



PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE (PSC) MEETING Meeting Minutes

Date: July 19, 2007
Time: 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM
Location: Room 319, City Hall
Attendees: See attached roster

Agenda

1. Housekeeping
 - a. Minutes from last meeting
 - b. Meetings and presentations
2. Downtown Action Plan – report on City Council amendments
3. Streetcar Feasibility Study – discussion items
 - a. Midtown Greenway
 - b. Initial and Minimal Operating Segments
 - c. Owner and Operator Options
 - d. Funding Option
 - e. Next Steps
4. Fall Public meetings
5. Status of Other Activities/Next Steps

Summary of Items Discussed

Housekeeping

Charleen Zimmer distributed paper copies of the June 21 committee meeting minutes. If anyone has changes to recommend to the meeting minutes, they should email Charleen Zimmer.

Downtown Action Plan

Charleen Zimmer reported that the Downtown Action Plan was adopted by City Council on June 29, 2007. Prior to that action, the project team had several meetings with downtown stakeholders to work out final details and compromises. Council amendments to the plan included:

- All references to the east-west transit spine and a two-way 8th Street were replaced with a recommendation to continue to explore multiple options to serve the east-west transit spine, including 4th Street.
- The PSC should continue to guide the work on the east-west transit spine.

- The bike lanes on 2nd and Marquette Avenues will be removed when the double-width transit lanes open. The remaining 5 feet of space will be allocated to sidewalks, with preference given to the transit side of the street.
- Bikes will be allowed on Nicollet Mall 24 hours a day.
- Bikes will be allowed on the 2nd and Marquette transit lanes in off-peak hours.
- Staff will continue to explore with the Bicycle Advisory Committee and Metro Transit using the passing transit lanes on 2nd and Marquette during peak hours.
- Accelerate deployment of hybrid electric buses on Nicollet Mall
- Explore new designs for bicycle facilities and treatments in downtown.
- Change the current requirement that only sworn police officers may direct traffic at building entrances.
- Complete the pedestrian and bicycle master plans by the end of 2008.

Charleen Zimmer explained that there was also significant discussion by the City Council of an amendment to remove non-hybrid, non-free buses from Nicollet Mall during summer evenings, but that this amendment did not pass.

Charleen Zimmer explained that the City and Metro Transit have been working with Mn/DOT to include the 2nd and Marquette double-width transit lanes in the region's Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA) proposal. The UPA is a new federal program aimed at reducing urban congestion through a combination of tolling, transit, telecommuting and technology improvements. The program was announced in January 2007, and applications were due in April 2007. Mn/DOT submitted an application for the region, and the region made it through the first cut.

Mn/DOT's application included the following elements:

- Reconstruction of 2nd and Marquette Avenues in downtown to accommodate double-width transit lanes and improved transit passenger facilities.
- Dynamically-priced inside shoulder lanes in the 35W south corridor for buses and tolled vehicles (similar to the I-394 MnPass lanes). This treatment effectively extends the HOV lane currently under construction as part of the Crosstown project all the way into downtown.
- Telecommuting
- Transit park and ride facilities
- Transit service improvements
- Dynamically priced transit fares

If funded, improvements would have to be completed by the end of 2009. Charleen Zimmer explained that the UPA proposal will not include any of the proposed BRT stations not included in the Crosstown project, such as Lake Street. The UPA funding is for short-term implementation; construction of BRT stations would require reconstruction of the entire freeway cross-section.

Charleen Zimmer explained that the City and Metro Transit are also working together to submit CMAQ applications for 2nd and Marquette for funding in 2011 and 2012, should the UPA funding not be awarded.

The committee discussed the Council's amendments affecting bicycle facilities in downtown. Comments included:

- Removal of bicycle lanes on 2nd and Marquette will be a permanent change. The reconstructed streets will not have sufficient space to add bicycle lanes, should the Nicollet Mall option prove problematic.
- Some committee members expressed concern with the safety of bicycles on Nicollet Mall.
- Adam Harrington reported that Metro Transit is open to exploring bicycles on Nicollet Mall and on the 2nd and Marquette transit lanes, but would have preferred to have evaluated the options before a decision was made. Metro Transit is most concerned with the impact of bicycles on Nicollet Mall on service reliability, particularly with a potential increase in recreational bicycle riders on Nicollet Mall. Metro Transit thinks that the use of the 2nd and Marquette transit passing lanes by bicycles in the peak hour is very problematic, but that they are committed to evaluating the options.

