

# MEETING NOTES

## Technical and Community Advisory Committee Meeting #10

**Date/Time:** August 19, 2013 – 4 PM to 5:30 PM

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

### Attendees

Michael Mechtenberg	Allan Klugman	Peter Wagenius
Jen Wendland	David Frank	Ethan McCusker
Charleen Zimmer	Dean Michalko	Erica Christ
Mike Corbett	Kevin Upton	Mark Dorn
Ed Newman	Dore Mead	Gavin Poindexter
Cole Hiniker	Matt Brown	Bill Smith

### I. Welcome and Housekeeping

Charleen Zimmer explained the purposes of the August 19, 2013 meeting, which were to: a) share findings from analysis of comment cards that were distributed at Open House meetings held during the month of August and the online survey, b) present results of the Phase 3 Detailed Evaluation, and c) obtain feedback from committee members regarding their preference for mode, alignment, and length of starter line. An additional meeting purpose was to inform the TCAC members of the next steps in the LPA process, which included:

- Policy Advisory Committee meeting on September 19, 2013
- Transportation and Public Works Committee Public Hearing and Recommendation on the Locally Preferred Alternative on September 24, 2013
- Minneapolis City Council Action on the Locally Preferred Alternative on October 4, 2013

### II. Summary of Comments Received from the Public

Bill Smith presented findings from: a) the electronic survey that was hosted through a link on the project website and b) comment cards received from attendees at three Open House meetings held in August. At the time of the August 19 TCAC meeting:

- Three Open House meetings had been held, and the combined attendance was 56 people
- 24 comment cards had been received from attendees at the meetings

## Nicollet – Central Transit Alternatives

- The online survey had been up and running between August 6 and 19, and 31 surveys had been completed.

Findings from the online survey indicated that:

- 83 percent of respondents supported modern streetcar
- 83 percent of respondents supported the 1st Avenue/Hennepin Avenue river crossing
- 88 percent of respondents supported the 3.4-mile long starter line

When asked to state reasons for their support of the streetcar mode, respondents commented that:

- Better ability to spur economic and housing development throughout corridor
- Improves connectivity between Downtown and Northeast
- Off-board fare collection will be beneficial for efficient travel times
- Potential increase in ridership
- Streetcar is more appealing, improves quality of service
- More funding sources are available for modern streetcar
- Potentially able to alleviate automobile congestion
- Reliable travel times, faster and more seamless service

When asked to explain their support for the 1st Avenue/Hennepin Avenue river crossing, respondents commented that:

- Easier access to downtown amenities
- Better bike and pedestrian environment
- More direct than Central Avenue Bridge
- Better for future connectivity to other rail systems
- Lower initial cost
- Handicap accessible
- More of a seamless integration

The respondents' rationales for supporting the 3.4 mile-long starter line included:

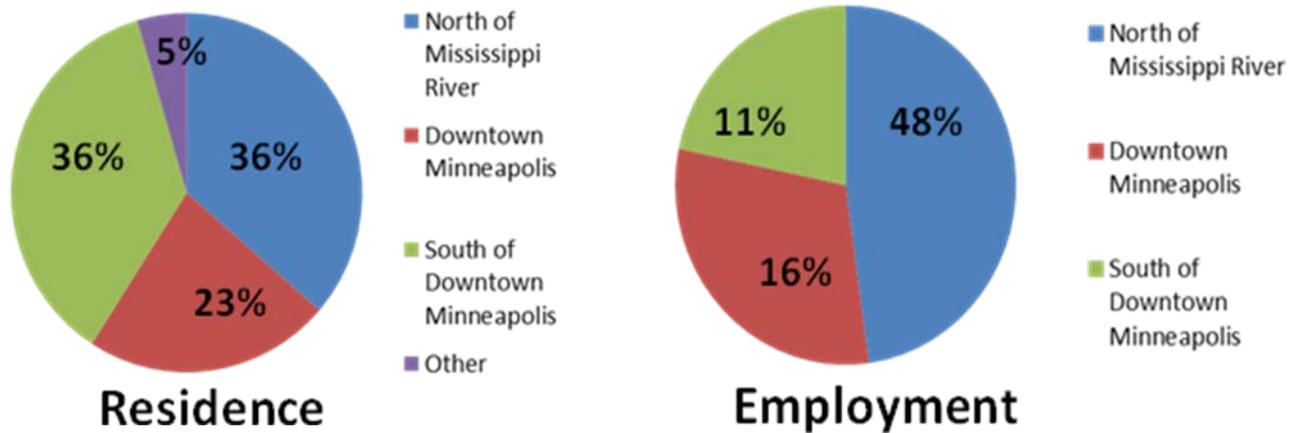
- The starter line, if successful, would provide a good base from which expanded services could be built
- The starter line would have a positive effect on economic growth and development
- The starter line provides better connection options than buses

