Cross-County MetroLink Extension

Community Engagement Phase One September – October 1998

# Summary of Phase One Engagement Activities


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**East-West Gateway Coordinating Council**
***In association with***
**Bi-State Development Agency**
**Missouri Department of Transportation**

**10.22.98**
**The Cross-County Corridor MetroLink Segment I Extension Conceptual Design & Environmental Analysis**

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# Introduction

This report includes written summaries of the first round of public meetings held for the Cross-County Conceptual Design Study. For each meeting, information concerning the date, place and time of meetings, the number of participants, the meeting structure, and the material available to participants is documented.

This report also provides:

- Summaries of Panel Discussions
- Summaries of Small Group Discussions
- Summaries of Evaluation Forms
- Summaries of Comment Sheets
- Summary of Media Coverage
- Evaluation of Engagement Activities

Additional documentation of the public meetings has been provided to the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council. The documentation reports include copies of all material distributed at the meetings, meeting agendas, transcription of notes prepared by recorders, and copies of all material—Evaluation Sheets, Comment Sheets—received at the meetings. The documentation reports are available for public review at the Council's office.

# Public Forum Summary

## Location, Date & Time

Clayton Community Center; September 28, 1998; 4:00 to 6:00PM and 7:00 to 9:00PM

## Forum Purpose

The first Public Forum was designed as an open house. The public was invited to drop-in and learn more about the first phase of the Conceptual Design Study for the proposed Cross-County MetroLink Segment I Extension. The forum provided an opportunity for the public to ask questions of and explore ideas with members of the design team and the Council's staff. It was sponsored by the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (the Council) in cooperation with the Bi-State Development Agency (Bi-State) and the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

## Public Attendance

252 sign-in cards were collected from attendees. Staff at the registration table noted that not all attendees signed-in, therefore actual attendance is estimated to be closer to 275. Based upon the evaluations received, the majority of attendees were residents of Clayton and its vicinity. Visitation was highest during the 7 to 9 PM session compared to the 4 to 6 PM session.

## Staff Attendance

| **Council & Agency Staff** | **Engagement Team Members** | **Design Team Members** |
|---|---|---|
| Les Sterman, EWGCC | Mary Means, MMA | Richard Hocking, PTG |
| Jerry Blair, EWGCC | Steve Schukraft, MMA | Bill Schafer, PTG |
| Donna Day, EWGCC | Leslie Smith, MMA | Paul Moyer, EDAW |
| Jim Seamon, EWGCC | Al Witzig, MMA | Greg Knauer, PES |
| Steve Clark, MoDOT | Laurna Godwin, | Vector Austin Tao, Austin Tao Assoc. |
| Paul Wojciechowski, MoDOT | Jessica Perkins, Vector | Andy Trivers, Trivers Assoc. |
| Bob Innis, Bi-State | Joe Berridge, Urban Strategies | Gary Smith, Bi-State |
| Mark Reid, Urban Strategies | | |

## Forum Structure

Participants were able to review displays showing the conceptual design options and to learn more about the ways these options will be refined and evaluated. The forum displays were organized into a series of ten stations:

- Station 1: Welcome & Sign-in
- Station 2: Planning History & Context
- Station 3: Basic Design Options
- Station 4: Design Options for Forest Park Station through University City
- Station 5: Design Options for Clayton and the Galleria Area;
- Station 6: Design Options for Richmond Heights to Shrewsbury
- Station 7: Evaluation Criteria
- Station 8: Forest Park Transportation System
- Station 9: Community Design
- Station 10: Community Involvement

Each station was marked by a large sign and included hand-outs or information displays. Information posted on the displays included: large maps, photos of existing conditions at possible alignment locations, sketches of the various vertical alignment options (at-grade, above grade, below grade), and accompanying text. Representatives from the Council and the study team were at each station in order to speak directly with the public regarding their questions or concerns. Upon entering the forum, participants were provided with a handout that described the purpose of the evening, a map of the stations with key questions for each station, and a schedule of upcoming public events.

## Materials Provided

In addition to the information displays, other materials were made available to the forum attendees including the following: Forum Orientation Handouts, Evaluation Sheets, Comment Sheets, Study Brochures, and Study Newsletter (Cross-County MetroLink Update, Volume 1, Fall 1998). Fact sheets were available regarding Upcoming Events, How to Get Involved, Frequently Asked Questions, Design Definitions, the Route, the Cross-County Team, and the Community Working Group.

## Evaluation Sheet Summary

Evaluation sheets were distributed to forum attendees asking them to evaluate the forum regarding logistics (location, time, set-up) and the quality of their experience. While the evaluation sheets *cannot* be interpreted as a statistically accurate picture of participant's opinions, they provide an indication of the overall quality of the experience. A total of 164 evaluation sheets were returned with the majority of respondents residing closest to the Forest Park to Clayton segment of the proposed extension.

