

Light Rail Transit-Task Force
Proposed Nicollet Route
March 24, 2008 6:30-8:00pm
Whittier Alliance

Attendees: Alex Bauman-Facilitator, Brooks Mahoney, Mary Cable, Josie Shardlow-staff

Alex and Brooks both brought motions they had created to discuss. Objective of the task force: To clarify and revise the motion. This can include a preferred option from the neighborhood. Also, we need to set environmental impact issues to be considered.

Brooks' motion has three resolutions. The first two go together—We don't want it on Nicollet or a street parallel to it and we do want it on the Greenway stopping at Nicollet Ave. The final resolution is for it to continue East from Nicollet to connect to the Hiawatha Line. This route would save the County money by stopping at the Greenway, it wouldn't affect business and it would get more people to Nicollet. The train needs to do something positive for the neighborhood it's disturbing instead of moving people from far away to downtown. There would be minimal environmental impact with this route as well.

Alex's motion: The neighborhood is pretty much 50/50—residents versus businesses so he tried to bring both perspectives into the motion and represent the most frequently used arguments. Three in favor and three opposed. The motion moves the station from 28th St to 26th St. We want to see plans/representations of what it will look like—parking, holes in the ground, traffic re-direction, stations, etc. We can demand an underground connection from the Greenway so there's no trench until it emerges. We also want LRT to be compatible with re-opening Lake and Nicollet.

Alex tried to make his motion inclusive of a wide range of neighborhood views. Hennepin County arguably wants the train to go directly downtown and may not consider the Hiawatha option. Alex suggested the committees be allowed to vote on a preferred route. The only 4 that are feasible are ones that use existing bridges over 94. They all run on the Greenway and then turn onto Blaisdell, Nicollet, 1st or 3rd. Brooks' could be a 5th option for the Committees to consider. Can Brooks' 2nd and 3rd resolutions be combined because the County would see a stop at Nicollet as a separate option (4d)? The County's goal is to get people downtown without having to switch trains (or to a bus). There was an option 3d that went down Park Ave. It got voted down because the interlining at Hiawatha would cause train congestion. Transferring would decrease ridership enough to make it not cost effective.

The County has said that depending on where utilities are they could move it up to a block in either direction. During the scoping process any one can suggest another route and it would be up to the County to disprove that it's a feasible route.

There was concern as to whether LRT served Whittier residents. Rapid transit draws people within a half mile of the stations and three quarters of the neighborhood is within that radius. If you moved the station to 26th, even more people are within that range. The buses would stay on Nicollet Ave. The goal is to keep a through lane in both directions. It was argued that businesses have paid for Eat St redevelopment and NRP so we shouldn't disrupt them again as building it will be hugely disruptive. HCMC Family Medical Center said they're happy about potential transit, but they're building soon and without it necessarily in mind. Mary said there

would be a minimal amount of transit-oriented development because most of Nicollet is already developed and arguably would be developed regardless. Kennilworth is the logical choice, but if they're going to come this way, we need the best project possible.

Alex wants to present options to the Committees and include Brooks' route along the Greenway. The motion to deny passed at the Board, but they wanted more diversity of opinion in the neighborhood—this often happens when we have close votes to avoid NIMBY neighborhood positions. With only three residents at the meeting, the task force wasn't achieving that diversity of opinion.

The task force decided to send both motions (Alex's and Brooks') to the Board for discussion and creation of a single motion for the CI Committee to vote on.

Summary Submitted by: Josie Shardlow, staff