

# AGENDA

## Policy Advisory Committee Meeting

**Date/Time:** October 29, 2012 – 10 AM to 12 PM

**Location:** Minneapolis City Hall, Room 350 South Fifth Street, Room 333

- |             |   |              |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Welcome &amp; Housekeeping Items</b>   | <b>10:00</b> |
|             | A. Introductions  |              |
|             | B. Action Item: Approve notes from September 24 meeting (attachment #1)   |              |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Completing the Current Study Phase – Purpose and Need</b>  | <b>10:05</b> |
|             | A. Open Houses / Public and Stakeholder Feedback  |              |
|             | B. Revisions to September 2012 Draft (attachment #2)  |              |
|             | C. Action Item: Approve purpose and need statement summary (attachment #3)  |              |
|             | <p><b>Proposed Motion:</b></p> <p>That the Policy Advisory Committee approve the Purpose and Need and goals and objectives for the Project, as summarized in the attached handout, namely: “The purpose of the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives project is to improve transit connectivity, enhance the attractiveness of transit service, and catalyze development through an investment in transit infrastructure within the Nicollet-Central Corridor.”</p> |              |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Peer Review</b>  | <b>10:35</b> |
|             | A. Modern Streetcar   |              |
|             | B. Rapid Bus  |              |
|             | C. Modern Streetcar Funding   |              |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Next Phase – Initial Screening of Alternatives</b>   | <b>11:35</b> |
|             | A. Evaluation Methodology   |              |
|             | B. Schedule   |              |
| <b>V.</b>   | <b>Next Meeting</b>   | <b>11:55</b> |
|             | A. January 2013 – TBD   |              |
| <b>VI.</b>  | <b>Adjourn</b>  | <b>12:00</b> |

## MEETING NOTES

### Policy Advisory Committee Meeting #1

September 24, 2012

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#### Attendance

##### PAC Members

Mayor R.T. Rybak, City of Minneapolis  
 Kevin Reich, City of Minneapolis  
 Jim Kordiak, Anoka County  
 Tamera Diehm, Columbia Heights  
 Gary Cunningham, Metropolitan Council  
 Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County  
 Pat Bursaw, MnDOT (for Scott McBride)  
 Adam Duininck, Metropolitan Council  
 John Wheaton, Downtown Council  
 Brian Shekleton, Hennepin County (for Peter McLaughlin)  
 Elizabeth Glidden, City of Minneapolis

##### Other Attendees

Peter Wagenius, City of Minneapolis  
 Anna Flintoft, City of Minneapolis  
 Dan Meyers, URS  
 April Manlapaz, URS  
 Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Council  
 Katie Roth, Metro Transit  
 David Frank, City of Minneapolis  
 Steve Kotke, City of Minneapolis  
 Charles Carlson, Metro Transit

Absent: Lisa Goodman, City of Minneapolis

#### Welcome and Introductions

Committee members and attendees introduced themselves. Mayor Rybak thanked Committee members for their participation.

#### Vision for Transit in the Corridor

The Mayor asked the Committee to discuss their vision for transit in the corridor. Committee discussion included the following discussion points:

- Reopening Nicollet Avenue at Kmart site at Lake Street is important, and transit-oriented development north/south of Lake Street is important.
- There are a lot of people with depressed incomes in the corridor south of downtown; we need to develop a transit-oriented workforce and connect people in the corridor to other modes of transit, like LRT and BRT lines.
- We need to stimulate housing and retail development in the corridor – the types of transit-oriented land uses that people want and city policy supports.
- Streetcar can work as both a local commuter and local circulator type of transportation.
- Nicollet is a great connector corridor, providing access to LRT and bus system.
- Potential to transform Nicollet by allowing existing businesses to expand and also attract new businesses; however, we need to be careful to protect existing businesses and avoid wholesale gentrification.
- Attracting investment and gentrification is not necessarily a bad thing. The 35W trench hasn't attracted investment. We need a transit investment to attract investment.
- We need downtown visitors to have a better downtown experience; we need to provide better downtown circulation to visitors.
- There are several different zones within the corridor: Nicollet Avenue S, downtown, East Hennepin area, Central Avenue NE, and Columbia Heights/Anoka County. Vision is that people perceive and use the

## Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives

corridor as a whole – tie it together – put northeast Minneapolis within easier access of downtown and south Minneapolis. Also connect downtown and neighborhoods with the Mississippi River - Minneapolis is the only city in America with a national park in the middle of the city.

