



## Midtown Corridor AA

### PAC Meeting

November 13, 2013, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Colin Powell Center

#### PAC Members

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 - <b>PAC Chair</b>	X		
Adam Duinick	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
Ethan Fawley	Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition	X		

#### PMT Members

Name	Organization	Present	Absent
Dean Michalko	Hennepin County - HCWT	X	
Michael Mechtenberg	Metro Transit – Project Manager	X	
Don Pflaum	Minneapolis Public Works		
Charles Carlson	Metro Transit - BRT	X	
Katie White	Met Council	X	

#### OTHER ATTENDEES

Name	Organization
Faith Cable-Kumon	Midtown Community Works Partnership
Joyce Wisdom	Lake Street Council
Rebecca Harnic	Midtown Greenway Coalition
Bill Dooley	Major Taylor BC



## CONSULTANTS

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

## Meeting Notes

### 1. Project Updates

- Mike Mechtenberg reviewed the agenda
- Mike reviewed follow-up for the action items that were discussed at the September PAC meeting.
  - The project team met with multiple city and regional agencies, including Hennepin County staff, to receive input and guidance on issues that have come up in the corridor.
  - Mike is continuing to meet with business groups and owners.
    - There is a meeting tomorrow night at Mercado Central
    - There are upcoming meetings at the Midtown Global Market

### 2. Presentation

- Mike reviewed the ridership data and the cost estimates
  - The ridership numbers are very strong
  - The capital costs are in line with regional and national examples
    - At this point in the study the capital costs include a fairly large contingency
  - A PAC member asked if the dual alignment offered opportunities for cost savings (i.e. less station locations, shorter distances etc.)
    - Station locations remain the same for each mode for all the alternatives.
    - Service plan adjusted slightly: frequency dialed back to balance between the modes.
    - The enhanced bus alignment is slightly shorter in the Dual Alignment
      - The enhanced bus would terminate at Uptown Transit center in the west.
      - This adjustment was made, because a bus would have a much longer trip from West Lake to Uptown Station than the trip via rail in the Midtown Greenway.
  - A PAC member asked how much bridge work is incorporated into the cost estimate
    - The concepts tried to minimize impacts to the bridges
    - The project will have to add pier protection to the bridges
    - In areas where there is double track, the south abutment of two bridges will have to be reconstructed.
    - There will be an added retaining wall added in front of other bridge abutments to protect the existing bridge abutments.



- A PAC member asked if there is any economic impact analysis to measure the return on investment of the transitway.
  - The project team is working on the economic impact analysis.
  - The economic analysis will be ready in late December.
  - A PAC member noted that the corridor is already successful, so it's hard to measure what came in anticipation of a transitway investment.
- A PAC member noted that a transitway is needed to serve the diverse community in the corridor – the project is not all about economic development.
- A PAC member noted that there has been a tremendous amount of outreach for this process and that they are very happy with the process.
- Mike noted that there is little to no differences in the demography of both alignments.
- The Greenway alignments have the highest potential for impacts to historic and cultural resources.
- Single versus double track
  - A PAC member asked why it's necessary to have double track at stations
    - In case of emergencies, double track makes it easy to pull another train around a train that is out of service.
    - A PAC member asked if there is any other way to mitigate emergency situation other than using double track at stations.
  - Mike reviewed the two options for single-track sections in the corridor.
    - Metro Transit rail operations felt comfortable with the additional single-track segments.
    - The CAC is pleased the project is considering extra segments of single track.
    - The project team will present a range of options for the rail alternative (single, double track as well as turf track)
    - The project team will not be asking the PAC to vote on a specific track configuration. More research will need to be done on this issue as the project moves forward.
- Either a streetcar vehicle or a light rail vehicle (LRV) could run on the proposed track configuration.
  - John DeWitt said some members of the Midtown Greenway Coalition (MGC) would like to have a vehicle in place that can handle current ridership and allow for growth in ridership. However others in the coalition definitely do not want to see such a large vehicle.
  - Using a LRV would allow Metro Transit to save on operating costs.
  - This corridor will always function more like an LRT corridor, because it is a dedicated guideway.
    - Stations will be platforms very similar to a LRT platform in terms of amenities and vertical circulation, but they will be smaller.
  - The project team is not asking the PAC to vote on a vehicle type at this phase in the project.
  - Streetcar and LRVs are approximately the same width and height.
  - A PAC member noted that you could do some interesting interlining with Southwest LRT if you use the same vehicles.
    - Specifically you could run a train for the Uptown Art Fair
  - A PAC member noted that in terms of international examples, LRT and streetcar systems are actually a spectrum. Most lines around the world are mix of both technologies.
  - A PAC member asked if a LRT is faster, because it stops less.



