

## **CENTRAL CORRIDOR TRANSIT SERVICE STUDY CONCEPT PLAN OUTREACH**

Staff used the feedback received during pre-Concept Plan outreach to develop a concept service plan, which became the topic of a formal public review period. As in the previous phase, Metro Transit used several outreach strategies to reach different stakeholders and ensure broad public engagement. The five primary ways used to communicate the concept plan and gather public input were:

1. Contact neighborhoods and community groups, residents and businesses
2. Notices to current customers and general public
3. Five public meetings
4. A variety of public input methods, such as comment cards and email
5. Trusted Advocates contracted by the District Councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (DCC)

### **CONCEPT PLAN STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH MEETINGS**

When the Concept Plan was available, staff contacted key stakeholders in the Central Corridor Transit Service Study Area. In some cases, staff was invited to revisit appropriate neighborhood or District Council meetings to explain how the pre-concept plan data was used, and to introduce residents to the Concept Plan. In other instances, this was an opportunity for those who might have passed on the opportunity to influence the study to connect with the project for the first time. In all cases, stakeholders were encouraged to study the Concept Plan and provide comment.

Before the conclusion of the public comment period, staff reconnected with all 40 of the initial community/neighborhood groups and a few others were added, including Como Park Community Council and the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. This part of the process not only continued the ongoing dialog with community members but also uncovered community concerns with some of the elements of the plan. It provided staff an opportunity to further investigate options for future consideration as the Concept Plan was revised.

### **NOTICES TO CURRENT CUSTOMERS AND GENERAL PUBLIC**

Information about the study and the Concept Plan was provided to current customers and the general public through these outlets:

- All of the project reports, process and project information was available at metrotransit.org and at the Metropolitan Council Data Center.
- Key information from the project website and the Concept Plan was translated into Spanish, Somali and Hmong. The entire Concept Plan was available in Braille.
- Print versions of the Concept Plan report were available at all libraries in the study area and by request.
- 12,000 concept plan brochures – which included a comment card – were distributed on buses and at schedule distribution outlets in the study area.
- Nearly 100 posters advertising the five public meetings were displayed in bus shelters along University Avenue and throughout the study area.
- A special card was attached to the farebox of buses in the study area to highlight the concept plan and public meetings.

- A letter was mailed to residents and business along the new Route 83 informing them of proposed changes and ways to provide feedback.
- A press release was sent to local media. Articles appeared in the *Pioneer Press* and *Highland Villager* newspapers and online at mn2020.org, Transit for Livable Communities (tlcminnesota.org) and tcdailyplanet.net
- The June 2012 *Connect* customer newsletter, which is available on all buses and trains systemwide, outlined the Concept Plan and provided ways to learn more and comment, including public meeting information.
- Operators and staff made onboard announcements, especially on routes 16, 50 and 94.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Five public meetings provided opportunities for attendees to learn about the Concept Plan, ask questions, and provide feedback. Two meetings were designated as official public hearings, although all meetings had the same format. Each meeting began with an open house format in which attendees could view maps of proposed routes, ask questions and address concerns. A presentation of the Concept Plan was then given, including proposed routes and the rationale used in planning them. Attendees were given the opportunity to testify and provide public comments. Brochures with postage-paid comment cards were available for attendees who preferred to provide written comments. The meetings were as follows:

Date	Location	Attendees
June 19	Brian Coyle Center	10
June 21	Central Corridor Resource Center	16
June 23	Goodwill/Easter Seals	16
June 26	Hennepin County Central Library (public hearing)	21
June 28	Rondo Community Library (public hearing)	28

## METHODS OF PUBLIC INPUT

People could use several methods to provide feedback on the Concept Plan. These included email, a brochure with postage-paid comment card that was available on buses and at schedule distribution outlets in the study area, calls to Customer Relations, fax, letter, petition, Twitter and Facebook. The comment card attached to the brochure asked which bus routes the respondents ride most often, the intersection closest to their home or work, and their thoughts on the plan. Respondents could provide further comments regarding frequency, hours of service, transfers, travel time, eliminated service and general comments. Paper and electronic versions of the comment card were available to the public.

Metro Transit received over 800 comments from 650 contacts. Comments received after 5 p.m. on July 23, 2012, were considered late but still included for consideration.

The following chart provides the distribution of public comments received:

Type	Count
Email	239

Comment Card	473
Customer Feedback	44
Letter	3
Fax	1
Petition	1 (45 signatures)
Public Hearing Testimony	47
Twitter	3
Facebook	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>820</b>

Notes:

- A repeat responder is responsible for 137 of the comments (21%)
- There was 1 petition (45 signatures) opposing the proposed bus service on South Lexington Parkway (Route 83)
- There were 18 government officials, cities, or organizations responding about the restructuring
  1. City of St. Paul
  2. District Councils Collaborative of Minneapolis and Saint Paul
  3. District 10 Como Park Community Council
  4. Macalester Groveland Community Council
  5. Canabury Condominium Association
  6. Ramsey County
  7. Como Park Regional Advisory Council
  8. Como Town
  9. District 6 Planning Council
  10. District 12 Community Council
  11. St. Anthony Park Community Council
  12. Tri Area Block Club
  13. Transit for Livable Communities
  14. Como Zoo Conservatory
  15. Smart Trips
  16. Summit Hill Association
  17. Steve Elkins (Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee Chair)
  18. ISALIAH

## TRUSTED ADVOCATE OUTREACH

In a parallel process, the trusted advocates contracted by the District Councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (DCC) used their strong community connections to discuss the Concept Plan in meetings with individuals and small groups similar to those used to gather data in the pre-concept plan phase. In preparation for this work, trusted advocates received specialized training on the Concept Plan and were able to ask detailed questions to specifically address the anticipated questions and concerns of the communities they most associate with.

The trusted advocates reconvened meeting with the communities they made contact with in the first phase of work, making themselves available to gather feedback, identify concerns and assist with the submission of community formal public comment. As common themes and concerns emerged, trusted advocates helped connect Metro Transit with communities who could help understand problems with the Concept Plan and options for the revised and recommended plan. The methods for engagement for the trusted advocates continued to include one-on-one interviews, door knocking, tabling (staffing tables at events or gathering spaces), home visits, small-group meetings and community gatherings.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH CONCLUSIONS

Feedback from stakeholders and public comments identified areas in the plan that warranted modification. Metro Transit received the greatest number of comments about proposed Route 83. There were 176 comments regarding this route, including a mix of

positive and negative feedback. Most of the negative feedback came from residents on Lexington Parkway south of Jefferson Avenue. One of the common suggestions was to extend Route 83 north to Como Park. Other comments suggested that the route extend farther to serve those living north of the park.

Route 94 was the route that received the second highest number of comments (85). The primary concerns with this route were the loss of midday service, a longer commute time, and loss of the Route 94 stop at Marion Street near Ravoux Hi-Rise and at Snelling Avenue. Other concerns included the elimination of Route 144, the potential loss of Huron Station connections to the U of M, clarification regarding the future of the Route 62 deviation along Demont Avenue, and safety on light rail and University Avenue.

The Concept Plan was modified to address many of the concerns highlighted by public comments, while staying within the project operating budget. Specifically, five routes were altered in response to public comment.