Overall, respondents were positive toward the questions asked, agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:

- The Clayton Community Center was an accessible location for the Public Forum;
- Time slots were convenient for my schedule;
- Displays were valuable in helping me to understand more about the project;
- Handouts were valuable in helping me to understand more about the project;
- After the Public Forum, I feel more prepared to participate in Community Issues Workshops.

- The mailings (brochure and newsletter) and newspaper were cited most often as the way respondents learned about the meeting.

Attendees also were asked what they most liked and disliked about the forum. Generally, people most liked the opportunity to talk directly with members of the study team, exchanging views with other visitors, seeing the design options in writing and drawings, the informal format, and that the forum was held at all. Most disliked by attendees were the lack of detail, confusing displays, lack of formal structure (e.g., no presentation), defensiveness of some staff, and "buttonholing" of staff by some participants. During the 7-8 PM time period a large number of people arrived, prompting comments about crowding and an inability to see displays and hear or talk with staff. Concern also was raised about the integrity of the process (e.g., just "propaganda").

## Comment Sheet Summary

Although the primary purpose of the forum was to provide information rather than to solicit comments, public comment forms were made available to individuals who wished to convey their comments to the Council and study team in writing. Comments were received concerning the engagement process and forum specifically, community impacts, and design recommendations and preferences. With regard to the process and forum, comments included; appreciation for the ability to review information and provide feedback, concern about the integrity of the process, and inaccuracy of a display map. Community impact issues raised included concern about noise levels and vibration, vehicular and pedestrian safety, traffic, parking, urban design and aesthetics, costs, timing, and serving the young and elderly. Participants also expressed a variety of preferences regarding route location and profile, station design and location, integration with other forms of transit, and expansion.

# Community Issues Workshop 1
# Forest Park Station through University City

## Location, Date & Time

Compton Drew Investigative Learning Center; October 1, 1998; 7:00-9:00 PM.

## Workshop Purpose

This Community Issues Workshop was designed to provide an opportunity for the study team to elicit comments, concerns and questions from interested parties concerning the Cross-County study and the design options for the section of the MetroLink extension from Forest Park Station through University City. The workshop was sponsored by the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (the Council) in cooperation with the Bi-State Development Agency (Bi-State) and the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

## Public Attendance

225 sign-in cards were collected from attendees. Staff at the registration table noted that not all attendees signed-in, therefore actual attendance is estimated to be closer to 250.

## Staff Attendance

| **Council & Agency Staff** | **Engagement Team Members** | **Design Team Members** |
|---|---|---|
| Les Sterman, EWGCC | Mary Means, MMA | Richard Hocking, PTG |
| Jerry Blair, EWGCC | Steve Schukraft, MMA | Ron Deverman, PTG |
| Donna Day, EWGCC | Leslie Smith, MMA | Bill Schafer, PTG |
| Jim Seamon, EWGC | Al Witzig, MMA | Paul Moyer, EDAW |
| Steve Clark, MoDOT | Laurna Godwin, Vector | Greg Knauer, PES |
| Paul Wojciechowski, MoDOT | Jessica Perkins, Vector | Austin Tao, Austin Tao Assoc |
| | Mark Reid, Urban Strategies | Andy Trivers, Trivers Assoc. |

A team of facilitators and recorders also participated

## Workshop Structure

The workshop was organized around an introductory presentation and small group work sessions. Upon arriving, participants were asked to sign-in and pick-up several pieces of information about the study. The workshop began with a welcome by the Council's Executive Director, Les Sterman, followed by a presentation of design options by Richard Hocking of Parsons Transportation Group.

Jessica Perkins, lead facilitator with the engagement team, followed with an explanation of the small group discussion format.

Many participants did not want to break into small groups and chose instead to remain in the large room. Approximately half of the group chose to stay in the main meeting space, the other half chose to participate in the facilitated small group work sessions. Hocking remained in the large room and answered questions as Perkins facilitated. Mark Reid served as large group recorder. In the small group work sessions, participants were asked by a facilitator to respond to the following questions in round-robin style: "What are you feelings about the MetroLink extension in your area?" "How do you believe your community will be positively influenced by the MetroLink extension in your area?" "What concerns you most about the MetroLink extension in your area?" and "Which option do you prefer and why?" Participant comments in the large and small groups were recorded on flip charts.

## Materials Provided

Informational and other materials were made available to attendees at the registration tables included the following: Workshop Agenda, an excerpt from the newsletter, Cross-County MetroLink Update, Volume 1, Fall 1998, Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet, Evaluation Sheet, Comment Sheet, and a copy of the Cross-County MetroLink Update. At the front of the large meeting room displays were mounted including: large maps, photos of existing conditions at possible alignment locations, sketches of the various vertical alignment options (at-grade, above grade, below grade), and accompanying text.
Some individuals affiliated with known interest groups also distributed their own materials to participants as they entered the building. Among the material distributed was a comment form disguised to look like material prepared and endorsed by the Council. The use of the Cross-County logo on this form was not authorized by the Council. The form was designed to elicit preferences about specific design options and this may have led participants to believe that a Council decision regarding a preferred design was imminent, a purposely false impression.

## Large Group Discussion Summary

The large group question and answer session with Hocking revealed community concerns about several potential impacts of the extension. Participants asked questions about the following: parking impacts on neighborhoods and Clayton businesses, methods for estimating costs and assessing impacts, design requirements for stations, strategies to control parking, signal phasing, noise mitigation, right-of-way requirements, pedestrian and bike safety, and traffic congestion. Hocking provided answers and clarified that it was too early in the study to provide detailed information about the impacts of different design options.

In response to a participant's shouted request, people expressed their design preference by raising their hands. Most indicated their preference for the cut-and-cover tunnel option and many said they would prefer that money be spent to upgrade the bus system rather than extend MetroLink. A show of hands was not called for by the facilitator, but the results were recorded and participants were asked to share their perception of the benefits offered by a cut-and-cover option. Participants preferred this option because they believed that it would be faster, quieter, and less disruptive to neighborhoods and traffic flow.

## Small Group Discussion Summary

Six small group work sessions were held. For each small group, a facilitator guided a discussion around four questions and a recorder took notes on flip charts. In response to the first question, concerning personal feelings about the extension, participants expressed a range of feelings, from very negative to mixed to very positive. Participants expressed their skepticism about the intent of the planning process, arguing that they believe important decisions had already been made. Others stated their concerns about the "North-of-Forest Park" route, the costs, and their fears about neighborhood impacts. Others offered comments like "wonderful," "excited" and "cautiously optimistic." Many expressed mixed feelings, using words like "nervous," "uncertain," "unsure," or "excited and anxious."

Regarding perceptions of positive influences, participants mentioned potential improvements in traffic congestion, air quality, and improved connections to the airport, downtown and sports facilities. Community cohesiveness, economic development, improved accessibility for the elderly, and improved access to jobs also were mentioned. When asked about their concerns, participants said they believed the quality of life of adjacent neighborhoods would decline due to increased noise, traffic congestion, parking on residential street, and vibration. Participants also expressed concern about aesthetics, pedestrian safety, the possible need for additional right-of-way to accommodate the tracks, potential affects on bus service, the availability of sufficient funds to "do it right," and the integrity of the planning process.

Because the presentation and question and answer session at the start of the meeting went longer than anticipated, there was not sufficient time to explore the final question, "Which design option do you prefer and why?" Cut-and-cover was the design option most often cited as preferred but most of the groups did not have time to explore the reasons why this option was favored. When discussed, participants cited safety, speed, efficiency, and aesthetics as the primary benefits. Surface options were mentioned by several participants as favored, a few others expressed their preference for the open trench option.

(To allow more time for the introductory presentation and question-and-answer periods before and after the break out sessions, the question regarding design option preferences was not asked at the second two Issues Workshops. Instead, participants were asked if they had additional questions for the Council and the consultant team.)

## Evaluation Sheet Summary

Evaluation sheets were distributed to workshop attendees that asked them to evaluate the workshop regarding logistics (location, time, set-up) and the quality of their experience. While the evaluation sheets should not be interpreted as a statistically accurate picture of participant's opinions, they provide an indication of the overall quality of the experience. A total of 122 evaluation sheets were returned. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents reside closest to the Forest Park to University City segment of the proposed extension.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- The Compton Drew Investigative Learning Center was an accessible location for the Community Issue Workshop;

- Time slots were convenient for my schedule;
- I was able to express and share my feelings, hopes and concerns about the MetroLink extension in my area in an open and participatory manner; and
- I was able to express my design option preference in a manner that was fair and equitable.

More respondents were less positive or undecided about the following statements:

- The presentation was valuable in helping me to participate in the small group, and
- The displays and handouts were valuable in helping me to understand more about the design options.

Attendees also were asked what they most liked and disliked about the forum. Generally, people liked Richard Hocking, the opportunity to express their views and hear the views of others, flexibility in format, small groups, and large group Q & A. Attendees disliked the rigidity of the process, large group facilitation, lack of detail, logistics (inadequate seating and poor acoustics), small groups, and "rude" behavior of some participants, particularly in the large group. Concern also was raised about the integrity of the process.

