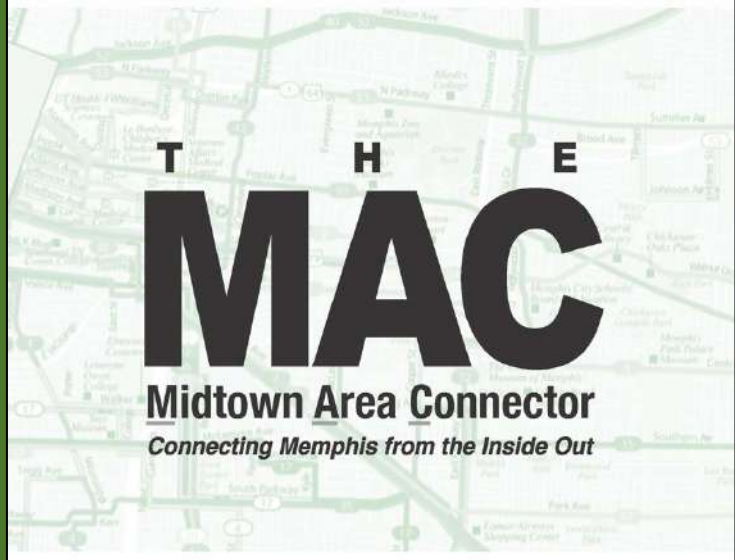


MEMPHIS AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Midtown

Alternatives Analysis

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM: **5**
Public Engagement Report



April 2016

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Executive Summary

The Midtown Alternative Analysis (AA) Study began in April 2014 and held its first public meeting in July 2014. A total of 4 public meetings, 4 technical advisory committee meetings, and additional meetings with key stakeholders and agencies were held during the 24-month study process. The overall emphasis of the project's public engagement was to:

- Educate interested stakeholders and the public on all aspects of the project.
- Encourage public participation by providing multiple opportunities and a variety of techniques for input.
- Build consensus around a Locally Preferred Alternative that best meets the needs of a diverse public.

The community outreach for the project, branded the Midtown Area Connector, or The MAC, was broad and engaged a wide variety of stakeholders, from bus riders and interested citizens, neighborhood groups, and community development corporations, to some of Memphis' largest institutions serving as anchors within the study area. Stakeholder input was collected at each stage of the project and was used to inform the direction of the study and to establish criteria for evaluating each potential route and type of service considered.

Over the course of two years, a community vision for a new type of high capacity or rapid transit service was captured through meetings, focus groups, interviews, and other outreach methods. This vision built on the previous planning work done by MATA and other public entities, and looked closely at the needs of commuters, residents, and visitors to Memphis and the Midtown area. Connecting people to jobs and other economic opportunities emerged as a top priority for the Memphis community, and one that fits well with major employment and educational centers within the study area. Additional public priorities throughout the process were expanded hours and increased frequency of service, as well as providing better information and amenities to transit customers.

Media communications, online platforms, and a broad network of community contacts were used to disseminate information and solicit feedback for The MAC AA study. Ultimately, this input from the community was used in the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative that will be advanced for implementation, as well as in the identification of additional high priority corridors that should be studied more closely in the near-term for service improvements.

Section 1|

Introduction

Overview

Input from transit riders, residents, and other stakeholders throughout the transportation planning process is of paramount importance to having a successful and implementable outcome. Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) and its consultant team recognize the importance of a robust community engagement process in the success of this Alternatives Analysis (AA) study. The public involvement plan for the Midtown Area Connector AA study included a variety of venues for stakeholders and the public to receive information and provide input throughout the planning process.

Over the course of the study, MATA and its consultants used email and online outreach, public relations through local news media, public input sessions, stakeholder focus groups and interviews, and other activities to engage stakeholders and the public. The groups involved in the process include MATA riders, business owners, developers, educational institutions, disability advocates, institutional and public sector stakeholders, and arts and civic organizations, among others.

Project Background

MATA's Midtown Area Connector Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study (The MAC) examined transit needs and the potential for High Capacity Transit service within Midtown Memphis and connecting to surrounding neighborhoods. The study made careful considerations about how both existing and potential transit users in Memphis access destinations such as employment, educational centers, and other daily needs.

This AA process built on previous planning work, including the recommendations of the MATA Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) for further study of High Capacity Transit. The MAC also included analyses of the travel needs of existing MATA ridership, as gathered through the Memphis Metropolitan Planning Organization's Mid-South Regional Travel Survey. As a part of the MPO's survey, a Transit On-Board Survey of all existing MATA routes was conducted, gathering information on origins and destinations of MATA's ridership, as well as a demographic profile of their customers. Other plans, such as the Memphis Metropolitan Planning Organization's Livability 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and the Mid-South Regional Greenprint 2015/2040, were included in the technical analyses for The MAC.

The ultimate goal of The MAC is to develop and evaluate transit alternatives to best meet local and regional goals and priorities, and to establish a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) describing the preferred transit route, mode, and technology in order to implement improved transit service.

Guiding Principles of the Public Engagement Process

A robust public involvement program is both a key element in the planning process, and an effective tool in documenting the outcomes and implementation of an active and open public engagement approach. The MAC's community engagement program utilized a variety of outreach and involvement tools to engage the public and assure a variety of opportunities to participate. The overall emphasis of the program was to:

- Educate interested stakeholders and the public on all aspects of the project.
- Encourage public participation by providing multiple opportunities and a variety of techniques for input.
- Build consensus around a Locally Preferred Alternative that best meets the needs of a diverse public.

Federal requirements necessitate meaningful public participation as a significant element in projects such as this AA. Beyond merely checking a box, the benefits of engaging stakeholders and the public in a participatory planning process are many. First, the process raises the potential for an agreed upon solution, or at the least informed consent by various parties and a greater chance for successful and timely project implementation. Public engagement also facilitates the identification of community issues and priorities early in the process, allowing those issues to be adequately acknowledged and addressed. Ultimately, the public engagement process for The MAC committed the team to actively involve the public and community leaders in taking action, with the end result yielding a widely supported outcome.

Simply stated, the purpose of this public involvement program was to inform, involve, and engage the community in the project, and incorporate their input into the decision-making process. The public involvement program was built on the following guiding principles:

- Educate and inform the public about transportation planning, projects, and issues within their communities and the region.
- Ensure that information is easily accessible to all interested parties in the community.
- Prioritize Environmental Justice and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act by communicating with affected and interested parties, including special effort to include under-represented populations.
- Improve the decision-making process to include the interest/ needs of stakeholders through informed consent.

- Evaluate the participation processes and procedures on a periodic basis to assess and improve effectiveness.

Public involvement activities were compliant with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related regulations which ensured that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin (including limited English proficiency), religion, age, income, family status, or physical handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal assistance from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT).

Key Stakeholders and Committees

Early in the engagement process, a number of stakeholder groups were identified, including existing MATA customers, institutional/organizational stakeholders, neighborhood representatives, the business community, and the general public. The MAC AA study process was guided by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the makeup of which deliberately represents the stakeholder groups identified by MATA and its consultants and partners. The TAC membership, at the invitation of the Memphis Mayor and MATA chief executive, included public transit stakeholders, business representatives, community groups, and citizens representing various sectors of the community. Additional stakeholders were identified and engaged through public meetings and a series of stakeholder interviews and focus groups, which are described in detail later in this report.

The project team also engaged the Memphis Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Memphis MPO), which is the regional agency responsible for long range planning and administering federal funding programs in the region, to coordinate with development of their plans and programs. The Memphis MPO's Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), comprised of citizens, public officials, and organizations involved in active transportation, bicycling, pedestrian, and transit concerns in the region, was engaged on a regular basis at their quarterly meetings.

Key Milestones and Public Engagement Schedule

Shown in Table 2.1 is a calendar of community engagement events and project milestones (the latter shown in bold italics):

Table 2-1: Schedule and Milestones

Community Engagement Schedule of Events and Milestones		
2014	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Kickoff with Staff & Consultants
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Completion of Draft Goals & Objectives Completion of Public Engagement Strategy
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Meeting #1 (35 attendees)
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MATA Leadership Meeting
2015	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #2 MATA Board Update Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Meeting #2 (23 attendees) Memphis MPO ATAC Presentation #1 Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Tier 1 Screening Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #3
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops with MATA & City Staff Public Meeting #3 (61 attendees) Memphis MPO ATAC Presentation #2
2016	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of Tier 2 Screening & Financial Analysis
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MATA Board Update
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Meeting #4 (16 attendees) Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #4 MATA Board Update
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memphis MPO ATAC Presentation #3 Selection of Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) MATA Board Adoption of LPA
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion and Presentation of Draft Report

Section 2|

Outreach & Engagement Strategies

Overview

The MAC project included a broad range of stakeholders engaged through a variety of opportunities throughout the process. These included the Technical Advisory Committee, public meetings, stakeholder interviews and focus groups, PR and media outreach, and online communications.

Technical Advisory Committee

The MAC's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) guided the overall planning process, adding broader community insight on policy and technical issues. The TAC, which began meeting at the earliest stage of the project in May 2014, included public transit stakeholders, business representatives, community groups, and citizens representing various sectors of the community.

The TAC membership was comprised of representatives of the following groups:

Table 2-2: Technical Advisory Committee

Organizations Represented on the TAC	
Binghampton Development Corporation	Memphis Area Transit Authority
Broad Avenue Business Association	Memphis Bioworks Foundation
CD Council of Greater Memphis	Memphis Bus Riders Union
Christian Brothers University	Memphis Center for Independent Living
Community LIFT	Memphis College of Art
Cooper Young Business Association	Memphis Engineering
Crosstown Concourse/Crosstown Arts	Memphis Housing & Community Development
Downtown Memphis Commission	Memphis MPO
EDGE	Midtown Development Corporation
Greater Memphis Chamber	Office of the Mayor of City of Memphis

Organizations Represented on the TAC	
Loeb Properties	Office of the Mayor of Shelby County
Innovate Memphis	Overton Park Conservancy
M/SC Division of Planning & Development	Pigeon Roost Development Corporation
M/SC Office of Planning & Development	Rhodes College
M/SC Office of Sustainability	University of Memphis
Madison Avenue Business Association	Uptown Alliance
Medical District	Victorian Village CDC
Memphis Aerotropolis	Workforce Investment Network

Public Meetings

Summary

Four public meetings were held during the study process in July 2014, March 2015, July 2015, and March 2016. The intent of these forums was to provide an opportunity for two-way interaction with the public, educating them about the project and gaining their thoughts on viable solutions. Public meetings, in general, are an efficient way to provide information and accommodate large groups of participants. Specifically, MATA and the consultant team sought to better understand the transportation needs of the various communities within the study area and gauge public support for the alternatives studied.

