



**Benning Road Streetcar Extension Feasibility Study  
Transcribed Comments from Public Meeting #2**

**Location:**

Department of Employment Services, 4058 Minnesota Avenue NE  
Tuesday, November 27, 2012

**Meeting Time:** 6:00pm-8:00pm

**Total Number of Participants:** 47 participants

**Meeting Agenda:**

6:00pm	Open House
6:30pm	Presentation
7:00pm	Break-out Group Discussions
7:30pm	Break-out Summary & Meeting Wrap-up

**Welcome – Circe Torruellas, DDOT**

**Study Overview –Selman Altun, AECOM**

*Q: The way you all presented the options, it looks like we have to choose from either Minnesota Avenue or Benning Road Metro Stops, is that the case?*

*A (Circe): Right now it is either/or. That doesn't mean another alternative could not be pursued later down the road through an environmental review process.*

*Q: Will your study report make a final recommendation? Who will ultimately make the decision between the two?*

*A: No. The report will take into consideration the pros and cons of both options and based on all of your feedback and, a combination of studies, including traffic analysis, bridge analysis, ridership forecast, etc., these considerations will then move forward to further study through an environmental document. The environmental document will provide the final recommendation. If this project becomes federalized, meaning federal dollars might be used for a portion of the*

*project, we will work with partners such as FHWA and FTA following the NEPA process. That process will result in a preferred alternative and a final decision document being produced.*

Q (Committee of 100 Chair): *On the H/Benning line, you all still allow for parking with bump-out station platforms, why couldn't the same be done on this end?*

A (Selman): *For sections of this area one could, but not for others. For one, the roads are much narrower over here. That is the goal of our table discussions to have you review several series of options and give us your input.*

### **Break-out Group Discussions**

At the conclusion of the study overview presentation by Selman Altun, the public was organized into five groups to further discuss the various alignments and stop location options. The discussions at each table were centered on specific areas of interest that the project team was interested in additional feedback from community members. These specific areas of interest include: parking impacts, traffic “hot spots”, pedestrian safety, termini connections and connection/availability to current and future transit services in the neighborhood. At each of the five break-out groups, table maps were provided to help the group facilitators lead the discussion on the various series of options. The transcribed notes and key points made from each of the discussion break-out groups are found below:

#### **Breakout Session, Table 1:**

- How does the Minnesota Avenue Great Streets project plays into all of this? Pleased to see pedestrian friendly options being included in the concept designs.  
Good idea to extend to Benning Road Metro, leaving the possibility for East Capitol connection.
- Majority of parking on sections of Benning Rd and East Capitol is residential.
- Traffic on the Minnesota Avenue extension –
  - Peak scheduling would have to be considered to mitigate the rush hour congestion
  - People will have to adjust to streetcar operations
- Does the study preclude other extensions?
- Recommend maintaining BOTH extensions, not either/or
- Consider using the CSX lines – being decommissioned and would cut construction costs
- Benning Road Metro Terminus
  - Central Ave less congested for tail track
  - WMATA-owned storage yard across from the Shrimp Boat
  - Loop idea – E. Capitol St median, then north near 46<sup>th</sup> St, west on Central Ave back to Benning Rd
- Consider an extension to Deanwood Metro
  - Far less congested than this area.
  - More development opportunities for that area, which has space to grow.
  - Increase revenue from MD commuters in the neighborhood (DC), since it borders Prince George’s County.

