Study Background

Beginning in fall 2009, GRTC Transit System and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) initiated a study of the Broad Street Corridor to consider rapid transit improvements from Willow Lawn to Rocketts Landing. Broad Street is central to the economic activity and the metropolitan area, linking the residential areas east and west of the corridor with the government offices and commercial activities downtown. The study team evaluated different approaches to introducing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to Broad Street and developed a Build Alternative that was presented to the public in October 2010 and again in August 2013. Since that time, the study team has addressed comments to reach consensus on a Recommended Alternative to move forward in the transit planning process with the goal of securing federal funding for the project and constructing it within the next several years.

What is BRT?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high quality, high capacity rapid transit system that offers many of the advantages of rail transit but at a lower and more affordable cost. Instead of trains and tracks, BRT invests in improvements to vehicles, stations, operations, roadways, rights-of-way, intersections and traffic signals to speed up bus transit service. BRT is not a uniform, turn-key transit technology, but represents a spectrum of service enhancements. BRT systems are constructed by choosing and integrating among various BRT elements, such as dedicated lanes, signal priority for buses, branded vehicles and enhanced station amenities. The integration of elements improves system performance and the experience for customers, with the overall goal of making the BRT line accessible, attractive, reliable and, above all, rapid.

What We’ve Heard

More than 350 citizens have attended three rounds of public meetings and the study team has received many comments. Summaries of the prior public meetings can be found at http://study.ridegrtc.com/. Most comments reflect support for rapid transit and transit-oriented development in the corridor. Comments also address concerns about impacts to traffic and businesses along the corridor and questions about impacts to current bus operations. The study team has continued meeting with groups representing key interests and institutions along the corridor to provide further opportunity for input in this process. Concerns and questions raised through these meetings have shaped the analysis and screening of alternatives, resulting in the Recommended Alternative.

Locating local bus stops near BRT stops will make transfers faster and convenient. Off-board ticketing. Signal priority will reduce delays at intersections.

Dedicated lanes allow BRT to bypass local traffic. Sidewalk and crosswalk improvements. Low floor buses reduce boarding times and ease boarding for wheelchairs and strollers.

A combination of dedicated lanes, convenient stations and branded vehicles will save time and make the BRT service attractive to new riders. The above image is a conceptual rendering of the Adams Street station – final design may vary.

http://study.ridegrtc.com
Where We Are Today: Recommending an Alternative

The purpose of today's meeting is to present the Recommended Alternative and gather feedback. The Recommended Alternative has been endorsed by the study Policy and Technical Advisory Committees made up of representatives from the City, County and DRPT, as well as by various community and regional stakeholders. The Recommended Alternative will be considered by the GRTC Board of Directors at its June 17 meeting. If approved to proceed, GRTC will continue with preliminary engineering for the Recommended Alternative with the intention of completing design, construction and opening the service by 2018. At this time, the study team wants to hear from citizens about their level of support for the Recommended Alternative and answer any questions citizens may have about design or operation of the BRT. Although specific design details of the BRT will be determined during the next phase of the project, the selection of the Recommended Alternative will commit GRTC to developing BRT service along the route and with stations in the general locations identified in the map below.

Recommended Alternative

Broad Street Bus Rapid Transit Key Features

| Route length: | 7.6 Miles |
| Vehicles: | Dedicated BRT vehicles |
| Dedicated Bus Lanes: | Thompson to Adams (Median Lanes) 4th to 14th (Curb Lanes Widened) |
| Number of Stations: | 14 stations (4 center, 4 consolidated, 6 curbside) |
| Frequency: | 10 Minutes (Peak) / 15 Minutes (Off-Peak) |
| Hours of Operation: | Weekdays: 5:30 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Weekends 6 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. |
| Proposed Fare: | Same as local bus fare (Currently $1.50) |
| Travel Speeds: | 65% Increase in Bus Speed |
| Estimated Ridership*: | Over 3,000 daily boardings About 500 new daily riders |
| Estimated Cost*: | $53.8 Million Capital $2.7 Million Annual Operating $400,000 Net Annual Operating |

*Updated in 2014 analysis.
Updates to the Recommended Alternative

In October 2010, the study team unveiled the original Build Alternative. The original Build Alternative followed the same route, same stations and had the same dedicated lane as the current Recommended Alternative. The original Build Alternative, however, included service frequencies of 5 minutes in the peak period and 10 minutes in the off-peak period. Since 2010, a number of changes in federal regulations and feedback from stakeholders led the study team to reevaluate the original Build Alternative to better balance ridership, the benefits to users and the corridor and the costs. The result of the reevaluation of ridership, benefits and costs has led to the current Recommended Alternative.

Environmental Impacts

The study team recently completed coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to assess impacts to environmental resources in the corridor. The FTA has determined that the Recommended Alternative meets the requirements for a Categorical Exclusion because the project is not expected to have a significant negative impact on the environment. The project team will continue to coordinate efforts with FTA, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and others as planning and design progresses to meet obligations set forth during the environmental review process.

Benefits of Bus Rapid Transit

- Current riders who switch from buses to BRT will save 36 hours per year
- Increases Property Values by 12% or $1.1 Billion over 20 Years
- New riders who switch from driving to BRT will save $816 per Year in Transportation Costs
- Creates 406 Jobs during Design and Construction
- BRT is faster than regular buses
- A trip between Downtown and Willow Lawn
  - Travel time in minutes
  - 21 min BRT
  - 35 min local bus
- Local Bus: 8.0 mph
- BRT: 13.2 mph

Schedule

Preliminary Engineering:
July 2014 to June 2015
- Develop initial design plans
- System, station and bus branding
- Finalize station locations & guideway alignments
- Design station features
- Detailed cost estimates
- Solidify Local Funding Commitments
- Solidify local funding commitments

Final Design:
June 2015 to February 2017
- Final design of all individual station elements
- Approval of designs elements by Urban Design Committee and Planning Commission
- Bus procurement begins

Construction:
July 2016 to June 2018
- Construction of station shelters and amenities
- Construction of median lanes between Thompson Street and Adams Street
- Reconstruction of curb bus lane from 4th to 14th Street
- Delivery of BRT buses

BRT Opening August 2018
The total cost for design and construction of the Recommended Alternative is $53.8 million. DRPT and the City of Richmond have already funded the preliminary engineering phase, which will cost $4 million. Therefore, $49.8 million will be needed to complete design and construction of the BRT. The study team has developed the following funding plan to construct and operate the BRT.

DRPT, the City and County have all expressed strong support for funding their shares of design, construction and operation of the BRT. The final piece of funding necessary is the 50% of federal funding for Final Design & Construction. On April 27, 2014, GRTC, with the support of the Governor, DRPT, City, County and many others, submitted an application for funding through the USDOT TIGER Discretionary Grant Program for $24.9 Million. The study team expects to learn of the final decision by USDOT in September of 2014. If GRTC does not receive the requested TIGER Grant, the study team will pursue funding through the FTA Small Starts program. Under the rules of the Small Starts program, an application for funding would be submitted once Preliminary Engineering is complete, which is expected in June of 2015. The Recommended Alternative has been developed to meet the criteria of the FTA Small Starts program and it is well positioned to successfully compete for these funds.

### Project Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Phase</th>
<th>Preliminary Engineering: July 2014 to June 2015</th>
<th>Final Design and Construction: June 2015 to June 2018</th>
<th>Operating Cost</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Cost</td>
<td>$4 Million Total Cost</td>
<td>Capital $49.8 Million Total Cost</td>
<td>Net Operating $400,000 per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Funding Source</td>
<td>Federal Flexible STP Funds: $3.2 Million (80%)* DRPT Grant: $640,000 (16%)* Local Match: $160,000 (4%)*</td>
<td>TIGER or FTA Grant: $24.9 Million (50%) DRPT Match: $16.9 Million (34%) Local Match: $8.0 Million (16%)</td>
<td>Farebox: $80,000 (20%) DRPT: $96,000 (24%) Local: $225,000 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed State and Local Funding</td>
<td>DRPT Grant: $640,000* City of Richmond: $160,000*</td>
<td>DRPT Match: $16.9 Million City Match: $7.6 Million County Match: $0.4 Million</td>
<td>DRPT Assistance: $96,000 City Annual Funding: $216,000 County Annual Funding: $9,000</td>
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*Funded

### How Can I Get Involved?

We invite your input in this project development process and encourage you to comment on any of the elements noted above. Comments can be submitted in one of three ways:

- Provide written comments at a citizen information meeting.
- Provide written comments at any time by using the electronic comment form [http://study.ridegrtc.com](http://study.ridegrtc.com)
- Mail written comments to Stephen McNally, Director of Engineering/Construction, GRTC Transit System 301 East Belt Boulevard, Richmond, VA 23224

### What’s Next?

Following the public meetings in May 2014, the study team will review and address all comments received and the GRTC Board of Directors will consider the Recommended Alternative with the goal of selecting a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Once the LPA is selected, preliminary engineering will begin. Continued public outreach and coordination with the City and County on local funding sources will occur during Preliminary Engineering, Design and Construction.