

-Meeting Summary-
North Nevada Transit Connectivity Study
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Kick-off Meeting
August 28, 2019

Attendees

Technical Advisory Committee Members:

Ryan Phipps, Colorado Springs Engineering
Jay Anderson, Colorado Springs Communications
Carl Schueler, City Comprehensive Planning
Page Saulsbury, City Comprehensive Planning
Chelsea Gaylord, City Economic Development
Bob Cope, City Economic Development

Tim Roberts, City Traffic Engineering
Elena Nunez, City Utilities
Joshua Pace, City Innovation and Sustainability
Victoria Chavez, El Paso County Transportation
Planning
Jariah Walker, Urban Renewal Authority

Project Team:

Brian Vitulli, Mountain Metro Transit Project
Manager
Craig Blewitt, Mountain Metro Transit

Rick Nau, Kimley-Horn Project Manager
Kyle McLaughlin, Kimley-Horn
Amy Garinger, Kimley-Horn

Key Takeaways and Action Items

- The study area will not have a hard limit at Garden of the Gods, as there are important destinations and services north of the intersection that would be worth connecting to, such as University Village.
- This study is looking at enhanced transit service for the North Nevada area, but it should be made clear that it is not replacing other transit services that Mountain Metro is currently providing or planning on providing throughout the City; instead, this study needs to consider how this project integrates and connects into the larger transit vision in the City and the region.
- There are discrepancies in growth projections between the PPACG model and the City Master Plan; this project will not alter the PPACG model but may consider having multiple scenarios using the different models (i.e. show different sensitivities) based on programming/funding needs.
- There are conflicting priorities among stakeholders in relation to the Project Goals and a recognition that some of the goals may sometimes be in conflict with one another. The goals will be revisited based on feedback and will be consolidated into 4 or 5 key goals (from the current 8).
- Like the goals, there are conflicting priorities and opinions from stakeholders related to the preferred type of transit mode that should be considered for the project area. Differing preferences largely stem from differences in goal priorities. These differing priorities will continue to be explored through subsequent outreach events to try and uncover most agreed-upon priorities, but it should also be explicit in the study that public preferences are one of multiple inputs that will impact decision making. Other inputs include technical processes that are critical and necessary parts of federal and other formal processes for making transit investments, and results from these will also be factors in the final outcomes of this project.
- Information from the TAC meeting will be provided on a project-specific webpage on the City website; the TAC will be notified when information is posted.

Meeting Notes

1. Study Overview

- Background of this study
 - This study comes on the heels of Renew N. Nevada Master Plan and Transportation Sub-Plan
 - USSC is currently doing a visioning exercise related to the N. Nevada corridor to understand how they would like to expand their campus
 - Most of the TAC for this project has been meeting throughout the sub-plan process
 - Goals – what type of mode, anticipated service levels, defining an alignment (especially between Filmore and Garden of the Gods)
 - This is Mountain Metro’s first alternatives analysis
- Planning Department – there are many studies that have recently been completed or are in process related to City transportation, and the goal of the planning department is to keep all of these in perspective and make sure they are cohesive
 - Each study provides a different piece of the vision for the City, but they are not all explicitly connected or cohesive, as each plan has a different purpose
 - Looking to be able to provide an annual update on activity on N. Nevada that is all encompassing of corridor
- Study area
 - Core study area is north of Filmore, but any transit services in this part of the City will have implications on areas south (Old North End) and should tie into services in Downtown
 - I-25 alternative arose out of end of the subplan process where there was interest from the Old North End to get transit off of residential streets and onto I-25
 - Suggest extending northern end of study area to include University Village
 - Update map to include multiple orange arrows at the top
 - Make sure to make connections to larger and more visionary context of transit in the region
 - Front range rail study (be mindful of big pictures and big connections – interregional space)
 - There is current study to look into and implement a Downtown Circulator within the next couple of years – how can that have an impact on this
- Previous plans and studies
 - Rail corridor right of way north of Filmore – BNSF is reevaluating if they want to sell it. City is very interested in buying it and has three different groups working with the railroad but railroad has not been responsive.
 - Need to make sure we are including *feasible* alternatives, and not every possible alternative
- Transit ridership
 - There is good service in the corridor right now (15-minute headways), but that has not attracted more riders.
 - May be indicating that potential riders are looking for something different – maybe something more upscale or with different types of amenities
- Corridor demographics – how to reconcile different growth forecasts between PPACG vs. City Master Plan
 - Master Plan growth projections were extrapolated from the plan’s build-out models
 - Used maximum development potential that could be expected and then used ITE trip generation factors to calculate trip potential
 - There are clear limitations to using the PPACG models, as they are intended for a much larger, multi-county region, and are not easily extrapolated for a small, specific area