Public Meeting #1 – Goals, Objectives, and Mapping Exercise

The public kickoff meeting for The MAC was held on July 29, 2014 at the Memphis Leadership Foundation, which is centrally located within the study area and along one of MATA's top two performing existing transit routes, bus route 50/Poplar. The 35 attendees were presented with draft goals and objectives for the project, existing conditions within the study area, and options for potential expanded or new transit service within the Midtown area, stretching between Downtown Memphis and the University District to the east. Input was gathered through general discussion, questions and answers, and a breakout group mapping exercise in which participants were shown potential transit corridors, dubbed "alignments" under the AA process.

Participants were presented with the basics of the study, an outline of the study area including existing transit service, and a summary of the routes and modes being considered. Following a discussion of the draft Goals and Objectives, attendees were asked to prioritize the initial universe of 26 alignments through a mapping exercise. For the mapping exercise and further discussion, the group was asked:

- What are the top transit destinations and activity centers in/outside the study area?
- What are the major needs and issues regarding service, amenities, and information for transit customers?
- What route options best meet community needs, and what modifications or additions should be considered?



The discussion centered heavily on four general categories: reliability/predictability of service, frequency of service, travel time, and connecting customers to destinations. Participants expressed a need for greater frequency during peak hours, more direct routes, expanded hours of service, infrastructure and technology improvements, and greater coordination with shift times at major employment centers. Also discussed were fare payment options, shelters, and amenities at stops, as well as integrating transit infrastructure and service with other transportation options, such as bicycle facilities and car sharing. A need for clean and safe environments and better amenities at transit stops, particularly seating, shelters, and service/travel time information, was expressed in a number of comments.

Public Meeting #2 – Tier 1 Screening and Community Support

A second public meeting was held on March 26, 2015 at the Crosstown Storybooth, near one of MATA's busiest transfer locations system-wide, at Poplar Avenue and Cleveland Street. This meeting was focused on the Tier 1 screening process and gauging community support for the various potential alignments being studied. The project team presented to the 23 attendees on the study's progress to date and presented the narrowed list of 16 alignments under consideration in the Tier 1 screening.



Among the participants, there was a general consensus that service to and from employment should be a top priority, and that the alternative selected should be balanced with and supportive of existing service and customers' basic needs. Again, extending the hours of operation for new and existing service was a priority for the stakeholders present. Participants also expressed that for future meetings, any info about the study, maps, and graphics should show how the proposed new service would connect with MATA's existing service, and with neighborhoods and destinations in the study area.

Public Meeting #3 – Tier 1 Results and Tier 2 Screening

A third meeting was held at the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library, also along Poplar Avenue, on July 16, 2015, with 61 attendees hearing updates and findings from previous rounds of public and stakeholder engagement.

This meeting, which occurred at the launching point for the Tier 2 analysis, provided a more in-depth look at what types of transit service would be paired with the narrowed list of 7 alignments. Details of regular bus, rapid bus (“BRT Light”), and bus rapid transit – vehicle types, road designs, station design and amenities, etc. – were presented along with a review of the overall scores in the five categories of the Tier 1 screening, shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Tier 1 Screening Results

Alignment	Enhance	Connect	Develop	Thrive	Sustain	Overall Rating
2 Binghampton via North Parkway	▲ FAIR	✗ POOR	✗ POOR	✗ POOR	▲ FAIR	✗ POOR
4 Binghampton via Poplar and Summer	▲ FAIR	✗ POOR	▲ FAIR	✗ POOR	✓ GOOD	✗ POOR
6 Airport via Poplar and East Pkwy	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	✓✓ BEST	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD
7 Germantown via Poplar	✓ GOOD	✓✓ BEST	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD	✓✓ BEST
8 U of M via Poplar, Cooper, and Union	✓ GOOD	✓✓ BEST	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD	✓✓ BEST
9 Fairgrounds via Madison	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD	✓✓ BEST	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD
10 U of M via Union, Cooper and Poplar	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	✓✓ BEST	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR
11 U of M via Union and Poplar	✓✓ BEST	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD	✓✓ BEST
12 U of M via Union, Cooper, Young, and Central	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR
13 U of M via Lamar and Southern	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD	✗ POOR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR
14 U of M via Lamar and Park	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR
15 AWTC via Lamar	✓✓ BEST	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR
16 Airport via Lamar	✓ GOOD	✗ POOR	✗ POOR	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR	✗ POOR
22 Graceland	✓ GOOD	✗ POOR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR	▲ FAIR
23 Elvis Presley, Cleveland, Watkins Crosstown	▲ FAIR	✓✓ BEST	▲ FAIR	✓✓ BEST	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD
26 U of M via Union, Cooper, and Central	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD	✓ GOOD	▲ FAIR	✓ GOOD

Comments from participants ranged from general support, to technical questions about the analysis and next steps for the project, to some general questions and concerns about prioritizing new or enhanced service over existing facilities and routes. Once again, a need to carefully coordinate in a way to support and enhance existing transit service was expressed, and several questions were asked regarding the details of the analyses, funding considerations, and timeline for implementing the LPA resulting from the study.

The meeting was attended by bus riders, disability advocates, neighborhood stakeholders, local media, and interested members of the public. The meeting was also covered extensively in local media outlets, helping to boost attendance and inform the general public about The MAC.

Public Meeting #4 – Tier 2 Results and Selection of the LPA

A fourth and final public meeting was held at the Memphis Leadership Foundation on March 28, 2016. 16 members of the public were in attendance and heard updates on the project's progress, including the results of the Tier 2 Screening process and the identification of the Locally Preferred Alternative, and east-west rapid bus service between downtown



Memphis and the University District along the Union Avenue and Poplar Avenue corridors. The presentation included some discussion of the various steps of the AA study analyses, including environmental scan, development potential, ridership projections, fatal flaw analysis, funding and branding strategies, and conceptual design of the corridor (shown in Figure 2).