- Friendship School – evening and Saturday activity on Minnesota Ave – pick-ups and drop-offs will be impacted by streetcar
- Median alignment seems better – allows for dedicated right of way.
- Streetcar Signals – use bars of white light similar to Baltimore
- On-Street parking – note some is used by police station at Benning and 42nd St

**Breakout Session, Table 2:**

- Structural concerns with the bridge – length of reconstruction process
- Construction impacts to residences nearby
- Timing of Pepco burying wires vs. adding more for streetcar – visual clutter already a concern
- How will future construction be phased?
- Kingman Island Stop: Both options seem fine
- 34<sup>th</sup> Street Stop: loss of parking with the B3 option needs to be explored – especially with regard to residential parking (currently no restrictions).
- Minnesota Ave/Benning Rd (C Series):
  - C2 seems to be against traffic calming measures and pedestrian safety plans.
  - Buses already pile up at this intersection and impede traffic flow. Will stops on the bridge (C3) back up traffic on the bridge?
  - Is C2 a better option because it allows the streetcar to turn onto Minnesota Ave first?
  - C3 better for pedestrians because they don't have to cross traffic lanes.
  - Maintains business focus with whatever C option is chosen.
- Minnesota Ave Metro: Be sure to combine reconstruction projects to lessen impacts to residents
- Three main points of table:
  - Loss of parking in residential areas (E & F) and trickle down issues into the residential neighborhoods.
  - Single-lane traffic is a no-go on Benning where a median stop will take a lane of traffic.
  - Prioritize pedestrian safety and business access with all options.

**Breakout Session, Table 3:**

- Section A
  - Why not build up for pedestrian safety (pedestrian crossing, dedicated travel lane for streetcar)
- Section B
  - Issue with room for parking and sidewalk
- Section C
  - Accessing Stops
  - Curbside access better for pedestrians
- Section D
  - Curb to Kiss and Ride

#### **Breakout Session, Table 4:**

- Concern about additional construction impacts on Benning Road (and Minnesota) and East Capitol St.
  - Could there be other community benefits (FIOS) if streets are reconstructed?
- Concern about bike accommodations at stations and trackways
- Would like ANC/Civic Association Presentations
- Curbside parking not an issue on Benning- even less in future with streetcar
- Concerned about having to cross Benning Road to access center platforms
- At 34<sup>th</sup> Street Stop should enhance access to existing strip mall (in front) – in median best
- Want plan to include quality street trees
- Prefer G options that stay off of East Capitol Street. Best stop is behind Benning Metro.
- Can headway be less than 10 minutes?

#### **Breakout Session, Table 5:**

- Curbside stops work better with Minnesota Ave Terminus
- Kiss and Ride drop off could be relocated
- Minnesota Ave congestion
  - Metrobus Traffic
  - Commercial Traffic
- Bad Idea with stop in front of school (D2)
  - Kids drop off
  - Buses turning
  - Alternate option – stop beyond the school
- C3
  - Safer to allow/facilitate pedestrian access
  - Residential parking
  - Most traffic is from Maryland or other areas
    - How can we get them to choose another way thru the area?
- C2
  - Bus stop impacts
    - Carry out/24 Hour Shop (may be redeveloped)
- Option C – get off Benning Road Bridge
- How will handicapped residents access the streetcar stations?
- Residential parking both sides of Benning Road
- Police Station is being relocated; opportunity for development/parking
- Can streetcar loop around for option G2?
- City property at East Capitol Street availability is an advantage (G1)
- Bad stop location (E3)
- E2 is a good location

- Historic site (old movie theatre south of Benning Rd/Minnesota Ave)
- F2 is good, minimizes conflicts
- Extend alignment to East Capitol Street near St. Luke Church – Central Avenue
- Parking for disabled residents near station stops
- Don't duplicate Metro line alignment
- Why tear up Benning Road again to accommodate streetcar?
- Could the kiss and ride at Minnesota Ave Station be moved up?
- D2 is not a good idea
  - Wheelchair access is required
  - Conflicts with buses
  - 80' turning radius
- What would make the times quicker
- What times will they run at 10 minute headway?
- How many new streetcars are required?
  - 4 for Minnesota Ave option
  - 5 for Benning Road option
- How many people?
  - Capacity is 130 persons/car
- Why is the Minnesota Avenue Option being considered also?
- Why is 2040 the horizon year?
- Curbside alignment/stop location is better option
- Maryland traffic needs to stay away from neighborhood streets
- Lots of residential parking on Benning Road to consider