- In this corridor, the stop spacing would be the same no matter what kind of vehicle is used.
  - Whether a system is considered a 'streetcar' or 'LRT' system is more a function of the stop spacing and the operating plan than the vehicle.
- Pier protection
  - With rail or bus traffic reintroduced to the Midtown Greenway the existing bridge piers would need to be reinforced with concrete.
  - Currently, the project team does not know how high or wide the pier protection would need to be. This would need to be researched in further study phases.
- At-grade street crossings
  - East Isles neighborhood is concerned with the noise impacts at the at-grade crossings.
  - The general consensus is that the project does not need the full gate arms with dinging bells.
    - No consensus on what would be used. This will be explored in the next project phases.
  - A PAC member noted that 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue also is an at-grade crossing.
    - Yes, the project team is looking at this crossing as well.
- Connection with SWLRT
  - A PAC member asked about the discussion around rerouting SWLRT.
    - This study was designed around the SWLRT LPA – if the LPA changed than this project would drastically change too.
    - Peter Wagenius commented that the additional study being conducted for SWLRT is NOT reviewing the Midtown Greenway for a reroute of LRT.
      - The study is looking at a new alignment for the freight line that is currently in the Southwest Corridor.
- Historic status
  - A PAC member asked what the historic status actually means.
    - The historic status is a combination of multiple features in the corridor ('trenchiness', bridges, retaining walls, etc.).
    - The historic district is most likely not a fatal flaw of the project, but it will add time and money to the project timeline and budget.
    - A PAC member noted that the historic nature of the Greenway is valuable – especially the trenchiness.
- Community outreach
  - Mike reviewed the groups that the project team is planning to meet with in the coming months.
  - Mike asked the PAC to send him contact information of any other groups they think he should try to meet with.
  - The project team will also be doing outreach at the Uptown and Chicago transit centers.
- Next steps for the PAC
  - Recommendations from the PAC will not include specific vehicle type of single/double-track segments.
- Other discussion
  - A PAC member asked what assumptions were regarding the look and feel of the stations.
    - Station prototype layouts are on the project website.



- There will also be photo renderings of the stations presented at the upcoming public meetings for a sample station.
- In future phases Metro Transit will work with the community on the look and feel of the stations.
- Every below grade station would include an elevator, no matter if a double or single-track configuration is chosen
  - Currently assuming a single elevator and a staircase at each below grade station.
- A PAC member asked what the cost difference would be between the concepts with more or less single track.
  - A range of costs is shown on the worksheet.
  - There are multiple variables being considered that go into the range: more single track segments versus fewer single track segments and turf track versus ballasted track.
  - The project saves costs from having more single track, but also incurs an increase in cost increase by assuming turf track.
  - The 'third section' is the station from Hennepin to Nicollet.
  - All the decisions on segments of single versus double track will be made in the future phases of the project.
- A PAC member asked if the section along 12<sup>th</sup> between Bloomington be considered for single track, since there are a fair amount of impacts in this section.
- A PAC member commented that the economic development should be used as an outreach tool.
- A PAC member noted that the CAC, and the business community, is very concerned about economic development east of Hiawatha.
- A PAC member noted that Metro Transit will work with specific businesses at stop locations on sidewalk space as the project moves forward.
- A PAC member asked if a Dual option changes the way a connection would be made between Lake Street and the Greenway.
  - As part of any chosen alternative the project would work to facilitate the connection between the Greenway and Lake Street.
- A PAC member asked about the connection between the Orange Line BRT/35W.
  - Both the rail and the bus option would facilitate a short transfer between the corridor and the Orange Line BRT
  - The 'Green Crescent' is planned to link the BRT station to the Greenway.
    - A PAC member noted that this is connection is a priority for the city of Minneapolis.
- The PAC chair noted that they are very pleased with the outreach work and other work on the project.