



Midtown Corridor AA

PAC Meeting

September 16, 2013, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Colin Powell Center

PAC Members in Attendance

Name	Organization	Present	Alternate	Absent
Peter Wagenius	City of Minneapolis - Mayor's Office	X		
Gary Schiff	City of Minneapolis - City Council			X
Robert Lilligren	City of Minneapolis - City Council	X		
Peter McLaughlin	Hennepin County			X
Gail Dorfman	Hennepin County			X
Dave Burrill	Lake Street Council			X
Ronald Lezama	Latino Economic Development Center	X		
Gary Cunningham	Metropolitan Council - PAC Chair	X		
Adam Duinck	Metropolitan Council	X		
Janet Olson	MCWP			
Adam Juul	MCWP	X		
John DeWitt	Midtown Greenway Coalition	X		
Andrew Rankin	Mpls Bicycle Advisory Committee			X
Kenya McKnight	Transportation Advisory Board	X		

PMT Members in Attendance

		Present	Absent
Dean Michalko	Hennepin County - HCWT	X	
Michael Mechtenberg	Metro Transit - Serv Dev		X
Don Pflaum	Minneapolis Public Works	X	
Charles Carlson	Metro Transit - BRT	X	
Katie White	Met Council	X	



OTHER ATTENDEES

Name	Organization
Faith Cable-Kumon	MCWP
Joyce Wisdom	Lake Street Council
Rebecca Harnic	Midtown Greenway Coalition
Jeff Petola	WCNC CAC Rep
Michelle Fure	Met Council
Claudia Fuentes	Met Council

CONSULTANTS

Name	Organization
Joe Kern	SRF
Mona Elabbady	SRF
Joy Miciano	ZAN
Liz Heyman	SRF
Lisa Rasmussen	KHA

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome and introductions— Gary Cunningham
2. Public Outreach— Joy Miciano
 - Joy reviewed feedback from the open houses in May and the multiple public outreach efforts over the summer.
 - Joy has a copy of all the feedback from the May open houses and it's available on the project website.
 - Gary Cunningham: How many participated in the open houses?
 - Miciano said 50 people came to the meeting at the Colin Powell and 53 people came to the Whittier Clinic
 - Cunningham: What was the diversity of people participating at these meetings?
 - Miciano: Hard to tell, most people were Minneapolis residents, some Saint Paul residents. We did not ask the ethnicity of people, and we don't feel comfortable assessing the ethnicity of people just by looking at them.
 - Additional presentations and event staffing were done during the summer; including, outreach during National Night Out. For some of the small group presentations there were approximately 30 people in attendance.
 - Metro Transit staff, Jill Hentges, engaged bus riders by riding the bus in May.
 - Robert Lilligren requested a summary of the information that was collected from transit riders.
 - Upcoming outreach efforts will include meeting with CAC members, engaging riders at high frequented stations and having mini-open houses at the Uptown Transit station and Chicago Lake transit station.



