



Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis Community Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Summary

February 19, 2013

Cristo Rey-Colin Powell Center

2924 4th Ave S - Minneapolis, MN 55408

Meeting began at approximately 7:05 p.m.

CAC Attendees: Mike Wilson, Jeff Peltola, Candace Dow, Harry Savage, David Greene, Rob Binder, Patricia Fitzgerald, Amanda Dlouhy, Eric Weiss, Tara Beard, Patrick Ciernia, Thatcher Imboden, Dave Johnson, Sheldon Mains, Joyce Wisdom (co-chair), John DeWitt (co-chair)

Staff Attendees: Michael Mechtenberg, Katie White, Joy Miciano, Jill Hentges

Visitors: Shane Morin, Soren Jensen, Michael Nelson, Margaret Kirkpatrick

1. Committee Introductions (All)

2. CAC Work Plan and Deliverables (John and Joyce)

Reviewed work plan and deliverables (based upon the description provided as a handout)

Highlights include:

- The CAC is not a decision-making committee.
- The CAC's primary role is to make recommendations to the Policy Advisory Committee or PAC. John DeWitt and Joyce Wisdom are members of the PAC and provide a direct link to that body for the CAC. Project Management Team (PMT) members, Michael Mechtenberg of Metro Transit and Katie White of the Metropolitan Council also provide that link and continuity.

Reviewed of CAC responsibilities from handout

Highlights include:

- CAC members are expected to attend all meetings. If unable to attend, they should provide an alternate who is familiar with the project. It is the responsibility of the delegate to brief the alternate for the meeting and meet with them after the meeting to transfer information.
- CAC members are expected to take information from the meetings and carry back it to the community you represent. In turn, bring the thoughts of the community you represent to this planning process and project.
- Maintain an open mind while asking thought-provoking questions and engaging in dialog regarding the alternatives for the project.

Reviewed of meeting schedule from handout

- Candace Dow: Wednesday, Feb 12, 2014. Wednesdays are hard days—any way to switch day?
ACTION 1: This Wednesday meeting is the joint wrap-up meeting with the other committees. We can certainly look at scheduling the meeting outside a Wednesday evening.

Reviewed of meeting guidelines from handout

- Question about meeting summary and turnaround for meeting minutes.



ACTION 2: Meeting summary will be created and presented to CAC members for revisions and clarifications within one (no more than two) week(s) of the meeting. Staff will revise the meeting summary based upon feedback from members (within one week of receiving draft summary) and include summary in the meeting agenda packet prior to the next meeting. Meeting summary will also be posted online.

- Question about sharing emails and affiliations of CAC members with others.

ACTION 3: Share CAC roster (names, email addresses and community represented) with CAC members.

3. Project Introduction and Current Associated Work (Michael)

Reviewed Project Background

Decision Making Process (slide 3)

ACTION 4: Add a dotted line relationship between the PAC and the CAC to better represent the relationship between the two bodies.

- Joyce Wisdom: Would the TAC be a good place to have representation from police department?
- Candace Dow: Crime statistics from Minneapolis Police Department can be pointed to very specific locations, including the Midtown Greenway.
- Aaron Isaacs: The TAC should include representation from both the Minneapolis Police Department and Metro Transit Police Department.

ACTION 5: Seek engagement of both police departments on this project.

- John DeWitt: Suggested a clarifying comment regarding an Alternatives Analysis.

What is an Alternatives Analysis? (slide 4)

- An Alternatives Analysis is the first of multi-stage process toward building a transitway.
- The CAC's role is to question the benefits, cost and impacts of a transitway from the community's perspective.
- In the end, a single alignment and single mode is identified. These elements become the locally preferred alternative or LPA.

Midtown Corridor AA Work Plan (slide 5)

- The project is currently in the middle of determining/finalizing the Goals and Objectives on the timeline. The next step involves determining the "Universe of Alternatives". These alternatives are measured against the Goals and Objectives.

What is the Study Area? (slide 6)

- Two alignments (Lake Street and the Midtown Greenway) and basically two modes (rail and bus). Rail includes light rail transit and modern streetcar).
- Map in CAC packet show area all the way to river—what is the study area?
- Map shows the area where CAC representation is coming from; wanted to make sure we get representation for those neighborhoods to the river.
- Thatcher Imboden: How was study area selected? Because it lands between to transit lines?
Michael Mechtenberg: For this project, the study area needed to be defined and it made sense that it be established between LRT lines and where Greenway trench ends. It is thought of as a transitway connector at 4.5 miles.
Thatcher Imboden: This will be an issue with the constituency I represent (West Calhoun business). CONCERN related to mobility being too limiting in travel throughout the entire stretch of the corridor.
- Jeff Peltola: Who made this decision?



