



Central Harlem Avenue Corridor Study

Steering Committee Meeting #2

Corridor Tour – February 27, 2018

Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Jacob	Connor	CTA
Nicole	Campbell	City of Berwyn
Tomohiko	Music	CCDOH
Andrew	Balmer	Houseal Lavigne Associates
Allison	Buchwach	Metra
Larry	Pierce	Village of Bridgeview/Toyota Park
Dan	Hilker	Village of Lyons, Trustee
Bill	McKenna	Village of Oak Park
Sonya	Abt	Village of Riverside
Kelsey	Mulhausen	SCM
Project Team		
Sara	Steinberger	Cambridge Systematics
Kevin	Tilbury	Cambridge Systematics
Kyle	Terry	Goodman Williams Group
Kevin	Clark	Lakota Group
Mike	Kritzman	Lakota Group
Tammy	Wierciak	Metro Strategies
Adam	Eichenberger	Pace
Tom	Robbins	Pace
Ryan	Ruehle	Pace
Jessica	Rybarczyk	Pace
Sue	Rushing	Pace
Brian	Hacker	RTA
Michael	Groh	Sam Schwartz
Joe	Iacobucci	Sam Schwartz

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions

Ryan Ruehle, Pace, thanked everyone for attending the second Steering Committee meeting and provided an overview of the corridor tour. The tour began at the North Riverside Mall and introductions were made by the attendees.

Brian Hacker from the RTA, also welcomed the committee and reminded everyone about RTA's role in funding this study.

2. Corridor Tour

Joe Iacobucci, from Sam Schwartz, explained the corridor tour's goal of obtaining information about the land use, economic development opportunities and transit connections along Harlem Avenue.

Stop One: Harlem Avenue and Cermak Road

Overview: Joe Iacobucci stated that over 30,000 cars a day travel through the intersection. The Pink Line is 2 miles to the east and the land use for the area is predominately big box retail. The area is served by CTA Route 21 and Pace Routes 307 and 322.

Comments: Sonya Abt stated that a lot of local investment has been made in the area. The intersection is a part of IDOT's 5 year plan for capital improvements which may include dual left turns.

Stop Two: Harlem Avenue and North Avenue

Overview: Kevin Clark from Lakota Group provided a summary of the intersection that currently falls under four different jurisdictions, Elmwood Park, Oak Park, River Forest and Chicago. There is a major retail vacancy on the northeast corner where Sears once operated. A 2017 Pace North Avenue Corridor Study was recently completed and CMAP will be completing an Economic Development Study in 2018.

Comments: Participants toured the area and discussed the high level of traffic and noise while commenting on the large number of pedestrian amenities that already existed. There was a discussion about the potential

for the Sears building to be knocked down and replaced with multi-family residential housing.

Stop Three: Harlem Avenue and Lake Street CTA Station

Overview: Ryan Ruehle informed the group that this area is served by CTA's Green Line and Route 90 as well as Pace Routes 307, 309, 313, 318 and 757. While the area has high retail, the Harlem Avenue corridor has narrow sidewalks along the busy roadway which are prohibited for Pace customers. The new high rise being constructed at Harlem and South Boulevard may be a future location for a Pulse Station. On the southbound side Pulse Stations could potentially be located at the Starbucks. There is potential to improve the CTA/Pace shelter at South Boulevard.

Comments: Participants exited the bus and walked along Harlem towards the CTA Station. Bill McKenna of Oak Park stated that Oak Park encourages transit-oriented development, affordable housing and transit services like Pace for residents. The Village is also developing plans to replace the viaduct and add a traffic lane. Currently, when buses stop, traffic backs up in this area as the viaduct currently only accommodates one lane of traffic in each direction.

Allison Buchwach from Metra commented that the sidewalks under the viaduct were not pedestrian friendly or accommodating for individuals with disabilities.

Stop Four: Harlem Avenue and Eisenhower Expressway

Overview: Michael Groh from Sam Schwartz stated that this site was a major connection point for Pace as over 300 people board Pace and 1,000 people board the CTA Blue Line at this location. Additionally, almost 160,000 cars travel on I-290 daily and 30,000 travel on Harlem. IDOT is currently studying I-290 improvements which would include a managed lane which could improve not only operations on I-290 but also for cars entering or exiting the expressway on Harlem Avenue.