- Miciano asked the PAC to advertise the upcoming public meetings to their networks.
 - Cunningham: You and staff did a great job with the outreach and we appreciate your efforts.
- Rebecca Harnic from the Midtown Greenway Coalition (MGC) shared some highlights from a survey the MGC conducted about transit. The results were also presented at the last CAC meeting.
 - The survey was posted online survey, but MGC members also surveyed bicyclist/pedestrians on Lake Street and in the Greenway and tabled at multiple events.
 - Big issues: Safety on the Greenway and Lake Street
 - 1/3 of respondents said they were afraid of being on the Greenway alone at night
 - Majority of people who took the survey were bicyclists
 - Harnic will share the results of the survey with the PAC via email
 - Robert Lilligren: Are the results posted on the MGC website?
 - Harnic: No, not yet, but they will be posted on the website.
- CAC update from John DeWitt and Joyce Wisdom
 - Joyce Wisdom stated that she thinks projects should have somebody from the police department at the table from the beginning.
 - Wisdom feels that putting transit in the Greenway may decrease violent crime on the Greenway, but may increase the livability crime (drugs/prostitution) on the Greenway.
 - Cunningham: Instead of waiting for crime to happen, can we see if there is something we can do in the mean time and take this issue seriously.
 - Cunningham: Is there work being done between the transit police and the business community? Are you satisfied with the work being done on this issue?
 - Wisdom: Business community's concern is that the livability crimes are ignored because police have other higher priorities.
 - Cunningham stated that he is more than willing to talk to the police chief and work on this issue.
 - Lilligren: We need to find the balance between keeping the street safe and keeping transit working. But from the design perspective, we need to make sure to involve police/safety experts from the beginning
 - Other comments from last CAC meeting
 - The CAC wants the Dual Alternative. Believe each alignments serves different transit populations
 - CAC members would still like to see improvements to the 21 bus even if the streetcar is chosen
 - The CAC want planners to pay attention to the connection between the Lake street and the Midtown Greenway
 - Concerns about safety and specifically safety at the at-grade crossings.
 - Concerns about the retaining walls
 - Lilligren: Talk a little more about the concerns about retaining walls
 - John D.: Worried that Metro Transit is basically planning a double track system that will require many retaining walls
 - The Midtown Greenway Coalition doesn't like the existing Hennepin Avenue retaining wall and are concerned about adding more retaining walls.



- The MGC is concerned that SHPO might not approve double track
- Wisdom: CAC members felt that the evaluation measures really do address many of their concerns and are happy with the measures.

3. Evaluation Measures— Mona Elabbady

- Peter Wagenius: Why are we using zero car households as the measure? Should really be the number of adults in the household minus the number of cars.
 - Mona: Zero car households is what is more frequently used and what is used by the FTA.
 - Joe Kern: Zero car households is what is reflected in the survey results from the on-board Metro Transit service. It's easier to validate the model results if our measures are consistent with the survey.
 - Charles Carlson: Metro Transit sent comments to the FTA that other measures should be used/considered, but FTA did not accept the comments for MAP-21
 - Wagenius: Thanks, that makes sense.
 - Liligren: Why are there no FTA criteria in the fifth project goal area? Is it because most of these are NEPA related?
 - Mona E.: The VMT measure is the only factor that MAP-21 identifies that matches our environmental measures
 - Elabbady: We do have all the MAP-21 measures covered. However, we are not doing an environmental document, so we are just identifying *potential* impacts, not actually identifying impacts.
 - The CAC members asked for two additional measures:
 - A measure to evaluate service reliability
 - A measure to evaluate construction impacts
 - Dewitt/Wisdom: Can we include these?
 - Mona: All service plans would be reliable as we'll see when we present the service plans at later meetings. Everything has very high frequencies.
 - We are quantifying construction impacts through our potential ROW impacts measure.
 - Ron Lezama: Has there been any economic analysis that looks at which mode is more cost effective?
 - Elabbady: Yes, every Alternative Analysis looks into this, but the results are very corridor specific.
 - Cunningham: In general, buses are cheaper. Tracks are more expensive to construct.
 - Lezama: Is the movement towards a trolley car, better because it's cute or more cost effective?
 - Cunningham: Trying to plan routes for 50 years to improve transit and long-term investments. We are not trying to build things because they are 'cute.'
 - Wagenius: Minneapolis believes that 90% of corridors in Minneapolis will continue to be served by buses; however, people in the development community are interested in investing in transit corridors that are permanent investments.
 - Elabbady: We have multiple measures that address the cost effectiveness of each alternative, for example we are measuring the costs per rider.



