



NORTHWEST CORRIDOR RAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY

San Antonio, Texas

Client

San Antonio VIA Metropolitan Transit

Cost

\$99,500

Dates

November 2008 – February 2009

Reference

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LAN performed a sketch planning level examination of the Year 2015 ridership potential for reuse of the existing Union Pacific Kerrville Subdivision freight rail line between Probandt Street near downtown and its northern terminus just north of Loop 1604, referred to as the “Northwest Corridor.” The study corridor was roughly 15 miles long and both light rail and commuter rail technologies were evaluated. Included with this exercise was an evaluation of potential overlap between the service market for this corridor and the market for the Fredericksburg Road bus rapid transit (BRT) service.

This work was part of an overall evaluation of the corridor coordinated through and supported by VIA staff efforts. Other work components included an evaluation of the physical condition of the line, determination of planning level costs associated with various rail

technologies, assessment of operating limitations and evaluation of potential funding opportunities. LAN reviewed operating characteristics of the identified peer systems to support these additional efforts.

Three types of rail transit technologies were assessed for the corridor: light rail (LRT), diesel multiple unit (DMU) and conventional (“push-pull”) diesel electric locomotive with carriages type commuter rail. Typical weekday boarding projections were derived using multiple published techniques. Station locations for each mode were determined through a GIS-based evaluation process. Forecasts for the various Northwest Corridor modes, as well as for the Fredericksburg Road BRT, were segregated by mode of access (walk, bus and auto). Overlapping walk and auto access catchment areas and shared feeder bus routes were identified.



As a result of this effort, LAN determined that the Fredericksburg Road BRT and Northwest Corridor markets are largely separate. A traditional push-pull commuter rail operation is not suited to the Northwest Corridor, owing to the relatively short length of the corridor and the low employment density in downtown San Antonio. LRT and DMU technologies appear to have relatively low overall corridor boarding levels compared to other systems (i.e., 45 percent of other studied LRT systems' ridership per mile); but still merit further investigation within the context of a longer term transit system master planning effort.