

# Appendix B (Community Meeting Summary)

## **Appendix B. Summary of Meeting with Near West Side Neighborhood Residents**

Text Written by Dr. Robert Schneider

Community Comments Summarized by BRT Class Students

November 2016

### **B.1. Background**

The UWM School of Architecture and Urban Planning Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) class met with residents at Our Savior's Lutheran Church (3022 W. Wisconsin Avenue) on November 14, 2016 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. This meeting was titled, "A Community Conversation about Bus Rapid Transit," and was organized jointly by Professor Robert Schneider and Keith Stanley and Darrian Davis of the Near West Side Partners organization. The purpose of the meeting was for students in the BRT class to share information about BRT and for neighborhood residents to provide feedback about positive opportunities as well as potential concerns related to BRT. Promotional e-mail messages and fliers distributed during the month prior to the meeting stated that the BRT class would consider this input as it develops its final products for the semester and would share the feedback with Milwaukee County staff members who are working on the official East-West Corridor BRT project. The meeting was advertised by the Near West Side Partners through neighborhood newsletters and church bulletins.

### **B.2. Meeting Summary**

A total of nine community members and ten students participated in the meeting. Community members signed in at a welcome table from 5:30 pm to 5:50 pm. Participants were then welcomed by Keith Stanley and Robert Schneider. At 6 pm, BRT students, Emma Price and Chris Hillard gave a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation summary of the features of BRT, background about the official Milwaukee County East-West Corridor BRT planning process, and presented several conceptual ideas for BRT along Wisconsin Avenue. Students then led a listening session discussion with residents. The students selected a standard set of four questions to structure the conversation around each of three tables during the listening session. The sections below summarize specific feedback from community members.

### **B.3. Community Member Input Received During Listening Session**

Feedback from community members is organized under each of the four questions asked by students. The final section summarizes other overarching comments.

**Question 1) What type of transportation do you use to get to work, stores, and other activities on a daily basis? Do you travel along Wisconsin Avenue or other parallel streets? (First: Students share. Second: Residents share.)**

#### Table 1

- *Her business is by her home—Walks to work. Uses car for shopping.*
- *Shopping and work is car--Goes along downtown to 24<sup>th</sup>...was a walker but now is a driver; commutes from Downtown.*

- *Lives Downtown--Walk, drive, or bike. Works along corridor. Would take bus but takes too long. Transfers take too long. Takes Lisbon. Bikes around until November. Bubblr Bikes have really taken off. Go up to beer garden with Bubblr Bikes. Sometimes [the Bublr bike] doesn't register [when it is returned to a station].*

Table 2

- *Our community members traveled almost exclusively by car and practically never used the bus. They lived in Fox Point and on South 34th Street respectively. They cited the biggest barriers to using the bus include it not being convenient for where they want to go, the long travel times required, and the difficulty in figuring out the routes and times. They primarily came to the Wisconsin Avenue area to attend church.*

Table 3

- *One participant got around by biking and busing*
- *The other one got around by walking, car and bus if going downtown because "parking is so bad"*

**Question 2) What parts of the BRT proposal do you like? Are there any aspects of BRT that would make taking the bus a better experience or make you want to ride the bus more? Are there any aspects of BRT that could benefit the Near West Side community? What do you think about the possible changes to the design of Wisconsin Avenue?**

Table 1

- *Likes the faster service*
- *BRT could be useful to get out to shop in Tosa*
- *Like the idea of the shorter stop*
- *Safety of the system*
- *Beautifies the neighborhood*
- *Easy access to handicapped*
- *Very pleasing to the eye*
- *Like Cleveland! Did not have the backup like they thought.*
- *Likes how the bus does not have to weave into traffic*
- *More fuel efficient*
- *More beautiful, safer, and connects the economic hubs (Medical center and Downtown)*
- *Minneapolis--Restaurants on light rail streets to have patios*
- *Bridge is treated like a freeway—[redesign with BRT could help] recognize it as a city street*

Table 2

- *They liked the travel time savings, the idea of ticketing before getting on and the fact that BRT would save the city money because it is not as expensive as rail. They liked that there would be a better connection to the hospital because it is a major job center. They felt that having BRT could entice them to take the bus Downtown for something like*

*Summerfest or other big events, so they wouldn't have to deal with the difficulty and high cost of parking. They also liked the idea of landscaping enhancing the streetscape and making it more pedestrian friendly.*

