



Approved Minutes
Citizens League Transit Study Committee
Thursday October 27th 7:30am-9:30am
St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church
3450 Irving Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Committee Members Present: Chair Peter Bell, Mr. Abou Amara, Mr. Michael Beard, Mr. Bill Blazar, Mr. Patrick Born, Mr. James Erkel, Mr. Ethan Fawley, Ms. Mary Giuliani Stephens, Ms. Elizabeth Glidden, Ms. Mary Liz Holberg, Mr. Scott McBride, Mr. Jim McDonough, Mr. Peter McLaughlin, Mr. Andrew Richter, Ms. Nancy Tyra-Lukens, Mr. Vayong Moua, and Ms. Patty Thorsen

Members not present: Mr. William Schreiber and Ms. Kenya McKnight Ahad.

Staff & staff support present: Pahoua Hoffman, Consultant Katie Hatt, and Policy Fellow Matt Byrne.

Citizens League members: Bright Dornblaser, Bill Dooley, Bob Carney, Peter Wagenius, and Matt Burress.

Proposed outcomes for this meeting

- State study committee charge and proposed goals.
- Approve minutes from previous meeting.
- Hear from presenter on spatial & skills mismatch of unemployment and job vacancies
- Review draft matrix chart of funding scenarios
- Agree on next steps

Minutes

Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 7:33am.

Welcome

Chair Bell reminded the committee of the charge.

- *Understand the current transit capital and operating funding systems.*
- *Review and consider different funding and governance models, including current models.*
- *Make recommendations based on these findings and conclusions.*

Chair Bell commented on the previous meeting's takeaways. He then mentioned that the committee would see an updated list of funding scenarios later in the meeting.

Chair Bell moved to approve minutes and asked for discussion. The minutes were moved by Jim Erkel and seconded by Pat Born. A motion to approve the minutes passed by a unanimous vote. No changes were made.

Vice Chair Lenczewski reviewed the meeting's proposed outcomes (above).

Chair Bell welcomed speaker Dr. Yingling Fan. He explained that she would be discussing how transit matches workforce needs in the region.

Presentation on Spatial & Skills Mismatch of Unemployment and Job Vacancies

[see attached Power Point, Attachment A]

Dr. Fan explained that she studied the combination of both the spatial and skills mismatches to identify opportunities for transit integration. Her research looked at where job vacancies are, housing availability, and the geography of the unemployed in the Twin Cities.

She noted that the Twin Cities area now has one job vacancy for every unemployed worker.

Dr. Fan showed slide 3 which illustrates seven key sectors for job placement: Health Care and Social Assistance; Manufacturing; Retail Trade; Educational Services; Accommodation and Food Services; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Financial and Insurance. In addition, slide 3 illustrates the percentage of the working population who are employed in each sector.

Chair Bell asked if the data was exclusively from the private sector or if it includes public sector jobs. Dr. Fan replied that it included both private and public sectors.

Dr. Fan showed slide 5, which sorted sectors by high/low turnover rate, and the degree to which the demand is met. She highlighted that manufacturing, finance and insurance, and healthcare sectors all have low turnover and large unmet demand.

Dr. Fan used slide 6 to show job vacancies by education requirements. She showed slide 7 to break down the seven sectors by education requirements. Dr. Fan noted that manufacturing, finance and insurance, and healthcare sectors have high education requirements alongside their previously noted low turnout and high unmet demand.

Dr. Fan showed slide 8, which illustrates a map of the Twin Cities with concentration of job vacancies and unemployment in the context of planned transit corridors.

Chair Bell asked if there is a breakdown of types of jobs in the southwest area on slide 8. Dr. Fan replied that she does have this on future slides.

Dr. Fan briefly discussed the Metropolitan Council report: Choice, Place and Opportunity: An Equity Assessment of the Twin Cities Region. She showed slide 9, which illustrates a map demonstrating Areas of Concentrated Poverty (ACP) from 1990, 2000, and from 2007-2011 showing the transit impact on minority populations in the Twin Cities.

Dr. Fan showed slide 10, which illustrates education, employment, income, ownership rates of white and people of color in Minnesota. Next, she showed slide 11, which displays the increased share of people of color in the region. Dr. Fan noted that the African American male unemployment rate in North Minneapolis is 52%; the North Minneapolis unemployment rate is 22.3%; and the Twin Cities regional unemployment rate is 3.8%.

