

BROAD STREET

RAPID TRANSIT STUDY

October 19 & 20, 2010

Public Meeting Information Packet

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Study Background

Over the last decade, three transportation decision-makers – GRTC Transit System, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and Richmond Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (RAMPO) – have worked to devise an integrated strategy for investment in a regional transit infrastructure.

In multiple studies conducted by these agencies, Broad Street consistently emerged as a prime candidate for transit improvement with frequent recommendations that the corridor proceed to the next phase of study. As a result, rapid transit improvements are now being examined along a seven-mile portion of Broad Street spanning the City of Richmond and anchored at either end by the Rocketts Landing and Willow Lawn in Henrico County.

Broad Street is central to the economic activity of the metropolitan area, linking the residential areas east and west of the corridor with the government offices and commercial activities downtown. This important roadway and transit route serves numerous commercial and residential areas and averages more than 700 bus trips daily.

More information regarding the study background and the previously completed studies can be found on the project website at: <http://study.ridegrtc.com>.

Study Purpose and Need

The purpose of this study is to identify a package of improvements that will provide rapid, reliable transit service to increase overall mobility and serve existing patterns of transit oriented development and redevelopment in the corridor. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) uses upgraded buses and a combination of new routes, stations, and roadway improvements to provide a faster, more efficient transit service that will provide an attractive alternative to the automobile.

What We Heard

The initial public meetings for the Broad Street Rapid Transit Study were held in February 2010. More than 140 citizens attended the meetings. A summary of public comments is provided in the Public Scoping Report which can be found on our website at <http://study.ridegrtc.com>. Most comments reflected support for rapid transit and transit oriented development in the corridor. Comments also addressed the initial proposal for route and stations, concerns about impacts to traffic and businesses along the corridor, and questions about impacts to current bus operations. Following the public meetings, the study team met with groups representing key interests and institutions along the corridor to provide further opportunity for their input in this process. Many of the concerns and questions raised through these meetings have shaped the analysis and screening of alternatives, resulting in revised recommendations regarding potential BRT routes and station locations.

What is BRT?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high quality, high capacity rapid transit system that offers many of the advantages of rail transit but at a lower and more affordable cost. Instead of trains and tracks, BRT invests in improved vehicles, stations, operations, roadways, intersections and traffic signals to speed up bus transit service.

Initial Alternatives and Screening

The initial screening of alternatives was the first round analysis performed to refine route alignment and eliminate those alternatives least likely to meet the established Purpose and Need for this study. The initial screening utilized accepted measures of effectiveness guidelines in combination with feedback provided by the public and our Technical Advisory Committee. Measures of effectiveness include:

- Improve Local and Regional Mobility
- Support Economic Development
- Promote Livable Transit Oriented Development
- Provide Attractive Transportation Choices
- Optimize Return on Investment
- Enhance Environmental Quality

The initial alternatives put through the screening evaluation are listed in the box below.

INITIAL ALTERNATIVES			
<p>No Build</p> <p>Represents future conditions if no improvements are made beyond those already planned as GRTC system improvements.</p>	<p>Baseline</p> <p>Represents the lowest cost alternative for addressing the needs of the corridor. Improvements include consolidated stops, increased frequency, and improved signal timing, but does not include a major capital investment.</p>	<p>Build Alternative 1</p> <p>Seeks to address the needs of Broad Street corridor through capital investment. Investment includes 3.4 miles of dedicated bus lanes, BRT stations with branding, dedicated BRT buses with branding, and signal priority.</p>	<p>Build Alternative 2</p> <p>Seeks to address the needs of Broad Street corridor through capital investment. Investment includes 6.7 miles of dedicated bus lanes, BRT stations with branding, dedicated BRT buses with branding, and signal priority.</p>

Build Alternative 2 Eliminated

Based on the measures of effectiveness outlined above, Build 2 was removed from further consideration due to irresolvable impacts on general traffic and on-street parking within the limited right-of-way on Main Street. In addition, Build 2 included much greater capital costs while providing only limited additional benefit to the efficiency and operation of the BRT system.

Recommended Station Locations

As part of the initial screening, station locations were reviewed in detail as was the alignment (or route) between Broad and Main streets. An analysis of the corridor's land use characteristics was used to refine the station locations. The recommended station locations target major community facilities, population and employment centers; provide access to other transit routes and multimodal infrastructure; and achieve the proper spacing to maximize travel efficiency. In addition, growth and development potential were assessed to ensure that stations will continue to be in appropriate locations in the future. The recommended stations are illustrated on the map on page 3 of this fact sheet.