Also covered in this meeting were estimated project costs and potential funding sources at the federal, state, and local levels that could be used to implement the LPA. Discussion with the attendees was primarily centered on procedure and timeline for adoption and implementation, branding and outreach efforts that would be needed to market the new service, and how similar projects have performed compared to their ridership projections. One major conversation point was the travel time shown for the LPA corridor service – participants expressed concern about the 44 minutes to travel end-to-end on the route. The project team agreed to revisit the number and placement of stations, signal priority and timing, and other possible measures to reduce the travel time for the new service.

Figure 2: DRAFT Conceptual Design of the LPA

Length	8.6 miles
# of Stations	23 stations
Peak Service Freq.	10 minutes
Capital Cost	\$25.70 million
Ann. Operating Cost	\$3.6 million
Avg. Daily Ridership	3,100
Existing Ridership	1,600
Passengers/Mile	356
One way Travel	28-31 minutes
Dev. Opportunities	19%
% of MATA FY16 Operating Budget	6.2%
Span of Service	5am – 12am



Stakeholder Workshops, Interviews, and Focus Groups

In order to directly engage stakeholders in the study process, workshops, focus groups, and interviews were conducted to gather input on current travel patterns, typical destinations, service hours and other time-of-day needs, route and mode alternatives for High Capacity Transit, and general transit needs/desires within the study area. These sessions helped the planning team gauge the similarities and differences between different constituencies interested in public transit and transportation generally within the study area. A list of the activities is shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2-3: Stakeholder Engagement Timeline

Stakeholder Outreach Activities, Audiences, and Dates	
Workshop - MATA Leadership	12/15/14
Workshop - City of Memphis - Engineering	2/13/15
Focus Group - Arts & Educational Institutions	2/24/15
Focus Group - Study Area Business Association	2/24/15
Interview - Development Industry Representative	3/9/15
Interview - Arts & Education Institution Representative	3/31/15
Focus Group - Memphis Bus Riders Union	5/8/15
Focus Group - University of Memphis Faculty & Staff	5/15/15
Workshop - City of Memphis - Engineering & Public Works	7/16/15
Workshop - MATA Staff and Board of Commissioners	7/15/16

The project team conducted four focus groups with a variety of stakeholder groups drawing from: MATA ridership, business and development interests, community and neighborhood organizations, and institutional stakeholders. Focus group participants were invited using an extensive list of potential stakeholders in the study area developed by MATA and the consultants, shown in Table 2.4. A questionnaire was developed to capture comprehensive input and candid responses on the current state and future potential of public transit in the study area. The sessions included private citizens, particularly those with greater mobility needs, business interests, and institutions and organizations with a presence in the study area.

Table 2-4: Potential Stakeholders for Focus Groups or Interviews

Organizations Invited by Focus Area	
Transit Ridership	
Memphis Bus Riders Union	Memphis Center for Independent Living
Memphis Interfaith Association (MIFA)	Mid-South Peace and Justice Center
Business Interests	
Cooper-Young Business Association	Madison Avenue Business Association
Grocery Stores	Overton Square Businesses
Historic Broad Business Association	Workforce Investment Network
Community or Neighborhood Organizations	
Annesdale Snowden Neighborhood Association	Midtown Central Neighborhood Association
Belleair Woods Neighborhood Association	Midtown Memphis Development Corporation
Binghampton Development Corporation	Neighborhood Associations
Central Gardens Neighborhood Association	Old Binghampton Neighborhood Association
Community LIFT	Orange Mound CDC
Cooper-Young Neighborhood Association	Pigeon Roost Development Corporation
Cooper-Young Community Association	Rhodes View Neighborhood Association
Crosstown Arts & Crosstown Development Team	Rozelle-Annesdale Neighborhood Association
Evergreen Historic District Association	Soulsville
Glenview Edgewood Manor Area Association	Tucker-Jefferson Neighborhood Association
Green Meadows-Poplar Glen Neighborhood Association	Uptown Alliance
Hein Park Civic Association	Victorian Village CDC
Lemoyne-Owen CDC	Vollintine-Evergreen Community Association

Organizations Invited by Focus Area	
Institutional Stakeholders	
Brooks Museum of Art	Methodist University & LeBonheur Hospitals
Christian Brothers University	Overton Park Conservancy & Memphis Zoo
Church Health Center	Regional Medical Center (The Med)
Downtown Memphis Commission	Rhodes College
Memphis Bioworks	Shelby County Schools
Memphis College of Art	St Jude Children's Research Hospital
Memphis Medical District	University of Memphis
Memphis Public Library	University of Tennessee at Memphis

In addition to identifying transit needs and desires, these sessions helped MATA and the project team to evaluate the feasibility of implementing recommended transit projects, to identify potential barriers to the implementation of the LPA, and to seek support and champions for the future of transit in Memphis from within the community. In general, participant feedback was positive, and further emphasized the need to connect people with jobs, education, and other opportunities in the community; in this case, specifically in the Medical District and University District, as well as in the cultural centers located in Downtown and Midtown Memphis.

Questions raised during these sessions were similar to those presented by the general public:

- How will marketing and outreach be used to increase ridership and improve public opinion on transit?
- How feasible is this new service in Memphis (ridership, costs of implementation, etc.) compared with similar projects in other cities?
- How will this new service complement existing routes and provide accessible connections for people who rely on transit in Memphis?