Table 3

- In response to improved connectivity for those who are transit dependent along the corridor: "Oh, that would be nice"*
- In response to BRT creating a safer and more efficient street: "That would be nice, too"*

**Question 3) Is there anything that worries you about BRT coming to or going through the Near West Side community? How might changes in local bus service impact you? If you have a car, where do you park near your home and where do you park when going to Wisconsin Avenue?**

Table 1

- Losing parking. Parking pushed from Wisconsin to side streets. No more than 38 spots. Housing does not have parking. Businesses along Wisconsin would lose. West of 27th street would lose parking and need it.*
- Are the streets going to be better? Would like reconfiguration to make it nicer.*
- Should add designed interactions to the [Wisconsin] Avenue.*
- What needs to be added to make the street better? Add flowers. Landscaping. More kid friendly. More info about the historic area around the corridor. More community based. Spaces for community gathering.*
- How does this affect you? Would not like a bus going past every ten minutes. More likely to take the bus to Tosa. Local people are handicapped so worried about accommodating them. Want to look into placement of station. Want to connect bus to streetcar. Connect UWM, [Third?] Ward, to Marquette. Summerfest utilizing the BRT.*

Table 2

- They were concerned with how this would effect the quality of life of community members and how we communicate those effects. How will the community be changed? Walking will be a major cultural shift, implementation must be done with education. Some concern about parking, worried community members don't have enough on-street parking because they keep using the church parking lot without permission. On the subject of parking, they themselves rarely park on Wisconsin Avenue itself because there are parking lots available. They were concerned about how bike lanes would be implemented, if at all, in conjunction with BRT. Some concern was expressed over cars entering/exiting the single lane of traffic from driveways. There was also some concern about how removal of a traffic lane would impact traffic congestion, which is already a problem with two traffic lanes each way. If current MCTS bus lines remained running along Wisconsin Avenue, they would be concerned about being stuck behind a bus that is pulled over if other bus routes are not using the dedicated BRT lanes. They want to see*

*community outreach improved because they were not contacted by County during initial community outreach.*

Table 3

- *Wisconsin Avenue can't be torn up twice in a 5 year period—needs to be done simultaneously or not at all*
- *Bike lanes are not existent in near west side and biking is dangerous.*
- *Height concerns from new development (“they’ll never see the sun!”)*
- *People won’t ride it, there’s no destinations along the route.*
- *It’ll turn the street into a parking lot.*
- *Removing street parking will kill business for my friend.*
- *One participant stated: “a car is freedom”*
- *Business can't survive any loss of parking (mentioned specifically in relation to Bluemound Road)*
- *Too much density on corridor already*
- *Concerned that BRT will cost more than regular service (such as \$4)*
- *Signal priority for BRT on Wisconsin will cause congestion on crossing streets and ruin other route schedules*
- *Like the idea of a tram much more.*
- *There will be no room for bike lanes.*
- *Mistrust is coming from past decisions where homes were taken [specifically related to Concordia University].*

**Question 4) Were there any parts of the presentation or our discussion that you would like clarified or to hear more information about?**

Table 1

- *What would fares be?*
- *Dislikes the darkness of the buses currently--likes the inspiration of the sunburst maybe?*
- *Are they diesel or electric buses?*
- *Thoughts about beautification: Allow for communities to design the stops. Greater MKE might fund a unique bus stop.*
- *Confused about bus stops. Wants center lanes (“Median service vs center lanes” is unclear).*
- *Like the emergency vehicle being able to use the lanes*
- *Expand the road?*
- *What is the reason for the Wells part? Concern about the dedicated lane in this part. Tourists would like clarity of the straight shot. Reduce the travel time.*
- *How much street parking is actually in the spot[s] where we are taking it away? [Discussion of street parking effects in the immediate area of stations].*

Table 2

- *None*

### Table 3

- *Is the plan to eliminate car traffic?*
- *What's the point of BRT if there's no bells and whistles?*
- *Will it really remove cars from the road?*
- *Where are there destinations along the route? Why will people use it?*
- *How will it be coordinated with local routes going north/south?*
- *How much will it cost for riders?*
- *With the trolley downtown, aren't we tripping over ourselves? Is it too much at one time?*
- *Why not do BRT along highway 100? So many destinations there.*
- *Is there dedicated funding for this or is it part of the wheel tax?*
- *Where will development go, isn't the corridor very residential?*
- *Why not go to Brookfield?*