The analysis of responses to questions presented in the comment cards showed that there were similarities to findings from the online survey:

- 83 percent supported the modern streetcar mode

- 82 percent supported the 1st Avenue/Hennepin Avenue river crossing
- 60 percent expressed support for the 3.4-mile long starter line

Analysis of ZIP codes showed that a majority online survey and comment card respondents live and work in the corridor, as shown below in the pie charts.



### III. Results of Phase 3 Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives

Charleen Zimmer explained that the Phase 3 Detailed Evaluation addressed three key questions:

- What mode is best? (Comparison of 9.2-mile alternatives)
- What river crossing is best?
- What is the minimal operating segment (or “starter line”)?

#### What Mode is Best?

Charleen explained that differences and similarities of modern streetcar and enhanced bus for the longer 9.2 mile corridor relative to the six project goals and 28 evaluation measures.

- Goal 1
  - Same alignment, same geographic area – therefore, no significant differences among alternatives.
- Goal 2
  - Streetcar has higher ridership and greater ability to accommodate future growth.
- Goal 3

## Nicollet – Central Transit Alternatives

- Similar to Goal 1: Same alignment; therefore, development capacity and value are the same for enhanced bus and streetcar. However, streetcar has greater potential to spur development based on information from peer city review and local developer forum.
- Goal 4
  - Based on neighborhood meetings to date, there have been some questions regarding traffic impacts. Charleen reiterated that no travel lanes would be taken under the enhanced bus or streetcar alternative, i.e. these alternatives would operate in mixed traffic. Curb extensions at enhanced bus/streetcar stops will be located in the parking lane. Traffic may experience minor delays when buses/streetcars are stopping at the stop. However, decreased boarding times, fewer stops and signal timing are anticipated to mitigate potential impacts on travel time. It is anticipated that additional analysis will be done during the environmental review phase to identify and minimize traffic impacts in individual locations.
  - Based on neighborhood meetings to date, there have also been some questions regarding on-street parking impacts. Minimal parking impacts are expected at some stops. No impacts are likely if the stop is an existing bus stop. 2-3 parking spaces may be impacted at new stop locations. It is anticipated that additional analysis will be done during the environmental review phase to identify and minimize on-street parking impacts in individual locations. Both traffic and parking impacts would likely be similar for modern streetcar and enhanced bus.
- Goal 5
  - Higher transit-reliant population for streetcar than other modes. Otherwise, there are no differences between alternatives.
- Goal 6
  - O&M costs per passenger boarding were basically the same at \$3.12 (2013 dollars) for streetcar, compared to \$3.17 for enhanced bus.
  - Higher capital cost estimate at \$393 million for streetcar, compared to \$94 million for enhanced bus.
  - Slightly higher cost-effectiveness measure at \$5.80 streetcar, compared to \$4.52 for enhanced bus. Both cost-effectiveness measures were noted to be within the realm of acceptability per FTA.

There were no comments or questions from Committee members.

### What River Crossing is Best?

Charleen compared the two bridges, 1st Avenue/Hennepin Avenue and 3rd Avenue/Central Avenue and walked through slides that described the differences between the two bridges, noting that both alternatives would work acceptably. She noted that the Hennepin Avenue alignment is a shorter distance between Nicollet Mall and Central Avenue, resulting in slightly shorter travel times, higher ridership and lower O&M cost. She also noted that the Hennepin Avenue alignment has better pedestrian and bicycle access to the river and provides access to Nicollet Island. The Central Avenue Bridge is much older, on the

National Register of Historic Places, and retrofitting the bridge is expected to be a higher capital cost. Comments from Committee members included:

Kevin -- I am a regular Route 10 rider. My stops (Post Office and transfer to University of Minnesota) are along the 3rd Avenue/Central Avenue Bridge.

Ed -- Streetscape and urban design considerations make 1st Avenue/Hennepin Avenue the better choice.

David -- Would streetcar on 1st/Hennepin preclude two-way operations on these two streets? *Response: No, it would not preclude two-way operation.*

Ethan -- I observed a streetcar/Volvo accident in Portland. I noticed that most streetcar riders are commuters.