- Federal transit funding applications will rely on the PPACG model, so we may look at opportunities to move Master Plan forecasts into regional forecast before asking for money
 - PPACG just updated their model, so it will be another 6 years before we can formally revisit those numbers
 - Need to put collective knowledge to get a more accurate thought – this group will need to do it
- Brian spoke with PPACG on this – ok with acknowledging PPACG model is regional and this study is a very focused area
 - We are not going to alter the PPACG model, but we may consider having two scenarios using the different numbers (changing sensitivities)

2. Draft Project Goals

- Priority goals identified by different TAC members:
 - Improves the visibility and perception of transit (comment that we have to hit this one out of the park)
 - Community perception ties into perception of efficiency; improving travel time reliability and customer experience
 - Transit has to be seen as convenient, effective, and reliable
 - Have apps available for real-time information on schedules/locations/etc.
 - Provides an improved, direct connection between Downtown and UCCS
 - Supports economic development
 - Tool to leverage for redevelopment
 - Nodes for business sector
- Suggested changes/updates to goals
 - ‘Supports’ neighborhood plans and contributes to safety, livability, etc.
 - Not always going to be consistent with them
 - This goal may often complete with other goals
 - The ‘manage congestion’ goal assumes that there is/will be congestion in the corridor (also, perception of congestion is very localized – congestion in CO Springs is very different than in Denver)
 - Transit itself will not help manage congestion – it is one piece of the larger solution; maybe talk about transit helping with parking issues in downtown
 - There is actually no congestion in the Old North End, which is the cornerstone of their safety study (want to reduce lanes because ADT is low)
 - We may need to re-consider the wording of this goal – Minimize the impacts of growth of traffic as opposed to focusing on what is out there today
 - Want to provide more mode choices than just automobile – *efficient* mode choice (this would be consistent with Comp Plan and Transportation Subplan)
 - N. Nevada is the best opportunity for City to introduce transit in a way that it is not seen as the last resort mode
 - Student housing – provide them a way to live without them owning a car
 - Not just focusing on our current population/group of riders; building a new generation of riders – start with them in school and they continue to expect it
 - Incorporated into corridor redevelopment efforts – instead, “help advance” redevelopment
 - North of Filmore – lots of opportunity to inform what roadway section looks like

- Including transit as part of the upfront costs rather than a retrofit will help make the corridor more efficient and keep future costs down (don't need to retrofit)
- Also find ways to lessen impact of redevelopment on neighborhoods
- Update "federal funding" goal
 - Cost and time to implement the solution is more important than a federal funding source; should be cost effective with sources of funding that are available
 - The project needs to be effective and nimble to adjust to best opportunities for implementation
 - First section of Denver light rail was locally funded – when they proved that it was successful, they then went for federal funding