Michael Mechtenberg: The definition of the study area came from the Minneapolis feasibility study. The Midtown Greenway Coalition's work also saw this as a connector.

- Joyce Wisdom: I have heard this issue over the last few months; how connections get made regionally.
- John DeWitt: Met Council does more regional connections; whereas, cities are responsible for the feeders lines into the city.
- Harry Savage: Where are the communities of colors represented on this committee? Are we missing them on this committee? They are large users of transit.
 - Joyce Wisdom: We have Latino Economic Development Center on PAC and invited them to participate in CAC.
 - Jill Hentges: We will be doing additional outreach outside of CAC; engagement doesn't begin and end with the work on the CAC.
 - Joyce Wisdom: It would be helpful for organizations to encourage communities of color to participate and involve them and CAC members need to represent their interests.
- David Greene: Worried about limiting scope of study area and getting accurate count of ridership, especially of those who ride beyond the study corridor (example: Routes 21 and 53).
 - Michael Mechtenberg: As work on corridor study, and look at the models, the Project management Team (PMT) will look outside of 4.5 mile study area.
- Sheldon Mains: Evening meetings are a very white, middle-class thing, so it is important to go to where people are and do things out of the ordinary. Any type of public meeting is difficult for people of color to attend.
 - Joyce Wisdom: Evening meetings are also difficult for businesses. They prefer morning meetings.

ACTION 6: Supplement stakeholder outreach plan with different types of engagement at varying locations, times of day and days of week.

Existing Conditions (slide 7 – missing number)

- Joyce Wisdom: When were traffic volumes on Lake Street taken? Please find out.
 - ACTION 7: Find out when the traffic volumes were taken for the existing conditions portion of the study.
- Aaron Isaacs: The ridership was done for the study area only?
 - Michael Mechtenberg: Yes.
- Thatcher Imboden: Is the Greenway historically significant?
 - Michael Mechtenberg: Yes, received historic designation around 2005.
 - Amanda Dlouhy: Should be noted that in Phillips West the Greenway is the only public green space in the neighborhood.

NOTE: Presentation slides from meeting are available on the website (midtowntransitway.org)

What modes are being studied in the AA? (slide 8 – missing number)

- David Greene: Battery electric vehicles: Does anyone talk about trolley buses.
 - Michael Mechtenberg: No, seems to have all the disadvantages without advantages.
- Patrick Ciernia: I believe you left off the word "million" in the LRT column.



Aaron Isaacs: Cost per mile for LRT at \$80-125 million is way too high; shouldn't use this number.

Michael Mechtenberg: The costs per mile numbers are National averages. A closer estimate would depend on ROW, station size, etc. The estimates on the slide are rough averages.

John DeWitt: There's a continuum because a system could use LRT vehicles as street car which is another contributing factor toward the average cost per mile.

- Harry Savage: Why only going with four options—why not do an 'L' or subway?
Michael Mechtenberg: Options get phased out because of cost and ROW. These are the four most realistic options for the study area.

Other Transit Studies Affecting Midtown (slide 9)

- David Greene: Will the new service on the corridor replace the existing service or be an addition to the existing service?
Michael Mechtenberg: We don't know yet.

4. Previous Midtown Corridor Work (John and Soren)

John DeWitt: 1998 Midtown Greenway Coalition got involved with streetcar feasibility study. 2000 At a public meeting in January, the Metropolitan Council agreed to conduct a study of streetcars in the Greenway. The Coalition disagreed with some of the assumptions and undertook its own Streetcar Feasibility Study. The Coalition hired nationally-known consultant Jim Graebner, who designed a system that would have cost \$53 million in 2005 dollars. For more information on that feasibility study and the Midtown Greenway Coalition's advocacy work for a streetcar line (midtowngreenway.org),

- \$53 million dollars to build
- Did not address vertical access/circulation
- Stations just concrete slab
- Priced using old vehicles (more historic streetcar)
- No fare collection at stations
- Idea of turf track (the green in the greenway) proposed versus ballasted track
- Single track okay-nothing to interfere with running; environmentally sensitive area between Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles; more suitable in Cedar Ave area

ACTION 8: Post Midtown Greenway Coalition streetcar feasibility study on the project website.

- Aaron Isaacs: should read study; good idea of what can be done with little money.

