

MEETING MINUTES
MAIN STREET MULTI-MODAL ACCESS AND REVITALIZATION PROJECT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 5

DATE: February 08, 2006

TIME: 12:00 Noon

LOCATION: Buffalo Place Conference Room

ATTENDEES: See attached sign-in sheet

ATTACHMENTS: Meeting Sign In Sheet

An agenda was distributed to the Advisory Committee (AC) by the City of Buffalo. The following is a summary of key issues discussed:

Public Information Meeting feedback review

John Bidell provided the AC members with an update on the project and stated that the project was moving forward and that the project was well received during the first Public Information Meeting.

Debra Chernoff presented the feedback from the first public meeting for the project which approximately 100 people attended. Debra Chernoff provided the break up of the comments received during the public meeting and the concerns of the public regarding the project. At this time 26 comments have been received, 10 favor the project, 3 oppose the project, 5 persons suggested different alternates for the project, 3 emphasized safety concerns, one person stated to keep all the stations and 2 suggested to remove all stations. There were 2 people who commented on having provisions for bicyclists and 2 wanted loading areas that front Main Street. The majority of the comments were regarding landscape/trees, parking along Main Street and safety concerns.

Bill Jones stated that the project cost was an issue with people.

Rail design issues

Larry Jacobson presented the overview of the inspection of the existing track bed and rail conducted by a URS track and rail expert in December 2005 and their subsequent meeting with NFTA. The major issues discussed are as follows:

- Larry Jacobson described the configuration of existing embedded track bed comprising of girder groove rail and the gauge rods located 5 feet apart separating the two rails. The existing system is approximately 20 years old. A concrete base slab supports the existing system.

- Larry Jacobson stated that the existing base slab and the rail are in good condition, however the elastomeric pads are deteriorating. Walt Zmuda enquired about the longevity of the rails; Larry Jacobson stated that the rails could last for another 10-20 years since the rail wear is minimal.
- Larry Jacobson described the direct fixation method. The fixation is a clip arrangement holding down the rail in place. The tee section of rail is more common these days. He also explained that the boot system helps absorb the vibrations and stray currents.
- Flangeway is an important part of the rail, and is required for the train wheel. The groove created is therefore of concern especially for bike riders. Larry Jacobson stated that a material to fill the groove is not available to reduce the groove. Apart from the groove, the rail itself is slippery when wet and is a concern for bike riders.
- Sheila Lopez enquired if the groove was just an issue for bikes or it affected the cars also. Larry stated that the groove was a concern for bicycles only. Debra Chernoff enquired if a similar problem exists in other cities. Larry stated that similar conditions do exist but the other agencies that he has contacted prohibit bicycles on the track bed.
- John Bidell stated that there will be no dedicated bike lane on the track bed and if the AC decides to propose a dedicated lane for bicycles, it should be outside of the track bed.
- Larry Jacobson provided the option of fixating the rail as compared to using the gauge rods. In order to fixate the rails the approximate cost is \$660 per linear foot of the track bed with the boot. This does not include the trackbed pavement and the cost of the rail itself.
- Bill Jones enquired if the rail is replaced, would the new rail match the existing rail. Larry Jacobson stated that it would not since the existing rail is not being manufactured any more. Fixation of the rail could be done using the existing rail. The fixation would cost approximately \$ 3.6 million, provided the NFTA approves of the fixation.
The existing rail at this time is in good shape and does not need to be changed. In the event new rails are required a tee rail section would be recommended and would add an additional \$90 per linear foot to the project. The general consensus of the AC members was to fixate the existing rail.

Review of Station Lift Options

Peter Ringo provided an overview of accessibility at the stations. The existing is a raised platform for accessing the trains with a 3" offset (separation) between the platform and the train car. An option would be to provide more separation between the platform and the car, and provide a plate within the train car to provide safe access into the car. Case studies involving various other Light Rail Systems were presented and are discussed as follows:

- Peter Ringo stated that the curb-side lifts for train access has pretty much been discontinued. The Portland Light Rail system had lift systems for accessing the rail car in the mid 90's. One lift remains on this system and is being used as a temporary lift for street-car use. The lift system if required has to be operated by the car driver, who has to step out of the car and operate the lift system using a special key. This operation requires 8-minutes to load a passenger. Peter Ringo identified various problems with the lift enclosure such as the enclosure being used as place for sleeping overnight, being used as a rest room, etc. The lift system also has maintenance issues associated with it.
- Pete provided details of the Baltimore rail system using fixed platforms that are setback about 12 inches from the curb. Their cars are equipped with bridge plates to make up the gap difference. The train driver operates this plate manually when required. The door is operated only when being used by a handicap person or when a passenger requires assistance.

