safety, is a big concern for her. She stated that the train lights are dim and the vehicles are hard to see.
- Will Lumpkins stated that he likes the economic impact of streetcar. He believes that buses are not going to change anything but that streetcar will change North Minneapolis. He thinks the BRT bus looks like a Mystic Lake bus. He noted that job creation is very important and that the most important impacts for the community are jobs and education. He doesn't like the cost of streetcar – it is ten times more than BRT – and doesn't like the long timeframe for when it could be built. He would like to see an option explored on how to build BRT now and then switch to streetcar later when it is more feasible. He is afraid that the North Side will get BRT, and the South Side will get streetcar. He thinks that West Broadway should be ahead of Nicollet-Central and believes that the community was promised this priority.
- Harry Maddox stated that social media should be used more and felt that feedback would be better.
- Gary Cunningham responded that Nicollet Central is the first priority for streetcar for the city of Minneapolis, and that work on that corridor has advanced further than this corridor. He noted that the Midtown corridor has been studied. The reason the West Broadway study is being



done is that it was part of the Blue Line deal when Blue Line was not going to go down Penn Avenue. This study, the C Line project, and the shelter improvements came out of that negotiation. There are similar issues with all of the other streetcar projects.

- Scottie Tuska stated that none of these lines will be funded if they are not added to the regional plan and if the region doesn't get new funding – the sales tax currently being discussed at the Legislature. He stated that he preferred BRT because you can move buses if the line doesn't work while you can't move streetcar tracks. He agreed that social media would have helped the community engagement.
- Rob Hanson stated that streetcar is better for economic development, while BRT is better for transit service improvement. He stated that he feels the process is asking the community to prioritize between economic development and improved transit service when the community needs both. If the community chooses streetcar, and it is not included in the regional plan, then West Broadway is out of luck. The safer way to go is to select BRT and make sure West Broadway is ready to receive streetcar in the future.
- LaShella Sims stated that the North Side was not at the table when the pie was divided. She stated that she would like to see better reports about what is going on at the schools and with youth and transit. She is concerned about hearing that money is being spent elsewhere and not here. She noted that expensive park and ride facilities are being built in the suburbs but not here. It is time for the North Side to get our piece of the pie. We shouldn't be paying taxes if we are not getting the benefits.
- Catherine Fleming stated that she thinks it is important for the community to ask for what they want and for the best they can possibly get. We want to transform the neighborhood and want people to have pride in their neighborhood. We want to go for streetcar and we want people to come here.
- Dacia Durham asked how the numbers presented earlier by Metropolitan Council Member Cunningham could be leveraged. She wondered if shutting down the system would be a way to get what they want.
- Gary Cunningham responded that he was not advocating a boycott of transit, but he wanted people to know that they have power through advocacy. A lot of the bus shelter improvements came from advocacy from North Minneapolis. Metro Transit did a study that led to an understanding about the disproportionate placement of shelters so now they are trying to address those inequities. Whatever comes out of this study, implementation will take advocacy. People have to be in this for the long haul if you want anything to happen. How do you make it a priority and take advantage of the current discussion of equity?
- Sean Fahey stated that the economic development argument is strong for streetcar, and that the community should fight for the thing that benefits the community the most.
- Scottie Tuska noted that almost everyone at the table was a resident of North Minneapolis. He stated that this has changed since the start of CAC. He has supported streetcar from the beginning. It is a great smooth ride. It may be slower than you think but it is still better than a



bus. Economic development from rail has been huge for University Avenue. West Broadway is not that different from University Avenue. Both are old streetcar streets. He would be fine with BRT as an intermediate step. He also noted that he thinks it would be a disservice to streetcar if we don't look at dedicated lanes for streetcar, which would increase speed and ridership. He believes streetcar would be better if we were willing to take on-street parking and put parking structures at key nodes along Broadway. He also stated that he thought alternatives had been narrowed down too quickly, and that past transit routes have prioritized going straight downtown over reinforcing Broadway.

