From Collaboration to Consensus: How to Navigate Stakeholder Challenges

Natasha Velickovic
VHB, Principal, Transit and Rail
Boston, Massachusetts
Key Presentation Take-Aways

• There is no such thing as “consensus”
• Success pivots from an understanding of perspectives
• Early and comprehensive coordination irreplaceable
• The devil’s in the detail (i.e. the technical data)
The Consensus Challenge

- Diverse perspectives and conflicting agendas
- Pace and processes of each stakeholder
- Station area readiness for the uptick in investment and activity
- Funding (!!!)
The Consensus Challenge

- **Municipal Perspective** – station projects are catalysts to revitalization and development
- **State/Agency Perspective** – funding needs and prioritization across the state/system a constant balancing act
- **Railroad Line Owner Perspective** – existing and future growth capacity and operations top priority
Representing Each Perspective

• What the municipalities want is a new station, tomorrow – *help push the station along but set realistic expectations*

• What the State/Agency wants is to makes sure it’s investment is justified – *help the State/Agency find funds and help the municipalities tell their P&N story and stage for TOD investment*

• What the rail line owner and operator wants is capacity – *work to dispel theories of perceived impact*
Stakeholder Coordination and Public Outreach
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study

Historic rendering of a thriving Main Street in the late 1800s

Historic Pawtucket/Central Falls Station
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study

Percentage of Minority:
- Rhode Island: 11.6%
- Nation: 17.7%
- Pawtucket: 33.5%
- Central Falls: 33.1%

Percentage in Poverty:
- Rhode Island: 14.9%
- Nation: 12.2%
- Pawtucket: 27.0%
- Central Falls: 18.7%

Median Household Income:
- Rhode Island: $31,046
- Nation: $51,016
- Pawtucket: $40,383
- Central Falls: $29,268

Unemployment Rate:
- Rhode Island: 10.3%
- Nation: 8.2%
- Pawtucket: 13.6%
- Central Falls: 12.1%
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study

Project Timeline

1981
Rail passengers move to Pawtucket/Central Falls station

2006
State Guide Plan, Land Use Plan identifies Pawtucket station as key activity center

2006
Pawtucket trolley project moves to restore commuter rail

2007
Pawtucket Comprehensive Plan sets vision to restore commuter rail

2007
City of Pawtucket commuter rail feasibility study

2011
Pawtucket.Trailway District Plan calls station as key priority

2012
Pawtucket introduces Rail Station District in station area, and reduced parking requirements to accommodate TOD

2013
Pawtucket introduces Bill Hinchman in station area and reduced housing requirements to accommodate TOD

2014
Station area designated as one of 6 Growth Centers in RI Guide Plan

2014
Roger Williams University NH Award for Transit-Oriented Development: Perspectives

2015
Station area designated as one of 6 Growth Centers in RI Guide Plan

2015
US Congresman approved Blockhouse Valley National Historical Park

2015
Pawtucket Trolley Brown Line designated as RI Smart Growth and TOD

2016
RIPTA completes pedestrian and bicyclist improvements to Union & Canal Streets

2016
RIPTA expands pedestrian and bicyclist improvements to Union & Canal Streets
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study

- Ownership vs. Operations
- Passenger vs. Freight
- Everyone competing for the same space/limited capacity
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study

- TOD Visioning
- Cities’ preparedness top priority for DOT
The Pawtucket/Central Falls Case Study
Thank you!

Natasha Velickovic
nvelickovic@vhb.com
617.607.2909