

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Chris White  
Manager of Service Development

**Re:** Connector Study

**Date:** July 16, 2009



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The Connector Study is a joint project of the City of Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor DDA, the University of Michigan, and AATA. A steering committee composed of representatives from these agencies has been overseeing the process with Eli Cooper as the project manager.

The concept of a Connector originated as an element of the Mayor's Model for Mobility in 2006. The concept was more clearly defined over the past two years during the development Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update, which was recently adopted by the Ann Arbor City Council

Connector Study has always been the shorthand term, but it has also been referred to as an alternatives analysis and feasibility study. The full name is "Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility Study." A brief description of the project is to examine the feasibility of high capacity transit in two corridors from downtown; 1 ) northeast from downtown to US-23 and 2) south from downtown to I-94. Essentially the two corridors form an arc with downtown at the middle. The purpose of the study is to provide the technical work and ridership and cost estimates for the community to decide whether it makes sense to develop high-capacity transit in these corridors. A summary of the key elements prepared by Eli Cooper is included as attachment #1.

In February, 2008, the AATA Board agreed to participate in the execution and funding of the Connector Study. The original budget was \$250,000, with an AATA share of \$100,000. A request for proposals was issued and proposals were received from three companies. Each of the cost proposals was much higher than \$250,000. At the request of the steering committee, the companies provided revised proposals with two phases, with a first phase cost of \$250,000. After reviewing the revised proposals, the steering committee selected the proposal by URS, a multidisciplinary planning company, as the best overall considering qualifications, proposed work plan, and cost. However, after a good deal of consideration, the steering committee also recommended approving the entire study at a cost of \$640,000. All of the members decided that the entire study is necessary to have a product to take to the community while a phase I costing \$250,000 would only provide the preliminary work to prepare for phase II.

The members of the study team decided to recommend that the partners split the project cost evenly, at \$160,000 apiece. In November, 2008, the Planning and Development Committee recommended that the Board adopt a resolution which accepted URS as the contractor for the study at a total cost of \$640,000, with the AATA share of \$160,000. The full Board adopted the resolution on November 17, 2008.

Shortly thereafter, a problem developed. The DDA Board and City Council balked at each paying \$160,000 arguing that their funds are essentially from the same source and they should pay only \$160,000 total combined. This resulted in a deadlock for a time.

In January, the Federal stimulus program was announced and staff proposed that the deadlock could be broken if AATA committed stimulus funds to the project. In February the Performance Monitoring and External Relations considered the FY2009 Program of Projects (POP). The connector study was included with a total cost of \$640,000 and \$320,000 in federal funds and the committee discussed this inclusion. PMER recommended the program of projects (POP) with the Connector study to the Board which passed a resolution adopting the POP with the Connector study at \$320,000 in February.

UM committed their funds at the back in November. The DDA passed a resolution committing their funds on June 3, 2009. The City Council passed a resolution committing their funds on June 15<sup>th</sup>. URS has agreed to continue to stand by its proposal and contract offer for the time being.

A resolution authorizing approval of the Connector Study is included in New Business.

Prepared by Eli Cooper 5/27/2009

## Ann Arbor Connector Feasibility Study Key Elements

What will the feasibility study to provide us?

It is a technical transit and transportation analysis of two corridors reaching from the downtown. One corridor will extend from Downtown to the US23 and Plymouth Road interchange area, along the Fuller/Plymouth Road. Analysis will also be conducted to the south from the Downtown along State Street to the interchange with I-94.

The analysis will include the development and analysis of several initial transit alternatives representing a broad universe of potential mode and alignments. Alternatives studied will include modal options, alignment options, operational options, alternative termini and station/stop options. The options to be explored include a transportation system management option and up to five fixed guideway options. The key deliverables are outlined below.

### **Key Deliverables:**

#### **1. Purpose and Need Statement**

- Identification of existing and future system deficiencies, service gaps and desired levels of service at both the corridor and regional level. A statement of Purpose and Need provides the basis for proceeding with an investment.

#### **2. Fatal Flaw Analysis**

Analysis of each alternative to assure they can respond to each critical issue outlined below:

- Is each alternative consistent with the adjacent environment?
- Is there sufficient right-of-way available or will significant property acquisition/displacement be required?
- Does the alternative serve the transit market?
- Is the mode consistent with anticipated demand?
- Is the route/alignment appropriate for the proposed mode?

#### **3. Ridership and Travel Demand forecasting**

Detailed modeling and travel forecasting providing a basis to evaluate the study alternatives will be undertaken. Specific travel markets will be evaluated and considered as part of the study. They include:

- City of Ann Arbor
  - Residents
  - Commuters

- Employment
- University of Michigan
  - Inter-campus
  - Intra-campus
  - Medical
- Activity Center to Activity Center person trips by mode.
- Summary model run tabulations
  - Regional VMT
  - District to district trips
  - Directional transit passenger volumes
  - v/c ratios on roadways
  - mode of access to transit stations

#### **4. Capital and operating cost estimates**

The feasibility study will provide generalized capital and operating cost estimates based on concept design characteristics for each alternative. The estimates will provide a basis to compare the alternatives fairly and provide the community an order of magnitude for each alternative.

#### **5. ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

The Study will provide a detailed market analysis, considering land use, zoning and transit investment. The following areas will be included in the economic impact analysis.

- Potential new development
- Retail purchasing
- Downtown employee retention
- Attraction of new business
- Improved convention/tourist business
- Housing impacts
- Increased hospitality investment
- University related activities