Streetcar Feasibility Study

Charleen Zimmer explained that the streetcar consultant has completed additional work on owner/operator options, funding options, and revised the initial operating segments. After this meeting, the consultant will prepare the final streetcar report, which will be presented to the PSC in August, along with the Citywide Action Plan. Both reports will be presented to the Transportation and Public Works Committee of the City Council in September, in order to present the plans to the broader public through public meetings in October.

Bonnie Nelson from Nelson Nygaard presented the latest work on the streetcar study. She reminded the committee that the purpose of the study was to evaluate the Primary Transit Network corridors for the feasibility of streetcar service, to develop a long-range plan, and to develop implementation phasing options. She explained that the reasons that streetcars may be a better option over the existing bus service on PTN corridors include increased ridership, improved quality of service, particularly for developing near downtown neighborhoods, and to support economic development along PTN corridors.

She explained the opportunities and challenges of each of the long-range streetcar corridors:

- **West Broadway/Washington Avenue** – good maintenance facility opportunities near 10th Avenue N, good economic development opportunities in North Loop and east Downtown (if aligned with Chicago corridor), limited bus replacement until reach Robbinsdale
- **Hennepin Avenue** – good short-term opportunities to serve entertainment district, economic development opportunities, highest ridership potential over long term, short-

term conflicts with existing bus service is challenging, construction of streetcar through Hennepin Lyndale bottleneck is costly

- **Nicollet Avenue** – good short-term opportunities to serve downtown core and visitor/consumer market, good long-term opportunities to serve some of the densest neighborhoods in the city, high ridership potential, limited maintenance facility options, depends upon Southwest LRT alignment decision
- **University and 4th** – high ridership potential if linked with Hennepin corridor, costly bridge crossing
- **Midtown Greenway** – higher speed service connecting two LRT lines, good development potential, but not at the intensity of downtown, strong community support, higher costs for vertical circulation but lower costs for ballasted track, limited bus replacement (the connection to Lake Street is not strong enough to replace more than the route 53 express service)
- **Chicago Avenue** – high ridership and significant bus replacement if can reach 38th Street, difficult maintenance facility, opportunity to leverage planned street reconstruction, limited development opportunities between downtown and Greenway
- **Central Avenue** – opportunity to connect to Hennepin or Nicollet corridors, can replace significant number of buses on Nicollet Mall if connected to Nicollet corridor and can reach Columbia Heights, needs to be connected to another corridor to serve significant ridership

The committee discussed the economic development versus transportation purpose of streetcars. Bonnie Nelson and Charleen Zimmer explained that all corridors have elements of transportation benefits and economic development benefits. The City will have to decide for each corridor which is more important. Nicollet at I-94, for instance, has high density development potential, as does Nicollet at Lake, but in between, development potential is more limited.

Bonnie Nelson then summarized the opportunities and challenges of each of the initial operating segments. They looked at both initial operating segments, as well as minimum operating segments. In both cases, the location of a maintenance facility is essential in identifying initial and minimum segments.

- **West Broadway/Washington Avenue** – an initial operating segment could terminate at Fremont and West Broadway; a minimum operating segment could terminate at a maintenance facility at 10th Avenue N in the North Loop
- **Hennepin Avenue** – there are maintenance facility opportunities near I-94; an initial operating segment could extend from Groveland to Central; a minimum operating segment could extend from Groveland to 5th Street (the 5th to Central segment cannot be completed without a maintenance facility)
- **Nicollet Avenue** – an initial operating segment could extend from Washington to Lake, with maintenance facility opportunities at I-94, 29th Street and 31st Street; a minimum operating segment could terminate at 13th Street or Franklin
- **Chicago Avenue** – an initial operating segment could extend from downtown to 38th Street; a minimum operating segment could terminate at 14th Street or Franklin; there

may be some opportunities for a maintenance facility near the east side of the Metrodome, but this would require some non-revenue trackage

Central, University/4th, and the Midtown Greenway do not contain strong initial operating segments. Bonnie Nelson explained that Metro Transit is interested in increasing the proposed frequency on the Nicollet and Chicago corridors from the assumed 15 minute frequency. She also explained that while the initial operating segments form a loop on paper, running a circular, one-directional streetcar route would perform very poorly; transit routes need to be bi-directional in order to effectively serve origins and destinations.