- Want to have twice as many people living in the corridor in the future as there are now – not every block and every neighborhood, but in total. We need to rebuild the streetcar city.

### Overview of Study

Anna Flintoft presented an introduction to the project, providing an overview of previous corridor studies, the Alternatives Analysis process, anticipated modal alternatives, the Policy Advisory Committee role, public and stakeholder engagement to date, timeline/key decisions, and the upcoming September 26 & 27 public open houses. Committee discussion included:

- *Is a nine-mile streetcar line a possible LPA outcome of the study?* For a streetcar alternative, we expect to need to consider a shorter segment initially for the first phase of implementation. The 9-mile study corridor is much longer than most modern streetcar projects around the country. We also expect that the Federal Transit Administration's Small Starts funding program is more appropriate for this project than the New Starts program, which has a funding limit (maximum \$250 million total, \$75 million federal contribution) that constrains the length of a streetcar project. We don't want to compete with other New Starts projects in this region.
- *Can this project use information developed as part of Southwest LRT for Nicollet Avenue?* The Southwest EIS work has a lot of historic and environmental information that will be used; because LRT was considered on Nicollet Avenue through the Southwest AA and not recommended, we expect to quickly eliminate any LRT alternatives in the evaluation process.
- *How far from Nicollet and Central avenues would alignment alternatives need to be considered? Consider a circular loop in downtown.* We don't expect to do detailed analysis of alignment alternatives. The first phase of alternatives screening will likely evaluate Nicollet Avenue vs. First/Blaisdell Avenues, Nicollet Mall vs. other north-south downtown streets, and the Hennepin Avenue bridge vs. 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue bridge over the Mississippi River.
- *Why does it need to take six months after LPA recommendation for the Metropolitan Council to approve the LPA, and is there a way to accelerate this process?* This is an existing transit corridor and significantly different from corridors like Bottineau. The LPA adoption process includes regularly scheduled monthly meetings, plus required public comment periods. Gary Cunningham and Adam Duinck from the Metropolitan Council agreed to look into how the process might be expedited.
- *What is the status of the West Broadway Alternatives Analysis?* The City of Minneapolis applied for a grant from FTA to conduct an Alternatives Analysis, similar to this study, for West Broadway; Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council are sharing the cost of the local match with the City. The FTA has not released grant recipients for this round of AA funds. The Nicollet-Central and West Broadway corridors share a common alignment through downtown on Nicollet Mall; the West Broadway corridor will benefit from the work completed on the Nicollet-Central corridor. In addition, Metro Transit is leading an Alternatives Analysis for the Midtown/Lake Street Corridor. The Nicollet-Central AA has been initiated first, followed by the Midtown Corridor AA, followed by the West Broadway Corridor AA.
- *How were the September 26-27, 2012 open houses advertised?* The open houses were publicized in press releases at the end of August and early September, as well as an email to all neighborhood organizations and business organizations in the corridor.
- *Minneapolis Rail Expansion* – Peter Wagenius noted that after the Bottineau LRT line, there are no additional rail projects on the horizon in Minneapolis. In order to expand rail transit in the West Metro beyond the 4 existing and planned LRT lines, we need to consider streetcar.

## Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives

- *Is both enhanced bus and streetcar possible in the same corridor?* Yes, it is possible to have both enhanced bus and streetcar in the corridor.
- *How will funding/financing be considered in this process?* The PAC will be discussing funding/financing in future meetings. The next PAC meeting will include a review of peer city funding sources for streetcar.

### Developing the Project Rationale

Anna Flintoft presented the draft purpose, need, goals and objectives for the project. Committee discussion included:

- The problem statement should address the needs of transit-dependent people and make connectivity and connections to the regional transit system a stronger aspect of the statement.
- The project rationale appears to be missing the aspect of connecting people and highlighting people.
- We need to create opportunities for the market to meet the city's growth and housing density goals through transit investment.
- Talk about "growing communities," rather than "catalyzing development" in the purpose sentence.
- Talk about the region's goals for increasing population, as well as city goals.
- Talk about the need to improve ADA accessibility in the corridor, particularly given the aging of the population.
- Talk about increasing foot traffic in business districts.
- Talk about diversity of population in the corridor (lots of foreign languages).
- Need to use the language of downtown conventioners/tourists; we need to make downtown transit circulation easier to understand for visitors and extend the reach of LRT for visitors, as well as attract more residents who don't live in the corridor today (empty nesters, young couples).
- When city had 500,000 residents, how many of them were in the corridor?  
Talk about environmental goals.

