



April 7, 2020: Transit-Oriented Development Open House Q&A Session 1

Q. How is the project team remaining adaptive with our COVID and the current economic situation?

A. Our community engagement efforts for this project began in February 2020. Due to COVID-19 and a commitment to social distancing, a virtual “Open House” format was developed to encourage and allow the ongoing engagement of community members. The project team thanks everyone for their flexibility and willingness to adapt in an ever-evolving time of change.

The New Rapid Transit Project for a Growing, Equitable Rochester is funded 90% through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The remaining ten percent is funded locally through the use of Destination Medical Center funds that can only be spent within the DMC District. In order to receive this funding through the FTA, the project must continue with community engagement events to meet deadlines for the grant. The City intends to submit an FTA Small Starts Program application in the Fall of 2020. The majority of the work, including economic development and land use planning concepts, must be completed and endorsed by Rochester City Council by September 1, 2020.

The city of Rochester and its partners are committed to addressing immediate community needs. We are also committed to our resilience and success in the future, and advancing work that supports these goals. By positioning the City for the future, we will be able to come out of this stronger, more resilient, and ready to embrace the new normal.

Q. Is the route for the Rapid Transit project set in stone?

A. The Rapid Transit project team has evaluated several scenarios and routes for the Rapid Transit. The four-mile route will run for the Mayo Clinic West Parking Lot to downtown Rochester via 2nd Street SW. The Downtown Transit Circulator Alternatives Evaluation report shows all that was involved in the evaluation of this route. On November 18, 2019, the Rochester City Council approved the selection of Broadway Avenue. There are several reasons for the decision to utilize Broadway over Third Avenue, to highlight a couple:

- Integration with previous plans: The City of Rochester recently accepted the Comprehensive Plan, which designates Broadway as a Primary Transit Network corridor where we have adopted TOD Zoning.
- Community well-being and neighborhood impact: By selecting Broadway Avenue, our plans are consistent with the priorities outlined for the UMR/REC Zone and the investments in Discovery Square. It also minimizes the projected disruption of existing neighborhoods along Third Avenue.

The next steps for this project include a traffic study that will evaluate how the efficiency of this route for the Rapid Transit and the surrounding traffic.

Q. Will neighborhoods along the Rapid Transit route be included in the planning process?

B. Yes, the Rapid Transit project team wants to hear feedback and keep neighborhoods involved in this project. Their values and input matters in creating thriving neighborhoods around the Rapid Transit line. If you are a part of these surrounding neighborhoods, please reach out to us with any thoughts or ideas on Rapid Transit planning:

- Email: Rapidtransit@rochestermn.gov
- Phone Number: (507)328-2025

Q. What are the selected sites for the Rapid Transit villages/hubs?

A. The Rapid Transit route will have an eastern and western terminus. The western hub will be located on Mayo Clinic's West Lot; the eastern hub will be located on or near Seneca Site. The specific locations on these sites are yet to be determined.

Q. What features will make Rapid Transit superior to standard busses?

A. Rochester's Rapid Transit project will include the following features for an improved transit experience:

- Buses make fewer stops, significantly speeding up travel time. RT will stay better in sync with traffic flow.
- Ticket machines at stations allow customers to purchase tickets before boarding. There's no need to line up at the fare-box.
- Low-floor buses and raised curbs at stations, plus wider bus doors and boarding from the front and back, speed up boarding.
- Extending the curb at stations saves time. Buses can merge more easily into traffic after serving a station.
- Signal priority allows buses to move through traffic lights a bit faster.
- Buses will have designated transit-only lanes along 2nd Avenue and Broadway to speed service.

RT will have a level entry, which makes it easier for those with wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers to board. It is also proposed that passengers using wheelchairs could choose to ride in either a forward-facing or rear-facing self-securing wheelchair space. Additionally, there may be Braille "Stop Requested" buttons on the bus and Braille information located on the ticket vending machines. Additionally, audio and vibratory signals will also be introduced at pedestrian crossings along the route.

Q. Will the Rapid Transit route replace the current park-n-ride lots (such as IBM or Target South)?

A. The Rapid Transit route will utilize the Seneca site and Mayo Clinic West lot as a transit hubs. It is not anticipated that other Park and Ride locations will be replaced by this project.

