Here is the statement I mentioned in our meeting today, and am pasting it from the GRTC's own Environmental Assessment:

Tyler Ladner

I appreciate to hear that some of the parking issues are resolved. However, how are you going to let the public know . . . with Parking Office, there is a caveat though, such as that public parking in the VCU West Broad Parking Deck is not...

Kevin Korda

While answering the eighth question in the WTVR interview, you said that BRT in Cleveland resulted in a $5 billion investment. This figure appears to come from the article More Development For Your Transit Dollar (Page 9), a study...

I have attended many GRTC hearings. This was far and away the best meeting I have attended. Ms. Pace's presentation gave me the best picture of what progress is being made on this project.

I write out of concern for the new proposed left turn onto Boulevard in the Public Meeting #8 materials (which is a violation of the existing left turn prohibition in place). Boulevard is already heavily trafficked, connecting I-95, the Downtown ...

S. Nathan Cosby

I have access to only one car. These residents have the right to convenient, reliable transportation. Bus rapid transit can ... is extremely easy and extraordinarily cheap. But people are used to free street parking and it is rational not to want...

Valentine last night that the city is currently doing an economic impact study on BRT in Richmond. To what were you referring?

Where exactly does GRTC expect the 12% property value increases to occur? How was that 1.1 billion in increased property values for Richmond calculated? You also mentioned at the forum at the Valentine last night that the city is currently doing an economic impact study on BRT in Richmond. To what were you referring?

Ralph Rhudy, PE

4/24/2015

Jonathan Marcus

Here is the statement I mentioned in our meeting today, and am pasting it from the GRTC's own Environmental Assessment:

"Number of new transit riders: Build Alternative would attract approximately 30 new daily riders, though this estimate is likely low" It is on page 21 of 23 of the Environmental Assessment. Here is the link: http://www.ridewithus.com/media/news/Broad_Street_BRT_Transit_Study_2015/... The GRTC has played fast and loose with the facts ever since I have been listening to them. The document above states 30 new daily riders. At the first meeting I attended, in February, they said they were counting 300 new daily riders. Now they are saying they do not know how many new riders are taking the Boulevard line. Please do challenge them on these figures, and please ask how they arrived at figures that vary by a factor of about 17. Estimate like this matter, because they provide metrics by which you assess success or failure of the project. I did ask about how you define success or failure of the BRT, but as we covered a lot of subject matter, it was one of the questions that never was answered in our meeting. The question certainly seems appropriate for a publicly funded project of this scope, with many possible unintended consequences. I would welcome an answer. I would look forward to working with you towards best possible outcomes for the BRT and other city and regional projects.

Mark Peterson

I am unable to attend the BRT meetings on 10/26 and 10/27, however I would still like to voice my opinion. I am fully supportive of bus rapid transit in Richmond. The proposed Pulse has the potential to form the spine of GRTC as we move into the 21st century. More and more people are moving back into the city's neighborhoods like Scott's Addition, Downtown, Shockoe Bottom and Rockerfeller Landing. Public transportation needs to be a competitive alternative to driving for new and current residents. The Pulse will serve all of these neighborhoods and has the potential to allow households to go car free or car light where a two car family goes to one car family. Much of the opposition to the Pulse is focused on parking. Currently parking in the city of Richmond is extremely easy and extraordinarily cheap. But people are used to free street parking and it is rational not to want...

Frederick S. Fisher

I have attended many GRTC hearings. This was far and away the best meeting I have attended. Ms. Pace's presentation gave me the best picture of what progress is being made on this project.

Jeannie Godsey

I am excited about this project and the potential it has -- along with the greater Regional Plans for BRT to help connect the region to public transit. I appreciate the hard work that has gone into the planning. I learned today for the first time that the current local route 6 would continue. Some of my neighbors will be supported by this, so it may good to share this more broadly.

Francis Cherry

Very concerned with loss of parallel parking as buffer for pedestrians on Broad Street Downtown. Curbstone is pedestrian friendly because of parking acting as a buffer on both sides. Trees and landscaping along will not be sufficient. Trees and landscaping are never properly maintained/replaced by City now. Please give more thought to design an effective buffer. Very concerned with loss of parallel parking as buffer for pedestrians on Broad Street Downtown. Curbstone is pedestrian friendly because of parking acting as a buffer on both sides. Trees and landscaping along will not be sufficient. Trees and landscaping are never properly maintained/replaced by City now. Please give more thought to design an effective buffer.