Friends and neighbors and mailings were cited most often as the way respondents learned about the meeting.

## Comment Sheet Summary

Participants provided written comments concerning the engagement process and workshop, community impacts, and design recommendations and preferences. With regard to the process, comments indicate people most appreciated the information sharing that took place, although some questioned whether their opinions would count. Community impact issues raised included concern about preserving neighborhood integrity, noise, and safety. Participants also expressed a variety of preferences regarding route location and profile, and station location.

# Community Issues Workshop 2
# Richmond Heights to Shrewsbury

## Location, Date & Time

Richmond Heights Library; October 7, 1998; 7-9PM

## Workshop Purpose

This Community Issues Workshop was designed to provide an opportunity for the study team to elicit comments, concerns and questions from interested parties concerning the Cross-County study and the design options for the section of the MetroLink extension from Richmond Heights to Shrewsbury. The workshop was sponsored by the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (the Council) in cooperation with the Bi-State Development Agency (Bi-State) and the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

## Public Attendance

139 sign-in cards were collected from the attendees. However, 150 packets were distributed and the actual attendance is estimated to be closer to 165.

## Staff Attendance

**Council & Agency Staff**
Les Sterman, EWGCC
Jerry Blair, EWGCC
Donna Day, EWGCC
Jim Seamon, EWGC
Steve Clark, MoDOT
Jeanne Fuchs, MoDOT
Paul Wojciechowski, MoDOT
Greg Northcut, Bi-State
Bob Innis, Bi-State
Gary Smith, Bi-State

**Engagement Team Members**
Mary Means, MMA
Steve Schukraft, MMA
Missy Schukraft, MMA
Leslie Smith, MMA
Al Witzig, MMA
Laurna Godwin, Vector
Jessica Perkins, Vector
Mark Reid, Urban Strategies

**Design Team Members**
Richard Hocking, PTG
Bill Schafer, PTG
Ron Deverman, PTG
Greg Knauer, PES
Austin Tao, Austin Tao Assoc
Andy Trivers, Trivers Assoc.

A team of facilitators and recorders also participated.

## Workshop Structure

The workshop was organized around an introductory presentation, a question-and-answer period, small group work sessions, and a final question-and-answer session. Upon entering the room, participants were asked to fill out a registration card and were handed a packet of information about the study. Prior to the commencement of the workshop, participants were encouraged to view displays prepared by the design team. The workshop began with a welcome and an agenda review by the lead facilitator, Jessica Perkins. Mark Reid served as large group recorder. Steve Schukraft provided a brief introduction to the study and reviewed the study schedule. Next, Richard Hocking presented the design options for this section of the extension. Mary Means then moderated a question and answer session. On the panel were Les Sterman, Richard Hocking and Steve Schukraft.

After the panel discussion Jessica Perkins instructed participants to break into small groups that corresponded with a letter on the bottom of the agendas. In the small groups, participants were asked by a facilitator to respond to three questions: "What are you feelings about the MetroLink extension in your area?" "How do you believe your community will be positively influenced by the MetroLink extension in your area?" and "What concerns you most about the MetroLink extension in your area?" Lastly, the participants were asked if they had any additional questions for the Council. Participant comments in the small groups were recorded on flip charts. Participants then reconvened as a large group, reported on their work in the small groups, and asked additional questions of the panel. This concluded the workshop activities.

## Materials Provided

Packets of materials were made available to attendees at the registration tables that included: an agenda, excerpt from the newsletter, Cross-County MetroLink Update, Volume 1, Fall 1998, Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet, Small Group Questions, Study Schedule, Evaluation Sheet, Comment Sheet, and a copy of the Cross-County MetroLink Update. Information displays were posted along the walls and included: large maps, photos of existing conditions at possible alignment locations, sketches of the various vertical alignment options (at-grade, above grade, below grade), and accompanying text.

## Panel Discussion Summary

Participants asked questions regarding the scope of the environmental analysis that will be conducted as part of the study, the study timeline, methods of financing the extension, traffic impacts on local streets, width of the existing right-of-way and possible distance from tracks to houses.

## Small Group Discussion Summary

Five small group work sessions were held. For each small group, a facilitator guided a discussion around four questions and a recorder took notes on flip charts. In response to the first question, concerning personal feelings about the extension, participants expressed a range of feelings, from

very negative to mixed to very positive. Participants used words like "worried," "concerned," "angry," and "apprehensive" as well as "excited," "happy," and "optimistic" to described their feelings about the extension.