### Next Meeting

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 29, 2012.

## Nicollet – Central Transit Alternatives

## Purpose and Need Statement Summary

The purpose of the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives project is to improve transit connectivity, enhance the attractiveness of transit service, and catalyze development through an investment in transit infrastructure within the Nicollet-Central Corridor.

Minneapolis is a dense urban built environment with a growing network of transportation alternatives. The Twin Cities region has several major transit investments in various stages of implementation, most of which directly serve downtown Minneapolis and are primarily oriented to serving long and medium distance trips. The Nicollet-Central corridor includes some of the region's most densely-developed and transit-oriented activity centers, including downtown. It is home to a diverse population, including many people who rely on and frequently use transit, and it connects to a large transit network, including local and express bus routes and existing and future light rail and bus rapid transit lines. The corridor, ~~and~~ is planned to continue to grow with compact, mixed-use development. The corridor has a significant demand for shorter distance transit trips and is currently served directly by several high-ridership bus routes. While bus service in the corridor is frequent, it does not connect the activity centers and destinations in the corridor with a legible, easy-to-use, reliable transit service that can serve the growing travel demand and support economic development objectives.

The need for the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives project is based upon:

- **Strong and growing travel demand**
  - Population and employment are densely concentrated in the corridor and projected to grow significantly in and near downtown Minneapolis.
  - Existing bus riders make a lot of short trips in the corridor already, and demand for short trips is expected to grow with population and employment growth.
  - The corridor serves a diverse range of destinations and reasons that people travel, contributing to a strong, all-day transit market.
  - A lot of people living in the corridor rely on public transportation for access to jobs and economic opportunities and contribute to a strong transit market in the corridor.
- **Economic development trends and objectives**
  - Local land use policies direct compact, mixed-use development to the corridor, ~~and~~; while the development market is performing strongly in selected nodes within the corridor, there is a need to catalyze further development to meet local and regional growth objectives ~~has shown that those policies are being implemented.~~
  - Nicollet Mall is a central component of economic vitality in downtown Minneapolis, and the public and private sector have prioritized improving infrastructure, ~~the~~ pedestrian experience, and connectivity along and beyond Nicollet Mall.
- **Deficiencies in existing bus service**
  - To occasional bus riders and visitors, the existing bus service in the corridor is not easy to use because the vehicles and stop facilities are not clearly distinguishable from other bus service in the region ~~and does not connect all of the activity centers in the corridor in a way that makes it attractive and easy to use for both regular and occasional riders.~~
  - The quality level of existing passenger facilities and amenities in the corridor is basic and not commensurate with passenger demand.
  - Existing vehicles and service frequency contribute to capacity constraints for future growth.
  - Boarding and fare payment on existing bus service is slow and contributes to inconsistent reliability of service in the corridor.



## Nicollet – Central Transit Alternatives

The goals of the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives project are to:

- **Connect People and Places**
  - Connect Downtown with nearby neighborhoods
  - Enhance connections between corridor activity centers and destinations
  - Improve connections between the corridor and the regional transit system
- **Increase the Attractiveness of Transit**
  - Provide transit capacity for future growth
  - Maximize transit ridership
  - Improve visibility and identification of the transit system
  - Provide improved passenger amenities and infrastructure
  - Provide reliable, frequent service
  - Provide transit service and facilities that are easy to use for people who live, and work and visit the corridor both regular and occasional riders
  - Provide safe and comfortable transit service and facilities
  - Improve accessibility for people with mobility challenges
- **Catalyze and Support Economic Development**
  - Support the economic vitality of downtown
  - Support the economic vitality of small neighborhoods ~~s~~ businesses
  - Support local and regional goals to foster compact, mixed-used development along the corridor
- **Integrate with the Transportation System**
  - Integrate with the existing transit network
  - Provide acceptable traffic operations and reasonable parking options
  - Support walkable neighborhoods and multimodal transportation choices
- **Support Healthy Communities and Environmental Practices**
  - Minimize impacts to historical, ~~and~~ cultural, ~~and~~ natural resources ~~and~~
  - Minimize impacts to disadvantaged-low-income and minority communities
  - Minimize neighborhood and property impacts
  - Support improved transportation, housing and economic opportunities for all people ~~of all income levels~~
- **Develop an Implementable Project with Community Support**
  - Define transit improvements with strong public, stakeholder and agency support
  - Identify transit improvements that are financially feasible and competitive
  - Develop transit improvements that allow for phased implementation

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