Soren Jensen: Midtown Greenway Coalition is a non-profit organization that helps guide the direction of Greenway.

- Hosted charettes; what streetcar would look like
- South side is reserved for rail; notice there is nothing there and ramps are on the north side
- Students from University of Minnesota studied Greenway; need to extend vertically and extend connection to Lake Street
- Interesting visioning to include trellises that would use "green" to connect the Greenway to Lake Street
- If Greenway is selected how can it support Lake Street businesses; understands the importance of connecting the Greenway to lake Street
- Important that it is on turf track. If streetcar is proposed without turf track, the Midtown Greenway Coalition will oppose it; also important to have single track



- Visioning sessions supported idea of streetcar on Greenway as, among other things, additional eyes on the Greenway and as a way to drive development in the Corridor.

5. Recent Public Open House (Joy)

Overview of Open Houses

Summary of open houses, including comments will be posted online in the next week.

- Jeff Peltola: Commented about how interesting it is to interact around activities which help facilitate comments and feedback/ideas.
- Mary Matze: Were transit users and non-transit-users separated or identified in the activities or comments received?
Michael Mechtenberg: No.
- Amanda Dlouhy: Would the fare structure change depending upon which mode might be selected?
Michael Mechtenberg: Fare policy isn't variable but set for all modes so there wouldn't be a change in fare structure resulting from this project of mode.
- Thatcher Imboden: How does this information get used now and in the future?
Michael Mechtenberg: This information fed the purpose and need statement. As a staff, we can get 80-90% there but it takes this key feedback from community to bring us 100% there. I believe you will see many ways that the public comment influenced the purpose and need statement next.
Katie White: The PAC will see the results of the open houses at their meeting on Friday.
Joy Miciano: The purpose and need is online.
David Greene: When will the open house results be posted online?
Joy Miciano/Michael Mechtenberg: Online within the week.

6. Midtown Corridor AA Work-to-Date and Next Steps (Michael)

Purpose and Need

- PAC is voting on Purpose and Need on Friday, 2/22, but it is a living document and can be modify as project progresses.

Key Elements of Purpose and Need

- Purpose Statement
- Needs
- Goals
- Objectives

ACTION 9: Please take a look at Needs, Goals and Objectives and provide any comments to Mike Mechtenberg via email or phone Midtown@metrotransit.org or 612-349-7793 before Friday, February 22, 2013.

- John DeWitt: Are there discussion with transportation staff on any changes that Lake Street may go through? What are you hearing from the roads people?
Michael Mechtenberg: Lake Street was just reconstructed with a bit of pain to business and residents.
Joyce Wisdom: All of it was reconstructed, except the area around I-35W. Of course, that is reserved for the current I-35W Transit/Access project with Hennepin County.
- Dr. Dave Johnson: Any idea when Greenway bridges will be worked on?



Michael Mechtenberg: Hennepin County is doing a bridge management plan right now and is responsible for any repair; study will be completed this summer. Bridges have historic designation which makes it complicated. Also areas along Greenway have historic designation.

Mike Wilson: The “trench” has historical designation in some areas too. It is also important to note that there is energized conversation regarding the re-opening of Nicollet too.

- Patricia Fitzgerald: What is relationship to goal and evaluation criteria and future funding sources?

Michael Mechtenberg: We want to get it built. There isn't funding identified for this work. Currently, we do not know where funding source would come from. Some of evaluation criteria do take cost into consideration.

Tara Beard: It would be helpful to know what the likelihood is of receiving Federal funding so can know CEI.

Michael Mechtenberg: Whether we are seeking Federal funding depends on cost. If funding is low, may be able to cover it locally. If cost is higher would seek funding from the Feds. This project is part of the Federal process for Federal funding.

Aaron Isaacs: From a community committee level, we shouldn't worry about funding now. Local criteria are much smaller compared to Federal criteria. If it's locally funded, process is easier.

- Sheldon Mains: Important to integrate with bicycles—so the project should integrate Minneapolis plan for bike facilities and know where those facilities will be.
ACTION 10: Pull bike plans for Minneapolis and integrate that planning into this project study.

- Thatcher Imboden: If using local dollars do not need to comply with historic regulations. SHPO (State Historic Preservation) doesn't touch a project if local dollars are used.

Sheldon Mains: Disagrees with Thatcher and believes that historic designation doesn't mean you can't touch it, just complicates things a bit.

Michael Mechtenberg: Historic designation and its impact on funding is simply one factor that we will need to look at.

- Harry Savage: Biggest fight will be bike vs. transit access; this project needs something fast; can't just have single track down greenway—how can it be faster with double track?