Comments: Bill McKenna stated that the Village of Oak Park and the CTA are wrapping up the Blue Line Vision Study to improve the CTA Stations. The study was coordinated with Pace, and a bus pull off area was not

included in the study per Pace's request due to the difficulty of buses reentering traffic at this point. He also stated that the concrete plant just south of the interchange recently closed and may be used for construction staging.

Stop five: Harlem Avenue and Roosevelt Road

Overview: Kevin Tilbury of Cambridge discussed the high truck volume in this section of the corridor. Between 3,000 and 5,000 trucks operate in this section every day as USPS has a distribution center nearby as well as other freight intermodal facilities. This will impact the design and lane widths as things like turn radius will need to be considered. Forest Park recently completed a \$5 million streetscape project to create a walkable gateway to their community.

Comments: Nicole Campbell from Berwyn stated that in 2011 Berwyn and Oak Park jointly completed a streetscape project that has driven new development in the area. Berwyn's biggest employer Turano Bread is located near Harlem on Roosevelt Road.

Bill McKenna stated that as part of the streetscape project, lighting was placed in the asphalt of crosswalks at 3 intersections. This lighting required additional approval from IDOT which delayed the project, and it requires frequent replacement.

Stop Six: Harlem Avenue and Ogden Avenue

Overview: Allison Buchwach from Metra stated that the BNSF rail line has approximately 100 trains travel it every day; this includes Metra, Amtrak and freight. The Metra stop has relatively low ridership due to its proximity to two other Metra stations. In a recent ridership survey, Metra found that 80 people walked to the station while only 30 people drove. The CREATE Program lists Harlem and the BNSF as a potential future grade separation project as well as grade separations at 63rd and 65th Streets.

Comments: Sonya Abt stated that the Village encourages walking to Metra stations and restricts parking on side streets.

Nicole Campbell stated that McNeal Hospital is near the Metra Station and Berwyn is in the middle of Phase 1 on Windsor and Stanley to redevelop and improve the area around the station.

Larry Pierce from Bridgeview/Toyota Park stated that the CREATE Projects at 63rd and 65th Streets are very early in the process. Both streets will need to be studied to determine if the road should go over or under the railroad to improve operations.

Stop Seven: Toyota Transit Center

Overview: Jessica Rybarczyk from Pace discussed the Toyota Park Transit Center. The construction of the bus lanes have been completed and there are currently two temporary shelters for riders, the permanent shelter should be complete in 2018. The park n ride opened in 2016 and offers express bus service to the east loop. During soccer games or concerts Pace runs service between the Orange Line and the stadium every twenty minutes. Route 386 serves South Harlem and connects riders to Tinley Park and the Orange Line. There is currently an issue for Pace buses leaving the Transit Center related to a conflict with freight traffic as the bus makes a left turn.

Comments: Larry Pierce stated that the Village is in early stages of planning for a hotel on site as well. Trucks also use the land near the gas station for rest breaks. This land is privately owned by the gas station.

Stop 8: Harlem Avenue and 63rd Street

Overview: Ryan Ruehle stated that there currently are over 100 boardings at this stop. The location of a future Pulse Station is being coordinated with IDOT and the CREATE Projects. As mentioned at the Toyota Park Transit Center, Route 307 has issues with the freight conflicts and left hand turns onto Harlem. This conflict impacts Pace's ability to stay on schedule.

Stop 9: Harlem Avenue and Archer Avenue

Overview: Kevin Clark from the Lakota Group stated that the municipal boundaries in this area is split which Chicago and Summit. The land use includes narrow parcels mixed with new development and vacant properties. Large retails spaces currently share an alley way with

residents. This area also had experienced approximately 200 crashes over a four-year period.

Comments:

Stop 10: Harlem Avenue and Metra BNSF Station

Overview: Ryan Ruehle provided a brief comment about how unsafe the area was for pedestrians as they have to cross the busy roadway to get to the Metra Station.

Comments:

Ryan Ruehle thanked everyone for their participation and reminded participants that if anyone had any additional comments they could submit them at any time via email to him.