3. Modal Alternatives (see attached sheet for summary of worksheet results)

- Key considerations for mode selection
 - Economic development - The more permanent modes (streetcar, light rail, BRT heavy) require higher capital investment but also indicate the City's commitment to the corridor and will likely spark more development to invest too
 - Transit does not generate TOD – need to have land use, permitting, zoning
 - Has to be a comprehensive investment
 - If the system is working, then redevelopment will more likely occur
 - Cost
 - Do not want to push the City too far in operational cost responsibly; should be cost effective
 - Should be appropriate for what could realistically be in the corridor
 - Need to be nimble so that we can adjust if needed as redevelopment occurs
 - Operational characteristics need to lead this discussion
 - Station spacing is important to make sure we are properly serving the area we are redeveloping – do not want stations too far apart so people feel it is too far to walk
 - Higher capacity, higher frequency system is a logical step for this corridor – supports the vision from the Master Plan
 - Could we consider different modes for different parts of the corridor? The operational characteristics of downtown, Old North End, and north of Filmore are all very different, and we need to recognize the unique attributes of each
 - Ex: service through Downtown will not be fast because of the way the streets are built out and the amount of traffic (pedestrian and vehicle), so it is probably not reasonable to try and come up with a service that is fast through downtown
 - Rider comfort
 - Current buses are not comfortable (potholes, quality of ride)
 - Connectivity
 - We need to be thinking what could be next in terms of connecting to additional corridors – may want to include this as part of the goals
 - This service will be in addition to existing, local services, and future services in planning (i.e. downtown circulator); it is not just this service or nothing
 - The goal may be to use this service to eventually get people to a much higher speed, longer system (such as an interregional rail system)
 - Opportunity to layer routes – maybe use the same stations

- The service has to be seen as clean, efficient, direct, and provide good connectivity; current service is not fast and direct, and we see it is not as well used as we would like
- Need to consider connections with and implications of uber and scooters/e-bike and if those impact ridership
 - Uber – Should try to partner with them for last mile connections
 - Provide joint information to create a complete trip (RTD mobile app has information about uber or bike share imbedded in it)
- “Cool factor”
 - Invest in something that would spur interest from students to use it – we would not even have to market it
 - Sustainability/environment characteristics and technology that might attract a younger population (electric, zero carbon, etc.)
 - Adding technology to the current system
 - Opportunity to be bold and plan for future – have to elevate the City as a connected, accessible community
- Ultimately, we will have a phased implementation plan – could be by geographic area and/or by mode
 - Reserve right of way and use it for bus today and convert to streetcar in the future

4. Next Steps

- Next TAC meeting – likely to be scheduled in late October 2019
 - Will begin to discuss alignment alternatives
- Let TAC know (email) when meetings are, or when things are posted on the site

Mode	Interest Level (# of responses) 5=Very interested					Reason for Level of Interest (# of responses)							
	1	2	3	4	5	Peak Frequency	Running-way	System Length	Capital Cost	Passenger Amenities	Influence on Development	Station Spacing	Daily Boardings
Local Bus	2	3	1		1	1		1	3			1	2
Enhanced Bus	1	1		2	3	3			3	1	1	3	3
BRT Light	1			3	4	3	1	1	3	4	2	3	3
BRT Heavy	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	1
Streetcar	3			3	2	3		1		3	4	3	2
LRT	3	1	2		2	1	1	2		2	3		

Mode	Notes – Relationship to Goal Priorities
Local Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for current boarding's; • Cost effective/nimble/station spacing; • There is opportunity for enhanced services. Current level is good, but more could equal higher ridership and experience; • Immediately implementable
Enhanced Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for current boardings; • Cost effective/nimble/station spacing; • Best bang for buck; • Potential to introduce new riders;
BRT Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting point for long-term regional, high capacity/frequency transit; • Appropriate for current boardings; • Cost effective/nimble/station spacing; • Improves transit time; • Best bang for buck; • Potential to introduce new riders
BRT Heavy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting point for long-term regional, high capacity/frequency transit; • Improves transit time; • Runningway can be implemented in only some portions of the overall corridor
Streetcar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need something new and exciting to attract new riders and get people out of cars; • Younger people want these types of options so if we want to bring more people to the City, we need to provide them; • Supports economic opportunity and shows long-term commitment; • Good for a few corridors; • An investment with higher potential for economic development drives redevelopment potentials and higher interest from riders; • Too much of a financial upfront commitment without established ridership

Mode	Notes – Relationship to Goal Priorities
LRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would create connectivity throughout COS - perhaps to airport; concern that it is more than COS may need; • Support economic opportunity and long-term commitment; • Good for higher people moving capacity; • A long-range potential, helping decrease congestion and commuting; • May be a very long-term option, but BRT service can produce similar service for corridor length