- Denver has a similar ramp and horizontal offset and Denver rail cars use a plate to provide the bridge between the platform and the rail car floor. Peter Ringo provided details of similar access issues at Dallas. He also stated that the key issues related to accessibility were headway, safety and maintenance.
- NFTA would study the retrofitting of the rail cars with bridge plates. The decision for the horizontal setback for the platforms would be addressed subsequent to the NFTA findings.
- Jeff Albert stated that incorporating a lift system within the station section would reduce the platform size by 2 to 3 feet. However, the maintenance issues and operating issues were significant.
- Walt Zmuda enquired if the option of a ramp from the station level to the train was considered. Pete stated that it has not been done, but the issues with such a system would again be the available space and maintenance in cold climates. John Bidell stated that the lift option is not a practical one and would not work due to various reasons.
- Bill Jones enquired if a lift similar to the ones in buses could be incorporated within the train. Peter Ringo stated that the NFTA would be looking into this option. Jim Nagle stated that to retrofit the rail cars with lifts would be cost prohibitive.
- The overall consensus of the AC was that the lift option would not be considered any further.
- Peter Ringo presented the design option of a three or a four car-boarding platform for the stations. Four-car configuration is used by NFTA during special events. Debra Chernoff explained that providing the four-car boarding would reduce the parking on Main Street. John Bidell stated that the three-car option would provide an additional 36-car parking along Main Street. Bill Jones stated that additional parking would be preferred on Main Street.
- Walt Zmuda stated that the dwell time for trains would increase by providing reduced boarding area. It was suggested that a mountable curb in that area should be designed to serve both for parking as well as boarding purposes. Details of this option will be presented to the AC at the next meeting.
- The issue of removing the Theater District Station was discussed and it was a general consensus that the elimination of Theater District Station should be a topic of conversation in the next meeting.

Trackbed Alternative Issues

Peter Ringo provided the track bed options. The following is a summary of the options discussed.

- Peter Ringo stated that one alternate would be to keep the existing catenary poles within the track bed and provide protection for the poles that act as fixed objects. The protection would be required for every pole and would occupy approximately 3 to 4 feet of the track bed area. This provision would reduce the travel lanes to 10 feet. In order to provide a wider travel lane the track bed widening will be required affectively moving the rails out about 15 inches.
- Walt Zmuda enquired the type of protection that will be used for the poles. Peter Ringo stated that the protection would be similar to the concrete barriers.
- The other alternative would be to remove the catenary poles outside of the track bed. The existing utilities occupy a majority of the section along Main Street and the only open area for relocating the catenary poles is adjacent to the existing light poles.
- The proposed new poles would support the catenary wires as well the street lighting system. A similar configuration is being used on the south side of the project along Scott Street and is functioning well.
- The light poles would be designed in such a manner that they provide street lighting and the required support for the catenary wires. Walt Zmuda enquired if the relocations of the poles

was discussed in the EA. Peter Ringo stated that the relocation of catenary poles at side streets only was discussed in the EA.

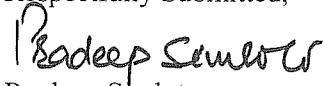
- Sheila Lopez enquired about the spacing of the poles; Peter Ringo stated that the poles would be located approximately 160 feet apart.
- Bill Jones stated that the pole height should be kept to a minimum and the existing poles be reused. Peter Ringo stated that the poles would be designed to support the wires and have a certain clearance from the ground in addition to provisions for street lighting. The AC members stated that this option should provide a clean look through the Main Street corridor.
- John DiDonato stated that the design team and NFTA would meet to discuss various design issues and operation issues related to the rail, track bed and stations.

Upcoming Meeting

- The next Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday March 8th at 12:00 Noon Buffalo Place.

These Meeting Minutes represent our understanding of the items discussed and/or agreed upon during this meeting. Any additions, corrections, or revisions by those present shall be directed (in writing) to the undersigned within (5) days of receipt of these Minutes or they will be considered accurate and complete.

Respectfully Submitted,



Pradeep Simlote
DiDonato Associates

cc: Attendees
Committee members not present