Regarding perceptions of positive influences, participants mentioned increased property values, economic development, and improved accessibility to job centers, downtown, and the airport. Participants shared thoughts about very specific benefits, such as the ability to get into Clayton without worrying about parking, the possibility of alleviating traffic on Brentwood and Hanley, and the possibility of connecting Webster University to the system via shuttle buses. When asked about their concerns, participants said they were worried about the possible affects of the extensionvibration, noise, divisiveness, visual clutter, increased traffic-on adjacent neighborhoods, the size of park-and-ride facilities, the design quality of stations and other facilities, and potential negative affects on property values. A few expressed concern about the safety of children crossing the track or increased crime from strangers entering their neighborhood. Others mentioned they were concerned about the project's cost. A few participants shared their concern that the interests of residents near the line would prevail over the interests of the region and that the extension would not be built.

In response to the question "What additional questions do you have for the Council?" participants requested additional information about the possible impacts of the extension, the amount of land required for stations and park-and-ride facilities, strategies for following universal design guidelines in the extension's design, and cost estimates of different design alternatives. Participants also asked about the timetable for construction, the integration of bus, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, the cost of relocating power poles and lines, and more specifics on financing. Questions about joint development opportunities also were raised.

## Evaluation Sheet Summary

Also included in the handouts were evaluation sheets. While the evaluation sheets *cannot* be interpreted as a statistically accurate picture of participant’s opinions, they provide an indication of the overall quality of the experience. A total of 41 sheets were returned. The majority of the respondents reside closest to the Richmond Heights to Shrewsbury segment of the proposed extension.

The majority of respondents were positive towards the questions asked, agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:

- The Richmond Heights Library was an accessible location for the Community Issues Workshop;
- The timeslot was convenient to my schedule;
- I was able to express and share my feelings, hopes and concerns about the MetroLink extension in my area in an open and participatory manner;
- The presentation was valuable in helping me to participate in the small group discussions;
- The displays and handouts were valuable in helping me to understand more about the design options.

In response to the question "I was able to express my design option preference in a manner that was fair and equitable." respondents were fairly evenly divided along the rating scale.

The mailings and newspaper were cited most often as the way the respondents learned about the meeting.

## Comment Sheet Summary

Comment sheets were distributed to the participants in their handouts. Comments were received concerning the engagement process and workshop design, community impacts and design recommendations and preferences. With regard to the process and workshop design there were questions as to why voting on options wasn't allowed and concerns about disruptive participants. There were requests for more detailed maps. Community impacts were expressed as suggestions for noise abatement, and concerns about traffic impacts, project budget and funding. Comments were received about design recommendations and preferences related to specific design suggestions regarding access road, pedestrian and bicycle access, ADA accessibility and adequate parking.

# Community Issues Workshop 3
# Clayton & the Galleria Area

## Location, Date & Time

Wydown Middle School; October 8, 1998; 7:00 to 9:00 PM.

## Workshop Purpose

This Community Issues Workshop was designed to provide an opportunity for the study team to elicit comments, concerns and questions from interested parties concerning the Cross-County study and the design options for the section of the MetroLink extension in Clayton and the Galleria area. The workshop was sponsored by East-West Gateway Coordinating Council (the Council) in cooperation with the Bi-State Development Agency (Bi-State) and the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

## Public Attendance

111 sign-in cards were collected from attendees. Staff at the registration table noted that not all attendees signed-in, therefore actual attendance is estimated to be closer to 125. Based upon the evaluations received, the majority of attendees were residents of Clayton.

## Staff Attendance

| **Council & Agency Staff** | **Engagement Team Members** | **Design Team Members** |
|---|---|---|
| Jerry Blair, EWGCC | Mary Means, MMA | Richard Hocking, PTG |
| Donna Day, EWGCC | Steve Schukraft, MMA | Bill Schafer, PTG |
| Jim Seamon, EWGC | Missy Schukraft, MMA | Greg Knauer, PES |
| Steve Clark, MoDOT | Leslie Smith, MMA | Austin Tao, Austin Assoc |
| Jeanne Fuchs, MoDOT | Al Witzig, MMA | Andy Trivers, Trivers Assoc |
| Paul Wojciechowski, MoDOT | Laurna Godwin, Vector | |
| Greg Northcut, Bi-State | Jessica Perkins, Vector | . |
| Mark Reid, Urban Strategies | | |

A team of facilitators and recorders also participated.