**Debriefing following Summary given by Facilitators:**

Q (Janis Hazel, President of Central Northeast Civic Association): *The issue is not just living through four more years of having our roads torn up, but what is the net benefit for residents? Could additional "telco" lines or Fios be installed when the streets are dug up again?*

A: *These are considerations and recommendation we want to hear from the community and there is an opportunity here to have this conversation about the overall benefits in the future including the possibility to work with the utilities.*

Q: *Can we get a before and after detailed analysis of the traffic study you mentioned, so we know what the real impacts are?*

A: *The Final Report that will include this information will be completed in December 2012 and posted on the DC Streetcar Website.*

### Comments after meeting:

Janis Hazel: *What is the communications plan to reach this demographic over here? Tweeting, Facebooking and emailing won't work exclusively, there needs to be more hands-on outreach. It's good to have traffic studies and development projections (Council of Governments report), but surveys and studies need to be conducted to weigh the impact on consumers. Why not poll PG or MD residents to determine how their transportation planning would change as a result of streetcar? There is a restaurant and entrainment desert in Capitol Heights, District Heights, and Largo. How can we capture those people and bring them into the H/Benning Corridor? Right now when they want to go somewhere, they're going to western portion of downtown, VA, and other parts of MD.*

### Comment Sheets received at meeting:

1. One should arrange overhead contact wire in such a way that it might accommodate both pantographs and trolley poles. Streetcar switches should function in such a way that they should not require that a streetcar operator should leave or reach out of his/her streetcar.
2. DC Streetcars should have large windows that one can open and close.
3. I am in the preproduction stages of a documentary film on DC Streetcars – Then and Now. I would love to be kept up to date on Streetcar events.
4. Residential effect of streetcar along the Benning Road area where construction has already taken place. Traffic and pollution concerns. Property Stability for residents already living in areas where stability is a concern along Benning Rd/Minnesota Ave and East Capitol.
5. Extending the “One City line to Minnesota Ave Metro Station is a far better option than extending it to the Benning Road Metro Station because:
  - o Shorter distance would improve service along entire line with shorter waits with fixed number of streetcars operating.
  - o With the massive development planned and under construction in Parkside neighborhood – City Interests Planned Unit Development, MetroTowns, etc. – ridership at Minnesota Ave is vastly underestimated as are future ridership needs.
  - o Fort Mahan Park severely limits development potential adjacent to a streetcar line to Benning Road Metro Station.
  - o Shorter distance reduces both capital and operating costs.
6. Very clear and concise presentation. I'd like to see this happen as speedily as possible, would like to see streetcars serve both Minnesota Ave and Benning Road Stations, and would prefer curbside running.
7. Capitol Traction and Electric suggests roadway-center alignment with side loading platforms. This would allow dedication of right-of-way.
8. Capitol Traction and Electric suggests that DDOT configure Benning Road's viaduct bridge to allow CT&E's Route 10 (more information available elsewhere) to service Deanwood. Please refer Capitol Traction and Electric's streetcar proposal.
9. Consider Deanwood Metro.

10. Streetcar signals should consist of bar of white light where streetcars should move differently than surrounding traffic. Whilst a vertical bar will indicate that a streetcar may proceed straight, a horizontal bar of white light will serve as a streetcar stop signal.
11. DC needs to prioritize transit over cars, take car lanes, parking for dedicated transit lanes. Transit must be fast!
12. Need streetcar to extend to Capitol Heights Station!! Benning Road Extension is a must have!
13. Could Streetcar extend to Capitol Heights?
14. Include SmarTrip card to be used for streetcars without double or additional costs.
15. Will there be quality bicycle parking near the streetcar platforms? Will there be on-street bicycle accommodations? Will there be quality landscape design and large street trees planted along the corridor?
16. The streetcar is only useful if a trip takes less time than it would in a car. Therefore, the rails should be separated from cars (no mixed traffic). For pedestrian safety, as many stops on the curb as possible is better.
17. Highly recommend option to extend to Benning Road and not Minnesota Ave. The ridership increase cannot be ignored and would provide a greater return on investment.