



Central Harlem Avenue Corridor Study

Steering Committee Meeting #3 – June 5, 2018

Howard Mohr Center – Forest Park

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Cindy	Cambray	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Jacob	Connor	Chicago Transit Authority
Katherine	Branch	Chicago Transit Authority
Brenda	McGruder	Chicago Department of Transportation
Tomohiko	Music	Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways
Andrew	Vesselinovitch	Houseal Lavigne Associates
Allison	Buchwach	Metra
Larry	Pierce	Village of Bridgeview
Tim	Gillian	Village of Forest Park
Byron	Kutz	Village of Oak Park
Sonya	Abt	Village of Riverside
Lenny	Cannata	West Central Municipal Conference
Michael	Fricano	West Central Municipal Conference
Project Team		
Sara	Steinberger	Cambridge Systematics
Kevin	Tilbury	Cambridge Systematics
Linda	Goodman	Goodman Williams Group

Kyle	Terry	Goodman Williams Group
Mike	Kritzman	Lakota Group
Ryan	Anderson	Metro Strategies
Tammy	Wierciak	Metro Strategies
Ella	Carmona	Pace
Adam	Eichenberger	Pace
Erik	Llewellyn	Pace
Charlotte	Obodzinski	Pace
Thomas	Robbins	Pace
Ryan	Ruehle	Pace
Brian	Hacker	Regional Transportation Authority
Michael	Groh	Sam Schwartz Engineering
Jamie	Osborne	Sam Schwartz Engineering

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions

Ryan Ruehle welcomed everyone and participants introduced themselves.

2. Corridor Tour

Michael Groh thanked everyone for participating in the corridor tour and stated that the input from the participants was very helpful.

3. Existing Conditions Assessment & Discussion

Michael Groh and Jaime Osborne introduced key findings from the Existing Conditions Assessment. The northern segment of the corridor contains lower travel speeds and traffic volume that make it more transit friendly and pedestrian-oriented. The southern segment, on the other hand, has higher traffic volumes and speeds and is less transit-friendly, but has transit-friendly demographics.

a. *Demographic Patterns*

Overall, the corridor contains about 85,000 residents and about 25,000 jobs. Both have been growing at a slow rate in recent years. The corridor's population density is greater than Cook County overall, and areas such as Oak Park and Berwyn have the greatest density. Household incomes are higher in the northern section. Employment density is high enough across the corridor to support rapid transit service.

b. *Corridor Characteristics*

Based on the CMAP Regional Model, Jaime explained that approximately 11% of trips starting or ending in the study area are transit trips. Additionally, most trips are less than 5 miles of length and take place during the off-peak period. Overall, lower speeds and a higher quality pedestrian environment make the northern segment generally friendlier for transit service.

c. *Public Transportation*

Kevin Tilbury presented the public transportation section. The corridor has many connections to the rest of the public transportation system, including connections to other Pace buses, CTA bus and rail, and Metra. Similar to the overall travel patterns, most transit trips occur during the off-peak period. High ridership clusters occur near connections to CTA rail and at major intersections. However, transit trips take 25-70 percent longer than driving.

Question from Allison Buchwach: Is the 25 percent longer trip length similar to other corridors? Kevin Tilbury stated that it would be a good idea to look at the numbers for similar corridors. Additionally, Ryan Ruehle noted that Pulse service would improve bus speeds by reducing the number of stops.

d. *Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure*

Jaime Osborne presented the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure section. For this study, the project team used intersection density as one indicator of walkability. This shows higher intersection densities in the northern section, suggesting better walkability.

Brian Hacker stated that intersection density in and of itself does not fully describe how walkable a road is. Harlem is an IDOT road, and while there may be high intersection densities, this does not mean that there are crosswalks there for people to use.

Jaime continued by noting that bicycle infrastructure along the corridor is limited, and there are only four locations where bike infrastructure crosses Harlem. Some barriers to walking and cycling in the corridor include sidewalk gaps, lack of a roadway buffer, lack of safe crossing opportunities, large intersections that are difficult to cross, and slip lanes that prioritize car movement over pedestrian safety.

e. *Traffic Safety*

Michael Groh discussed traffic safety. Data from IDOT's crash database from 2011 and 2015 was used for the study. There were over 5,000 crashes in the 5-year span. Of particular concern for Pace are the crashes involving bikes and pedestrians, as all transit riders are walkers or bikers first. There were more crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists in the north section.

f. *Freight*

Kevin Tilbury discussed freight. Freight and truck traffic can influence transit operations as well as design. There are several freight generators in the corridor, particularly in the south section. Some stretches of Harlem see as many as 5,000 trucks a day. Delivery loading adjacent to smaller scale retail uses in the northern section may impact travel times, and at-grade railroad crossings may also negatively impact on-time performance.

g. *Land Use and Zoning*

The land use and zoning section was presented by Linda Goodman and Mike Kritzman. There is more population density in the north section of the corridor, and a lot of transit-oriented development has taken place there, particularly in Oak Park. Retail is a major land use in the corridor, including the North Riverside Park Mall at Cermak Road. Even with Carson's closing, the mall has a

redevelopment strategy, and the corner of Cermak and Harlem remains a regional draw. The corridor has also seen a good amount of industrial infill development, largely due to the connections to I-55 and I-290. Finally, there are several large institutions along the corridor. Concordia University and Dominican University have a combined enrollment of 9,000. Office space is not too prevalent along the corridor.

While the north end of the corridor has greater development density, the south section contains larger available tracts of land. In the middle of the corridor there are several large surface parking facilities that might be opportunities for redevelopment at some point in the future. Overall, the types of commercial and industrial land use in the south section create challenges for transit access even though local demographics are transit-supportive.

Mike Kritzman described a typology of development patterns in the corridor. This included Mid-Density Residential, Main Street Mix, Vintage Commercial Strip, Arterial Commercial Strip, Commercial Center, Urban Mix, Institutional Campus, and Industrial Zone. He also described zoning policies. More than half of the study area is zoned for residential, with the vast majority of it being single-family. Commercially zoning policies throughout the corridor vary between pedestrian-oriented and auto-oriented design.

h. *Relevant Plans, Programs and Projects*

Kevin Tilbury led this discussion. A review of 28 plans from municipalities and agencies along the corridor was conducted. Pulse service was identified as a key catalyst for development and redevelopment in many plans. The team also catalogued many projects planned or ongoing along the corridor, so that Pace can ensure coordination as recommendations are developed.

i. *Discussion*

Tomohiko Music asked about the connection between pedestrian accessibility and safety. Ryan Ruehle responded that the report goes into more detail on all of the topics discussed thus far including pedestrian safety. He also asked that the Steering Committee

members review the report and send along any comments they may have within the next two weeks.

4. Stakeholder Interviews

Tammy Wierciak let the Steering Committee know that she is in the process of arranging interviews with Steering Committee members and other stakeholders to discuss the corridor's current conditions and upcoming plans, and to allow stakeholders to provide greater input into the study.

5. Next Steps and Schedule

Tammy informed the committee that the project team will hold a public meeting on July 12th at Morton West High School to inform the public about the study and to solicit feedback from them about their issues along the corridor. The project team will continue additional analysis and begin drafting recommendations soon. There will be two more Steering Committee meetings to discuss the recommendations and another public meeting in the fall to present the draft recommendations to the public. Ryan Ruehle thanked everyone for their participation and reminded participants that any additional comments should be submitted via email.