4. Definition of Alternatives—Charles Carlson

- Charles Carlson reviewed the Lake Street and Midtown Greenway concept plans.
 - Wagenius: What does expanding the bridge at Dean Parkway mean?
 - Lisa Rasmussen: Dean Parkway bridge wouldn't be completely expanded, it may just be modified so both the trail and the tracks can fit. Relatively minor modifications based on what we know about the bridge today.
 - Wagenius: South of the at-grade crossings (at James/Irving/Humboldt is vast expanse (the Mall) of green with no housing. Can we use this space at all to give ourselves more room to work with?
 - Charles: To move the alternative off the alignment may cause more problems.
 - The concerns we heard are more about noise from warning devices than noise from the train itself.
- Carlson: This project is assuming the bridge at Nicollet will be addressed by another project and therefore the reconstruction of the Nicollet bridge is not included in this project's capital costs
- Carlson: It is most effective is to continue double track through the Bloomington Avenue station.
- DeWitt: I believe we only have 2-3 train meets along the entire line, so why do we operationally need so much double track?
 - Carlson: To accommodate the desired frequencies (10 min at Blue/Green line) and to be mindful of the future that we may seek to grow. Also, we need to meet the purpose and need of providing reliability, and something that meets safety requirements. We identified the double track segments needed to create a reliable and efficient system.
 - Carlson: As we move forward with environmental analysis each double track segment will be scrutinized in detail.
 - DeWitt: Denver just built a LRT line with single track and we should be able to do so too. There are trade offs between cost and operational reliability. Double track means more retaining walls and more costs.
 - DeWitt thinks single track will be more cost effective.
- Mcknight: Why did you choose to stop at Bloomington over Cedar Ave.?
 - Carlson: Bloomington has more space for a station. Since we piggybacked on the MGC research we were consistent with their station locations.
 - DeWitt: There is a relatively new condo at Cedar that eliminated the space for a station.
 - Wisdom: Bloomington is the business node. This node is very well trafficked and businesses wanted a connection at this node.
- Mcknight said she was worried about how the choice to serve Bloomington over Cedar will affect access for existing transit users.
 - Carlson: Some of the bus operations have actually changed in this area.
- Wisdom: We want to take a very close look at the locations where retaining walls are shown on both sides as this creates a tunnel affect. We especially want to look at the area near the Bloomington station. This station will be the big challenge.
 - Rasmussen: We are trying to balance the height of the walls on both sides of the corridor is this location. In order to shift the trail to the north portal and retain access at the 14th Street ramp it is necessary to use a retaining wall on the north



- side. Placing a retaining wall on the south side reduces the impacts to the bridges as well as minimizes the height of the retaining wall on the north side.
- Wisdom: I understand the engineering, but the business community and the neighborhood see this as a critical connection. The location needs to have more attention.
 - DeWitt: If the single track extended just a block and a half further west, this location would be less complicated and require less space.
 - Rasmussen: Metro Transit rail operations wanted double track at all platform areas. It's necessary to start the double track east of the station, so there is enough room for the tracks to split in two around the platform.
 - Faith Cable-Kumon: Where are the existing retaining walls? It would be good to know where there the existing retaining walls are currently located.
 - Rasmussen: We will identify where we are modifying existing walls and where we are building new ones.
 - McKnight: Do we intend to use ridership data to decide where each alternatives stops? There are business opportunities at the Cedar Avenue stop. How are we looking at the economic impact of locating a stop at Bloomington versus Cedar?
 - Carlson: We will not have prospective ridership for a Cedar Avenue station. We will have ridership results for the Bloomington station. The enhanced bus alternative has stops at both Cedar & Bloomington.
 - Adam Duinink: What is the major constraint along Hiawatha?
 - Carlson: The shopping center building – we have enough space for a single track, but don't have enough space for double track.
 - Charles Carlson reviewed the station layouts.
 - Enhanced bus:
 - Carlson: Bumpouts will be provided at locations where there are existing parking spots. However, there is not always enough space to have a bumpout. May have opportunities to create a foot or two of extra space in some areas.
 - Cunningham: Is the business community aware of these plans? What are their thoughts?
 - Carlson: We rely on the CAC and our representatives on the PAC to get this information out to the business community. This information will be presented at the open houses in November.
 - Cunningham: Will my car be slower or faster moving down Lake Street if the enhanced bus alternative is implemented?
 - Carlson: We won't have very detailed information about traffic speeds at this level of study. However, buses block the travel lane under existing conditions on Lake Street. With enhanced bus, while we would still be stopping in the travel lane, the stops would take less time, because of the off-board fare collection. Also, transit riders currently make up a huge percentage of the person throughput on Lake Street – this system would benefit the largest percentage of peak period users in the corridor.
 - Elabbady: One evaluation measure will be looking at potential traffic impacts. We will have a general sense of how each alternative affects the traffic.
 - Wagenius: We need to know how the Hennepin County engineers feel about this project, considering it is a county road.