## Workshop Structure

The workshop was organized around an introductory presentation, a question-and-answer period, small group work sessions, and a final question-and-answer session. Upon entering the room, participants were asked to fill out a registration card and were handed a packet of information on the study. Prior to the commencement of the workshop, participants were encouraged to view displays prepared by the design team. The workshop began with a welcome and an agenda review by the lead facilitator, Jessica Perkins. Mark Reid served as large group recorder. Steve Schukraft provided a brief introduction to the study and reviewed the study schedule. Next, Richard Hocking presented the design options for this section of the extension. Mary Means then moderated a question and answer session. On the panel were Jerry Blair, Richard Hocking and Steve Schukraft. After the panel discussion Jessica Perkins instructed participants to break into small groups that corresponded with a letter on the bottom of the agendas. In the small groups, participants were asked by a facilitator to respond to three questions: "What are you feelings about the MetroLink extension in your area?" "How do you believe your community will be positively influenced by the MetroLink extension in your area?" and "What concerns you most about the MetroLink extension in your area?" Lastly the participants were asked if they had any questions for the Council. Participant comments in the small groups were recorded on flip charts. Participants then reconvened as a large group, reported on their work in the small groups, and asked additional questions of the panel. This concluded the workshop activities.

(During the workshop questions were raised about the selection of the meeting date and time. A open house at the Clayton High School was held the same night. When the workshop was scheduled, the team inquired about the school system's plans for other meetings in other locations on the same night and were informed that there were no conflicting events.)

## Materials Provided

Packets of materials were made available to attendees at the registration tables that included: an agenda, excerpt from the newsletter, *Cross-County MetroLink Update*, Volume 1, Fall 1998, Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet, Study Schedule, Phase One Questions fact sheet, Evaluation Sheet, Comment Sheet, Small Group Questions, and a copy of the *Cross-County* photos of existing conditions at possible alignment locations, sketches of the various vertical alignment options (at-grade, above grade, below grade), and accompanying text.

## Panel Discussion Summary

The panel addressed several questions, including questions regarding the difference between MetroLink and the old street car system, project costs and financing, the authority of state agencies to regulate surface-running trains, the condition of Forest Park Parkway south of the Clayton CBD, and methods for assessing traffic impacts on local streets.

## Small Group Discussion Summary

Five small group work sessions were held. For each small group, a facilitator guided discussion around four questions and a recorder took notes on flip charts. In response to the first question,

concerning personal feelings about the extension, participants expressed a range of feelings, as they did in other workshops, from very negative to mixed to very positive. Participants used words like "quietly resigned," "dissatisfied," "skeptical," "worried," and "apprehensive" as well as "enthusiastic" and "positive." Many expressed mixed feelings, offering comments such as these: "hopeful/suspicious," "fear and excitement," "mixed and undecided," and "positively apprehensive."

Regarding perceptions of positive influences, participants mentioned possible reductions in traffic congestion, increased accessibility to Clayton and downtown St. Louis, increased property values, benefits for merchants, improvements in air quality, and better accessibility for the young, elderly and persons with disabilities. Participants also mentioned that the system could help make the St. Louis region a more unified, modern, cosmopolitan community. When asked about their concerns, participants said they were worried about impacts on neighborhoods—vibration, noise, divisiveness, visual clutter, increased traffic—if the line were not below grade, possible decreases in property value, the visual affects of an elevated option, and impacts on MetroLink and bus fares. Participants also expressed concerns that a surface train may be too slow or may result in increased congestion on Clayton's commercial and residential streets. Some raised concerns about the extensions costs and proposed methods of financing. A few also expressed concern about the possibility of increased crime from strangers entering Clayton. The potential short term impacts on merchants during construction also was mentioned.

In response to the question "What additional questions do you have for the Council?" participants requested additional information about the ways decisions will be made by the Council, how the extension fits with other plans for the extension of MetroLink in the region, the location and design of stations and park-and-ride facilities, and the cost, speed, and travel times associated with different design options. Participants also asked why an alignment through Shaw Park was not included in the list of options, why the Council has not pursued federal funding for the extension, and when more detailed information of the design options would be available for public review.

## Evaluation Sheet Summary

Evaluation sheets were distributed to workshop attendees asking them to evaluate the workshop regarding logistics (location, time, set-up) and the quality of their experience. While the evaluation sheets *cannot* be interpreted as a statistically accurate picture of participant's opinions, they provide an indication of the overall quality of the experience. A total of 50 evaluation sheets were returned. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents reside closest to the Clayton and Galleria area segment of the proposed extension.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- The Wydown School was an accessible location for the Community Issue Workshop;
- Time slots were convenient for my schedule;
- I was able to express and share my feelings, hopes and concerns about the MetroLink extension in my area in an open and participatory manner; and
- The presentation was valuable in helping me to participate in the small group discussions.

More respondents were less positive or undecided about the following statements:

- The displays and handouts were valuable in helping me to understand more about the design options;
- I was able to express my design option preference in a manner that was fair and equitable.

Mailings and the newspaper were cited most often as the way respondents learned about the meeting.