The focus groups were successful in generating meaningful feedback from groups with shared interests in transportation, and in identifying additional stakeholders to provide feedback to the process through meetings, interviews, and other forums. Two follow-up interviews with individual stakeholders were conducted to ensure all interested parties were able to participate and provide input.

Section 3|

Other Outreach & Communications

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets and publication documents were developed at key study milestones for distribution to the public and at project activities. Copies of these fact sheets are included as Appendix A. These fact sheets were distributed by email to project contacts and were made available at all public and stakeholder meetings.

Table 2.5: The MAC Fact Sheets

The MAC Fact Sheets, Timeframes, Details, and Content		
Fact Sheet #1	February 2015 Tier 1 Screening	Distributed to TAC, Focus Groups, and at Public Meeting #2. Included general information on the AA process, public engagement, potential routes, and types of service & vehicles being considered.
Fact Sheet #2	July 2015 Tier 2 Screening	Distributed at Public Meeting #3. Included updates on the project process, Goals & Objectives for the study, a summary of public input, the pre-screening and Tier 1 screening results, and next steps.
Fact Sheet #3	March 2016 Selection of LPA	Distributed at Public Meeting #4. Included project background, results of screening process, public involvement summary, and next steps.

Project Website

Websites provide a valuable means of providing real-time project information and soliciting input throughout the study process. The study team established a dedicated project website at www.macmemphis.com. The site included elements such as the following: project history; project goals and schedule; meeting notices; documents, presentations and reports; information contacts; and relevant links. A screen shot of the home page is shown in Figure 3.

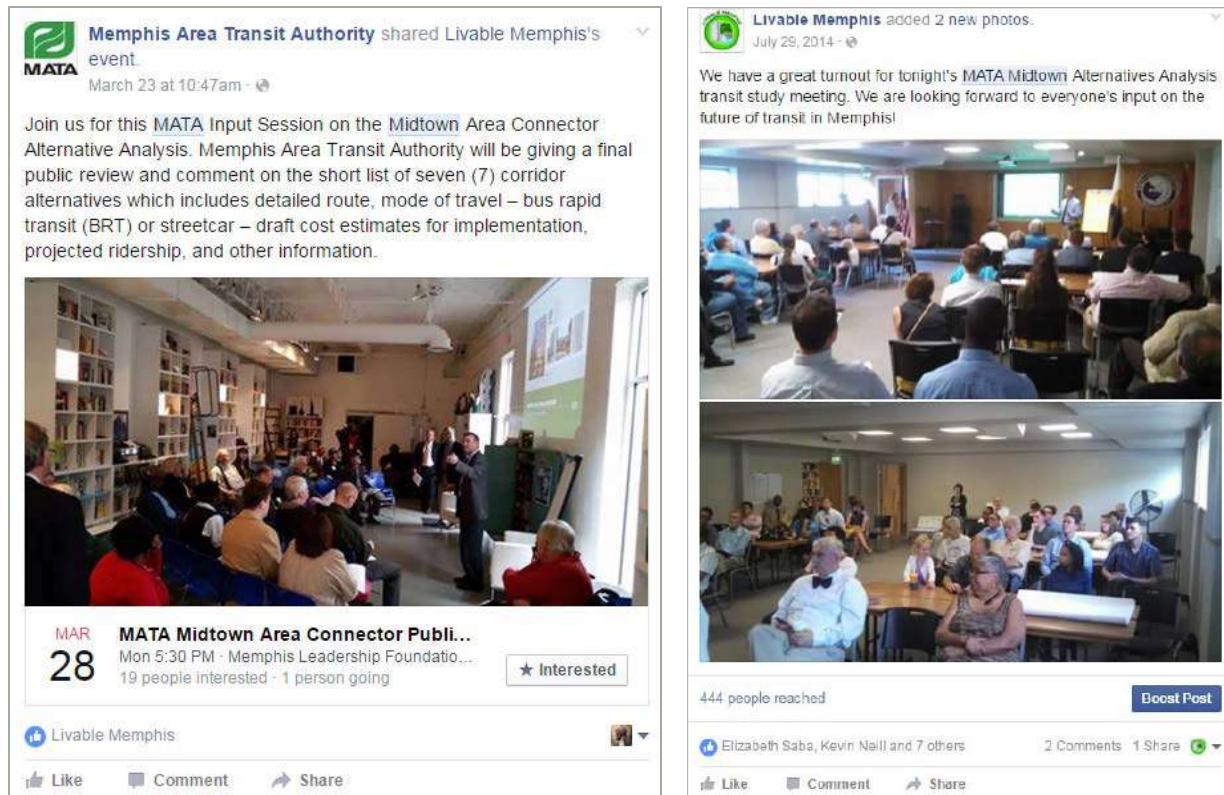
Figure 3: The MAC Project Website



Social Media

Based on previous experience of the community engagement team, the use of existing social media accounts was used for public outreach purposes, rather than creating new accounts for the purpose of a planning study. MATA and Livable Memphis Facebook and Twitter accounts were used extensively throughout the study to share information, promote public engagement activities, and solicit feedback. Between the two organizations' accounts and email lists, the project team accessed a combined network of nearly 5,000 online followers and contacts, with an average weekly reach of over 13,000 impressions.