A committee member asked if it was true that at current labor participation levels, the employment gaps in North Minneapolis must be closed to meet workforce needs. Dr. Fan replied that that was correct.

Dr. Fan discussed the impact of transit corridors on the spatial and skills mismatch.

Dr. Fan showed slides 13 and 14, which display the unemployment rate, job vacancies, and current transit routes in the Twin Cities. Slide 15 showed the addition of planned transit corridors. Dr. Fan commented that planned transit corridors, especially the Blue and Green Line Extensions, appear to make important connections.

Chair Bell asked if there has been work done showing maps including frequent bus service to areas of high unemployment. He added that he suspects the map would look quite different. Dr. Fan responded that high frequency bus service is concentrated in urban areas, and they do not reach far or wide into

suburban areas. She added that a lot of the lines are bus rapid transit lines (BRT). A committee member commented that busway issues are important. They recalled that there was work done to show how many jobs are available if it takes less than an hour to get there. For areas of concentrated poverty, many routes take too many transfers to get in under an hour. With some transit investment, it may be done in one ride. A committee member asked if it is important for the route to be a light rail or is the key to have a dedicated route separate from traffic. The member added that they suspect it is mostly about having a dedicated route. A committee member agreed that dedication matters more than mode. Chair noted that for future meetings the committee will hear from Metro Transit and do a deep dive of where transit riders are. A committee member responded to previous question noting that what is most important is that the mode carries high traffic. The member added that better bus service is necessary for light rail to be successful. Another committee member emphasized that light rail is high capacity and that in Houston they changed from a spoke to a grid system and it is working for them, but when Minnesota tried it, it was not as successful.

A committee member commented that there is a movement from jobs to transit corridors when investment is made, and developers have confidence about the longevity of the corridor. Light rail tends to give that confidence more than bus service. A committee member responded that employers or developers do not care about mode as long as confidence that there is a dedicated station. A committee member asked to see where job growth has taken place on transit corridors. They asked what decisions have been made by businesses to create jobs based on those corridors.

A committee member commented that we should develop confidence that existing and future employees are worth investment.

Dr. Fan noted that there is a recently published report on job growth comparing dedicated bus ways with Light Rail Transit (LRT). Looking at peer regions, LRT job creation is larger than bus rapid transit (BRT). A committee member asked about slide 15 not showing suburban transit providers. Dr. Fan responded that it was a fair question. Dr. Fan said that Houston has a short light rail system, but their express system functions as BRT, whereas express buses here tend to be morning or evening, not all day.

Dr. Fan showed slide 16 displaying current accessibility of job vacancies within 45 minutes of transit travel. She pointed out North Minneapolis suffers from particularly low accessibility. Slide 17 showed current vs future job vacancies with planned transit routes. Dr. Fan emphasized you can barely see the difference because there is a limited region-wide effect. Slide 18 showed accessibility to jobs within 45 minutes of transit travel changes. Dr. Fan noted a large local benefit to the changes, in particular due to the blue and green line extensions.

Dr. Fan then presented case studies from seven areas in the Twin Cities showing weighted average accessibility changes by area from the current to proposed system.

A committee member asked if the future accessibility listed includes changes to arterial bus services. Dr. Fan responded that it includes both rail and bus; however it does not include regular bus services.

A committee member commented that when the Blue Line and the Green Line became operational, Met Council took apart and put back together bus service to supplement the lines which ultimately improved services. A committee member reiterated this point noting that in South Minneapolis over 75 percent of riders reported faster service. The member added that it would be impossible to predict but important to keep in mind. A committee member said that it is important to think about building out arterials. They added that the Met Council does not have the resources currently to do that, and building out the rest of the service needs more money.

Chair Bell asked if there was a region in the country that integrates bus service with Uber. Dr. Fan responded that Seattle has implemented a similar practice on certain corridors. A committee member added that there are a few looking at connecting Uber to stations. Vice Chair Lenczewski mentioned

using Uber and discussed the benefits of ridesharing. She added Uber is now hurting the metro system because they are underpricing regular transit.

A committee member commented that some of the last mile connections do not even have sidewalks and we need to think about not just how we provide transit, but making sure we provide the sidewalks to make those connections. Chair Bell responded that we will bring that question back for Metro Transit.