- Harry Maddox noted that University Avenue used to be a streetcar corridor, and properties thrived after the streetcar left. Now a lot of small businesses are leaving. We need to look at the impacts on small businesses for both streetcar and BRT. We also need to look at the increases in property values and taxes. People may get pushed out because they can no longer afford to live here. We need to consider the people who are already here, not just the people who come to shop.
- Angela Williams stated that safety is important as well as keeping the bus stops and shelters looking nice. She suggested implementing a special service district where you assess a special tax to support policing and security when Minneapolis police can't be around. Business people could meet together once a month to keep it safe and keep it looking nice. She noted that the Chamber of Commerce in Chicago received over \$1 million to help with a special service district, and it helped people to get excited.
- Faith Xiong asked how does Metro Transit prioritize what comes first for funding - is it first come first served, who advocates the most, or based on need?
- Gary Cunningham responded that it is a complicated process but also a political process. There are several different funding sources that dictate who is involved and the decision-making process. It is not about who screams the loudest. There is a very complicated set of evaluation criteria. Professional staff provide technical input. Cities and counties have input. PACs make recommendations before the Metropolitan Council makes a decision. The Governor and the Legislature have a role. This corridor/project is not on the regional fiscally constrained plan based on current revenue. It needs to be put on the map. Dedicated groups of citizens can actually make a difference in our democracy.
- Alexis Pennie asked that the regional plan map be send map to the CAC. Website information was provided and a link to the map will be sent to the CAC.
- Kristen Murray asked if groundswell support needs to happen before the April 15 PAC meeting, and how does the PAC vote relate to that? She asked how the CAC might strategize going forward to foster more robust advocacy and discussion.
- Gary Cunningham responded that, for the Green Line, the PAC voted to support an alternative recommendation which was then accepted by the Metropolitan Council. Approval of this report is important because it is the report that people will go back to. Until there is political will, it is hard to make things happen. The PAC will listen to what the CAC has to say. The community's input will matter. The clearer you can be with the elected officials in this corridor, the better it



will be. Co-chairs of this group are on the PAC and I am the Chair. We will make sure that the CAC positions are heard.

- Charles Carlson noted that this study is only the first step in a long planning and design process. The study provides the arguments and benefits for supporting these improvements and fosters ongoing activities.
- Scottie Tuska asked if the future project would go through the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). He noted that The C Line and possibly the D Line will be funded through TAB without an additional sales tax. He stated that bonding was also a funding option
- Gary Cunningham responded that the project would go through the TAB. He also noted there is still a \$15 million funding gap for the C Line.
- Harry Maddox asked how the new bus service along I-494 between Shakopee and Maple Grove was funded. Charles Carlson responded that it was a direct appropriation of \$2 million from the Legislature to the suburban providers.
- Gary Cunningham observed that he had watched the North Minneapolis area for over 40 years and had not seen much change. He said that the question before us is how to use infrastructure investments to transform communities and to provide access to opportunities. People should be able to get to jobs in other areas, but should also be able to work here if they want. There should be housing near the jobs. North Mpls is overdue for serious infrastructure investment and needs a major investment.

## 6. CAC Recommendation

A resolution was proposed by Scottie Tuska that had been prepared by some of the CAC members and other community members. The resolution recommended that arterial BRT be designed to accommodate future streetcar and included many other statements. After discussion, it was agreed that there should not be a vote on a resolution that the CAC had not had time to review or discuss. There was discussion about circulating the resolution but no decision was made. Scottie Tuska commented that it would be best for the CAC to have a consensus on a single position that would go to the PAC. He expressed concern that the CAC had not been given an opportunity to discuss other alternatives.

The CAC agreed not to take a vote on a preferred alternative at this meeting. It was agreed that the Co-Chairs and PAC Chair Gary Cunningham had heard the CAC discussion, and the comments would be documented in the meeting summary.

## 7. Final PAC Meeting

- The final PAC meeting is April 15, 2016. CAC members were encouraged to attend or to provide their input to the Co-Chairs who are members of the PAC.
- No further CAC meetings are planned.