



# Edgewater Red Line Charrettes

## Community Activism to Advance Transit Planning

Rail-Volution  
Miami Beach, Florida  
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# Lessons from Charrettes

- 1. Provide multiple options for public input**
- 2. Publicity serves to generate awareness of issues as well as generating input into planning process**
- 3. Partner with other organizations and elected officials to “grow the tent”**
- 4. Difficult to maintain participation over multiple meetings**



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# Why the Red Line Charettes?

- Intentional process that developed over several years. Kept pushing to reach goal.
- An Engaged community - accustomed to extensive community input in planning; extensive network of community groups

**2004 Approached UIC-CDC regarding Charettes as studio project**

**2005 Edgewater Neighborhood Transopoly:**

- One major conclusion was that “transit is seen as a necessary and desirable asset, but one that suffers from aging infrastructure, particularly some of the Red Line Stations.”
- State Representative co-sponsored the session

**2006 Submit proposal to State of Illinois to fund Red Line Charettes**

- Absence of funds in SAFETEA-LU for planning/revamp of the Red Line
- State Representative very swayed by this assertion
- Extensive history of community input into planning in Edgewater

**2006/7 Implement Charettes**

- Dec to Mar – planning and field work
- Dec to May – publicity campaign
- Mar-May – Charettes held
- Final report to be released Dec

Rotten wooden gutter in the center of the passenger platform of Red Line Station





# Publicity Efforts

We utilized multiple forms of outreach, to draw from a large and diverse sample population: digital; print; word of mouth; personal and community networks.

## 1. Email Marketing

- EDC Newsletter
- Other community organization newsletters

## 2. Press Releases

- Local community paper ran a story
- City-wide paper ran a calendar blurb

## 3. Blogs/Listserves

- CTA Tattler
- University list-serve

## 4. Post cards & flyers @ CTA Stations

- Distributed 1,000 flyers at CTA Stations leading up to the Charrette dates

## 5. Announcements at community meetings



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# Participation Opportunities

We offered multiple opportunities for input, to again maximize the sample population and offer input opportunities to those that could not attend the charrettes:

- Charrettes – two rounds
- Surveys – both online & paper
- Comment boards at charrettes
- E-mail
- ECC post-card campaign



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# Red Line Survey

**Provided an alternative input option to the charrette process**

- Less time intensive
- Provided input opportunity to those that didn't attend charrettes (much positive feedback on this)
- 192 surveys completed
- Age range from 18 to 80
- All publicity material included the link to the survey

**Collected some of same information as charrettes plus some additional information**

- Station improvements
- New business recommendations & business usage patterns
- *Behavior measures – how use system, travel purpose*
- *User characteristics*



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# Charrette Structure

**Four CTA Stations divided into 2 pairs:**

1. Berwyn & Bryn Mawr
2. Thorndale & Granville

**Two Rounds for each station pair:**

1. Round 1- interactive design exercises
  - Station improvements
  - Retail mix
  - Urban design of district
2. Round 2 – review results & impacts, revise as necessary



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# Charrette Participation Overview

**A total of 156 participants in the 4 charrettes**

- 2/3 result of personal/organizational relationships
- 1/3 “new to EDC” and motivated solely by the issues
- 14% live outside Edgewater – twice the rate of those taking the survey
- Compare to RTA public meeting earlier that year drew ~20

**Participation much higher in Round One than Round Two**

- Round two drew half as many attendees

**Participants came from throughout community**

- Expected more from areas adjacent to Red Line
- Participation reflected population patterns



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# Survey Participation Overview

## 192 surveys completed

- 7% live outside of Edgewater – reveals that flyers generated weak response with riders from outside of Edgewater.
- 2 ½ times as many surveys completed by residents from north half of community where the retail districts are the least developed
- 49.7% male, 50.3% female
- 175 surveys (91%) completed @ SurveyMonkey, 17 surveys completed in person



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# Lessons from Charrettes

## 1. Provide multiple options for public input

- More than doubled input by offering survey
- Broadened sample population – particularly age range (more under 30 took survey than attended charrette)

## 2. Publicity as important for generating awareness of issues as for generating participation

- 2/3 of participation result of personal & organizational relationships & 1/3 were “new” to EDC and motivated by issue and opportunity to give input
- Get message out to max. audience

## 3. Partner with other orgs & elected officials to “grow the tent” – relationships important to draw participation

- Start locally and work outward
- Transit can be H-O-T when it's a political football – mobilize your public

## 4. Difficult to maintain participation over multiple meetings



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# Wildcards: the unexpected “visitor”

## 1. Can't Plan for them

## 2. Blessing or Curse?

In our case it was a blessing. Massive public fury over lack of advance notice about service reductions due to construction. Public and elected officials were all irate.

## 3. Adapt to the circumstances

We took advantage of the public ire to generate attendance.

Partnered with other community organizations on post card campaign, generating additional awareness of Red Line issues and further mobilizing the public. 5,000 post cards were distributed for mailing to elected officials.



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# What Next?

1. Final Report due out in December
2. Copies to all elected officials and community groups, and posted on our web site.
3. Additional media blitz and “Report Release Party”
4. State Representative Osterman pledged to partner with other State and Federal elected officials to secure the funds to “Rev up the Red.”
5. EDC and other community groups are continuing to push the transit issue – current City Budget hearings are targeted.
6. Keep in close contact with campaign partners and keep them engaged.



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# Current News & Headlines

## More Unexpected Visitors

On the pending CTA Doomsday on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>, our Mayor stated –

"They found out that more than 41,000 students use the CTA to get to school and that most of them don't have access to other means of transportation," he said. "They found out that 14,000 students said they'd have to drop out of city colleges if the CTA cuts go through, that another 11,000 would reduce their coursework or postpone it."

-- Mayor Richard Daley,

"Could transit 'neglect' cost Chicago the 2016 Olympics?"

*--Chicago Tribune web edition, October 29, 2007*



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# Thank you!

**Edgewater Development Corporation**

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