



CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

SUMMARY OF
PUBLIC
WORKSHOPS -
SERIES 4:
CITYWIDE
TRANSPORTATION
ACTION PLAN AND
STREETCAR
FEASIBILITY
STUDY,
OCTOBER 9-25, 2007

November, 2007

10-YEAR TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: ..Midtown Greenway Coalition Comments
- Attachment 2: Press Release

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Minneapolis hosted its fourth in a series of four workshops in October 2007 for the Ten-Year Transportation Action Plan, Citywide Action Plan and Streetcar Feasibility Study components. The purpose of these workshops was to garner specific feedback from the public on the proposed Citywide Transportation Action Plan and Streetcar Feasibility Study.

The Citywide Action Plan and Streetcar Feasibility Study are the second and third parts of a four-part citywide transportation planning effort. The other two components include a Downtown Ten-Year Transportation Action Plan (adopted by City Council in June 2007) and street and sidewalk design guidelines (currently underway).

In addition to the workshops, formal comments on the Streetcar Feasibility Study were received from the Midtown Greenway Coalition. These comments are attached.

II. WORKSHOP DATES AND LOCATIONS

Nine workshops were held for this fourth series of public meetings. The dates, locations and times of the workshops are listed below. Each workshop facility was handicapped accessible and each was readily accessible by transit.

Date	Time	Location	Address
Oct. 9	5:30-7:30 p.m.	North Regional Library	1315 Lowry Ave. N.
Oct. 10	6:30-8:30 p.m.	3 rd Precinct Community Room	3000 Minnehaha Ave.
Oct. 11	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Northeast Library	2200 Central Ave. N.E.
Oct. 15	4-6 p.m.	Minneapolis Central Library	300 Nicollet Mall
Oct. 16	6:30-8:30 p.m.	North Commons Recreation Center	1801 James Ave. N.
Oct. 17	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Lake Nokomis Recreation Center	2401 E. Minnehaha Parkway
Oct. 23	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Martin Luther King Rec Center	4055 Nicollet Ave. S.
Oct. 24	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Van Cleve Recreation Center	901 15 th Ave. S.E.
Oct. 25	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Bryant Square Recreation Center	3101 Bryant Ave. S.

III. WORKSHOP FORMAT AND AGENDA

Each workshop centered around two 30-minute presentations - one on the proposed Citywide Transportation Action Plan and one on the Streetcar Feasibility Study. The presentation is available for review on the City's website at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/trans-plan. Question and answer sessions followed the presentation. Workshop participants also had an opportunity to view presentation boards on the two studies and talk with City and Metro staff about the recommendations of each plan.

IV. PROMOTION OF WORKSHOPS

The workshops were promoted through:

- A press release (see attachment 2) was sent to all neighborhood and citywide publications.
- An email advertising the meetings and asking recipients to forward the information to their contacts was sent to the Project Steering Committee, neighborhood organizations, the Mayor and City Council Members, a list of former Access Minneapolis Public Workshop attendees, and Public Works' pedestrian and bicycle email lists.

V. WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

A total of 148 people signed in at the public workshops. It is expected that a small number of attendees did not sign the sign in sheet. At the downtown Central Library workshop, in particular, over 50 people were in attendance, although the sign in sheet shows only 30. Workshop attendance was recorded as follows:

Date	Location	Attendees
Oct. 9	North Regional Library	7
Oct. 10	3 rd Precinct Community Room	20
Oct. 11	Northeast Library	21
Oct. 15	Minneapolis Central Library	30
Oct. 16	North Commons Recreation Center	3
Oct. 17	Lake Nokomis Recreation Center	19
Oct. 23	Martin Luther King Recreation Center	14
Oct. 24	Van Cleve Recreation Center	10
Oct. 25	Bryant Square Recreation Center	24

VI. WORKSHOP SUMMARIES

The following issues were raised during questions following the presentation and via written comments provided at and following the meeting. In addition, comment sheets and emails with comments were received from approximately 30 people. All of these comments are summarized below.

Citywide Action Plan

- *Primary Transit Network Implementation*
Several attendees were interested in how a City plan would result in implementation of transit service improvements. Staff explained that Metro Transit has been a partner in developing and funding the Action Plan. Discussion also centered around the need for increased transit funding regionally.
- *Comprehensive Plan Coordination*
Some people were interested in how the Action Plan related to the upcoming revision to the City's Comprehensive Plan. Staff explained that the Action Plan will not be part of the Comprehensive Plan, but that the policies guiding the Action Plan are consistent with those in the Comprehensive Plan.

