

RIVERVIEW MODERN STREETCAR PROJECT

JULY 10, 2024 OPEN HOUSE

EVENT OVERVIEW

DATE: JULY 10, 2024

TIME: 5:00-7:00 P.M.

LOCATION: JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER, SAINT PAUL

PURPOSE

The purpose of the meeting was for area residents, commuters, and other stakeholders to learn about the work of the Riverview Project team study of the design alternatives, recommendations from the team on next steps, and how to stay connected on future engagement opportunities as Ramsey County moves forward. This event also served as an opportunity for attendees to share their feedback with the project team, technical staff and policy makers.

EVENT ATTENDANCE

STAFFING

Name(s)	Role	Organization
Amanda Greene Guentzel	Welcome/Sign-in/Float/Catering	HDR
Scott Reed	Capital Costs and Maintenance/More than a Streetcar	HDR
Jessica Laabs	Roll Plot	Kimley-Horn
Mona Elabbady	Board/float (At a Glance board Streetcar)	SRF
Jason Gottfried	Board – Extensive Benefits	HNTB
Brandon Maurisak	Streetcar Construction	HNTB
Christian Campbell	Streetcar and ABRT routes	HNTB

Andrew Olson	Lots to Love/Place Your Dots Board	HNTB
John Slack and Mike Lamb	SAP Boards	Perkins and Will Mike Lamb
Grant Martin	Economic Development Analysis	LOCi
Mike Rogers	Float	Ramsey County
Jennifer Jordan	Float	Ramsey County
Kevin Roggenbuck	Float	Ramsey County
Shee Yang and Kevin Walker	Board or handout - Highway 5 Mill and Overlay	MnDOT
Ophelia Washington		Ramsey County Intern

We had a strong staff contingent that reflected the expertise and knowledge area of each of the key topics and points related to the display materials. Staff stayed throughout the event to provide information and support to attendees who were looking to learn more or voice their opinion about the streetcar and ABRT. In the debriefing with staff, it was agreed that we had the appropriate staffing number and expertise in the room. It was observed that people were engaging in meaningful conversations with the experts.

ATTENDEES

NUMBER: There were 26 total attendees. Three additional people came in to take materials and left without signing in or talking to project staff.

DEMOGRAPHICS: Mostly long-time residents and business owners who are interested in learning more about the project.

MEDIA AND COVERAGE

No known media coverage

COMMENTS AND CONVERSATIONS

THE FOLLOWING ARE POINTS THAT WERE MADE DURING OUR POST-EVENT DEBRIEF BY THOSE WHO STAFFED THE EVENT:

What We Heard/Questions that were asked:

- How and who decides between option #1 and #2? Do people get to vote on it?
 - The “what you get for the price tag” and the “construction” boards were very helpful and answered a lot of attendees’ questions and eased some concerns.
1. Attendees had many more technical questions than at previous open houses.
 - There is still old/outdated information circulating in the community. Project staff got questions about issues that have already been decided on or are no longer relevant.
 - Option #2 seemed to have more support from event attendees.
 2. Many voiced safety concerns about pedestrian crossings to get on and off the streetcar.
 - Attendees noted Metro Transit’s absence at the event and wanted to ask them questions about light rail ridership, etc.
 3. There were also complaints about how long the planning process has taken.
 - Attendees were deeply involved in their communities and included: Highland District Council, business owners, and the Riverview Corridor Community Advisory Council.
 4. Tough to justify significant cost, but investment in West 7th and the new bridge was recognized as needed. (supportive of this)
 - Concerns over median guideway being barrier to pedestrian crossings/connections on both sides of corridor. Need to emphasize curb separation, not wall or fence.
 5. Concerns over limited vehicle turning options leading to additional cut through traffic on local streets. Recognize temporary impacts but envision overall traffic calming and diversion to other arterials (Shephard Rd/35E) in longer term.
 - Generally supportive but curious why not interlining with Green Line Downtown?
 - How do cars transition from driving adjacent to dedicated streetcar tracks to driving in lanes shared with the streetcar?
 - Are the streetcar vehicles compatible with the LRT maintenance bays? Can they share platforms?
 - What would be done with the intersection of West 7th Street and Snelling Avenue?
 - Will the project need to take property at West 7th Street and St. Paul Avenue to reconfigure the intersection? That improvement is long overdue.
 - This study is taking too long, something needs to happen soon. The community is frozen waiting for something to be decided.

- A modern streetcar project would cause destruction of the neighborhood and loss of its history.
6. The loss of on-street parking will affect businesses, people don't like using parking ramps.
 - General questions about safety.
 7. The layout of the center-running streetcar with platforms in the middle of West 7th Street was not made clear to people.
 - Riverview modern streetcar project could become another Southwest LRT, with cost overruns and delays.
 - Why does the ABRT layout have a jog at Norfolk Ave.?
 - Arterial BRT is not geared well for recreational use, people going to sporting events, concerts, etc.
 8. General discussion about why we are not using all or part of the CP Rail spur, the differences between streetcar options 1 and 2, and the bike/pedestrian improvements on the Hwy 5 bridge.
 - Would Metro Transit operate the modern streetcar? Could I use my GoTo card to ride it?
 - Like the streetcar concepts and wants to be as car-free as possible. Could board the streetcar at Davern Street.
 - Likes the modern streetcar option but the Route 54 is a good bus.
 - What is the difference between ABRT and the Route 54 bus?
 - General questions about project funding, federal, state and local sources.
 - Are the travel lanes for cars blocked off on Kellogg Boulevard by the entrance to RiverCentre? The map looks like cars would hit a dead end.
 - How do the Purple and Gold Line BRT projects connect to Riverview?
 - General discussion about streetcar layout, how a streetcar operates in mixed traffic and use of signal priority.
 9. One attendee liked option 2 because it minimizes impacts to business and parking which they believe is critical to the vitality of West 7th Street.
 - One person who preferred option 1 did so because he favors transit reliability; he's a regular transit user and wants a better transit experience.