

**October - November Public Comments**

Date	Name	Question/Comment
10/7/2015	Jonathan Miller	While answering the eighth question in the WTVR interview, you said that BRT in Cleveland resulted in a \$5 billion economic impact and \$114.54 in new development for every dollar invested. This figure appears to come from the article More Development For Your Transit Dollar(Page 9), a study produced by a transportation advocacy group. This figure excludes \$200 million in expenditures on Euclid Avenue (footnote 83, page 158). Is BRTC aware that, if calculated in a way that includes these expenditures, more development was produced by investments in standard bus systems rather than bus rapid transit(page 9 of the same study)? You mentioned last night that some of that 200 million represented land purchases. How much of that 200 million represents land purchases on Euclid Avenue? Where did you get that information? There were also 87 million in available in forgivable Hud loans, 3 million in Hud grants and 15 million in private grants available for development on Euclid Avenue. Is GRTC aware of any similar development incentives that might make the Euclid Avenue Corridor comparable to our BRT route? I'm also very interested in your comment that BRT will generate \$1.1 billion and increase property values by 12% over the next 20 years. Some of the academic (peer reviewed literature) shows much lower property value increases in some cases. One such study analyzed Quebec City data and used regression analysis to determine that home prices within 50 meters of bus rapid transit fell in value due to the inconvenience of using cars so near the BRT lines. (Economic impact of a supply change in mass transit in urban areas: A Canadian example). Properties between 150 meters and 300 meters saw price increases from 2.9% to 6.4% depending on proximity. Where exactly does GRTC expect the 12% property value increases to occur? How wide is the band around the BRT line that GRTC expects to see this 12% property value increase? 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?
10/14/2015	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 2-21 of the Environmental Assessment. Here is the link: <a href="http://www.ridegrtc.com/media/news/Broad_Street_Rapid_Transit_Study_EA_March_2014.pdf">http://www.ridegrtc.com/media/news/Broad_Street_Rapid_Transit_Study_EA_March_2014.pdf</a> . 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 stated 300 new daily riders. Now they are saying 500 new daily riders. Please do challenge them on these figures, and please ask how they arrived at figures that vary by a factor of about 17. Estimates 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 and 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 look forward to working with you towards best possible outcomes for the BRT and other city and regional projects.
10/17/2015	Kevin Korda	Before the meeting I wanted to ask if now that there is a station at 2nd street has any thought been given to the Adams street station only 2 blocks west. Are they not to close and the Adams street station could go west towards the Rite Aid A good service point. Also are you (GRTC) aware of the cities plans to close Brook RD from Broad to Adams which will eliminate 2 additional parking spots and 1 loading zone They plan to remove the tree and create a hardscape plaza dedicated to Maggie Walker. This is scheduled to start in spring 2016. GRTC will need to take into account you will not have Brook Rd as a detour possibility. Also in your traffic flow studies has anyone seen that any larger box truck a 18 wheeler going south on Adams to turn right west onto Broad Street is VERY tight and usually have to swing so wide they go up on the curb.
10/23/2015	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 forward into the 21st century. More and more people are moving back into the city to neighborhoods like Scott's Addition, Downtown, Shockoe Bottom and Rocketts Landing. Public transportation needs to be a competitive alternative to driving for new and current residents. The Pulse will serve all of of these neighborhoods and has the potential to allow households to go car free or car light where a two car family goes to a 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 to give up something that has been perceived as free for a very long time. However free parking is not free. It costs everyone, including those who do not even own cars. Parking will not be drastically impacted with the implementation of bus rapid transit. At most people will not be able to park directly in front of their destination if the current plan moves forward. Furthermore, the streets are a public good. The free storage of private automobiles shouldn't thwart a project that gives residents who cannot afford to or choose not to use a private automobile, a viable means of transportation. While BRT can be great at attracting new riders, the Pulse needs to benefit current riders too. Private car ownership is extremely costly and the city and parts of eastern Henrico have a poverty level in excess of 25%. Additionally 18% of households in the city do not have access to a car and 41% of households have access to only one car. These residents have the right to convenient, reliable transportation. Bus rapid transit can provide that. I hope that in the future the Pulse will extend beyond Rocketts Landing to Montrose and other neighborhoods that truly need better public transportation.
10/26/2015	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.
10/26/2015	Jeunee 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 all 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 suprised by this, so it may good to share this more broadly. Keep up the good work.
10/27/2015	Francis C herry	Very concerned with loss of parallel parking as buffer for pedestrians on Broad Street Downtown. Carytown is pedestrian friendly because of parking acting as a buffer on both sides. Trees and landscaping alone will not be sufficient. Trees and landscaping are never properly maintained/replaced by City now. Please give more thought to design an effective buffer.
10/27/2015	S. Nathan Cosby	My comment is more of a suggestion. Instead of going through and making a lot 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.
10/27/2015	Ralph Rhudy, PE	Think about improvements to Broad and 14th Streets. Provide 3 northbound approach lanes on 14th to facilitate improvements for BRT transit vehicles to make left turns onto westbound Broad. This will regain some improvements to the Broad Street & I95 Interchange (since the interchange was initially built around 1957 or 1958).
10/28/2015	Renate Forssmann-Falck	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 Siegal 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 for 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 "snail" buses continue to run on Broad Steet. *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. *Community input is very important as indicated by the speaker and yet the community has not been involved in the early stages of the project. I, for instance, learned about it through the Fan District Assocation in July! My tenants and neighbors did not know anything either. There has to be continued and adequate public input during the decision making process rather than communicating already made decisions. The troublesome aspect of the meeting was that the presentation and the RTD article of 10/27/2015 emphasized that the BRT is a done deal. This does not make sense. It is like building a house without secured financial plans and without a final blueprint! After all this is public money that is being spent and GRTC is accountable for it!
10/30/2015	Tyler Ladner	I write out of concern for the new proposed left turn onto Boulevard in the Public Meeting #8 materials (which is a change, I note, from the Public Meeting #7 materials, which left 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 Museum District. Permitting a left turn onto Boulevard will only increase the congestion on Boulevard and will exacerbate the problems associated with many cars unlawfully speeding 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 on 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 lefthand turns, in part because there is little to no enforcement of those restrictions (just as there is little to no enforcement of any speed limits). Although I have seen people make left turns onto 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.

11/10/2015	Jonathan Miller	<p>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):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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?</li> <li>2. 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, forgivable 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?</li> <li>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. (citation below)</li> <li>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)?</li> <li>5. This economic impact study indicated that there was a 4.3 billion increase in development and a %1000 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?</li> <li>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 \$150 million dollars (see below).</li> <li>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? 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? 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?</li> </ol> <p>Background for Question 1: 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, ).</p> <p>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. 23). 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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Background for Question 5: According to Chmura, the BRT was a catalyst for the three-mile, 1,600-acre section in Midtown that will include 210,000 square feet of new office, lab and flex space. "Baiju Shah, BioEnterprise 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).</p> <p>Background for Question 6: Note that Cleveland used "\$150 million invested in street improvements and infrastructure in the corridor" (page 119) 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 88).</p> <p>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).</p>
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