Recommendation for Broad Street to Main Street Transition

The alignment (or route) for the Build Alternative 1 in its transition from Broad Street to Main Street was revised. An analysis of alternatives spanning Governor's Street to 25th Street was undertaken with consideration of the feasibility, transit destinations served, station locations, and interaction with other GRTC routes. The recommended alignment now follows 14th Street between Broad and Main because this option provides the best balance of roadway characteristics (such as turning accommodation) and station locations with the lowest potential for impacts to adjacent properties.

Where We Are Today: Alternatives for Detailed Study

Build Alternative 1 along with the No Build and Baseline alternatives are the options currently being studied in greater detail. Following initial screening, Build Alternative 1 was developed in more detail to define the location of the dedicated bus lanes (median- or curb-running) and stations (split platforms, median or side locations). The conceptual drawings below show these possible locations.



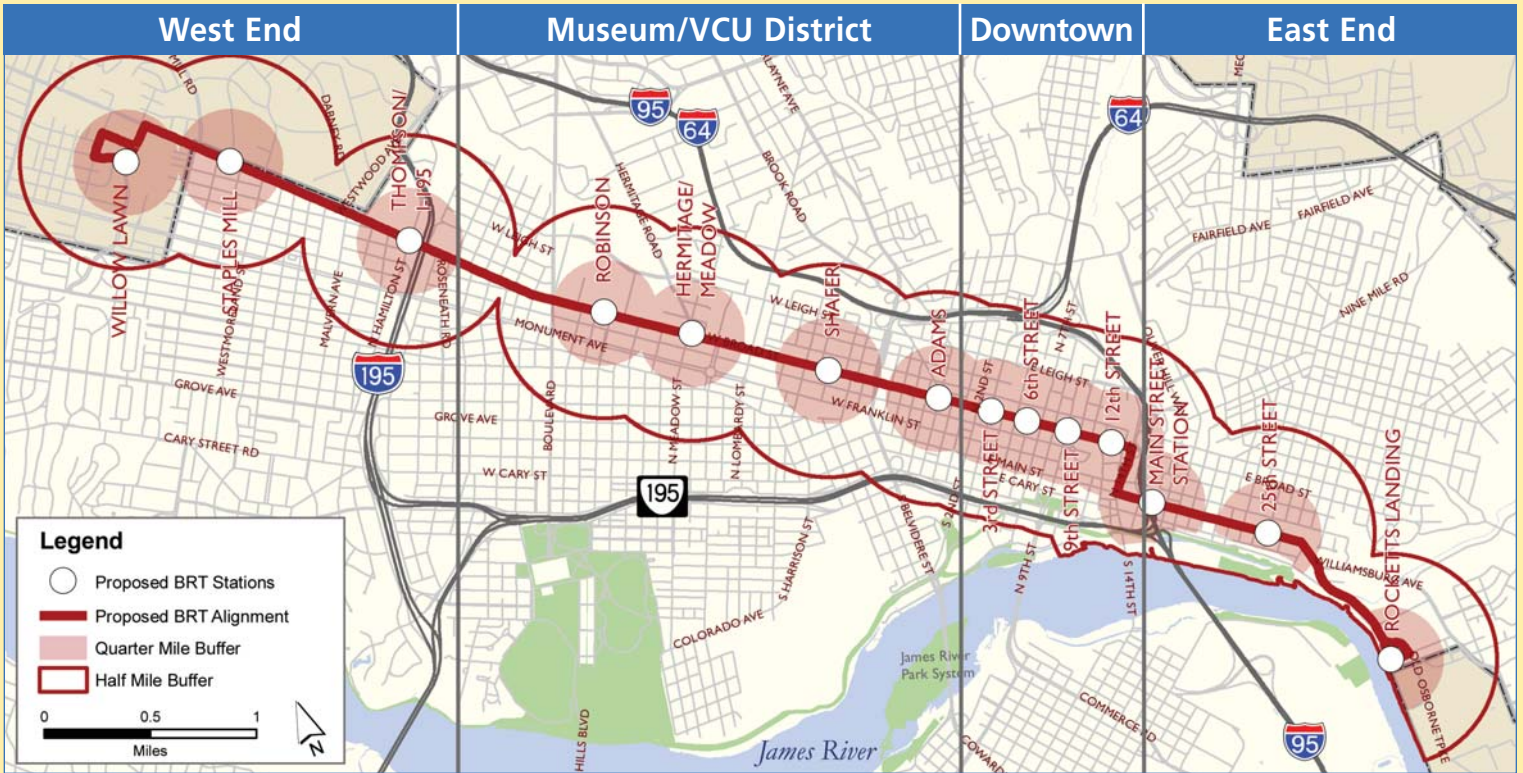
Alternative 1: Median-Running Dedicated Lanes and Station Location



