

# MEETING SUMMARY

## COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #7

**Date:** February 27, 2024  
**Time:** 6-7:45 p.m.  
**Location:** Virtual

### ATTENDEES

#### Committee Members

Name	Community of Residence or Affiliation	Present
<b>Committee Members</b>		
Safiyo Ali	Saint Paul, Ward 5	
Abenezer Ayana	Saint Paul, Ward 3	
Katherine Bell	Saint Paul, Ward 3	X
Daniel Bruggeman	Saint Paul, Ward 2	
Sam Burns	Saint Paul, Ward 1	
Stephany Carpenter	Saint Paul, Ward 2	
Hanna Debele	Saint Paul, Ward 3	
Jason DeBoer-Moran	Saint Paul, Ward 2	
Cristina Diaz	Saint Paul, Ward 2	X
Eric Ecklund	Bloomington	
Amelia English	Minneapolis	X
Kevin Gallatin, Co-chair	Saint Paul, Ward 3	X
Diane Gerth	Saint Paul, Ward 2	
Sylvie Guezeon	Saint Paul, Ward 1	
Mary Hogan-Bard	Saint Paul, Ward 1	
Meghan Kress	Saint Paul, Ward 2	
Negatu Merkuria	Saint Paul, Ward 3	
Bill Lindeke	Saint Paul, Ward 1	
Corrinne Ollman	Saint Paul, Ward 2	X
Jay Severance	Saint Paul, Ward 2	X
Bob Whitehead	Saint Paul, Ward 3	
Amanda Willis, Co-chair	Saint Paul, Ward 3	

<b>Project Team Members and Other Attendees</b>		
Jennifer Jordan	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Jessica Laabs	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Kevin Roggenbuck	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Grant Wyffels	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Lyssa Washington	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Robin Caufman	Riverview Corridor Project Team	
Raquel Strand	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Kara Johnson	Riverview Corridor Project Team	
Dr. Michelle Terrell	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
John Slack	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Christina Slattery	Riverview Corridor Project Team	X
Wendy Underwood	Co-Chair SAPTF, Riverview Corridor	
Joe Landsberger	Co-Chair SAPTF, Riverview Corridor	X
Paul Hardt	W. 7 <sup>th</sup> Fort Road Federation	X
James Schoettler	Citizen Advocates for Regional Transit (CART) member	X
Greg Struve	Citizen Advocates for Regional Transit (CART) member	X
Grant Martin	Loci Consulting	X
Meg Duhr	W. 7 <sup>th</sup> Fort Road Federation	X
Henry	Citizen, Ward 3	X

## **DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

### **1. Welcome**

Kevin Roggenbuck welcomed everyone to the Riverview Community Advisory Committee meeting and read the land acknowledgment.

### **2. Introductions**

Ramsey County staff, participating members of the consultant team, stakeholders in attendance and the committee members introduced themselves.

### **3. Housekeeping Items**

Kevin Roggenbuck reviewed several items with the committee including the group agreements and virtual meeting procedures. He also reviewed the agenda.

### **4. Project Timeline and Project Phases**

Jennifer Jordan reviewed the timeline and phases. Longer durations were shown to determine which path this will go on ABRT or Streetcar.

- **Project Phases - Streetcar**

- Project development would be 2-year phase
- 2–3-year engineering
- 3-year construction project
- Opening projected to be 2033

- **Project Phase - ABRT - TBD**

COMMENT - timing and development of mode impacts "bust or benefit".

RESPONSE Can't speak for Metro Transit and their timeline.

Ramsey County estimated 2030 opening, used to formulate cost consideration.

COMMENT - MnDOT project and timing for ABRT.

RESPONSE - Can't speak for either organization, but everyone is aware of the MnDOT mill and overlay project versus Riverview project potential and effects. If ABRT is selected, Metro Transit will lead project coordination between stakeholder agencies.

## 5. Milestones

- a. February 2024: PAC to take action to release options to the public.
- b. Spring and Summer 2024: Engage in Spring and Summer.
- c. Fall 2024: PAC decision in Fall on mode direction.

## 6. Identification Process for Streetcar Operation and Maintenance Facility Sites

Jessica Laabs noted the supplemental streetcar information requested at the 1/31/2024 PAC meeting that was provided separately to PAC and CAC. In addition, Jessica went over the identification process for streetcar operation and maintenance facility sites. Three potential sites were chosen and will be evaluated further in a later project phase.

## 7. Animation for Streetcar Shown

1. Davern and Jefferson - one center-running (applicable as both streetcar options).
2. Jefferson shown as side-running alignment.

There was a question asked if the streetcar was only side-running and Jessica explained that there are two options, one center-running and one side-running.

COMMENT - Parking from 8 a.m.-10 p.m. used from Kellogg to Smith; Counted parking spaces - observed 98; assumed 2-hour turnovers - calculated to approximately 72,000 cars/week not servicing the businesses they park in front of. He noted that project numbers do not address the use of parking spaces and that the report was too "simplistic" - also much of the side street parking is permit parking only. He requests the project gets more sophisticated when talking about parking.

RESPONSE - there are many ways to do the analysis and tradeoffs, high level at this phase.

RESPONSE – Kevin provided information on additional parking options including many lots and ramps behind some of the West 7th businesses.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - Presumably at least some of these people would be able to use transit to access these businesses. I know I would be hopping a bus or train to get from St. Clair and places closer to downtown rather than drive my car.

COMMENT FROM CHAT: Or side street parking, which is what I only use already along the corridor (if not off-street parking).

## 8. Issue Resolution Process

Jessica went over how the ABRT came to be further studied and the elements of ABRT station. Reviewed alignment and travel time assumptions (2-3 minutes faster than Route 54 but less stations). Note – adjust slide 24 “interlining”.

## 9. Travel Time, Ridership and Cost; Comparison by numbers for 54/ABRT

COMMENT - Will 54 bus be retained under the ABRT Plan?

RESPONSE - Assumption would be Route 54 bus in this part of West 7<sup>th</sup> Street would go away.

Ridership assumptions add content concerning duration when presenting information to the public.

(Change slide 27 to 2030 projections)

COMMENT - Clarify with public numbers indicated = daily ridership.

COMMENT - Explain how ridership #'s were generated; Behaviors have changed post-pandemic. Dramatic difference between ABRT vs. streetcar -why?

COMMENT - Catenary lines vs Electric; Do electric ABRT buses require any overhead lines?

RESPONSE: No, electric vehicles run on battery.

COMMENT: Did the team consider a trolley vs. electric bus?

RESPONSE – This team assumes diesel or electric buses, in alignment with the fleet Metro Transit currently has.

COMMENT: Clarify the differences between electric vs. diesel buses; what is being compared?

RESPONSE – Metro Transit choice. No difference in ridership but there is a difference in maintenance and operations cost.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - When will the ridership estimates be updated with a post-pandemic model?

RESPONSE -timing unknown, waiting on the Met Council regional model update.

COMMENT – Capacity of bus vs Streetcar?

RESPONSE - streetcar has almost three times the capacity of a bus.

COMMENTS FROM CHAT -

- When will the ridership estimates be updated with a post-pandemic model? Yes, once the Met Council updates the regional model this summer.

- I think if ABRT was the chosen alternative, the neighborhood would really \*not\* prefer diesel buses. We already deal with quite a bit of large vehicle noise and impacts because semis are diverted from 35E and onto West 7th.
- And catenary trolley lines could reduce the number of buses needed since they have less downtime than e-buses but that sounds like a met council/metro transit choice, not for us here today with our choices.
- This comment would apply to either the rail or bus alternative and regards the frequency: I would request that project planners consider extending the 10-minute frequency until 11 PM (or maybe even later) on Friday and Saturday evenings. This transit corridor supports a lot of bars and restaurants along West 7th, as well as event goers from the Xcel and other venues downtown. Keeping it high frequency later on weekend nights would help support this vibrant corridor and reduce the risk of drunk driving.

RESPONSE – Similar to light rail, there would be additional vehicles/operations for large events.

## 10. Alignment

COMMENT FROM CHAT - will the bus still run that goes to Randolph and Highland Bridge?

RESPONSE - Can look into it to provide more information. The route 74 that serves Highland will continue to operate.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - Can I ask why it can't be serving terminal 2 as well? Three transfers to terminal 2 for my transport to the airport is more than should be happening.

RESPONSE - Maintaining what current 54 does - goes into secure area and has infrastructure to receive buses.

RESPONSE FROM CHAT - Aside from the Riverview concept, MSP Airport's 2040 plan includes a Terminal 1-Terminal 2 people mover.

Norfolk Avenue jog – request from the city of St. Paul for the ABRT to serve Norfolk for adjacent high-density housing. Downtown ABRT will be shared with existing transit.

## 11. Comparison of all Options

Jennifer went over a summary comparison of all options, streetcars, ABRT and Route 54, including what costs don't cover, common metrics, numbers and non-number factors.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - What is preventing the planning process from considering the impact of the Rivers Edge project? The planned Rivers Edge development has been factored into current ridership projections.

COMMENT - I would not use streetcar to access businesses along West 7<sup>th</sup>.

