

# MEETING NOTES

## Policy Advisory Committee Meeting #05

September 19, 2013 – 2:30 PM to 4 PM

Minneapolis City Hall, 350 South Fifth Street, Room 132

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### Attendees

See attached attendance sheet.

#### I. Welcome & Housekeeping Items

Mayor R.T. Rybak kicked off the meeting after welcoming the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and other attendees. PAC approved meeting notes from June 10, 2013 meeting.

#### II. Update on Funding

##### A. Value Capture

An update on Value Capture funding was provided by Peter Wagenius, including a brief history of how the value capture funding was developed. It can only be used on Nicollet Avenue and Central Avenue and only for a streetcar. There are five sites in the value capture district. Four of the sites are either under construction or soon to be under construction and one site (“meter farm”) is owned by the city but there are no plans at this time for redevelopment. The Value Capture District was adopted by the Minneapolis City Council on June 30, 2013. Total value of the program could be \$60 million.

##### B. Other Activities

There were some questions about the funding of the remaining of the capital cost. Charleen Zimmer stated that the funding of the capital cost was still being worked out but the project was proceeding on the assumption that federal funding (Small Starts program) would be sought for the project.

#### III. Update on Evaluation of Alternatives

Charleen provided a high-level review of the technical work completed to date which included identifying the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) by answering three key questions:

1. What transit mode is best?
2. What river crossing is best?
3. What is the “Streetcar Starter Line”?

The evaluation of the alternatives was completed by focusing on the approved goals and objectives of the project including: Connecting People and Places; Increasing the Attractiveness of Transit; Catalyzing and Supporting Economic Development; Integrating with the Transportation System; Supporting Healthy Communities and Environmental Practices; and Developing an Implementable Project with Community Support.

## Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives

When comparing the enhanced bus and modern streetcar alternatives for the 9.2 mile corridor, both alternatives serve the same people, the same jobs, the same activity centers and have many of the same benefits. The primary differences are:

- Modern streetcar attracts more riders (19-20,000 compared to 13-14,000 riders per day)
- Modern streetcar has greater potential to catalyze economic development
- Enhanced bus has lower capital cost than streetcar (about one-fourth the cost)
- Enhanced bus has lower operating and maintenance costs but the two alternatives have similar O&M costs/passenger
- Both alternatives are expected to have a medium or better FTA cost-effectiveness rating

Both the Hennepin Avenue and the Central Avenue river crossings would work but the Hennepin Avenue Bridge has the following advantages over the Central/3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge:

1. Better bike/pedestrian access to both sides of the river
2. Access to Nicollet Island
3. Lower capital and O&M cost compared to the Third Avenue/Central Avenue Bridge
4. Slightly higher ridership/faster travel time
5. Lower capital cost to retrofit the bridge
6. The Third Avenue/Central Avenue Bridge is on the National Register of Historic Places

A “Starter Streetcar Line” was deemed appropriate as the first phase of implementation of modern streetcar based on experience in other US streetcar systems and the competition and requirements for federal funding (less than \$200-250 million capital cost at start of construction). Staff is recommending a 3.4 mile “Starter Streetcar Line” running from Lake Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE for the following reasons:

1. Overall transportation in the Nicollet-Central corridor is important for regional and federal funding and this segment of the corridor:
  - a. Has strong ridership (9,200 riders) with many short trips between Lake Street and downtown on Nicollet Avenue and along Nicollet Mall
  - b. Can replace some buses on Nicollet Avenue (and remove some buses from Nicollet Mall)
  - c. Provides an important east-west connection at Lake Street, the Midtown Greenway, and I-35W BRT stop at Lake Street
2. This segment connects neighborhoods to downtown across both geographic barriers (Mississippi River and I-94)
3. This segment serves the most people and jobs
  - a. 90% of growth in population and employment
  - b. Connects all but two activity centers
4. Serves the most transit reliant people
  - a. No vehicle population = 62%
  - b. Population living in poverty = 74%
  - c. Non-white population = 62%
5. Serves 90% of affordable housing
6. Has the best economic development potential
  - a. 69% of development capacity
  - b. Serves 5 of 9 opportunity sites as defined in the City’s Small Area Plans

A large number of potential locations for the Operations and Maintenance Facility were evaluated and they have been narrowed down to the following sites:

1. K-Mart Site (but a potential redevelopment site)
2. Superior Plating Site (but a potential redevelopment site)
3. 4<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct
4. 14<sup>th</sup> Street NE Sites (may be more than one site in this area)
5. Harrison Site

A summary of recent public outreach meetings and comments were presented. They included:

1. Four public open houses on August 6, 2013; August 7, 2013; August 14, 2013; and September 9, 2013 with over 100 people in attendance
2. Presentations to 31 neighborhood organizations, business associations and advisory committees with over 500 people in attendance
3. On-line surveys with over 150 surveys completed
4. The common themes heard from all of the meetings and surveys included:
  - a. Support for the modern streetcar mode
  - b. Support for the Hennepin Avenue/1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Bridge River Crossing
  - c. Support for the 3.4 mile long starter line from Lake Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE
  - d. Desire for an extension (now or later) further to the north (Broadway, 14<sup>th</sup>, or Lowry)
  - e. Concerns about traffic, parking, and construction impacts for businesses
  - f. Concerns about bicycles and streetcar
  - g. Concerns about cost and funding

