AGENDA

Technical / Community Advisory Committee Meeting

Date/Time: October 9, 2012 – 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM

Location: Minneapolis City Hall, Room 333 (Mayor's Conference Room)

I.	**Welcome and Introductions**	**4:00**
II.	**Public and Stakeholder Engagement** A. Engagement Activities to Date B. Input to Date C. Next Steps	**4:05**
III.	**Review of Purpose and Need Summary** (see attached)	**4:35**
IV.	**Next Phase of Study: Initial Development and Screening of Alternatives**	**5:00**
V.	**Next Meeting: November 13, 2012**	**5:25**
VI.	**Adjourn**	**5:30**

MEETING NOTES

Technical and Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1

September 11, 2012

Attendance
See sign-in sheet.

Welcome and Introductions
Committee members and attendees introduced themselves. Peter Wagenius from Mayor Rybak's office expressed the Mayor's thanks for the Committee's participation and input in the project.

Overview of Study
Anna Flintoft, Project Manager, provided an overview of the study, including the purpose of the study, the study process, previous studies and plans, anticipated alternatives, decision-making process, role of the Committee, planned stakeholder outreach, and stakeholder outreach to date.

Committee discussion included:

- *How are modern streetcar tracks designed for bicycle traffic?* Options include designating separate bicycle facilities or routes and filling the track gap with "boot material" to narrow up the space.
- *Would modern streetcar have catenary wire?* Yes, modern streetcar does typically have overhead catenary wire. Dallas is planning to implement a battery-operated streetcar that charges at stations; however, this is new technology, and it has not yet been implemented anywhere in the US.
- *How was the membership of the Committee determined, and how are minority communities being engaged?* Community/business committee members were identified by Minneapolis council members and the mayor's office to represent a cross-section of stakeholder interests, including neighborhood, business, minority communities, and other stakeholder interests. The project team wants the Committee's input in how to engage the broader community.
- *Is the project website and online survey available in other languages?* Currently, the website is in English only; the project team is considering translating it into Spanish. Other relevant languages in the corridor discussed include Somali and some Russian (along Central Avenue NE).
- *To what stakeholder groups should the project be reaching out?* Consider reaching out to the large artist studio buildings in Northeast; they sometimes have large public events. Set up meetings in religious institutions and engage faith-based groups. Engage the coalition of downtown neighborhood organizations that meets 8 times/year. There is a large renter population in the corridor; make sure to engage residents, as well as property owners. Determine what destinations are in the corridor outside downtown and engage those stakeholders.
- *How have modern streetcars and arterial BRT been funded in other cities, and what are the approximate costs?* Modern streetcar projects around the country are in the $30-60 million/mile capital cost range, while Metro Transit has estimated arterial BRT to cost $3-6 million/mile capital cost range. LRT costs more than modern streetcar. Funding of modern streetcar around the country varies widely; Portland, Oregon funded their first four miles entirely with local funds, while the current three-mile segment under construction is 50% federal funds (Small Starts). The City wants to be eligible for federal capital funds

through the Small Starts program for the project, and this program has a maximum $75 million federal capital contribution.

- *What is BRT?* The three types of BRT that are being considered in the Twin Cities region are Highway BRT that uses a managed lane, such as 35W; arterial BRT, which operates in mixed traffic lanes on surface streets; and BRT in a dedicated busway, such as the University of Minnesota transitway. All provide frequent, all-day service. The project team expects that arterial BRT is the most appropriate type of BRT to consider for this corridor.

Developing the Project Rationale

Dan Meyers, consulting team project manager from URS, described the current phase of project development, developing the purpose and need statement, and facilitated a discussion of transportation and economic development challenges in the corridor.

Committee discussion of transportation challenges included:

- Kevin Upton – Return Hennepin/First avenues NE to two-way and add bike lanes. Concern that directing transit improvement to Hennepin/First avenues NE instead of 3rd/Central Avenue NE would negatively impact neighborhood's investments in residential development and walkability.
- Erica Christ – Kmart at Lake and Nicollet is the biggest obstacle south of downtown. System is very centralized; everything has to go through downtown; not much opportunity for east-west movement.
- Joe Surisook – Central Avenue NE feels big. Scale down Central Avenue to be more walkable; consider bike lanes.
- Jen Wendland – High frequency of bus stops adds to travel time; faster travel time would increase ridership. Need environment to still be walkable.
- Betty Folliard – Transit in the corridor is slow. Need to look at getting people to jobs. Who will be most impacted with improved transportation?
- Erica Christ – A lot of people in the corridor can take the bus but don't because of frequent disruptive activity on buses (not well-policed). Also value in getting some cars off road.
- Katie Hatt – Be mindful of multimodal nature of corridor.
- Jeff Sargent – It is challenging to integrate any mode within the corridor in Columbia Heights. Where will the stops be?
- Peter Wagenius – Issue of transit reliability. Delay from wheelchair boarding/alighting.
- Cole Hiniker – Need to balance different needs in the corridor (long trips vs short trips) in identifying potential solutions as part of study.
- Kevin Upton – Wants to see improved connectivity with express buses on Marquette/2nd to serve fast/long trip.
- Joe Bernard – Call out Nicollet Mall – tens of thousands of pedestrians. Safety and vibrancy of downtown.
- David Sternberg – How would streetcars and buses coexist on Nicollet Avenue (especially the Mall)? Would buses be completely replaced?

Committee discussion of economic development/land use challenges included:

- Jen Wendland – Timing of construction projects is important in Whittier with multiple projects under development (I-35W Lake Street Transit/Access, reopening of Nicollet Avenue, this project); minimize construction impacts to small businesses.

- Erica Christ – Don't assume that new development is better than existing development. Concern with high property taxes pushing out small businesses on Eat Street.
- Jeff Sargent – Columbia Heights has difficulty attracting new businesses; concern that this project might hurt existing businesses with this project.
- Betty Folliard – How much increase would there be in corridor usage (transit ridership) with improvement? What information is available to help with this discussion?
- Joe Surisook – Can bike and transit coexist?
- Erica Christ – Zoning along Nicollet Avenue is very mixed.

The Committee ran out of time to complete the discussion of needs and discuss the draft Purpose and Need summary. Anna Flintoft asked for initial comments on the Purpose and Need summary by next Tuesday and agreed to follow-up with individual Committee members on additional feedback.

Next Meeting

Committee members agreed that the second Tuesday of the month is generally a good meeting time.

Sign-in Sheet

Meeting Topic(s): Technical and Community Advisory Committee Meeting

Date/Time: September 11, 2012 – 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM

Location: Minneapolis City Hall, Room 333 (Mayor's Conference Room)

Name	Agency/Group	Email	Phone
Tom Johnson	Hennepin Co		
Kevin Upton	NIC ISLAND - EAST BANK		
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Jeff Sargent	City of Columbia Heights	jeff.sargent@ci.columbia-heights.mn.us	763 706-3673
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Joe Bernard	Mpls CPED	joseph.bernard@	612 673 2422
Matt Brown		mcb612@gmail.com	612-760-1241
Joe Hatch-Sniscak	Sen Yai Sen Lek	joe@senyai-senlek.com	612-207-0405

Name	Agency/Group	Email	Phone
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David Steinberg	Brookfield Props		
Steinstein	UT Council		