Bonnie Nelson explained the owner/operator options:

- In Seattle, the streetcar was organized and funded by the City, the right-of-way is owned by the city, but the system was intended from the beginning to be operated by the transit agency.
- In Portland, the system is owned by a non-profit formed by the city, the transit agency is contracted to operate the service and maintain the vehicles and equipment, and the city is contracted to provide administrative support for the system.
- In Memphis, the transit agency funds the service as they do any other transit service.

Metro Transit, due to their unique experience, is the best entity to operate streetcar in Minneapolis, but whether they are contracted by the city to operate the service or are directly responsible for the service will have to be determined.

Because local improvement districts and other local funding sources are often used to fund streetcars, cities often have a greater involvement and control over the streetcar operations than is true for typical transit service. In all cases, the city is typically the champion of the streetcar project, not the transit agency.

Bonnie Nelson reviewed the funding options for streetcar. While there are federal funding options, she explained that these are often not used due to the additional time and requirements involved. It is also important that streetcar projects not compete with other projects seeking federal funding. The next phase of the Portland Streetcar will be the first to received federal Small Starts funding, and FTA has expressed a willingness to fund streetcars with the Small Starts program.

Most streetcars are funded through local sources:

- Charlotte used mostly city sales tax
- Tacoma used its motor vehicle sales tax
- Memphis used federal interstate substitution funds, city general funds, New Starts, and CMAQ
- Portland used different funding sources for each of its three segments, including local improvement districts, city parking fund bonds, federal HUD grants, and tax increment financing

The Committee discussed the unique conditions with the Midtown Greenway and the comments submitted by the Midtown Greenway Coalition and the Midtown Community Works Partnership. Hennepin County owns the Greenway right-of-way, which may result in different owner/operator options. Bonnie Nelson explained that the Greenway is not recommended as an initial operating segment because they believe it should be built in its entirety, and that requires a decision on the Southwest LRT alignment. She explained that due to the community and political support for the Greenway, it could be the first corridor to be built, but it would not make sense to build additional streetcar segments connecting from the greenway. The long-term streetcar network needs to be constructed from downtown outward.

Fall Public Meetings

Charleen Zimmer explained that public meetings on the streetcar study and citywide action plan will be scheduled for October. There will be 2 meetings in each of the 4 sectors.

**PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE
RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

Meeting Date/Time: July 19, 2007, 4:00-6:00 pm

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OFFICIAL MEMBER	NAME	ORGANIZATION	PRESENT
X	Akre, John	Northeast Sub-Area	X
X	Anderson, Richard	Mpls Bicycle Advisory Committee	
X	Brown, Tim	Mpls Parks	
X	Davis, Douglas	Mpls Senior Citizens Adv Commission	
X	Dewar, Caren	Southwest Sub-Area	
X	DeWitt, John	East Sub-Area	X
X	Gerber, Darrell	Southwest Sub-Area	X
X	Greenberg, Bob	Downtown Sub-Area Business Rep	
X	Grube, Jim	Hennepin County	X
X	Harrington, Adam	Metro Transit – Service Development	X
X	Hay, Steven	Minneapolis CPED	X
X	Indieke Cross, Margot	Mpls Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities	
X	Johnson, William	Transit Rider Representative	
X	Keysser, Janet	Transit Rider Representative	
X	Kjonaas, Rick	Mn/DOT – SALT	
X	Kotke, Steve	Minneapolis Public Works	
X	Kozlak, Connie	Metropolitan Council	
X	McLaughlin, Mike	Downtown Council	X
X	Moe, Susan	FHWA	
X	Morlock, Jan	University of Minnesota	
X	O’Keefe, Tom	Mn/DOT – Metro	
X	Opatz, Mike	Suburban Transit Representative	
X	Pearce Ruch, Kerri	Northwest Sub-Area	
X	Scallen, Maureen	Meet Minneapolis	
X	Schuster, Lea	Southeast Sub-Area	
X	Scott, Pat	Mpls TMO	X
X	Thorstenson, Tom	Metro Transit – Eng and Facilities	
X	VanHeel, John	Downtown Sub-Area Resident Rep	X
X	Walker, Katie	Hennepin Community Works	
X	Walter, Doug	Southeast Sub-Area	
X	Warden, Kent	BOMA Minneapolis	
Staff	Diaz, Nacho	Consultant to CPED	
Alternate	Ramnaraine, Jim	Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities	
Alternate	Olson, Glenn	Mpls TMO Alternate	
Staff	Wagenius, Peter	Mayor’s Office	

