

Downtown Riverfront Streetcar Project Outreach Summary

In August 2006, the City of West Sacramento, in a teaming cooperation with the City of Sacramento, Yolo County Transportation District and Sacramento Regional Transit, reintroduced the concept of a streetcar line to the Sacramento region. As public involvement and participation plays a vital component to the success of the project, HDR|The Hoyt Company spearheaded efforts to ensure that West Sacramento and Sacramento residents, transit stakeholders, property owners, business owners and other impacted publics were involved to ensure cohesive and community-wide education. Proven successful strategies and outreach tactics were utilized to gain public feedback and involvement while synonymously educating the general public about the possibilities of streetcar service and the differences between streetcars and commuter rail service.

Listed below are the community outreach activities in detail for Phase I and Phase II.

Phase I – Feasibility Analysis

The Phase I Community Outreach program for the Downtown Riverfront Streetcar was effective in introducing and engaging the public on the Streetcar concept, selection of a preferred alternative, and preparation of a project description. Outreach activities included creation of a project database and coordinating week long Charrettes.

Project Database

The database for the Downtown Riverfront Streetcar Project, consisting of 1,850 contacts, is an inclusive and diverse list containing adjacent property owners and occupants, community/neighborhood associations, businesses, key stakeholders, and local agencies and elected officials.

Project Charrettes

Charrettes were held during the week of October 30, 2006 to present the project concept to the general public, specific stakeholder groups and public officials. Displays and handouts illustrated the project's Purpose and Need, provided education about streetcars in general, and invited a dialogue among the attendees. The first day of the Charrette provided opportunity for the general public to learn more about the project and provide input, while subsequent days included focused meetings with the following groups:

October 30, 2006: Neighborhood Leaders
November 1, 2006: Business and Tourism Experts
Local Developers
Policy Makers
Existing Transit Riders
November 2, 2006: Regional Commissioners

The display boards, which illustrated an aerial map of the project study area, provided

opportunity for attendees to identify desired destination points for streetcar. Additionally, several meetings and team work sessions were conducted. The meetings and team work sessions were intended to capture ideas, important facts and issues, and overall project direction to objectively reduce the number to a manageable set of alternative routes.

During a joint session meeting between PSC and TAC members, potential streetcar routes were referenced and discussed. The pros and cons for different routes were documented. The following key features from the PSC and TAC joint meeting were noted:

- Economic catalyst- future connections for future development
- Outreach to riders not yet present
- Serve both sides of the river
- Riverfront mobility and access
- Serve areas not served by Light Rail Transit

The Charrette process established the conceptual beginning and ending points of a potential initial route (Alignment A). The westerly limit would be at West Sacramento's City Hall, and adjacent planned transit center and community college facility; the easterly limit would be at J Street and 19th Street in the City of Sacramento. The Tower Bridge was identified as the most feasible (and likely only) location to cross the river.

Financing Meeting with Developers

On January 22, 2007, financing meeting with Developers at Westside Pub & Grill.....

Phase II – Environmental Study and Preliminary Engineering

The Phase II Community Outreach program for the Downtown Riverfront Streetcar was effective in increasing awareness of the potential benefits of streetcars and creating enthusiasm as the project took shape. With the proposed alignment determined and vehicle type selected, the project team actively involved the West Sacramento and Sacramento communities through a variety of engagement tools.

Project Newsletter

A project newsletter was mailed to 1,700 community members and key stakeholders on Wednesday, August 15, 2007 to create greater awareness of streetcars and its benefits to the surrounding communities, as well as announce the two scoping meetings in September 2007.

Scoping Meetings for DEIR

Two scoping meetings were held in September 2007 to engage the community in the environmental process. The meetings, held on Wednesday, September 12 (Sacramento) and Thursday, September 13 (West Sacramento), were set up as informal open houses that allowed attendees to walk around the room, view a variety of project displays and illustrations of the study area and potential alternatives, and talk one-on-one with project team staff and consultants. A court reporter was on hand to record all public comments. Nine community

members attended the Sacramento event, while 19 community members attending the West Sacramento event.

Community Advisory Committee

When the project progressed to a point where the community could discuss the realities of streetcar within the communities, a Community Advisory Committee was created. Special care was taken to involve representatives from a variety of groups, including neighborhood associations, property owners and businesses along the alignment, Downtown Sacramento Partnership, Chambers of Commerce, transit riders, mobility coalitions, state agencies, property owners, Old Sacramento Merchants Association, Walk Sacramento, Friends of Light Rail, Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates, and tourism interests.

Community Advisory Committee meetings were held Thursday, April 17, 2008, and Thursday, June 19, 2008. The groups were enthusiastic about the benefits of streetcar while practical about determining how capital and operations costs would be financed.

At the request of the CAC members, a briefing packet was created, allowing members to foster a dialog within their respective organizations.