- *Transit Security*
Some attendees commented on the need for improved security at bus stops.
- *Traffic Calming*
Several attendees discussed the need for traffic calming or speed management on major corridors.
- *Pedestrian Traffic Safety*
There were some comments about pedestrian safety, particularly at intersections and questions about the use of no turn on red restrictions.
- *Bicycle System*
Some comments were received about the need for more bicycle facilities, improved education for both cyclists and motorists, and bicycling education in the schools.
- *Signal Operations*
There was a lot of discussion about signal systems, particularly related to Hiawatha Avenue, at the Nokomis Recreation Center meeting.
- *Parking*
Some comments were received on the need to eliminate parking minimums and replace with parking maximums for new developments.
- *Complete Streets Policy*
Several written comments were received in support of the City developing a complete streets policy.
- *Streetscapes*
Some attendees inquired about how street furniture and improved streetscapes are implemented and funded.

Streetcar Feasibility Study

- *Corridor Priorities*
Throughout the city, attendees supported streetcar corridors in their areas. People wanted to understand how priorities would be set as the city moves forward. Participants, particularly in neighborhoods with less development intensity, were interested in how the city would balance the need for development-related financing tools with the goals for implementing a citywide streetcar system.
- *Financing*
Attendees wanted to understand in more detail how streetcars would be funded, which is a follow-up action to the Streetcar Feasibility Study. People wanted to know how they

can help get the needed funding, by working with legislators, etc.

- *Midtown Greenway*

There were many supporters of the Midtown Greenway corridor at the meetings. Many of these supporters also expressed support for the Chicago Avenue corridor. Concerns related to the Midtown Greenway included whether the streetcar would impact the existing bike trail and how it would connect to activities and transit connections on Lake Street.

- *Next Steps*

Attendees, particularly at the Downtown Central Library meeting which attracted a lot of downtown stakeholders, wanted to understand how the city is going to move corridor selection, financing, and developer participation forward.

VII. OTHER FORMAL COMMENTS

In addition to the comments received at the public open house, formal comments were received from the Midtown Greenway Coalition. These comments are attached (attachment 1).

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Streetcar Feasibility Study Comments – October 2007

Prepared by the Midtown Greenway Coalition

The Midtown Greenway Coalition has been an advocate of a streetcar line in the Midtown Greenway since 2000 and welcomes Minneapolis' Streetcar Feasibility Study. The Coalition is pleased that the study recognizes the Midtown Greenway Streetcar line as a strong contender even if not a part of the proposed start-up network.

There are a number of issues surrounding the Streetcar Feasibility Study that warrant comment. These include:

1. Network configuration
2. Phased implementation of double track
3. Starter segment for Greenway
4. Headway and hours of operation
5. Overhead vs. Cantenary
6. Ballasted track
7. Bridge replacement
8. Stray current

1. Network Configuration

The highest priority must be the development of a robust multi-modal transit network serving Minneapolis and the Twin Cities region with a place for every mode and every mode in its place.

The consultant team has chosen a radial network of streetcar lines, all passing through the Minneapolis Central Business District (CBD). But there are other configurations that also work well:

Portland – Plans for Portland's Streetcar System are based on a loop about 1-1/2 miles across surrounding the CBD. This loop crosses Portland's light rail lines. A number of branches take off from this loop to serve areas further from downtown.

Toronto – The streetcar network operated by the Toronto Transit Commission consists of 10 lines based on a grid. Five of the lines are essentially east-west lines paralleling the Lake Ontario shoreline. Two of these, King and Queen, pass through the CBD; two others, Dundas and Carlton, pass just north of the downtown area. The St. Clair line is some 3 miles north of the CBD and does not connect to any other streetcar lines. There are also two north-south lines located just west of downtown Toronto. All of the lines are well connected to Toronto's subway system and several lines terminate at subway stations.

WEST CALHOUN

CEDAR ISLES DEAN

EAST ISLES

EAST CALH

CARAG

LOWRY HILL EAST

WHITTIER

LYNDALE

CANDO

PHILLIPS WEST

MIDTOWN PHILLIPS

LOVE OUR PATHWAYS

PROSPECT PARK

LONGFELLOW

SEWARD

EAST PHILLIPS

CORCORAN

POWDERHORN

A Midtown Greenway Streetcar Line would appear most similar to Toronto's St. Clair line as it runs about two miles south of downtown Minneapolis and links two transit hubs on the Hiawatha and future SW LRT lines in addition to serving the Uptown Transit Hub. And, like the St. Clair line, it would not necessarily connect to other streetcar lines.