Alternative 1: Curb-Running Dedicated Lanes and Station Location

Study Corridor Characteristics and Recommendations

The study area was divided into four distinct sections: West End, Museum/VCU District, Downtown and East End. Each section along the corridor varies due to its individual characteristics. These varied characteristics, such as Travel and Land Use, were used to determine recommendations specific to each area.



West End

Travel: Good traffic flow, longer signal spacing and lower local bus volumes.

Land Use: Suburban land use pattern with large surface parking lots and employment hot spots, but low pedestrian accessibility.

Recommendation: Use general travel lanes, limit number of stations to improve travel time, consider park-and-ride lots.

Museum/VCU District

Travel: Good traffic flow, closer signal spacing and moderate local bus volumes.

Land Use: Older urban commercial and redevelopment land use pattern with medium density residential to the south. Smaller blocks with improved pedestrian infrastructure.

Recommendation: Fixed guideway for BRT only in the median with some accommodations for general traffic left turns.



Downtown

Travel: Good traffic flow, close signal spacing and heavy local bus volumes.

Land Use: Highly urbanized area with large scale institutional and commercial employment buildings. Traditional urban grid with extensive pedestrian infrastructure.

Recommendation: Fixed guideway for BRT and local buses along the curb with elongated station platforms to accommodate multiple bus boarding and alighting.



East End

Travel: Good traffic flow, narrow right-of-way and limited local bus volumes.

Land Use: Lower density with historic redevelopment and infill potential. Substantial change and development is expected in this area.

Recommendation: Use general travel lanes and limit stations to improve travel time. Consider park-and-ride lots.

STUDY SCHEDULE

Fall 2009 – Winter 2010

- Scoping
- Define Purpose and Need
- Define Initial Alternatives
- Public Meeting #1

Winter 2010 – Fall 2010

(We Are Here)

- Conduct Initial Screening of Alternatives
- Define Detailed Alternatives
- Conduct Detailed Traffic Analysis
- Evaluate Station Locations
- Study Station Area Land Use
- Public Meeting #2

Fall 2010 – Summer 2011

- Develop Station Prototypes
- Assess Environmental Impacts
- Final Results of Alternatives Analysis/ Environmental Assessment
- Recommend Locally Preferred Alternative
- Public Meeting #3

Add Your Voice to the Discussion

We invite your input on a variety of topics including the alternatives under study and the recommended station locations and findings relating to land use and station area characteristics. Comments can be submitted for the record in one of three ways:

- Provide written public comments at a citizen information meeting.
- Provide written comments at any time during the public comment period using the electronic comment form at <http://study.ridegrtc.com>.
- Mail written comments at any time during the public comment period to: Larry Hagin, Director of Planning, GRTC Transit System, 301 East Belt Blvd., Richmond, VA 23224.

The formal public comment period for this phase ends on **Friday, November 19, 2010**.

What's Next?

Following the October public meetings, the study team will review and address relevant comments received and begin the detailed evaluation of the alternatives to recommend a Locally Preferred Alternative. The results of the detailed evaluation and a subsequent Environmental Assessment will be presented to the study's Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Advisory Committee and presented at another set of public meetings to be held in late Spring 2011.

How Can You Stay Informed?

To stay involved and informed about the progress of the Broad Street Rapid Transit Study, either visit the study website and submit your contact information on the "Keep Me Informed" page, or provide your name, postal address, e-mail address and any group affiliation to: Larry Hagin, Director of Planning, GRTC Transit System, 301 East Belt Blvd., Richmond, VA 23224.

<http://study.ridegrtc.com>

Notes: