

6.0 MTTC Conclusions and Recommendations

MTTC Project Conclusions

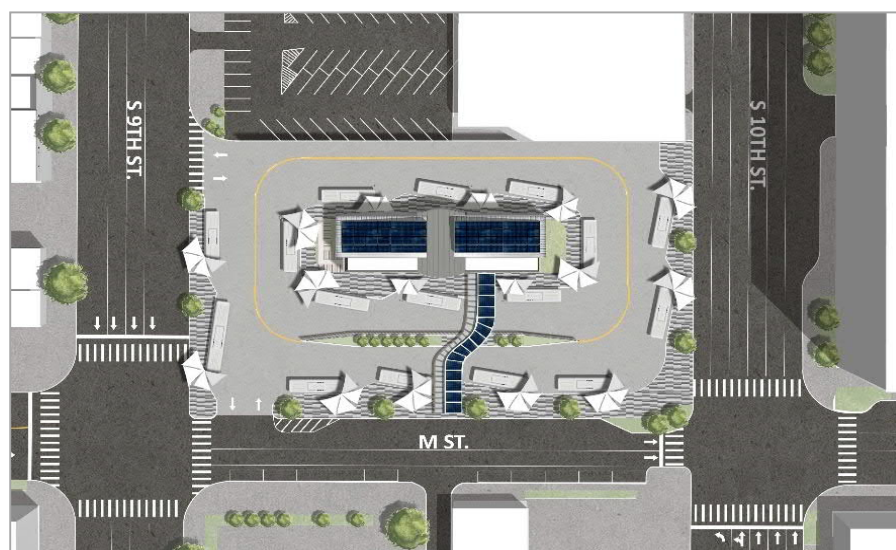
The construction of a new transit center in downtown Lincoln is a critical piece of infrastructure that will support improved mobility for residents and visitors for decades to come.

The MTTC Planning and Feasibility Study was initiated to investigate opportunities to enhance the transferring facilities and environment for StarTran bus riders for decades to come. The study identified several challenges that have made the current transfer location at the Gold's Building an unsustainable location for the long-term future of the StarTran transit system. The primary purpose and need for the study was to identify an optimal site for a new downtown transit center and to develop a conceptual layout and site plan for the new center that StarTran and its passengers can utilize as the hub of the transit system. To guide the MTTC study process, a number of goals were developed and prioritized through a public survey that identified improving transit system efficiency, accessibility to transit, and safety as the highest priorities for the MTTC.

The MTTC study conducted a thorough site selection process to locate the optimal location for the new MTTC. Overall this analysis reviewed nearly twenty properties in the downtown study area through a two-tiered process. The first level of site selection review involved prerequisites that a potential site must or must not include. If a site did not meet all the prerequisites it was not moved into the second tier of evaluation which scored approximately seven sites on a variety of metrics that tied back to the project goals and priorities. This process identified the best site for the MTTC located at the southern half of the block on M Street between 9th and 10th Streets which is largely owned by the city.

Following site selection the MTTC study worked through a process to create several alternatives for layout configuration of the site that would best integrate the functional needs of the transit center. This included indoor waiting space, StarTran administrative office areas, up to sixteen bus bays to accommodate current

Figure 91: MTTC Preferred Layout



and future StarTran operations, multimodal connections to bike/scooter share, and several other considerations. The layout and design process led to the development of the preferred conceptual layout of the MTTC shown in Figure 91.

The conceptual layout will provide StarTran a centralized, off-street facility for all bus routes to meet and allow passengers to transfer more efficiently.

The MTTC concept would construct a two-story building located on a central boarding island. The ground floor of this structure will provide a climate-controlled passenger waiting area with restrooms, free public

Wi-Fi, as well as a customer service area that would be staffed by StarTran to provide information and sell bus passes. The second story of this main structure would relocate StarTran’s administrative offices from their current home closer to the heart of the bus network’s operations.

The new MTTC will provide several benefits for multimodal transportation in the greater Lincoln metro area and beyond. The transit center will allow all StarTran routes to meet on a combined pulse that will shorten passenger’s transfer wait time and overall travel time to reach their destinations. This transit center will also greatly improve the comfort and convenience of using transit for future StarTran riders with climate-controlled waiting areas, on-site customer service, free public Wi-Fi, and restrooms. The MTTC will provide connectivity to bike share and scooter sharing as well as a connection to a new intercity commuter bus service between Omaha and Lincoln. Along with the mobility improvements, the MTTC will enhance safety and security for StarTran passengers and staff with improved lighting and lines of sight and other security measures that will be incorporated to the facility’s design and operation.

The preferred MTTC conceptual layout and design were utilized to develop capital construction costs as well as on-going operation and maintenance costs for the transit center facility. Using a conservative cost estimating process it is anticipated that the total capital cost, including engineering and detailed design would be approximately \$12.36 million. A benefit-cost analysis for this project was conducted and found that the MTTC project would result in a benefit-cost ratio of 1.8, meaning its benefits to the community would greatly outweigh the costs.

MTTC Project Next Steps

StarTran and the City of Lincoln should advance the MTTC project into the next phases of more detailed planning and engineering design that will further refine the project and estimated costs in the coming year. Table 21 presents a conceptual project schedule for the main task areas over the coming four years.

To advance this project there are several items that will be necessary to proceed. The preferred site for the MTTC is largely under the ownership of the City of Lincoln, but one parcel has yet to be acquired. StarTran and the City will need to work through the appropriate processes to acquire this small piece of property needed to support the MTTC.

Table 21: Conceptual MTTC Project Schedule for Next Steps

| Project Task | 2020 | | 2021 | | | | 2022 | | | | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | |
|------------------------------|------|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| Property Acquisition | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Funding Commitments | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NEPA Analysis | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Engineering / Design | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Federal Funding Applications | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bidding | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| Construction | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| MTTC Open to Service | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |

Securing federal funds to design and construct the facility is another critical item to make the MTTC a reality. Having commitment of local funding is an important component to making the MTTC project competitive for securing discretionary federal capital funds. This funding should be able to be identified in an agency or city budget that is clearly committed to support the project. Projects that are typically

selected for highly competitive federal funds have low budgetary risks, and in many cases provide more local match than the minimum twenty percent. In recent years Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) have been released for competitive federal funding programs in the first half of the year, and similar timing could be anticipated for 2021. If StarTran is unsuccessful in securing federal discretionary funding in 2020, it should target the next finding window in quarter one or two of 2021 to continue efforts to locate the funding needed to deliver the MTTC project.

The environmental analysis required by NEPA and preliminary/final engineering efforts could be undertaken simultaneously to accelerate the overall MTTC project timeline. StarTran will need to coordinate closely with the Region 7 Federal Transit Administration office in Kansas City to initiate and advance through the NEPA process. StarTran will also need to engage with other State of Nebraska agencies to obtain other needed approvals in the environmental process. It is anticipated that the MTTC project would be classified as a Categorical Exclusion or an Environmental Assessment. Generally, these levels of NEPA evaluation can take 12-18 months to conclude and receive appropriate approvals. Initiation or completion of the NEPA process will also make the MTTC a more competitive project if applying for federal funding in 2021 or beyond.

As the NEPA process is on-going, StarTran could also begin the preliminary design/engineering task that would develop engineering drawings to the 30% design level and continue to further develop drawings towards a final design targeted approximately 18 months from the start of the engineering task. Having preliminary designs will also help to inform the NEPA process.

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