St. Nathan Cosby

My comment is more of a suggestion. Instead of going through and making a list of changes which could effect parking that is already an issue, why not run this service as an Express Route. Under the Express Route heading the bus could use existing lanes, but only stop at designated stops. Thank you.

Ralph Rhyne, FE

Please give more thought to design an effective buffer.

Renata Forsumnich-Falch

I appreciate to hear that some of the parking issues are resolved. However, how are you going to let the public know that VCU parking areas are available for public parking? Talking with Parking Office, there is a caveat though, such as that public parking in the VCU West Broad Parking Deck is not available when there are events in the Siegler Center. The concerns I have are as follows: The presentation indicated that issues of great concern are not resolved yet. There are unresolved issues re: financing of the project. Traffic studies and the impact of traffic lane closures, for on instance in the VCU area, have not been done. There was no public discussion of what the effects for transportation and traffic are, if the "small" issues continue to run on Broad Street. Plans for future expansions of BRT and its economic impact sounded surreal. The plans did not include ideas as to how to engage the Richmond Metropolitan area for a regional bus transit system.

S. Nathan Cosby

My comment is more of a suggestion. Instead of going through and making a list of changes which could effect parking that is already an issue, why not run this service as an Express Route. Under the Express Route heading the bus could use existing lanes, but only stop at designated stops. Thank you.