Erica -- 1st/Hennepin and 3rd/Central are close in every category. Central is better because it is wide, transportation oriented, more streets cross Central than Hennepin, Hennepin seems more like a pedestrian street.

Peter -- The next line should be along Washington Avenue, according to some Met Council members and two council members. 1st/Hennepin is a better crossing in terms of linking to a Washington Avenue streetcar line.

Jen -- If 1st/Hennepin were not to work because of cost, right-of-way, and operational issues, would Central be back on the table? *Response: Yes, that would be likely.*

### What is a Streetcar Starter Line and Would you Support it?

Charleen presented information on the 3.4 mile-long starter line. She explained that FTA has historically funded starter streetcar lines (Small Starts projects) with capital costs approximately in the \$200 million to \$250 million range (at start of construction). The starter line that performed the best against the stated project goals is a line between Lake Street and 5th Street NE. From a transportation perspective, it is important to get to Lake Street in order to replace buses with streetcar. There are many short trips in this segment and ridership drops off significantly south of Lake Street. That same condition does not exist with the Route 10 (Central Avenue) where the trips are much longer. From an economic development perspective, this section includes five of the nine opportunity sites as well as about two-thirds of the development capacity of the 9.2 mile corridor.

Comments from the Committee included:

Kevin -- The starter line does not go far enough to the north. There is only a short distance to go further north before reaching Broadway Street (0.6 mil) and Lowry Avenue (0.9 mile). In the grand scheme of things, this is only a couple of feet more. Going north would stimulate economic and housing development, and there are opportunities to locate the maintenance facility.

Dore -- If K-Mart is not going to be taken out at Lake Street why not start the line north of Lake Street and use available resources to go further into Northeast Minneapolis?

Erica -- Redevelopment of the K-Mart site is secondary. It is the ridership at Lake Street that contributes to high ridership for the whole system.

Kevin -- The ridership will come from development that will be stimulated by the streetcar. How much more expensive would it be to extend from 8th Street to Broadway Street? *Response: About \$20 million to Broadway and about \$50-60 million to Lowry.*

## Nicollet – Central Transit Alternatives

David – Developers are not confident about developing north of 8th Street NE. The market is not there yet.

Dore – Who are the developers you've been talking to? I have a sense that industrial development can occur in Northeast Minneapolis; not restaurants. *Response: Several local developers participated in the developer forum, including developers working along both Nicollet and Central Avenues as well as in downtown.*

Peter – Conventional wisdom is that building the 9.2 mile-long alignment is not feasible. The FTA supports the notion of shorter, starter lines.

Cole – The starter line is our best option. It makes technical sense and it makes sense from an economic development position. The ridership is also good. Expansion from the starter line could go further north and also eastward to the University of Minnesota.

### IV. Round Robin

Charleen asked the Committee to engage in a Round Robin where each Committee member would state his/her opinions about the three issues that were addressed in the Phase 3 Detailed Evaluation. Committee members were also asked to provide written comments (see attached).

Ed – The starter line must go north as far as possible. Need not have federal dollars for the expansion to the north; it could possibly be done with local resources.

Mike – Mn/DOT has no objections to the findings from the Phase 3 Detailed Evaluation.

Cole – The streetcar at 3.4 miles costs more than enhanced bus at 9.2 miles. There are additional operating costs where the rest of the region might not get the service they would receive if we were not investing this much in a 3.4 mile corridor.

Allan – As far as traffic operations go, either 1st/Hennepin or 3rd/Central would work. There would be greater impacts on 3rd/Central, however, because of traffic diversions to adjacent streets.

David – Yes to the streetcar. Yes to 1st/Hennepin, and yes to the starter line, with the provision that we should go as far north as possible.

Kevin – Ditto David

Dore – Ditto David and Kevin. I would like to see the line get to Broadway at a minimum where, with industrial land available, job creation could occur, and a maintenance facility could be developed.

Peter – Lake to as far north as possible.

Mark – Ditto David, Kevin, and Dore. This is not only a transportation project. It is also an economic development project. It is, therefore, preferable to extend the line to the north where economic development needs to be stimulated. I hope the extension to Northeast is made a priority.

Ethan – I live in Loring Park and work downtown. Streetcar can extend economic development opportunities and residential development opportunities. We should go north as far as possible. Why should we stop at 8th Street, in an area where development seems to occur without a transportation stimulus? The City needs to look to the downtown business community to assist with the funding of this project. The City should enter into discussions with large downtown employers like Target and Ameriprise.

