TOPIC: Woodward Avenue BRT Locally Preferred Alternative
DATE ADOPTED: November 17, 2014, by a 24-0 vote of the Citizens Advisory Committee

Issue Presented

The Woodward Avenue Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Study has advanced to the point of selecting a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Woodward Avenue Corridor. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) considered factors related to the alignments presented in the LPA report in order to endorse an alignment in Detroit’s core consistent with the CAC adopted vision and values for regional transit.

Recommendation

The CAC strongly supports a Mainline / All-Woodward alignment between Grand Boulevard and Grand Circus Park, running in a dedicated facility. This alignment should be represented as an option in addition to alignment options #1 through #4 of the LPA document submitted to SEMCOG. The CAC strongly requests evaluation of this alignment alternative in the upcoming Environmental Assessment.

The CAC submits the following conclusions for consideration:

- Woodward Avenue, at a roughly 90-foot right-of-way between Grand Boulevard and Grand Circus Park, has enough space for M1, BRT, local bus service and cars;
- Transit corridors in the United States in places like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Portland, Chicago, Minneapolis and many others successfully mix four and even more modes of transit within rights-of-way less generous than Woodward Avenue between Grand Boulevard and Grand Circus Park. The two case studies referenced for this memo include dense, main street / downtown corridors with more transit and less right-of-way width than Woodward;
- Relegating the metro area’s first Bus Rapid Transit service to secondary corridors when there is clearly space to accommodate it on the primary corridor is a missed opportunity to establish Woodward Avenue as Detroit’s premier transit thoroughfare.

The LPA report generally alludes to the M1 Streetcar on Woodward Avenue as if it precludes further transit service from developing in the right-of-way. In fact, adding BRT alongside the future M1 Streetcar will improve the transit offerings of Woodward Avenue and also preclude a number of potential unintended harms to small businesses and bicyclists associated with running service on Cass Avenue or John R Street. The Woodward Avenue Action Association (WA3) thoughtfully outlined potential harms to small businesses, non-motorized users and street life in its LPA comments. The CAC concurs with the WA3’s concerns with routing off of Woodward Avenue south of Grand Boulevard.

Background/Analysis

1 “Woodward Avenue Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Locally Preferred Alternative”
2 Right-of-way estimates are taken from Google Earth, are curb-to-curb and do not include sidewalk width.
3 http://www.woodwardanalysis.com/pdfs/20141024_woodward%20AA_LPA_FINAL.pdf
Two case studies of corridors in the United States were chosen to demonstrate the feasibility and also success of transit rich corridors, but these are by no means the only relevant cases.

1. Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles
   - Set in LA’s “Miracle Mile” along Wilshire Boulevard, this corridor just outside of downtown is home to a stretch of museums called “Museum Row” as well as many residential, commercial and employment centers.
   - In a 70-foot right-of-way the corridor contains four different modes of bus service running in parallel: BRT, Express, Rapid / Limited Stop and Local bus modes. At least two transit operators provide service in this stretch of Wilshire Boulevard. The modes running on various pieces of this stretch of Wilshire are as follows:
     - Wilshire Boulevard BRT: Bus Rapid Transit operating in dedicated lanes throughout the Miracle Mile, with plans for extension
     - 720: Metro Rapid bus line operating 2-10 minute headways during peak
     - 710: Metro Rapid bus line operating 10-20 minute peak headways
     - FT481: Downtown Los Angeles Express Service run by Foothill Transit
     - 20: 24-hour local line operating 6-15 minute headways during peaks
     - Purple Line: Heavy rail subway line with plans for extension

2. Market Street, San Francisco
   - Market Street is an important corridor in downtown San Francisco. A large number of modes and service types operate in a roughly 2-mile stretch between the waterfront and Van Ness Avenue. An attempt to list all of the service in this roughly 55-foot right-of-way is below. It includes many modes of transit like Heavy Rail, Light Rail, Streetcar and Trolleybus, including at least three modes of bus service operating alongside streetcar service: Express, Limited Stop and Local Stop service. In addition to extremely dense transit, the street manages to also fit on-street parking and bike facilities.
     - F Streetcar: Historic streetcar route
     - 2 Clement: Local bus route
     - 9 San Bruno: Local bus route
     - 9L San Bruno Limited: Similar limited stop version of route 9
     - 21 Hayes: Local trolleybus route
     - 71 Haight-Noriega: Local bus route
     - 71 Haight-Noriega Limited: Same general route as local service, but limited stop
     - 16X Noriega Express: Express bus service
     - Market Street Subway: In addition to the at-grade right-of-way, there are underground connections along Market Street to BART (heavy rail) and Muni Metro (Streetcar/Light Rail) stations connecting numerous rail lines