Both Toronto and Portland demonstrate that there are successful models other than a network of CBD-centric radial routes. The priority must be the implementation of a robust multi-modal network. It's also worth noting that Toronto is currently rebuilding the St. Clair streetcar line with a reserved median suggesting the importance TTC places on at least a semi-private right of way.

Minneapolis might be well served by a combination of CBD-centric radial lines combined with streetcar lines serving as distributors connecting to higher capacity transit lines. The Lake Street/ Midtown Greenway and Broadway corridors come to mind.

2. Phased implementation of double track

A 2001 Streetcar Feasibility Study of streetcars in the Midtown Greenway conducted by Jim Graebner and paid for by the Midtown Greenway Coalition used the recently opened Kenosha streetcar system as a model. This two-mile line was built for \$5 million. One feature of that system, operating used PCC cars, has proven to be inappropriate as planning progressed on the Midtown Greenway. Aside from that, the 2001 study presented a very well thought out plan.

One of the key features was a phased implementation of a double track system. The alignment is crossed by 40+ bridges built 90+ years ago and most are life expired. Because of support column spacing, a number of those bridges cannot accommodate double track. At those locations, single or gauntlet track segments were proposed for a start-up system. Approximately two-thirds of the route was to be double track from the beginning and ultimately the entire route could be double tracked if warranted. This would decrease costs and environmental impacts thus reducing barriers to implementation. The proposed single track segments were capable of supporting streetcars operating 10 minutes headway.

It should be noted that single track was also proposed on the right of way between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun which is an environmentally sensitive area. Double tracking that stretch was to be the subject of future dialogue.

3. Starter Segment for Greenway

It is puzzling that a starter segment was proposed for all lines except for the Midtown Greenway which has, perhaps, the most natural starter segment of all. That is the segment between Hiawatha and Uptown. It makes little sense to operate west of Uptown until the SW LRT line is in operation. Nonetheless, this starter segment would terminate at two busy transit hubs. It would link five existing anchors while no other starter segment connects more than two. There is also a very high employment concentration on this corridor in addition to significant development potential

4. Headway and hours of operation

The Coalition's 2001 feasibility study recommended a 10-minute headway during peak hours. Minneapolis' Streetcar Feasibility Study proposes a 7-1/2 minute peak hour headway to match that of the Hiawatha LRT line. The Coalition supports a 10-minute headway for two reasons: 1) Fewer than 10% of the riders are forecast to transfer to Hiawatha and 2) a 7-1/2 minute headway represents a 33% increase in operating costs. A 10-minute headway serves the corridor well for a start-up system and shorter headways or two-car trains should be considered as ridership grows.

The Coalition's feasibility study recommended a 16-hour operating day. Minneapolis' Streetcar Feasibility Study recommends a 23-hour operating day. The streetcar line is paralleled by Metro Transit's #21 bus line which provides 24 hour service and can provide backup service when the streetcar isn't running. A 16-hour operating day serves the corridor well and extended operating hours should be considered as ridership grows.

5. Overhead vs. Catenary

The Minneapolis Streetcar Feasibility Study recommends a catenary system rather than a Simple Overhead system because of the high speeds involved. The Hiawatha LRT line utilizes both; simple overhead in downtown Minneapolis where operating speeds are lower and catenary for the remainder of the line. The Coalition believes a Simple Overhead system is preferable in the Midtown Greenway because of lower installation costs and less visual impact. Transportation Research Board (TRB) Report No. 7, *Reducing the Visual Impact of Overhead Contact Systems*, notes on page 21 that "Pantograph operation on direct suspension wire is limited to about 55 kph (35 mph)." It is doubtful that streetcar speeds will exceed 35 mph in the Greenway because the stations will be only about one half mile apart and Simple Overhead should be sufficient. In addition, with Simple Overhead, existing bridges can be used for support further reducing costs.

6. Ballasted track

The Midtown Greenway Coalition favors ballasted track over embedded track for the Midtown Greenway. The City's draft Streetcar Feasibility Study raises several concerns about ballasted track. One concern the study raises is that ballast can be "kicked" up by passing trains or thrown by vandals. Bike/ped trails parallel the Hiawatha light rail line near 24th Street where trains regularly attain 55 mph. Two individuals, a signal maintainer on the Hiawatha LRT line and an electrical engineer who worked on Hiawatha's power distribution system, are unaware of any ballast issues. In addition, in Delaware, bike/ped trails parallel Amtrak's Northeast Corridor where passenger trains regularly pass at 120 mph. Once again, there appear to be no concerns about flying ballast.