A committee member commented that Lakeville is adapting van pool partnerships with Met Council. Vice Chair Lenczewski added that many hotels have their own transit systems.

Dr. Fan showed slides 20 and 21, which illustrated the number of job vacancies accessible within 45 minutes of transit travel against a variety of maps including: the full transit buildout, a map without Green Line and Blue Line extensions, no future Arterial Bus Rapid Transit (ABRT), and no east metro transitways.

Dr. Fan then showed slide 23, which displayed job vacancies for the seven sectors in the Twin Cities region by region, and slide 24 showing top industries with job vacancies by city, and finally slide 25 showing top industries with job vacancies by neighborhood.

Dr. Fan emphasized that residential segregation and geographic disparities are part of the problem that leads to spatial mismatch. They also point to the particular importance of spatially targeted and localized strategies for eliminating disparities.

A committee member asked when the data for the industries with job vacancies by neighborhood was collected from. Dr. Fan responded that it is from 2014.

Dr. Fan showed slide 28 displaying top occupations by industry – emphasizing a high vacancy rate in retail sales.

Dr. Fan discussed case studies done on Brooklyn Park, Shakopee, Golden Triangle/Gateway, Mall of America, the Phillips neighborhood, and North Minneapolis. The case studies were semi-structured, with questions tailored to subjects from workforce and economic development, transit planners, government, transit agencies, and private/non-profit sectors. The cases were sorted into a matrix of job availability, housing availability, and transit services from poor, poor with planned improvements, and good transit services.

A committee member commented that the transit service rating does not include stops. For example, when discussing North Minneapolis – you may get the idea that there are many routes, but due to the number of stops, it is actually receives poor transit services. There is a distinction between having a route vs the efficacy of the route. Dr. Fan responded that North Minneapolis is in the “poor now but planned improvements”. Chair Bell clarified that when it says poor planned improvements, poor is referring to the current state of the transit service.

A committee member commented that MnDOT is in the middle of a combined [MnPass](#)/transitway study in the region and is looking at the potential for MnPass lane in Shakopee and evaluating routes which would connect.

A committee member asked for the definition of soft skill. Dr. Fan responded that anything other than certificates or degrees would count as a soft skill, for example, showing up on time.

Dr. Fan discussed the transit planning and workforce development findings for each of the selected case studies. She noted that overall there is stronger coordination desired and needed, especially to connect urban workers to suburban jobs. She emphasized that handing out bus cards is not enough, and that non-transportation barriers, work schedules, soft skills, and job training programs targeting specific sectors must be considered. She also mentioned that the first mile-last mile issue is a key problem and opportunity for better coordination.

A committee member mentioned that when the Blue Line opened, the reverse commute improvement was not taken into consideration in the predictions.

Dr. Fan finally discussed the most important practices based on the presentation:

- Target specific communities and focus on sweet spot jobs that are transit accessible
- Look at the entire pipeline: Job seekers' skills and interests, available training, jobs reachable by transit, and interested employers
- Reach out to employers who might partner, such as suburban companies struggling to hire and keep staff
- Provide frequent, rapid, regional services as the transit backbone, plus small-vehicle local services near worksites
- Pursue transit-oriented economic development to direct long-term job growth to transit-friendly areas
- Understand the existing skills assets in disadvantaged areas: geo-spatial data on skills and community strengths

A committee member asked what spatially targeted strategies mean. They also asked if Dr. Fan has looked at the cost/benefits of eliminating disparities. Dr. Fan responded that she has not done cost benefit analysis. She said one could argue that a job created in transit rich areas have more social benefits associated in terms of equity and justice issues. A committee member asked if the issue is we don't have the information. They also asked if there is a method for breaking down the cost relative to the skills. Dr. Fan responded that this is a good direction for future research.

A committee member commented that the practice of pursuing transit oriented economic developments is changed by the investments made. Chair Bell asked if there is a lower cost way of getting that same development in that corridor. A committee member responded that even if you assume it creates no new development in the region, accessibility to lower income people and reducing the number of trips on highways has benefits that deserve consideration. In response to the cost question, the member added that there are public sector costs. For example, the call centers got cheap land but could not fill the jobs because there was no transit, and then they ask for public investment. The question is, do we go where we have already invested or do we try to meet the needs of investments. The member emphasized there is a balance.

A committee member commented that transit is not only about getting people to work, it is about making connections to and from destinations. It is how we think about roads, and it is how we should think about transit. For example, there is an important need to make sure education institutions have a strong transit connection.

A committee member noted that transit is needed more throughout the day. Higher paying jobs require employers to be able to leave during the day. The member thought we should take into account the benefits of extra taxes received due to better jobs being accessible.

Dr. Fan to responded to a comment on new development and emphasized that having a regional mindset is important. It is not Shakopee competing with Woodbury, it is Twin Cities competing with Denver. The development comes to the region not to the city.

Chair Bell thanked Dr. Fan for her presentation.

Presentation of Draft Funding Scenarios

Chair Bell said the next order of business included mapping out the rest of the time in the committee. He recalled presenting transit funding options a few weeks ago. Chair Bell explained that the goal was to fill in more of the description of the funding scenarios.

Chair Bell explained that we will ask members to volunteer to talk about one or two of the scenarios that they particularly support. The committee will have five to seven minute presentations. The committee will take two or three sessions to do that. The presentations will be in the report. After the presentations the committee will participate in a rank choice vote. Chair Bell said that he is thinking about giving everyone 10 votes and members would have to divide the votes somehow. A member could take six votes into one area, and split two and two to others. The point is to try and measure intensity. Members would have to vote for at least three options. The committee would group the scenarios into tiers: top, middle, and bottom. The report and any testimonies and op eds would reflect the constellation of these options. These presentations would come in the middle or end of November. Staff will be sending an outline of at least the table of contents of the report anticipating having work done by mid to late December.

Chair Bell commented that the next meetings will include the Chair of Met Council. The committee is asking for his principles for how transit funding ought to be decided. Chair Bell asked for questions or comments.

A committee member noted that they cannot participate on Dec 22nd. The member asked when the date closes for additions to the list. They also asked if the committee will know the results of election to consider political viability. Chair Bell responded that he is trying for Dec 15th and that he wants to use the online tool, Survey Monkey, for voting. Chair Bell admitted that the question of political viability is difficult but that he wants the list to be inclusive for peoples vote. However, he noted, there is not time for five minute presentations on too many items. The items are going to be based on “does this have a shot”, which is a judgment call. The committee will make a stab, but will be permissive about adding more.

A committee member asked if there will be guiding principles or if it is a free-for-all. They also asked if the committee will decide on principles. Staff responded that the last committee found it useful to agree on principles. Even if there are disagreements, as much commonality about findings and conclusions as possible is useful.

A committee member commented that the committee could try initial voting early on to allow for second vote informed by what was learned. Chair Bell responded that it might work if the committee quickly got additions, then did an initial cut via vote, and take a half hour in one of the presentations, to take the temperature to see if principles come out of the vote.

A committee member noted that the committee has not talked about governance questions. Another committee member agreed with previous comments and asked if the committee is considering the big ideas if this repeats previous ideas. They also asked whether proposals can be grouped thematically or whether individual ideas need full consideration. Interested in principles idea but concerned about divisions.

A committee member commented that the committee needs to avoid how it will be received and focus on the facts that have been presented and should treat the process and final report accordingly.

A committee member suggested that as presentations are made on proposals the committee should ask the presenters for what principles they are using.

A committee member asked if the committee is talking about revamping the whole governance structure. They noted that that seems like a much larger question. Chair Bell responded that the committee may not have time to focus on governance issues – but one of the recommendations may be for a phase two that would focus on governance. The Citizens League just did a report on Met Council governance but there are governance issues with the rest of the system as well.

A committee member commented that there are almost two different questions, one being whether or not there should be additional funding and another being how should it be structured. The member said that the committee should start by considering whether we need more or less funding before consider how to

fund. The committee member added that a lot of options relate to sales tax but there are a lot more ways to divide this.

A committee member emphasized that having a vision is important, and the committee could spend a lot of time on that question. The member thought it is important to explain why a member is choosing the option they are. The member anticipates that the committee might not get unified opinion but would get a sense about what is important to people.

Chair Bell clarified that there was broad agreement with the path laid out subject to how the list is structured. There were no further comments or questions.

Vice Chair Lenczewski asked for evaluation.

Evaluation: 4, 4, 4.5, 4.5, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4.5, 4, 4.5, 4.5, 4.5, 4.5, 3, 4, 4, 3.5, and 3 for an average score of 3.82.