Erica – I like streetcar. The river crossing is not a concern. Starting at Lake Street makes sense, and going as far north as possible makes sense.

Michael – If the city has to build a streetcar line, Nicollet-Central is probably the best option. Others could be worse. The trade-off is operating cost. It is very difficult for Metro Transit to serve the ongoing operating needs of the region. Investing large amounts of operating dollars in a relatively small geographic area limits Metro Transit's ability to provide transit service to other parts of the region.

Jen – I would like a commitment from the city that the starter line will go north beyond 8th Street.

### **V. Maintenance Facility Requirements**

Charleen facilitated a discussion about requirements for a maintenance facility. She stated that 25 to 30 sites have been narrowed down to the top five or six sites and that the issue would be studied further in the next study, the Environmental Assessment. Maintenance facility location criteria include:

- Minimum of 2.5 to 3 acres
- Minimum dimension is 600 feet
- Availability of land, existing land use, adjacent land use, and proximity of the site to the line are important criteria.

Sites still under consideration include:

- 347 Harrison St. NE
- 854 14<sup>th</sup> Ave NE
- 400 6<sup>th</sup> Ave N
- 315 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NE
- 10 West 32<sup>nd</sup> St W

### **VI. Future Role of Committee and Next Steps**

The future role of the committee was discussed. It appears that this will be the last meeting of the T/CAC although Charleen will confirm this with others at the City. She requested that people let her know by e-mail if they have an interest in serving longer or on a future committee.

Next steps include:

- PAC meeting on September 19 (recommendation on LPA)
- TPW meeting and public hearing on September 24 (recommendation on LPA)
- Council action on October 4 (recommendation on LPA)
- Amendment of the regional Transportation Policy Plan to include the locally preferred alternative (LPA)
- Environmental assessment work
- Interagency agreements

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

8/19

Technical and Community Advisory Committee

Feedback

Your feedback will help the City of Minneapolis identify a Locally Preferred Alternative for implementation in the corridor.

Name: EQ Newman

Representing Agency/Group: Loring Park

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which alternative(s) do you prefer and why?

- Conventional Bus
- Enhanced Bus
- Modern Streetcar

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which Mississippi River crossing would you prefer and why?

- Hennepin Avenue/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- Central Avenue/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Based on information you have heard and seen today, would you support a 3.4-mile, Initial Streetcar Starter Line that runs between Lake Street/Nicollet Avenue and 8th Street NE? Why or why not?

- Yes
- No

It is a great economic and people mover. It is an important start to reducing what we have to spend on expanding public transportation.

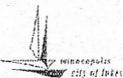
What specific questions do you have regarding the study?

I think it has been well done. I am a little concerned about the need for more public input.

Other comments (use the back of this sheet as needed):

Thank you for your participation! For more information, visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/nicollet-central> or contact Charleen Zimmer, acting project manager. 612-354-2101 [czimmer@zanassoc.com](mailto:czimmer@zanassoc.com)

Charleen Zimmer, c/o ZAN Associates, Inc., 105 Fifth Avenue South, Suite 490, Minneapolis, MN 55401.



Technical and Community Advisory Committee

Feedback

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Name: Matt Brown

Representing Agency/Group: Minneapolis resident

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which alternative(s) do you prefer and why?

- Conventional Bus
- Enhanced Bus
- Modern Streetcar

- development potential  
 - greater ridership

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which Mississippi River crossing would you prefer and why?

- Hennepin Avenue/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- Central Avenue/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

development potential  
 - river access  
 - lower cost

Based on information you have heard and seen today, would you support a 3.4-mile, Initial Streetcar Starter Line that runs between Lake Street/Nicollet Avenue and 8th Street NE? Why or why not?

- Yes
- No

practical, most potential

What specific questions do you have regarding the study?

none

Other comments (use the back of this sheet as needed):

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Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives

Technical and Community Advisory Committee

Feedback

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Name: David Frank

Representing Agency/Group: City of MN

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which alternative(s) do you prefer and why?

- Conventional Bus       Enhanced Bus       Modern Streetcar

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which Mississippi River crossing would you prefer and why?

- Hennepin Avenue/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue       Central Avenue/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Based on information you have heard and seen today, would you support a 3.4-mile, Initial Streetcar Starter Line that runs between Lake Street/Nicollet Avenue and 8th Street NE? Why or why not?

- Yes       No

What specific questions do you have regarding the study?

Other comments (use the back of this sheet as needed):

let's go!