Attendees also were asked what they most liked and disliked about the forum. Generally, people liked the question and answer session with Richard Hocking, listening and learning "without a shouting match," process structure, fairness, and small groups. Attendees disliked the lack of detail, "voluable/angry participants," schedule conflict with high school function, and feeling of manipulation. Concern also was raised about the integrity of the process (e.g., "Feeling that the process of community engagement is only window dressing").

### Comment Sheet Summary

Fifteen comment forms were handed-in at the workshop. Comments regarding the engagement process included issues pertaining to the quality and amount of information. Respondents also had questions and concerns about impacts of construction, costs, and funding. Specific design recommendations were made pertaining to horizontal and vertical alignments, stations, and bike facilities.

## Evaluation of Activities

The success of any public meeting is closely related to the meeting planner's ability to design a process that anticipates and responds to the expectation of participants. In some respects, participant expectations were not met during the first round of public meetings for the Cross-County study. The reasons expectations may not have been met are explored below.

### Clarity of Purpose

The first round of public meetings were designed to provide stakeholders with an introduction to the study process and team, and an opportunity to share issues, ideas and concerns with the Council staff and study team. It was anticipated that interested individuals would attend the Forum to learn more about the study, then attend an issues workshop in their neighborhood and share their ideas and concerns with the team. Although this structure was described in the newsletter and announcements, the team's expectation that participants would attend both the forum and a workshop proved unrealistic. In addition, the expectation that even the most interested, passionate people would attend only the single workshop which addressed their neighborhood or special interest proved unrealistic.

It was apparent at the first workshop that many participants had not attended the forum and may not have had a clear sense of how the study was being conducted or how and when design decisions would be made. Many had also not received a copy of the study brochure or newsletter, so they

came to the meetings with very little knowledge of the study process. When it was announced that time had not been budgeted for questions-and-answers and that a conventional public hearing format was not proposed, many were surprised to learn they would not have a chance to ask questions or speak in front of a large assembly. To better manage expectations at the second two workshops, a brief introduction to the study process was provided at the start of the meeting and question-and-answer sessions were held both before and after the small group discussion sessions.

## Study Sequence & Design Details

The implications of not having draft evaluation criteria or detailed design alternatives complete and ready for public review were not adequately anticipated in the design of the engagement events. The draft evaluation criteria were scheduled to be complete and ready for review along with the design options, and an announcement of the availability of the draft criteria was announced in the first issue of the study newsletter, *Cross-County Update*. When it became apparent that the draft criteria would not be complete in advance of the Public Forum, it was decided that it would be best to postpone completion of the draft criteria and have this material ready for public review during the second phase of study. Since the criteria would not be used until much later in the project, there would still be an extended period for public review and comment during the second cycle of meetings. (As presently planned, the draft criteria will be complete and available for public review in mid-November.) The absence of the draft criteria at the Forum and the Community Issues Workshops may have contributed to the feeling among some participants that the Council was withholding information.

It was clear during the first workshop that participants also wanted more detailed information about the design options, and expected to have an opportunity to learn more about the design options and comment on them in a public setting. Unfortunately, at this early stage of the design process, little new information was available for presentation. After several years of planning, stakeholders are understandably frustrated that more information has not been developed and presented for comment. While the Council’s basic premise at the outset of the design process was to start with a "clean slate" as a way of encouraging a more meaningful community engagement process, many went so far as to suggest that detailed design work has been completed and is being withheld from the public.

## Timing of Decisions

The high level of anxiety expressed by many participants, especially during the first Workshop, appeared to grow from a false expectation that a decision on a conceptual design was imminent and that the Community Issues Workshops were the only forum for the expression of concerns and preferences. Though the Council's public information material stated otherwise, many came to the Workshops thinking that it would be their only opportunity to voice their concerns. While it is difficult to know the reasons behind these false expectations, flyers prepared by others announcing the meeting as a hearing may have caused some misunderstanding among participants.

## Meeting Format

While most participants who filled out an Evaluation Sheet suggested they were able to express their feelings, hopes and concerns in an open and participatory manner, many came to a workshop expecting a different kind of meeting than what was planned. Many expected that the workshops were designed to as public hearings, where participants would have an opportunity to provide public testimony. This was not suggested in the Council's materials, but signs and flyers prepared by others described the meetings as public hearings rather than workshops.

## Quality of Small Group Discussions

Another shortcoming of the workshop design was the inability to counter incorrect statements made by participants. Apparently aimed at affecting the opinion of others, some participants offered incorrect or misleading information during the small group discussions. Inaccurate statements concerning the design options and their possible impacts on surrounding communities were aired, and design team members did not have an opportunity to respond. Several participants, many of whom attended several small group discussions, made inaccurate statements about the design options, suggesting for example, that trains would run in mixed traffic and sound horns when passing near residential areas. Council staff or members of the study team were not available to offer corrections or additional information, so it is likely that participants interested in finding out more about the study left the workshop with inaccurate or incomplete information.

