

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**MAIN STREET MULTI-MODAL AND REVITALIZATION PROJECT**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NO. 3**

**DATE:** December 14, 2005

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**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:

Peter Ringo provided a project status update on the following items:

**Scope Summary**

- The Draft Final Scope Summary was distributed to the AC prior to the meeting which incorporated comments received through Debra. The comment period will remain open for additions for a two more weeks before finalizing the document. The document will be modified to include traffic modeling of single and dual events.
  
- John Mecca stated that the wording should be revised to eliminate the presumption that a FONSI is forthcoming and that FTA is currently reviewing the EA.
  
- Keith Belanger stated that some items in the scope appear contradictory which makes it confusing. Peter Ringo explained that the scope covers all issues that will be considered and that the decisions will be worked out and clarified in the Design Report that will be developed subsequently.
  
- Walt Zmuda indicated that it would be helpful to have a Plot Plan or Drawing in conjunction with Draft Scope Summary. John Bidell stated that NYSDOT thought the report was detailed enough without a plot plan and this is being prepared in part for their approval. Also, it would be difficult to incorporate into one plan all the design issues, ideas, concerns into a plot plan and that design will be conveyed on plans that will be incorporated into the Design Report.

- HSBC security issue is still undefined at this point. A meeting will be held after the holidays with the design team and HSBC officials to discuss the various concerns. Bill Jones mentioned that with this issue lingering and the other projects at lower Main Street pending, starting at the upper end of Main Street makes the most sense.

### Survey Questionnaire

- Debra Chernoff distributed summary of the survey results.
- Summary of results and information collected include:
  - Survey was distributed to 145 properties, 98 first floor businesses. 33 large businesses (over 100 employees). 70 responses were received. 42 properties, 28 businesses.
  - 51 percent of property owners are interested in heated sidewalks, 19 percent currently have heated sidewalks that they like and 32 want heated sidewalks even knowing that they would have to be linked to their buildings and would be responsible for maintenance and heating costs.
  - 52 percent of properties have parking on site now (off street). 82% would like short-term meter parking.
  - 70% have employees who use free-fare zone during the day. More than 50% use metro rail to get to work. High percentage of visitors and patrons use Metro Rail.
  - Loading: 6 properties (13%) don't have door that isn't on Main Street (landlocked). Of the other properties that have doors other than on Main Street, 26% use Main Street for deliveries. Parking, loading and access will have to be addressed in the design
  - 28% use Main Street for sidewalk menu boards, advertising or outdoor cafés.
  - 76% found street presence to be very important to business/building.
  - Amenities important to respondents include planters, trees, hanging baskets, benches and 80% think green areas are important to attracting visitors. 90% feel seasonal decorations are important.
  - Respondents felt Fountain Plaza and Theatre District are currently successful parts of Main Street. M&T Plaza works for events and Seneca to Swan received favorable responses because of auto traffic. The size and scale of buildings for the 500 block was noted. Farmers Market and Thursday in the Square were listed as positive events.
  - Summary of detail information such as vaults will be used for the design.
- The project corridor is fairly well represented by the survey responses. John Bidell presented a board that shows the properties that have responded. Harold Matuszak would like to see more follow up on the section south of the I-190.
- Danielle Jacobs inquired as to what decisions would be made in regard to the heated sidewalk issue. John Bidell stated that the locations where heated sidewalks are preferred will have to be evaluated and the owners will have to be made aware of the issues related to the installation and maintenance. Bill Jones raised the concern over design cost for heated sidewalks. Mike Schmand raised the issue of ice buildup on adjacent non-heated walks. Consensus is to allow for heating of sidewalks but not make directly part of this project.

## **Traffic**

- Tom McPherson distributed the forecasting that will be used for input into the traffic model. The model is being developed for the current conditions and full build out that will utilize the forecasting of the vehicles, pedestrians and train schedules.
- John Bidell conveyed that by the next AC meeting the first pass of the 2-D model would be presented to convey the interaction with the vehicles and trains.
- Two-way traffic will extend to Goodell Street.