A summary of the results of the T/CAC meeting held on August 19, 2013 were presented and included the following summary of comments received from T/CAC members:

1. Streetcar mode is best
2. Hennepin Avenue is the best river crossing
3. Starter streetcar line from Lake Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE is acceptable but would like to see line extended as far north as is financially feasible

Questions that were brought up during the presentation included the following:

- Q1: Why are there more transit dependent riders with the streetcar alternative than the enhanced bus alternative? *Response: There are overall more riders for the streetcar alternative than the enhanced bus alternative so the number of transit dependent riders are proportionate to that difference.*
- Q2: Will there be a connection to the LRT system at Nicollet and 5<sup>th</sup>? *Response: Yes, there will be a connection at the LRT line. There will be a streetcar stop at 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Nicollet Mall.*

#### IV. Discussion and Action on Locally Preferred Alternative

Prior to discussion, Charleen Zimmer reported that John Wheaton, the Downtown Council representative was not able to attend and had sent comments by email which she read. In summary, he stated that, were he at the meeting, he would abstain from voting on the resolution since the Downtown Council is divided on the project due to unknown funding options and differences of opinion on alignment at this time. Charleen Zimmer also reported that Commissioner Dorfman from Hennepin County was not able to attend today's meeting, but County staff submitted comments that were technical in nature and would be answered in the next phase of the project.

## Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives

A motion for a resolution recommending an LPA was moved by Minneapolis Council Member Lisa Goodman and seconded by Council Member Elizabeth Glidden:

“That the Policy Advisory Committee approve the Locally Preferred Alternative as modern streetcar running between Lake Street and approximately 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE on Nicollet Avenue, Nicollet Mall, and Hennepin/1<sup>st</sup> Avenues, using the Hennepin Avenue Bridge to cross the Mississippi River.”

Anoka County Commission Jim Kordiak asked if staff would come present the project to the Anoka County Board. Staff replied that they would.

Minneapolis Council Member Kevin Reich asked if the northern terminus of the starter streetcar line depends on the location of an Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF). Staff replied that several of the most promising sites identified are located north of the 5<sup>th</sup> St NE terminus. Council Member Reich said there is a need to look at the extension of the streetcar line from 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE further northeast for OMF and development opportunities and moved the following amendment to the resolution, which was subsequently seconded and approved by the Committee:

“Be it Further Resolved that an extension of modern streetcar further northeast of downtown is desirable, the length of which depends on funding availability and the location of an Operations and Maintenance Facility.”

Minneapolis City Council Member Lisa Goodman stated that she supports the LPA, and her constituents are enthusiastic about the project.

Metropolitan Council Member Adam Duininck stated that he and his colleagues on the Metropolitan Council are excited about the starter streetcar line and are looking forward to working with the City of Minneapolis on amending the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Transportation Policy Plan with the LPA. He also offered a friendly amendment that the word “approve” in the original resolution be changed to “recommend”.

Scott McBride from Mn/DOT asked staff to confirm that none of the proposed LPA between Lake Street and 5<sup>th</sup> St NE is located on State Trunk highway, and staff replied that is correct. 5<sup>th</sup> Street SE is a couple blocks south of the Central Avenue NE, which is a State Trunk Highway.

The final resolution was approved unanimously by the PAC as follows:

“That the Policy Advisory Committee recommend the Locally Preferred Alternative as modern streetcar running between Lake Street and approximately 5<sup>th</sup> Street NE on Nicollet Avenue, Nicollet Mall, and Hennepin/1<sup>st</sup> Avenues, using the Hennepin Avenue Bridge to cross the Mississippi River. Be it Further Resolved that an extension of modern streetcar further northeast of downtown is desirable, the length of which depends on funding availability and the location of an Operations and Maintenance Facility.”

### **V. Next Steps**

A Public Hearing / Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 24, 2013 where the PAC resolution on the LPA will be brought forward.

A Minneapolis City Council meeting will be held on Friday, October 4, 2013 where the resolution for the LPA will be brought forward.

The City of Minneapolis will continue to work with the Metropolitan Council staff to amend the Transportation Policy Plan with the LPA amendment.

The City of Minneapolis is preparing interagency agreements to work with other agencies as the LPA project moves forward.

An Environmental Assessment on the LPA will be initiated and completed over the next several months.

**VI. Adjourn** – Adjourned at 3:30 PM.

# Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives

## **Attendees**

### Committee Members

Mayor R.T. Rybak, Minneapolis Mayor

Kevin Reich, Minneapolis City Council

Lisa Goodman, Minneapolis City Council

Elizabeth Glidden, Minneapolis City Council

Adam Duininck, Metropolitan Council

Gary Cunningham, Metropolitan Council

Jim Kordiak, Anoka County Board

Tamera Diehm, Columbia Heights City Council

Scott McBride, Mn/DOT

### Other Attendees

Steve Kotke, Minneapolis Public Works

Michael Mechtenberg, Metro Transit

Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Council

Peter Wagenius, Mayor Rybak's Office

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit

Dean Michalko, Hennepin County

David Frank, Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development

Jeremy Hanson-Willis, Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development

Anna Flintoft, Minneapolis Public Works

Dan Meyers, URS

Charleen Zimmer, ZAN Associates

Gavin Poindexter, URS