# Phase Two Engagement Activities

The next round of public meetings will be designed primarily as informational or educational sessions. These sessions will be designed to provide the public with greater access to the design consultants and more opportunities to have questions answered and concerns addressed. More emphasis will be placed on the clarity of the presentation materials. The team will also make an effort to distribute information more widely, ensuring that property owners and stakeholders throughout the region have opportunities to learn more about the design alternatives and the ways these alternatives will be evaluated.

# Appendix A: Phase One Media Coverage

## Publicity & Media Coverage at the September 28, 1998 Public Forum

Media coverage at this forum included:

- KDNL-TV/Channel 30. Footage of forum and interview with Les Sterman ran during ten o'clock newscast.
- KMOV-TV/Channel 4. News package by reporter Anne Steffens featuring interviews with Les Sterman and residents ran during ten o'clock newscast.
- KPLR-TV/Channel 11. Footage of forum and interview with Les Sterman ran during nine o'clock newscast.
- KSDK-TV/Channel 5. Footage of forum ran during six o'clock newscast.
- KTVI-TV/Channel 2. Footage of forum ran during nine and ten o'clock newscasts.
- KTRS-AM 550. Reporter Craig Unger interviewed Les Sterman and residents for next day morning drive time. 5,000 watts.
- Metro Networks News. Radio wire service. Reporter/News Anchor Tony Hicks interviewed Les Sterman and residents for next day morning drive time on KEZK-FM 102.5 (100,000 watts) and WIL-FM 92.3 (100,000 watts).
- *Suburban Journals*. Reporter Dan Younts covered forum for an article in Sunday, October 4th journals.
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Reporter Phil Sutin covered the forum.

## Media Coverage at the October 1, 1998 Community Issues Workshop

Media coverage at this workshop included:

- Metro Network News. Radio wire service. Reporter/News Anchor Tony Hicks covered the workshop;
- KMOV-TV. Footage of workshop ran during ten o'clock newscast; and
- *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Reporters Phil Sutin and Sterling Levy covered the meeting.

## Media Coverage at the October 7, 1998 Community Issues Workshop

Media coverage at this workshop included:

- KMOV-TV. Footage of workshop ran during ten o'clock newscast;
- KMOX Radio. Reporter interviewed attendees and Jerry Blair;
- KTRS-AM 550 Radio. Reporter interviewed attendees; and
- *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Reporter Phil Sutin covered the workshop.

## Media Coverage at the October 8, 1998 Community Issues Workshop

Media coverage was as follows:

- *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Reporter Phil Sutin covered the workshop.

## Additional Media Coverage

ollowing is a rundown of the media coverage and media appearances by Les Sterman that took place during the first phase of the community engagement process for the Cross-County MetroLink Segment I Extension.

**Media Appearances by Les Sterman:**

- KMJN/Majic 105. Sunday, September 27th at 7:30 a.m. on "Sunday Morning Live" with Deneen Busby. Host also took calls from listeners. 100,000 watts.
- KLOU/103.3. News reporter Meme Wolf conducted a taped interview with Les Sterman to air during Monday morning drive time on September 28th. 100,000 watts.
- KMOV-TV/Channel 4. Monday, September 28th at 6:00,6:30,7:00,7:30 and 8:00 a.m. morning newscasts with reporter Kathryn Jamboretz. Les Sterman appeared live at 6:00 a.m. and then a taped interview ran during the other segments.
- KMOV-TV/Channel 4. Saturday, October 3rd at noon and Sunday, October 4th at 6:30 a.m. on "Eye on St. Louis" with Mary Cannon.

In addition to the above coverage, Les Sterman met with Donald Suggs, publisher of the *St. Louis American*, and Alvin Reid, city editor of the newspaper on Tuesday, September 22nd to discuss the Cross-County community engagement process. On friday, September 11th, Les Sterman, Mary Means and Richard Hocking via telephone met with Philip Kennicott and Phil Sutin of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* to discuss the community engagement process.

Besides the media coverage specifically about the workshop, the following articles ran in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*:

- September 15th article on MetroLink options for Cross-County alignment;
- September 27th news brief giving dates, times and locations of upcoming Public Forum and Community Issues Workshops;
- September 28th article on the Community Working Group;
- September 29th article on how federal funding for MetroLink tight for cities;
- September 30th article on how MetroLink process will be open to discussion; and
- October 13th mention in Jerry Berger's social column about how County Executive Buzz Westfall appointed one African-American and three whites to the Community Working Group while St. Louis Mayor Clarence Harmon appointed four whites to the group.

In addition, Washington University's *Student Life News* published an article on the first phase of the design study in its October 6th edition.