Q. Does the project have plans to improve bike routes that connect to these corridors from other parts of the City? Are bike lanes being considered on 2nd Street, east of 52?

A. Yes, a part of this project is to review and improve pedestrian and bicycling routes to and from the rapid transit stations. The project is also reviewing pedestrian and bicycle amenities on the route (2nd Street SW and Broadway Avenue). At this time in the project, we are looking to receive input on whether bike lanes should be considered on 2nd Street.

Q. How many stops will be along the transit route?

A. The future rapid transit route currently has 11 stops. As part of this study, stops will be eliminated to improve the efficiency and speed of the line. We are asking the public to inform us which stops are the most important and which can be removed. This feedback can be provided by contacting the project team:

- Surveys by location:
 - 2nd Street SW: West of Highway 52 Survey - <https://arcg.is/1j40Xj0>
 - 2nd Street SW: East of Highway 52 Survey - <https://arcg.is/1PeLmL>
 - Broadway Corridor Survey - <https://arcg.is/1GGOLP>
- Email: Rapidtransit@rochestermn.gov
- Phone Number: (507)328-2025

Q. Will electric vehicle charging stations be included at the Transportation Hubs?

A. The City is committed to creating a sustainable and resilient future. This goal is evident in the City's designation as the first LEED Gold Certified City in the state of Minnesota and the recent adoption of Mayor Norton's Sustainability Pledge.

The City will look to implement energy-saving strategies as part of the design and development of the two transit villages.

Q. What is the projected implementation schedule?

A. Service is expected to begin in 2025. This timeline could be easily moved with the timing of funding grant awards and other issues.

Q. How can tickets be purchased at the RT station? How will it be different from the current bus system?

A. Our goal is to make this process as user-friendly, convenient, and efficient as possible. RT tickets will be available for purchase at fare boxes at stations or anywhere bus tickets can be purchased. Tickets will not be available on the bus to ensure that the Rapid Transit is as efficient as possible.

Q. Will there be a dedicated bus-only lane in each direction?

A. One of the elements of a rapid transit line is the use of transit-only or transit-designated lanes. The project team has begun the engineering process of reviewing the system and community impact of utilizing transit-only lanes. A portion of this analysis is the completion of traffic studies. These studies will assess the best options for Rapid Transit and traffic in the corridor and on surrounding neighborhoods. The project team hopes to have a draft version of this analysis available for public review in the Fall of 2020. The study of traffic impacts in the corridor and on surrounding neighborhoods is an element of the required state and federal environmental review process. If transit-only lanes are selected for Rochester, the implementation of actions to respond to changes in existing traffic patterns are required.

Q. How will the City Loop project be incorporated in the Rapid Transit project?

A. The City Loop project is the creation of pedestrian and bicycle features separated and protected from vehicle traffic in and around downtown. The current City Loop plans have been incorporated as part of the existing pedestrian and bicycle analysis of this study.

Q. What station locations have been for Broadway Avenue?

A. The station location selection is part of the current public outreach effort. Please review the two station location scenarios suggested along Broadway in the project's interactive webpage. After reviewing the scenarios, please complete the survey concluding the Broadway Section or available at <https://arcg.is/1GGOLP>. Completing the survey or submitting feedback another way will help inform the final station locations.

Q. What are the station locations along 2nd Street west of US 52?

A. The station location selection is part of the current public outreach effort. Please review the station location scenarios suggested along 2nd Street in the project's interactive webpage. After reviewing the scenarios, please complete the survey concluding the 2nd Street west of US 52 is available at <https://arcg.is/1j40Xj0>. Completing the survey or submitting feedback another way will help inform the final station locations.

Q. What are the proposed hours of operation for the future rapid transit service?

A. The proposed hours of operation for the rapid transit system is from 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. during the week with limited hours on the weekend. These hours of operation were developed to help the Project Team evaluate anticipated operating costs. As the project is further developed and agreements between partners are reached, the hours of operation may be altered to accommodate anticipated funding streams and revenues. The Rapid Transit route and hours of service can be updated as our community grows and changes.

Q. Will there be security at the transit hubs/villages?

A. The City of Rochester understands the importance of creating an environment in which people feel safe to ride the future rapid transit system. As the project is further developed, the security features and details will be reviewed and evaluated at the transit villages and on-board the vehicles.