Figure 4: Social Media



Appendix A

The MAC Fact Sheets

Midtown Alternatives Analysis Study

FACT SHEET #1

In April 2014, the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) initiated the Midtown Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. The Study's focus is: **to examine transit needs and the potential for providing a higher quality transit service within Midtown Memphis and surrounding neighborhoods.** The Study will carefully consider how both existing and potential transit customers in Memphis access destinations such as places of employment, educational centers, shopping and other daily needs.

This Study will build on MATA's existing Short Range Transit Plan for improved transit service city-wide, focusing specifically on new or expanded types of transit service in and around Midtown. A key element of this Study will be examining the specific travel needs of existing MATA customers, as gathered through the Memphis Metropolitan Planning Organization's Mid-South Regional Travel Survey. That survey included a Transit On-Board Survey of all existing MATA routes, gathering information on origins and destinations of MATA's ridership, and created a demographic profile of their customers.

Figure 1: Existing MATA Transit Service in the Midtown AA Study Area



PUBLIC INPUT TO THE MIDTOWN AA STUDY

Input from transit riders, residents, and other stakeholders throughout the study area (shown above) is essential to shaping effective transit solutions with the community. MATA will offer a variety of venues for the public and interested organizations to provide input throughout the planning process. MATA has convened a **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** to provide input on the goals and objectives of the Study. The Committee includes representatives from the transit riders union, businesses, community groups, and citizens representing various sectors of the community. MATA held the first in a series of public meetings for the study last summer, with over 35 participants from the community in attendance. MATA and the project team will be taking updates on the project back to the community this spring, and meanwhile are seeking input from residents and stakeholders throughout the study area.

Midtown Alternatives Analysis Study

FACT SHEET #1

DEVELOP AND EVALUATE ROUTE OPTIONS




A range of route options through Midtown Memphis will be evaluated for their ability to meet the community's goals. After listening to stakeholder comments and ideas and evaluating a broad range of initial options, the project team will advance a set of reasonable alternatives for further analysis. Ultimately, MATA and the community will select the most viable option, the **Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)**. The LPA should advance the project goals and objectives, including:

- Provides the best access to key attractions and advances the community's vision;
- Provides an opportunity to complement existing bus service and allows for future extensions;
- Has great potential for transit-supportive development along its corridor;
- Has the lowest potential for negative environmental impacts to the community.

In summary, the LPA is the route and technology which best connects neighborhoods, existing businesses and key destinations, while promoting future development and economic growth in desired areas.

DETERMINE WHAT THE NEW SERVICE WILL LOOK LIKE

The Study will also evaluate a range of modal options, or types of transit vehicles, as shown below. It will answer the question: **What transit technology is best suited for the corridor(s)?** The Study will determine and compare the costs and benefits of operating an extension of the existing trolleys, a modern streetcar or bus rapid transit (BRT) along the recommended route.

Trolleys	Modern Streetcars	Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
		
Improvements/extensions to existing MATA trolleys/buses could be recommended as an option to continue the operations of transit service in the study area as they do today.	Modern Streetcars provide economic development and place-marking benefits that are not as easily achieved with bus service. Operating in street traffic on rails embedded in the road, streetcars would complement existing bus service.	Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) uses rubber-tired vehicles with a higher level of service than traditional buses; stops may offer "station-like" level boarding; service could use dedicated bus-only lanes; or traffic signal priority could extend green lights for buses.

ELEMENTS OF FURTHER STUDY

Three critical elements of the Study will be evaluated going forward. These are: **Refinement of Reasonable Alternatives, Conceptual Design and Financial Strategy**. These elements will involve projecting future ridership; evaluating traffic and parking impacts; assessing noise, vibration and other potential environmental impacts; defining streets and station stops for the final alignment; identifying suitable location for a potential vehicle maintenance facility (if MATA's existing facility is not adequate); determining the conditions of utilities, bridges, and structures along the route; developing capital and operating cost estimates; estimating potential economic development impacts; reviewing potential federal, state, local and private funding sources; and developing an implementation plan for the Locally Preferred Alternative.

MIDTOWN ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FACT SHEET #2

SUMMER 2015



MIDTOWN ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FACT SHEET #2

MIDTOWN ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FACT SHEET #2

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In April 2014, the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) initiated the Midtown Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. The Study's primary goal is to **examine transit needs and the potential for providing a higher quality transit service within Midtown Memphis and surrounding neighborhoods.** The Study will carefully consider how both existing and potential transit users in Memphis access destinations such as places of employment, educational centers, shopping and other daily needs. The study will build on recommendations in the Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) approved by MATA Board in March 2014.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives were developed for the Project.

1. **ENHANCE**- Make Midtown Corridor transit service more compelling
2. **CONNECT**- Connect neighborhoods and improve local circulation
3. **DEVELOP**- Support local and regional economic development goals
4. **THRIVE**- Strengthen Midtown Corridor neighborhoods and business areas
5. **SUSTAIN**- Create an environment that will be sustainable over the long term



For more information on the Midtown Alternatives project, please visit <http://www.macmemphis.com/>

SUMMARY OF INITIAL SCREENING

A range of route options through the Midtown area have been evaluated for their ability to meet the Study's goals. After receiving input from stakeholders and reviewing the performance of each option, a reasonable set of routes shown in the map on page 1 emerged as viable candidate alignments for further screening.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process for screening the alignments developed 15 criteria which are tied to the 5 goals identified above in order to measure the performance of each alignment. The evaluation process consists of a three-step process (Pre-Screening of Alternatives, Tier 1 Screening and Tier 2 Screening).