Another concern is raised regarding the difficulty that pedestrians will have crossing ballasted track from the south. The broader issue of track crossings has been dealt with at length by the Midtown Greenway Coalition. The Coalition generally agrees with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority that crossings of the track only be allowed at station locations which will already have concrete platforms.

Should a bike/ped crossing prove necessary at some locations, a simple crossing similar the one found on Hiawatha at 24th Street should suffice.

A final but critical argument in favor of ballasted track in the Greenway is that the ballasted design, as compared to embedded track, could more easily accommodate turf tracks. With turf tracks soil is laid down over the ties enabling grass or other turf to be grown, with just the heads of the rails showing through the grass. In the future when the entire Greenway floor is occupied by either asphalt trails or transit tracks, this would make an enormous difference in the way the corridor looks, retains heat, echos sound, smells after a rain, etc.

7. Bridge replacement

Almost all of the bridges crossing the Greenway are approaching the century mark and will have to be replaced in the near future. This has generated concern about the impacts of bridge demolition and construction on streetcar operations. This concern may be largely unfounded. The Greenway trail was kept open during construction of new bridges over the Greenway at Chicago and Park Avenues in recent years except for a couple of days during demolition and again for a couple of days during the main ‘pour’. Although it may be a bit more difficult to keep both rail transit and trails open during the construction of new bridges over the Greenway, good planning should avoid the need to close the trails and streetcar line for duration of construction. Also, good planning should allow tackling a number of the bridges at once to minimize the number of construction seasons when the corridor is impacted—in fact this type of scheduling has already been advocated in a recent City study of the Greenway bridges. Finally, bus service on Lake Street would serve riders displaced from the Greenway line even though it may be less convenient for some.

8. Stray current

Any light rail or streetcar operation generates the potential for stray current, that is, current that finds an alternate route to ground than returning through the rails. This can cause corrosion in nearby pipes and other metallic objects. The Midtown Greenway Coalition’s preference for ‘turf track’, track embedded in grass, increases the possibility of stray current problems. To our knowledge, as compared to most roadways, the Greenway has very little in the way of pipes or other underground metal utilities. It must also be noted that New Orleans has been operating streetcars in track embedded in grass for over a century and numerous European cities operate streetcars in turf track. There are hopefully well established methods for successfully dealing with stray current.



News Release

Contact: Matt Laible, Communications Department, 612-673-2786
View this release online at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/newsroom

Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▪ One Minneapolis ▪ Lifelong Learning Second to None ▪ Connected Communities ▪ Enriched Environment ▪ A Premier Destination

Updated release – new location for Oct. 10 meeting

Minneapolis hosts public meetings to discuss Citywide Ten-Year Transportation Plan and Streetcar Feasibility Study

Sept. 26, 07 (MINNEAPOLIS) The City of Minneapolis is hosting nine public meetings to discuss the City's draft Ten-Year Transportation Plan and its Streetcar Feasibility Study. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on plan recommendations and to discuss key transportation issues facing Minneapolis.

The meetings are scheduled for:

Date	Time	Location	Address
Oct. 9	5:30-7:30 p.m.	North Regional Library	1315 Lowry Ave. N.
Oct. 10	6:30-8:30 p.m.	3 rd Precinct Community Room	3000 Minnehaha Ave.
Oct. 11	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Northeast Library	2200 Central Ave. N.E.
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The City's Ten-Year Transportation Action Plan – *Access Minneapolis* – is being created to identify steps that the City and its partner agencies (Metro Transit, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, Minnesota Department of Transportation) need to take within the next 10 years to improve the current transportation system and ready it for continued growth. While the *Access Minneapolis* plan is based on a long-term (2030) view of transportation needs, it focuses on actions that should be undertaken throughout the city over the next 10 years, recognizing that this timeframe is subject to the availability of funds.

The Streetcar Feasibility Study recommends a long-range streetcar system and identifies initial operating segments that might be good short “starter” segments. The Study evaluated 14 Primary Transit Network corridors to determine if the operation of streetcar in some of those corridors would be physically, operationally and financially feasible. The study addressed capital and operating costs, impacts on transit service, development opportunities, physical constraints, ownership and operation alternatives, maintenance and storage facility locations and funding alternatives.

If you need a translator or a disability related accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, wheelchair accessible meeting site or materials in alternative format, please contact Charleen Zimmer, Project Manager, at 612-673-3166 or at Charleen.Zimmer@ci.minneapolis.mn.us at least a week before the meeting.

For more information, visit: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/trans-plan.