- Elabbady: Hennepin County is represented on the PMT.
- McKnight: Is there written feedback from the county engineers on these plans?
 - Elabbady: Hennepin County participates at the PMT level and sees all the details on the projects.
- McKnight would like direct feedback from the Hennepin County engineers.
 - Elabbady: We will communicate with Hennepin Co. on this issue.
 - Cunningham: We might be too early in the process to get specific feedback the Hennepin County engineer, but we do need to involve them in the process up front.
- Streetcar station layout
 - DeWitt: The greenway stations need to be visible from Lake Street and vice versa. Or at least some sort of signage that is visible from both corridors.

5. Definition of Alternatives—Charles Carlson

- Carlson reviewed the service plans for all alternatives
 - Frequencies go up quite a bit in all alternatives
 - Route 21 local bus frequency is retained at 15 minutes for each alternative.
 - We did not see a benefit of running both the enhanced bus and the streetcar to the West Lake station; therefore the enhanced bus stops at the Uptown Transit Center in the dual alternative
 - Lilligren: Will the evaluation look at the travel times all the way to Snelling Ave?
 - DeWitt: Is there any way to measure of the reliability of the travel times?
 - Carlson: Yes, travel times will vary on Lake Street, but we don't know exactly how much they will vary. It will be about as reliable as driving. However, as you look at the travel time breakdown, we would be reducing dwell time significantly with off-board fare collection.

6. Next Steps—Mona Elabbady

- Mona Elabbady reviewed the next steps for the project.
- Lezama: By the time of the final public meetings will the alternatives be locked in stone? Or will things keep changing?
 - Elabbady: This is a very high level study. The alternatives will continue to evolve as the project moves forward.
 - Carlson: The concepts presented today will be evaluated in this study. After the study there will be much more detailed engineering.
 - Lilligren: This process can take multiple years. Things are not in stone until the project is fully funded.
 - Lezama: I want to avoid receiving negative feedback from the business community at the meeting in November. We need to enlist the business community around Lake Street and show them what the plans look like.
 - Wisdom: We have been doing this with the smaller meetings throughout the project. However, we do need to publically explain the funding process to the constituents.
 - DeWitt: The MGC was supportive of a streetcar, because our previous study had minimal retaining walls.



- Cunningham: Staff, please work with the MGC to answer their questions about retaining walls.
- Lilligren: Please also have a similar focus on the business community's issues, so we don't surprise people with
 - Carlson: Yes, we can do this.
- McNight: What about the neighborhood associations in the area? There is funding to work with neighborhoods in the area.
 - Wisdom: Neighborhoods have representation on the CAC. Beyond meetings with the project boards, we need to have outside meetings with local businesses. Metro Transit has been very receptive to attending these meetings.
 - Kenya: The city has staff appointed to work on the corridor. She wants a targeted strategy and an intentional commitment, so we receive input from corridor businesses.
 - Miciano: We are working with Minneapolis' Neighborhood and Community Relations. We pass all our information along to them.
 - Lilligren: Staff has presented to the neighborhoods and other organizations.
- Miciano: In the next week, we will be sending out a summer update newsletter. Please forward it on to your networks.