## **Stations**

- Jeff Albert presented an updated concept for the stations. The concept includes a fixed 10' x 15' platform with an integrated ramp surrounding the platform. Roof to be translucent. Station size approximately 2/3 the size of the smallest existing stations and considerably smaller than Auditorium and fountain Plaza stations.
- Panel equipment still under discussion. Looking for ways to reduce panel size and integrating into platform to remove from sight. Notion of transparency is still major concern.
- Steve Fitzmaurice inquired if projecting platform is still be considered and made reference to NYC subway system. A retractable loading area could be considered. The issue of safety of the projecting platform into traffic was raised. Harold Matuszak mentioned the lift options on the train is a consideration as well but has to be evaluated for impact on operations. John Bidell mentioned that a protective barrier would be installed to protect any projections from the platform.
- Bill Jones conveyed that reducing the station size only a third doesn't seem enough. Jeff Albert conveyed the need to cover the ramped portion. The proposed station is narrower as well. Harold Matuszak mentioned that the platform width could possibly be narrower as well. Transparency and size are key considerations. Jeff Albert conveyed that the protected area on the ground level includes the ramp, stairs ticketing and waiting area. Walt Zmuda conveyed that there should be some balance considered if the stations were too small, patrons would wait in buildings and doorways. Sheila Lopez asked how the station size related to the train cars and Jeff Albert conveyed that the stations are about 2/3 the length of a single car.
- Issue of center station (between rails) was raised. Issue was evaluated in the EA and eliminated due to cost associated with rail and catenary relocations and safety associated with passengers crossing rail and traffic. One center station would create backups into the intersections creating traffic problems.
- Traffic modeling will be used to evaluate station locations.
- The station look will be uniform throughout.

## **Public meeting presentation**

Kim Mathews walked through the presentation outline. The presentation will be a powerpoint presentation with voice overlay that will loop and be 4 to 5 minutes in length. The slides will include:

- Welcome slide with image developed by Design Team and use title "Cars on Main Street".
- Second slide overview of project and information about presentation materials. Image would be change to historic photo that reinforces the cars on Main Street concept.
- Third slide presents project goals.

- Fourth slide gives project objectives.
- Fifth slide gives a project history with a forward-looking overtone.
- Sixth slide conveys work limits with clear aerial with street names clearly identified.
- Seventh and eighth slides would identify project team members and roles.
- Ninth slide gives the project design schedule and milestones consisting of non-specific, ranges of dates since EA and other issues pending.
- Tenth slide to convey anticipated phasing.
- Eleventh slide to have a diagram of display area and comment card.
- Closing slide to direct people to the display areas.

Suggestion by Sheila Lopez is to keep wording from being too technical. John Bidell stated that design team would present from start to finish at next meeting and get feedback from AC to adjust presentation as necessary.

John Bidell conveyed that the goal of the public meeting is to create positive momentum for the project as well as make the public aware that we're moving forward with the design.

The survey questionnaire results will be incorporated into the presentation boards.

Steve Fitzmaurice suggested using the title "Cars sharing Main Street" to avoid alienating rail users.

### RAIL

Larry Jacobsen provided an update to the rail evaluation effort.

- URS track expert (35 years of transit and railroad experience) will be inspecting rail and trackbed and meeting with NFTA on Monday to determine conditions and needs. This will form basis for needs associated with track bed and rail.
- Options associated with rail will be evaluated including fixating, replacement or shifting.
- Catenary system is being evaluated to address where relocation of poles may be required.

Keith Belanger raised the question if the track bed is meeting the expectations than anticipated. Harold Matuszak stated that the vehicular traffic conditions are different now than they will be when traffic is reintroduced. Intersections are said to be constructed differently than the rest of the mall section. Drainage of track bed is currently a problem as well and needs to be addressed under the design.

The existing materials do not seem to be "wearing" the way they should, maintenance issues, especially on the track beds, is much more frequent than expected. New products and designs should be explored.

### OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED

Walt Zmuda questioned what the bottom line cost is for the project since the funding for this project is multi-year. Competing for FHWA funds is a concern. The scope and budget should be reflective of needs. Life cycle costs should be considered.

The HSBC and portal issues will be looked and discussed further in during the February meeting.

NFTA is in discussions with four separate car builders. Conversations have included the option of installing a handicap lift on the rail cars. Harold Matuszak discussed the concern on the potential impact on dwell times. NFTA will investigate with Rail Car builders options for flip out ramps and additional steps and provide input as to feasibility for this project.

Bill Johns raised the issue of maintaining the high curb for four car trains. Harold Matuszak stated that maintaining the high curb versus adding a step from the rail car would be looked at during the design. Reducing the curb length needed for boarding would help maximize parking and better accommodate maintenance efforts and bicyclists. The car rebuild will begin in the next few months.

Sheila Lopez raised the question of the need to present the project to the public until more design decisions have been made. John Bidell stated that the concept will be conveyed to the public that there will be cars on Main Street, survey results will be shared and additional feedback requested. The information meeting is not an FTA or FHWA requirement at this point as the public process is being addressed under the EA. John Mecca stated that it is hoped that comments will be received and responded to before the second public information meeting.

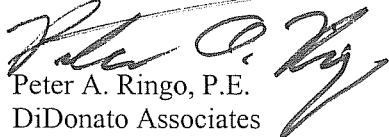
#### **Upcoming Meeting**

- The next Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on January 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon at Buffalo Place.
- The public information meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 1, 2006 between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. at the Market Arcade Film and Arts Center.

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.

cc: Attendees  
committee members not present

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Peter A. Ringo, P.E.  
DiDonato Associates