Aaron Isaacs: There can be sufficient passing sidings, where there is room for double tracks.

Joyce: Hope we can set aside advocacies; it is a time to ask questions, so things become clearer and transit becomes better in the corridor. No decisions have been made; this is the start.

Michael Mechtenberg: The issue (technical) of single and double track is definitely a discussion point for a future meeting.

- Shane Morin (visitor): Is the University of Minnesota student study that Midtown Greenway Coalition had done available?

Soren Jensen: Yes, it can be made available. Also, to clarify, Midtown Greenway Coalition isn't advocating single track the whole way; where there is room there can be double-track.



ACTION 11: Collect all previous studies.

- Sheldon Mains: Doesn't seem like there is enough time between next CAC and Open House.
- Thatcher Imboden: Can feedback be provided on community engagement plan?
Michael Mechtenberg: Yes, there is a Stakeholder Engagement Plan posted online; can review and comment.
- David Greene: Can a staff person come to a neighborhood meeting and present?
Michael Mechtenberg: Would like the information from this committee to trickle down; CAC members should report back to organizations; but could provide a presenter, if needed.
- Shane Morin (visitor) Are any other committee meetings public?
Michael mechtenberg: Yes, PAC meeting are open to public; will get dates and locations out.

ACTION 12: Provide PAC meeting dates/times to CAC members.

A discussion of challenges to project was on the agenda, but we did not discuss. Can we discuss?

7. Challenges from Community Perspective (All)

- Harry Savage: Confused and would like to know how single track would work. Any way to have model available at an open house?
Aaron: Single track and double track: Trade-off between cost and historic preservation and timing of project.
- Candace Dow: If on the Greenway, there is an access issue (not everyone can do steps); it is also away from businesses; how can we keep people coming to businesses?
- David Greene: It would be helpful to give an overview of the technical aspects of the study for those who haven't been through this process.
- Eric Weiss: Language barrier-45% Latino and other languages; how people can access info during study and any future infrastructures.
- Tara Beard: Is current bike trail meeting needs—recreational users vs. commuter bikes vs pedestrian. How to not create conflict with users, but not just maintain status quo on the Greenway.
- Thatcher Imboden: Interested in looking at stakeholders and whether strategies are fitting for stakeholders. SWLRT study there were lots of red flags that didn't get addressed—hope it's not the case in this study. Will be asking lots of questions on ridership, etc.
- Jeff Peltola: Efficiency isn't the only thing we should be looking at—also economic development. Stations should be places, not just a place to go from one transit stop to another.
- Rob Binder: Seems like there is preconceived route that people want to talk about. Looking at routes is important and at the different priorities for different communities.
- Patricia Fitzgerald: Concerned about businesses on Lake Street; concerned about recreational users on Greenway they are often forgotten. Also interested in real estate development-where is potential for these to be developed. This is an opportunity to learn about other issues. It would be nice to have the information prior to CAC meetings.
- Patrick Ciernia: Businesses on Lake Street and disruption to them; keeping people using businesses. Connection to Lake Street.
- Sheldon Mains: Don't come with preconceived ideas; keep an open mind to options and make fact-based decisions. Concerned about businesses—traffic and access impacts if something is on



Lake Street; how to connect to East of Lake Street that has major problems now. Don't orphan Lake Street east of Hiawatha.

- Amanda Dlouhy: Don't want station locations to be buried—easy to be sidelined because of technical reasons. Need to take time to go out and solicit information from people. As CAC members talk about this study, present it as an opportunity to improve transit.
- Mike Wilson: Challenges of different characters along corridor; affordability and efficiency will be a challenge. Those on the east end have a one-seat ride east whereas those on the west end must transfer from the 17 to the Route 21 or 53.
- Aaron Isaacs: Rail on Greenway can be a game changer-changes lives; increase access to businesses on Lake Street.
- Dr. Dave Johnson: What will integration be with current transit site, historic sites, and developments? Concerned about the transition between routes and modes. The use of HUBS as important transitions.
- Mary Matze: Preconceived ideas that Greenway is the best choice; would prefer people step out of advocacy role and take a look at the issues. Wants group to remember the diversity of the corridor.
- Harry Savage: Concerned if bus routes 21 and 53 will be scaled back with whatever is selected; hope bus lines aren't cut like the Route 180 was cut with Hiawatha LRT. The Route 21 is a vital bus route.
- Shawn Pearson: Don't create wastelands between areas. The importance of creating spaces.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:25 p.m.