



NEWS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

Andrew J. Gitzlaff
Gateway Corridor Project Manager
Direct: 651-430-4338 | Fax: 651-430-4350
andy.gitzlaff@co.washington.mn.us

Cleveland's HealthLine Offers Lessons for Gateway Corridor

June 24, 2013 (Woodbury, Minn.) A visiting transit administrator held a packed room of business and community leaders interested in the Gateway Corridor spellbound with his story of a wildly successful rapid-transit line in Cleveland. Joe Calabrese, the CEO of Cleveland's Regional Transit Agency, said the HealthLine transit project is successful because it is fast, simple, safe, first-class, and promotes economic development- more than \$4 billion in new investments.

Calabrese spoke at the June 24 Gateway Corridor Development Forum held at Oak Marsh in Oakdale. The forum was intended to spark conversations about the role cities and the business community play in shaping development along transit corridors. By 2030, the Gateway Corridor is expected to expand by 90,000 people (nearly a third more residents), and 30,000 jobs.

"Other people leveraged what we did," Calabrese said. The Cleveland business community embraced the transit proposal and lobbied policy makers for funding. Property owners advocated for zoning changes that would allow for more dense development.

Today, the HealthLine consists of 36, rail-like bus rapid transit stations that replaced 108 bus stops along seven miles of city street. Project improvements included bike lanes, 1,500 trees and public art.

"We learned viable, convenient public transit is what young people want, too," he added. "If it happens in Cleveland, it will happen here."

Calabrese was joined by panel members with local experience in development to talk about the region and the role transit may play.

When competing for talent and new or expanded companies, transit matters, said Peter Frosch, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Greater MSP and former Legislative Director for U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum. "Transit is no longer a competitive advantage," Frosch said. "It's expected."

Jay Cowles, co-chair of the Itasca Project Transportation Committee, said their recent study showed a significant return on investment in transit.

"It opens up the labor pool," Cowles said, noting the two-way flow of people traveling into the core of the city and out to the suburbs for work.

Paul Reinke, Oakdale city councilmember and president of Silver Oak Development, Inc., asked Calabrese about the last mile between the transit ride and the front door of the destination. Calabrese explained the importance of connectivity with the HealthLine. Sidewalks, bike lanes, bus and rail connections all work together to make the ride experience easier. He stressed the importance of making the entire ride experience a good one.

Mark Fabel, with McGough Companies and the Bloomington Central Station, cautioned people that transit systems need to mature before they can achieve their maximum value.

Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega, vice chair of the Gateway Corridor Commission, said it's important for Gateway Corridor to keep moving forward in order to bring a balanced approach to

regional investments.

"When we hear about a proposed transit service that won't be operational until 2022, we might think that's so far away," said Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik, chair of the Gateway Corridor Commission. "But, from a developer's perspective, that's just around the corner."

The Gateway Corridor Development Forum was hosted by the Gateway Corridor Commission and sponsored by the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and the Woodbury Chamber of Commerce.

EVENT PHOTOS are available at: <https://www.facebook.com/GatewayCorridor>

About the Gateway Corridor transit project

Gateway Corridor transit would run from Union Depot in St. Paul to Woodbury next to Interstate 94 mainly on Hudson Road. All-day transit service would stop at 11 stations and would include connections to Minneapolis and Hudson, WI. Light rail or bus rapid transit is being considered and the system could be operational by 2022. Gateway will provide a focal point for more concentrated development as the region grows. The work is led by the Gateway Corridor Commission, which is comprised of local elected officials, business and community leaders. More information is available at www.TheGatewayCorridor.com.

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