Tyler Lader

I write out of concern for the new proposed left turn onto Boulevard in the Public Meeting #4 materials (which is a violation of the existing left turn prohibition in place). Boulevard is already heavily trafficked, connecting I-95, the Downtown Expressway, the Boulevard bridge, and the Fan and West End District. Permitting a left turn onto Boulevard will only increase the congestion on Boulevard and exacerbate the problems associated with many cars unlawfully traveling through the neighborhood. The existing left turn prohibition at least serves as a deterrent to those who would take the quickest route to speed from one point to another to what is ultimately a largely residential street. My experience on Broad Street and on Boulevard is that people do not obey the time restrictions on left turns, in part because there is no traffic enforcement of those restrictions (just as there is little to no enforcement of any speed limits). Although I have seen people make left turns on Boulevard in violation of the existing no-left-turn policy, I have seen far more people ignore left-turn prohibitions when time-limited (as is the case on many left turns from Boulevard to points East and West). I urge you to reconsider changing the existing policy on Boulevard. It would be adding more strain to an already strained corridor.
I've been very interested in learning more about BRT financials and I have some questions about the Broad Street Rapid Transit Economic Impact study produced by Chmura for the GRTC. Please pardon me if these questions have been answered elsewhere. If you cannot answer these questions, could you please pass them onward to someone that can? Thank you so much! My questions are as follows (for additional background, see information below). 1. In this economic impact study, the idea that Broad Street in Richmond, VA is comparable to Euclid Avenue in Cleveland is based upon “informal conversations and emails with staff from Arlington VA, Urban Land Institute and the American Public Transportation Association.” With whom did Chmura have these discussions? What rationale was given by these institutions that would indicate that Broad Street in Richmond was comparable to Euclid Avenue in Cleveland? This impact study indicates that there were tax abatements, tax credits and financial incentives driving development on Euclid Avenue. Why is there no indication of the size of these incentives? This economic impact study also apparently does not include almost 90 million in Hud Loans, forgiveable Hud loans and private grants available to promote new development (figures provided by the I.T.D.P., see below). Why were these figures excluded? The economic impact study didn’t reference millions of dollars in state funding used for brownfield clean-up on Euclid Avenue. (citations below). Why were these figures not noted in the study? 3. Why are non-Rapid Transit lines like the Boston Silver line and the Kansas City MAX line included in the case studies as if they were BRT lines? According the Institute for Transportation and Development policy, these are not BRT lines. (citations below). 4. Why does Chmura’s study indicate that 4.3 billion in development was driven by the health line, when their footnote says that 3.3 billion in development was underway or proposed? What is the source of the 4.3 billion figure (page 5 footnote 2)? 5. This economic impact study indicated that there was a 4.3 billion increase in development and a 550,000 percent return on investment caused by BRT. The economic impact study attributes much of that development to other causes (see quotations and citation below). More than a billion of that spending was explicitly stated to be independent of the Healthline. Shouldn’t a billion dollars be subtracted from that figure? 6. Why does Chmura consider Euclid Avenue comparable to Broad Street, given the size of the direct city spending on Euclid Avenue? This implicit development subsidy is greater than $130 million (see below). 7. Why does Chmura indicate that in the conservative scenario there would be $1,028,000,000 in development caused by BRT (page 17)? In their study, they note that the BRT in Eugene, Oregon, did not necessarily drive any development in that city (page 6). Why isn’t the conservative scenario consistent with the conservative case study? 8. Why does Chmura indicate that in the conservative scenario there would be $1,028,000,000 in development caused by BRT (page 17)? In their study, they note that the BRT in Eugene, Oregon, did not necessarily drive any development in that city (page 6). Why isn’t the conservative scenario consistent with the conservative case study? 9. Why does Chmura notes that their choice of Euclid Avenue in Cleveland as the most comparable example case is based upon “informal conversations and emails with staff from Arlington VA, Urban Land Institute and the American Public Transportation Association.” (Broad Street Rapid Transit Study, Economic Impacts pg. 2.) Background for Question 2: Chmura doesn’t address the 90 million in grants and loans available to promote development on Euclid, provided by H.U.D. (again according to the I.T.D.P., page 86, More Development for Your Transit Dollar). The Chmura study does mention “a variety of tax abatements, credits and financial incentives to developers who engage in rehabilitation, conversion and new construction.” (Broad Street Rapid Transit Study, Economic Impacts pg. 2). They do not quantify the effect of these incentives or give any further detail. Chmura also excludes millions in other grants (More Development for Your Transit Dollar pg. 131). Background for Question 3: Chmura includes the Kansas City line as a comparable project. However, according to “More Development for Your Transit Dollar” by the I.T.D.P., that project fell below the minimum standard to be considered a BRT line (“below basic”), pg. 9, please see attached file, page 86). The Boston “Silver Line”, is also listed as being “below basic” by I.T.D.P. (pg. 9). Why, then, are they both included in Chmura’s study as examples of the effect of adding a Bus Rapid Transit line? If a bus line is not a BRT, its effect on business parking and traffic patterns may materially differ from a BRT project. Background for Question 5: According to Chmura, the BRT was a catalyst for the three-mile, 1,000 acre section in Midtown that will include 250,000 square feet of new office, lab and flex space. “Raju Shah, BidEnterprise President and co-creator” of the Health Technology Corridor, noted that “we wouldn’t have expected this type of thing until five or so years out.” (Broad Street Rapid Transit Study, Economic Impacts, bottom of pg. 18) Why then is this development attributed to BRT if it was going to happen regardless of the creation of the Healthline? Additionally, “Chmura notes that “discussions with real estate professionals indicate that much of the development in Public Square area of the CBD would have occurred regardless of BRT.” Similarly, Cleveland Clinic, considered one of the world’s preeminent hospitals, also continues to attract substantial investment to the corridor.” (Broad Street Rapid Transit Study, Economic Impacts, page 5). Cleveland Clinic spending, alone represents a billion dollars of the total development on Euclid. (Broad Street Rapid Transit Study, Economic Impacts, page 4). Background for Question 6: Note that Cleveland used $150 million invested in street improvements and infrastructure in the corridor” (page 110) this included “submerged power lines that had been an eyesore, installed fiber-optic telecommunications cables, rebuilt ancient sewer and water lines, and significantly improved the cycling and walking environment with street furniture, new shade trees, local art, and other urban amenities” (More Development for Your Transit Dollar, I.T.D.P., page 86). Background for Question 7: Chmura has indicated that the effect of a BRT line on Broad Street could be a catalyst driving billions of dollars in investment. They note, however, that there are BRT lines that did not necessarily drive any additional development, for example, the EmX line in Eugene, Oregon, provided “no concrete estimates for return on investment.” (Broad Street Rapid Transit Study, Economic Impacts pg. 6).