Project Postcard (for DEIR)

In preparation for the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report, a postcard was sent on Wednesday, September 10, 2008 to 1,800 stakeholders and property owners along the proposed alignment. To increase ease of access to streetcar studies, DEIR materials were uploaded to the project Web site.

Newspaper Advertisements (for DEIR)

Announcements of the availability of the DEIR and public comment period were placed in the *West Sacramento News Ledger* and the *Sacramento Bee* newspapers on Wednesday, August 22, 2007 as well as Wednesday, September 3, 2008.

Community Meetings for DEIR

Two public meetings were held on Thursday, October 2, 2008, to facilitate comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report. The first, held in Sacramento, had 10 public attendees. The second hearing was during the West Sacramento Planning Commission's regular meeting. Not only did this provide an opportunity for individuals to comment, it also provided an update to the West Sacramento Planning Commission and created greater exposure via the video taped hearing posted on the City's Web site.

Community Engagement

In addition to the aforementioned outreach efforts, the project team provided public briefings to numerous community groups, including Friends of Light Rail, Downtown Sacramento Partnership, Regional Transit Mobility Advisory Council, Neighborhood Advisory Group, Walk Sacramento, Capitol Area Development Authority, and Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce.

Portland Streetcar Tours

If “a picture is worth a thousand words,” then a ride on the Portland Streetcar system is “worth a thousand pictures.” Toward that end, we coordinated two tours enabling staff, elected officials, business leaders, developers and transit and transportation advocates to tour Portland. Beyond a streetcar ride, people could see the dramatic results of greater residential density, heightened pedestrian activity and pronounced economic development in areas much like our community. The October 2007 tour brought 13 participants. The July 2008 tour introduced another 14 transit, redevelopment and city officials, along with private-sector participants, to the benefits of streetcar.

Portland October 2007 Tour Attendees

Bassett, Terry – Yolo County Transportation District
Beers, Wesley – City of West Sacramento, Councilmember
Hammond, Paul – Railroad Museum
Heartman, Bill – Regis Homes
Johannessen, Mark – City of West Sacramento, Councilmember
Jones, Debra – Sacramento Area Council of Governments
Kristoff, Billy – City of West Sacramento, Councilmember
Pascoe, Maureen – City of West Sacramento
Ramos, Dan – Ramco Enterprises
Taylor, Cathy – CA State Parks
Taylor, Greg – City of Sacramento
Tiechman, Dustin – Sacramento Director of Tourism
Toppenburg, Val – City of West Sacramento
Villegas, Oscar – City of West Sacramento, Mayor Pro Tem

Portland July 2008 Tour Attendees

Canfield, Traci – Sacramento Regional Transit
Carpenter, Matt – SACOG
Dickinson, Roger – County of Sacramento, Supervisor
Faust, Michael – Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce
Fong, Robert – City of Sacramento, Councilmember
Greene, Kevin – Downtown Sacramento Partnership
Hahn, Paul – County of Sacramento
Hammond, Paul – City Parks
Hammond, Steve – Sacramento Convention & Visitors Bureau
Hanneman, Marty – City of Sacramento, Assistant City Manager
Leon, Todd – Capitol Area Development Authority
Nava, Lisa – District Director (Councilmember Fong)
Smith, Don – Sacramento Regional Transit
Way, Jerry – City of Sacramento, Transportation Director
Yackzan, Lynne – Dean F. Unger AIA Inc.

Recognizing that investment in the Downtown/Riverfront streetcar potentially affects funding from other areas, efforts were made to arrange speakers for a Portland tour coordinated by the Rancho Cordova, Folsom and El Dorado Hills Chambers of Commerce.

Presentation to Agencies

To keep the sponsoring bodies involved and informed about the progress of the Downtown Riverfront Streetcar project, there were several briefings, which included:

- Sacramento City Council
- Sacramento Planning Commission
- West Sacramento City Council
- West Sacramento Planning Commission
- Regional Transit
- Yolo Bus

Developers

Work has been done to facilitate discussion with developers from both West Sacramento and Sacramento. Following a meeting with the Triangle Developers Group, the financial study team responded to questions regarding how costs would be shared. Further, efforts were made to engage developers in other venues, including the Community Advisory Committee and the Portland tours.

Public Education

In addition to targeted connections, widespread attention was generated via newspaper articles and an engaging Web page. Stories appeared following the Portland tours and key milestones in the process. The project Web page was updated to serve as a resource for the Community Advisory Committee to share information with the member's respective groups. Public comments regarding the streetcar were collected via the comment page. Further, a video animation was posted showing a streetcar traveling the proposed alignment, with economic development springing up along the path.

As the project took shape, the messaging shifted to provide greater clarity on what the project would look like. Additionally, the messaging was responsive to the increased need to respond to climate change in land use and transportation planning.

Summary

In short, the Downtown Riverfront Streetcar outreach effort has demonstrated the invaluable benefits of economic development and improved air quality as we look to regional solutions for creating higher density development in the urban core, generating a lively and engaging central district among the two communities, and providing alternative transportation.