### **Other Conversation Points Made Before or After the Official Discussion**

#### Table 1

- *Wisconsin gets torn up - What's the timeline for BRT construction? This would happen with existing construction. [BRT construction] Needs to occur during the already planned construction [to minimize disruption].*
- *Is BRT going to take place with existing [local bus] stops along the BRT route? Will local service be in the BRT lanes or in the other travel lanes? Consolidating bus stops will make longer walks [to and from] stations, [but this could] potentially make it more efficient to save money.*
- *Questions about automobile parking.*

#### Table 2

- *Students asked: What do you consider important in street design? They mentioned lighting, signage and landscaping. They mentioned the Village [historic center] in Tosa, and North Avenue (minus the bumpouts) as good examples, and also mentioned the 1st Ward in Houston, and Seattle as places that do streets well. They were also attracted to the bus station design showed in the presentation [from the Fall 2015 UWM BRT class]. If it included the updated technology and would enjoy seeing heating for the winter time.*

#### Table 3

- *None*

## Figure B.1. Near West Side Neighborhood Meeting Promotional Information

### A Community Conversation about Bus Rapid Transit

Near West Side Partners and UW-Milwaukee Bus Rapid Transit Class

November 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 3022 W. Wisconsin Avenue

Learn more about what the newly proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) could look like along Wisconsin Avenue between Downtown Milwaukee and Wauwatosa, including possibilities for the Near West Side community.

- BRT is a high-quality public transit service that includes features such as dedicated bus lanes, covered stations with boarding platforms, and ticket vending machines.
- BRT has the potential to reduce bus travel times significantly and also change the character of Wisconsin Avenue so that it is safer for pedestrians and more supportive of local businesses.
- Milwaukee County's current proposal for BRT in the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor started in 2015, went through a planning process in early 2016, and the general concept was approved by the City of Milwaukee and Village of Wauwatosa in summer 2016. Details such as where dedicated bus lanes will be provided, how stations will be designed, and how pedestrians, bicyclists, and other traffic will be accommodated have yet to be determined.
- BRT is an important issue for the Near West Side community, so we would like to share information and start a community conversation about it. This is a great point in the process to identify any neighborhood concerns and come up with creative solutions.



**The purpose of the meeting will be for the 11 graduate students in the UW-Milwaukee Bus Rapid Transit class to share information about BRT and for neighborhood residents to provide feedback about positive opportunities as well as potential concerns related to BRT.** The BRT class will consider this input as it develops its final products for the semester and will share the feedback with Milwaukee County staff members who are working on the official East-West Corridor BRT project. Students in the class are very enthused to hear from residents.

#### Agenda

- 5:30 pm Welcome & refreshments
- 6:00 pm Brief summary of BRT in general and some ideas for Wisconsin Avenue (UWM students)
- 6:10 pm Listening Session 1 (Small group discussions around tables led by UWM students)
- 6:45 pm Brief summary of BRT in general and some ideas for Wisconsin Avenue (UWM students)
- 6:55 pm Listening Session 2 (Small group discussions around tables led by UWM students)
- 7:30 pm Wrap-up and thanks

We look forward to hearing from many members of the Near West Side community.

## **Figure B.2. Near West Side Neighborhood Meeting Agenda**

### **A Community Conversation about Bus Rapid Transit**

#### **Near West Side Partners and UW-Milwaukee Bus Rapid Transit Class**

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 3022 W. Wisconsin Avenue

November 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

*Learn more about what the newly proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system could look like along Wisconsin Avenue between Downtown Milwaukee and Wauwatosa, including possibilities for the Near West Side community. Students in the UW-Milwaukee Bus Rapid Transit class will share information about BRT, and neighborhood residents will have an opportunity to provide feedback about positive opportunities as well as potential concerns related to BRT. The BRT class will consider this input as it develops its final products for the semester and will share the feedback with Milwaukee County staff members who are working on the official East-West Corridor BRT project.*

### **Agenda**

5:30 pm—Welcome & refreshments (Keith Stanley & Bob Schneider)

6:00 pm—Brief summary of Bus Rapid Transit in general and some ideas for Wisconsin Avenue (UWM students)

6:10 pm—Listening Session 1  
(Small group discussions around tables led by UWM students)

6:45 pm—Brief summary of Bus Rapid Transit in general and some ideas for Wisconsin Avenue (UWM students)

6:55 pm—Listening Session 2  
(Small group discussions around tables led by UWM students)

7:30 pm—Wrap-up and thanks

*Thanks for attending and sharing your ideas with us!*



# Milwaukee County Proposed East-West Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Line

Source: <http://www.eastwestbrt.com/>