RESPONSE - Housing units, development, etc. become factors into viability of project from Federal dollars perspective; so in fact Rivers Edge is considered.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - I live two blocks off West 7th and St. Clair and I would definitely use the streetcar or bus to get to Aldi or to get to downtown. Also the airport, but I hardly ever fly. Just wanted to provide another viewpoint.

COMMENT - Models area snapshot in time - and can be disproven: example - green line exceeded ridership numbers quickly after opening.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - If you have time, could you go into any differences that are triggered in local zoning policy by ABRT vs the streetcar. Do either of these allow higher building than the other for example. If no time, continue on.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - Good question. This could become moot due to state preemption.

RESPONSE – Station Area Planning is backbone to working through some of those ideas to carry forward.

COMMENT FORM CHAT - what is the safety comparison between options for both pedestrians and vehicles?

RESPONSE - pedestrian safety is highest priority.

COMMENT - Parking cover only west 7th and not side streets?

RESPONSE - West 7th proper. If streetcar progresses, would work with City to develop options and opportunities for district parking scenario.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - while there may be some form of a West 7th business group, generally it's not very active. Getting aggressive to get input from business must be a priority.

RESPONSE - Thank you for your observation - we will make certain to include them in our planning for engagement. We did some door-to-door business engagements early on in this phase and people who were against the idea of streetcar made us aware of their stance.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - For LRT on University, we had very active and credible business groups and Community Dev Corps. We don't have a similar structure on West 7th. This is a void that needs to be filled.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - The new bridge will create vehicular constraints due to one lane westbound vehicle lane with stoplight crossing gates and crossing of railroad tracks - poor traffic design.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - But not necessarily people constraints if the line is strong enough to offset the wait of the few for the speed of many.

COMMENT: The issue is traffic along W 7<sup>th</sup> – we need the streetcar to alleviate traffic.

COMMENT: In looking at 2040 ridership numbers, if downtown offices convert to housing, the population will balloon. There is a problem with the ridership projections -why are the ABRT numbers lower if they are basically the route and stations as the streetcar?

## **12. Economic Development Analysis**

Grant provided an overview of the analysis and review of parameters. Parallel studies taken into account (literature review). Emphasis that this analysis is not comprehensive.

COMMENT FROM CHAT- Is the duration of construction and loss of bridge for extensive periods of time considered as a negative economic impact between the Streetcar and ABRT?

COMMENT - Development happening now and "seems" appropriate? Do we want to just turn it over to developers? Views of bluffs obscured; do we want 5-story buildings? Will development have a negative impact on parking and how will it affect local businesses? Requests a more comprehensive analysis including both negative and positive impacts.

RESPONSE: There will be opportunity for Station Area Planning to influence what can happen.

COMMENT - affordability, uniqueness, independent businesses and diverse, socially and economically - concerned with how area would change affect property taxes. Everything being proposed here seems cheap and not of quality.

COMMENT FROM CHAT - That's because we're not building enough housing; Justify streetcar.

COMMENT: "Character" buildings/ what is being called cheap housing was only way to make it affordable for some of us.

COMMENT: Economic development deserves its own meeting. Community data shows people like that the area offers affordability, neighborhood character, independent businesses and diversity. New development throws up red flags. Doesn't want house value increases; want to maintain affordability.

COMMENT: Development returns don't justify streetcar cost.

COMMENT: The value used will push people out; raise taxes/rents; "I need a roof over my head."

COMMENT: Other neighborhoods have new housing being built that is in step with neighborhood character. We just want developers to respect our neighborhood as much as they do Grand Ave and Selby/Dale area.

COMMENTS:

Thanks for your presentations to our committee

7th is hot; grand is not... ;-)

### 13. Engagement Plan

The July through December 2023 community engagement report will be added to the website project library. Engagement for this time period included District Council briefings, responding to [info@riverviewcorridor.com](mailto:info@riverviewcorridor.com) inquiries and comments, the digital INPUTiD map and general awareness campaigns through advertisements and social media.

After the upcoming PAC meeting and approval, we will begin robust community engagement including pop-up events, open houses, public meetings, District Council briefings and in-person outreach with a focus on underrepresented groups, pedestrians and transit riders, and area businesses. We will also continue online engagement including updating the project website and online library, photo and video simulations, a new version of the interactive INPUTiD map and a survey, plus we will continue the outdoor advertising campaign and responding to [info@riverviewcorridor.com](mailto:info@riverviewcorridor.com) inquiries.

## 14. Next Steps

Next steps include the PAC February 29 meeting to authorize release of streetcar and bus options for public input and engagement. Following that approval, spring and summer will be time for robust public engagement. Then in summer/early fall of 2024, the PAC will reconvene to discuss what was learned through public engagement and next steps for this project.

Kevin G. adjourned the Community Advisory Committee at 7:43 p.m.