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Feedback

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Name: Jan Wendland

Representing Agency/Group: of the Whittier neighborhood

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which alternative(s) do you prefer and why?

- Conventional Bus
- Enhanced Bus
- Modern Streetcar

- Ridership potential
- Less of a need to convince people to try it

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which Mississippi River crossing would you prefer and why?

- Hennepin Avenue/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- Central Avenue/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

\$10,000 / ~~5000~~ additional rider savings

Connectivity options

Based on information you have heard and seen today, would you support a 3.4-mile, Initial Streetcar Starter Line that runs between Lake Street/Nicollet Avenue and 8th Street NE? Why or why not?

- Yes
- No

PLEASE get to Lowry if possible (or at least Broadway), but it has to go to Lake Street for reasons already made

What specific questions do you have regarding the study? clear in previous discussions.

How the bikers fit into all of this.

Other comments (use the back of this sheet as needed):

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Technical and Community Advisory Committee

Feedback

Your feedback will help the City of Minneapolis identify a Locally Preferred Alternative for implementation in the corridor.

Name: KEVIN UATON

Representing Agency/Group: NIC ISLAND - EAST BANK

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which alternative(s) do you prefer and why?

- Conventional Bus
- Enhanced Bus
- Modern Streetcar

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which Mississippi River crossing would you prefer and why?

- Hennepin Avenue/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- Central Avenue/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Based on information you have heard and seen today, would you support a 3.4-mile, Initial Streetcar Starter Line that runs between Lake Street/Nicollet Avenue and 8th Street NE? Why or why not?

- Yes
- No

BUT GO AS FAR NORTH OF 8th AS POSSIBLE

What specific questions do you have regarding the study?

TWO WAY STREETS ON HENN/1st / BIKE ROUTES

Other comments (use the back of this sheet as needed):

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Technical and Community Advisory Committee

Feedback

Your feedback will help the City of Minneapolis identify a Locally Preferred Alternative for implementation in the corridor.

Name: ERICA CHRIST

Representing Agency/Group: WHITTIER

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which alternative(s) do you prefer and why?

- Conventional Bus
- Enhanced Bus
- Modern Streetcar

*easy access to many destinations  
clean, comfortable ride*

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which Mississippi River crossing would you prefer and why?

- Hennepin Avenue/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- Central Avenue/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

*Central is bigger and easier to navigate*

Based on information you have heard and seen today, would you support a 3.4-mile, Initial Streetcar Starter Line that runs between Lake Street/Nicollet Avenue and 8th Street NE? Why or why not?

- Yes
- No

*It would serve many of the transit riders that I currently take.  
I would encourage exploring a farther north terminus*

What specific questions do you have regarding the study?

*I don't think anyone really seriously advocated for the bus options.*

Other comments (use the back of this sheet as needed):

*Please choose the most modern, efficient, forward looking technology*

Thank you for your participation! For more information, visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/nicollet-central> or contact Charleen Zimmer, acting project manager. 612-354-2101 [czimmer@zanassoc.com](mailto:czimmer@zanassoc.com)

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Technical and Community Advisory Committee

Feedback

Your feedback will help the City of Minneapolis identify a Locally Preferred Alternative for implementation in the corridor.

Name: Ethan McCusker  
Representing Agency/Group: Looming Park (resident)

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which alternative(s) do you prefer and why?

- Conventional Bus
- Enhanced Bus
- Modern Streetcar

- increased ridership
- ~~economic~~ environmental benefit
- aesthetics + civic pride

Based on information you have heard and seen today, which Mississippi River crossing would you prefer and why?

- Hennepin Avenue/1st Avenue
- Central Avenue/3rd Avenue

- solve maximum density of population
- cost benefits (capital expenditure + operating expenses)

Based on information you have heard and seen today, would you support a 3.4-mile, Initial Streetcar Starter Line that runs between Lake Street/Nicollet Avenue and 8th Street NE? Why or why not?

- Yes
- No

• Go as far North as possible

• If this 3.4 mi route is proven to be a more likely way to get the project implemented

What specific questions do you have regarding the study?

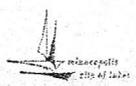
• how many people work downtown? who are we exhausting all other funding sources?  
not use structure for connecting but over budget, etc? what are opportunities here?

Other comments (use the back of this sheet as needed):

• what other funding sources are available - specifically are the large businesses downtown sources of \$ given the huge benefits

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*[Handwritten signature]*

that their employees will come? It will make  
London a more desirable place to work.

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