A. **Pre-Screening:** The initial step involved the screening of 26 alignments (Universe of Alignments) which were evaluated against a set of criteria such as ridership on existing routes, population and employment densities along corridors, community input, services to major activity centers and viability of streets for implementing High Capacity Transit service. This phase reduced 26 alignments to 16.

B. **Tier 1 Screening:** The second step involved Tier 1 screening intended to narrow these 16 potential alignments into a short-list of alternatives. The preliminary results of the Tier 1 screening process shown that seven alignments were rated as BEST or GOOD when considering the project's five goals:

- ✓ 6 - Airport Poplar and East Pkwy
- ✓ 7 - Germantown via Poplar
- ✓ 8 - U of M via Poplar, Cooper, and Union
- ✓ 9 - Fairgrounds via Madison
- ✓ 11 - U of M via Union and Poplar
- ✓ 23 - Elvis Presley, Cleveland, Watkins Crosstown
- ✓ 26 - U of M via Union, Cooper, and Central

C. **Tier 2 Screening:** The analysis performed during Tier 2 will be a detailed evaluation of each alignment and will eventually results in the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

In efforts to gain the public's input regarding the Midtown Alternatives Analysis, several public meetings have been held. In addition to this, several meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee has been held to provide additional input on the Study. Important issues discussed include study goals and objectives, funding, future expansion opportunities, and identification of potential alignments. Input from the community and the TAC have guided the evaluation process.

NEXT STEPS



Assessment of Development Potential

- Assess development opportunity along potential corridors.
- Determine the best use of available or underutilized properties along potential corridors

Environmental Analysis

- Conduct an environmental scan of the seven alignments
- Determine if there are any significant environmental impact along potential corridors

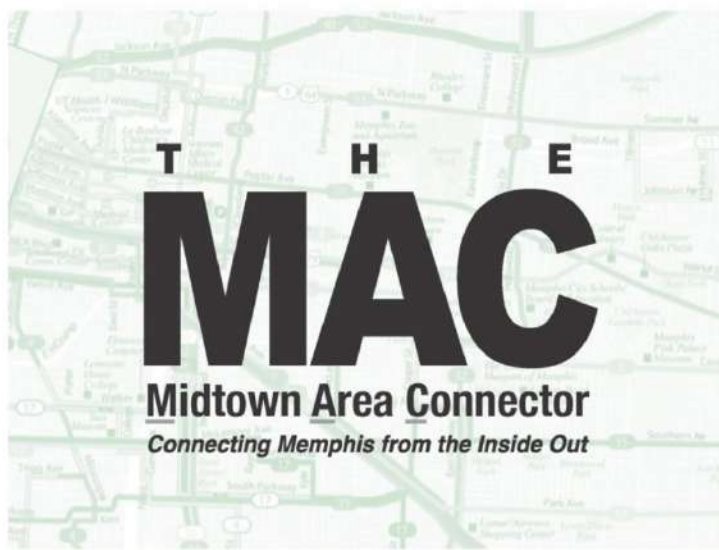
Refine Alignment Options

- Perform next level of screening for the seven alignments
- Conduct ridership modeling to determine potential users of the new service

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MIDTOWN MEMPHIS ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FACT SHEET

SPRING 2016


MIDTOWN MEMPHIS
ALTERNATIVES
ANALYSIS

FACT SHEET #3

MIDTOWN MEMPHIS ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FACT SHEET #3

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In April 2014, the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA) initiated the Midtown Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study. The Study's primary purpose is to examine transit needs and the potential for providing a higher quality transit service within Midtown Memphis and surrounding neighborhoods.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives were developed for the project:

1. **ENHANCE**- Make Midtown Corridor transit service more compelling
2. **CONNECT**- Connect neighborhoods and improve local circulation
3. **DEVELOP**- Support local and regional economic development goals
4. **THRIVE**- Strengthen Midtown Corridor neighborhoods and business areas
5. **SUSTAIN**- Create an environment that will be sustainable over the long term

SUMMARY OF INITIAL SCREENING

A range of route options were evaluated for their ability to meet the Study's goals. After receiving input from stakeholders and reviewing the performance of each option, a reasonable set of routes emerged as viable candidate alignments for further screening.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process for screening the alignments developed 15 criteria which are tied to the 5 goals identified above in order to measure the performance of each alignment. The evaluation process consists of a three-step process described below:



For more information on the Midtown Memphis Alternatives Analysis project, please visit <http://www.macmemphis.com/>

MIDTOWN MEMPHIS ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FACT SHEET #3

2

A. **Pre-Screening:** The initial step involved the screening of 26 alignments (Universe of Alignments) which were evaluated against a set of criteria such as ridership on existing routes, population and employment densities along corridors, community input, services to major activity centers and viability of streets for implementing High Capacity Transit service. This phase reduced 26 alignments to 16.

B. **Tier 1 Screening:** The second step involved Tier 1 screening intended to narrow these 16 potential alignments into a short-list of alternatives. The preliminary results of the Tier 1 screening process identified seven alignments for further screening:

- ✓ 6- Airport Poplar and East Pkwy
- ✓ 7- Germantown via Poplar
- ✓ 8- U of M via Poplar, Cooper, and Union
- ✓ 9- Fairgrounds via Madison
- ✓ 11- U of M via Union and Poplar
- ✓ 23- Elvis Presley, Cleveland, Watkins Crosstown
- ✓ 26- U of M via Union, Cooper, and Central



C. **Tier 2 Screening:** The analysis performed during Tier 2 resulted in the table below. These results will be presented to the Technical Advisory Committee, the public and MATA Board on March 28 and 29, 2016. The top performing BRT alternative (#11) is identified as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) and may be advanced for further refinement. In the future, other higher performing BRT and Streetcar alternatives such as #23 and #9 may be advanced for further analysis. At this time, MATA anticipates requesting Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding for the implementation of the LPA.

Alternative	Corridor Description	Mode of Travel	Daily Ridership (2035)	Capital Cost (2016)	Annual Operations & Maintenance Costs (2016)	Corridor Length (Miles)	One Way Travel Time (Minutes)	Number of Stops/Stations	Number of Vehicles	Development Potential (% of underutilized parcels)	Passengers per Mile
6	Airport via Poplar & Airways	BRT	1726	\$43.70	\$5.51	11.75	50.37	39	13	22%	147
7	Germantown via Poplar	BRT	2138	\$37.00	\$4.06	7.81	37.70	27	11	17%	274
8	U of M via Poplar, Cooper & Union	BRT	1205	\$35.20	\$4.52	8.49	42.38	30	12	18%	142
9	Madison Ave. Streetcar to Fairground	Streetcar	1301	\$65.00	\$3.41	2.82	27.73	4	8	13%	461
11	U of M via Union & Poplar	BRT	3061	\$37.20	\$4.55	8.59	44.05	31	12	19%	356
23	Cleveland, Watkins Crosstown	BRT	3512	\$40.00	\$5.29	11.04	47.22	39	13	22%	318
26	U of M via Union & Central	BRT	2430	\$38.40	\$4.65	9.1	44.82	32	12	20%	267

NOTE: Total length of Streetcar is 7.20 miles (extension line is 2.82 miles)

*Costs are shown in millions

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

In efforts to gain the public's input regarding the Midtown Alternatives Analysis, several public meetings and stakeholder focus groups have been held. In addition to this, several meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee have been held to provide additional input on the Study. Important issues discussed include study goals and objectives, funding, future expansion opportunities, and identification of potential alignments. Input from the community and the TAC have guided the evaluation process.

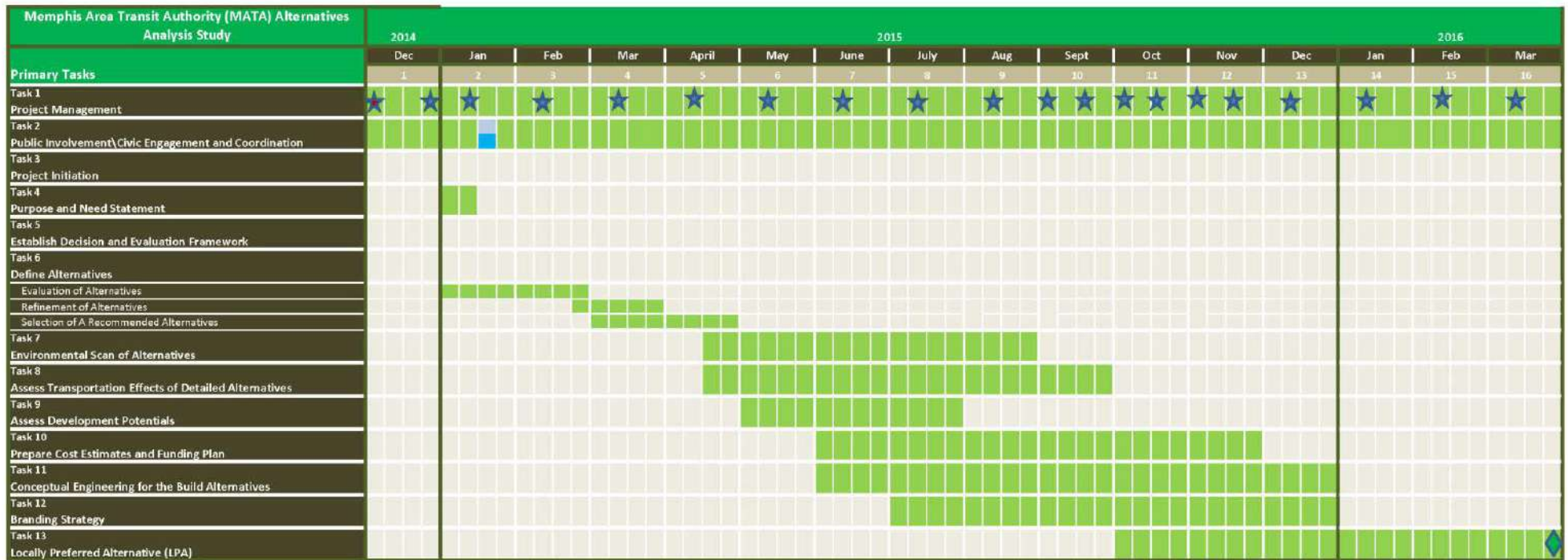
NEXT STEPS

- April 2016: Further analysis of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
- April 23, 2016: Presentation of Draft Alternatives Analysis Report to the MATA Board of Commissioners
- April 29, 2016: Submit LPA to the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Discretionary Grant Program (TIGER: Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery).
- May/June 2016: Final AA/LPA Study Report to MATA.

For more information on the Midtown Memphis Alternatives Analysis project, please visit <http://www.macmemphis.com/>

Appendix B

Project Schedule



- ★ Meeting with MATA Leadership: 12/15/14
- Board Meeting: 01/02/15
- Advisory Committee Meeting: 01/02/15
- Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA): March 2016
- ★ Project Team Management Meetings/Calls: Monthly/2nd Week