



Agenda

Gateway Corridor Commission

October 13, 2011 - 3:30 PM

Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room
 8301 Valley Creek Road
 Woodbury, MN 55125

<u>Item</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Action Requested</u>
1. Introductions		
2. Approval of Agenda		Approval
3. Summary August 11, 2011 Meeting*		Approval
4. Consent Items		Approval
a. Checks and Claims*		
5. Gateway Corridor AA		
a. Update on Study and Recommendations from PAC*	Stephanie Eiler, CH2M Hill	Information / Approval
b. Outreach Activities*	Washington County	Information
6. Preliminary 2012 Work Plan and Budget*	Washington County	Discussion
a. 2011 State Bond Funds		
7. Communications	Washington County	Information
a. Google Analytics Update – July / August*		
b. Talking Points*		
8. Bus Tour*	Washington County	Discussion
9. Legislative Update	Ramsey County	Information
a. State		
b. Federal*		
10. Other	Washington County	Information
a. Meeting Dates Summary*		
b. Media Articles*		
11. Adjourn		

*Attachments

Gateway Corridor Commission
August 11, 2011
Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room

Members	Agency	Present
Rafael Ortega	Ramsey County	X
Lisa Weik	Washington County	X
Kathy Lantry	St Paul	
Will Rossbach	Maplewood	X
Paul Reinke	Oakdale	
Mary Giuliani-Stephens	Woodbury	X
Dean Johnston	Lake Elmo	X
Randy Nelson	Afton	
Dan Kyllo	West Lakeland	X
Brian Zeller	Lakeland	X
Victoria Reinhardt, Alternate	Ramsey County	
Gary Kriesel, Alternate	Washington County	X
Paul Rebholz, Alternate	Woodbury	
Brett Emmons, Alternate	Lake Elmo	
Pat Snyder, Alternate	Afton	X
Dave Schultz, Alternate	West Lakeland	X
Peg Larson, Alternate	Lakeland	

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	Present
Mike Amundson	Baytown Township	X
Greg Watson	Woodbury Chamber of Commerce	X
Richard McNamara	Oakdale Business and Professional Association	
Doug Stang	3M	
Tim Ramberg	St. Croix County	
Zach Schwartz	St Paul Chamber of Commerce	X

Others	Agency
Mike Rogers	Ramsey County RRA
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County
Andy Gitzlaff	Washington County
David Jessup	City of Woodbury
Stephanie Eiler	CH2M Hill
Ellen Biales	St. Paul City Council – Ward 7
Clint Gridley	City of Woodbury
Allen Lovejoy	City of St. Paul
Garneth Peterson	St. Paul District Council 1
Ann Marshall	Citizen
Phyllis Letendre	Citizen

The Gateway Corridor Commission convened at 3:34 p.m. by Chair Weik.

Agenda Item #1. Introductions

Introductions were made by those present.

Agenda Item #2. Approval of Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda. Motion made by Johnston to approve agenda. Seconded by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3. Summary June 9, 2011 Meeting

No changes were made to the June 9, 2011 meeting summary. Motion made by Johnston to approve June 9, 2011 meeting summary. Seconded by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4. Consent Items

Item 4a. Checks and claims:

Gitzlaff distributed an updated checks and claims memo with two additional items. Motion made by Johnston to approve revised checks and claims. Seconded by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #5. Gateway Corridor AA Update

Item 5a. Update on Study

Gitzlaff distributed updated copies of supplemental information on the AA. Stephanie Eiler presented a PowerPoint presentation on the outreach activities and public comments. The second round of open houses is completed and the general comments included:

- Support for transit improvements
- Desire for feeder bus service and all-day service
- Concerns about traffic impacts, intersection impacts, business impacts during construction, right-of-way impacts, and environmental impacts
- Mixed opinions on preferences of BRT verses LRT.

Eiler presented the background and documentation on the revisions to the Alternatives that were recommended by the PAC and TAC. The discussion of a recommendation to dismiss the East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue Alternatives will be deferred to the September 7th combined PAC/TAC meeting.

Motion made by Johnston to approve the PAC/TAC recommendation to dismiss the BNSF Midway Subdivision Commuter Rail alignment option from consideration. Seconded by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Motion made by Rossbach to approve the PAC/TAC recommendation to revise Segment 3 Alternatives: BRT, LRT, and BRT Managed Lane. Seconded by Johnston. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Rossbach commented that this revision makes a lot of sense. We don't have a way to build a new bridge and we can't use expand the existing bridge; therefore, we need to use what we have existing at this moment. The recommendation indicates that both of the Departments of Transportation should look to make the situation better in the future.

Giuliani-Stevens asked what's going to be happening or what do we expect to learn over the next month that will help us make the decision about the St. Paul segments in September. Eiler said we will have more information on the impacts of changing the alignment; the next step allows them to have meetings to address concerns and look at impacts.

Item 5b. Outreach Activities

Gitzlaff referred to the outreach activities outlined in the packet. Future meetings include the East Side Area Business Association on September 14th, and the Oakdale Business Association on September 1st. Staff will keep the Commission updated if additional meetings are scheduled. Participation from Commission members is encouraged, especially if the meeting is in the member's district. There has been a lot of promoting for the open houses. Copies of five printed articles and eight on-online articles were included in the packet. Weik stated she has done a couple of presentations recently, as well as a taped segment on Monday for the Local Cable access channel. It will be broadcast from August 15th through September 15th on local markets in the east metro. The segment was brief; however, she has been invited to come back and do a longer segment on the Gateway Corridor.

Zeller commented that in one article, a position was taken in terms of the implementation of LRT, and we may want to update our talking points so that we can all be consistent and not discuss a predetermined outcome. Weik agreed. Kriesel also read the article and concurred that the information must be data driven. Zeller said, typically, calls he has received are assuming we are after one mode of transportation, and he tries to assure people that we're waiting to see what the study reveals. Zeller requested someone review the previous talking points and share them with the WI Gateway Corridor Commission so they are on the same page. Gitzlaff said staff can review the information to see if updates need to be made.

Agenda Item #6. Copyright/Trademark for Gateway Corridor

Gitzlaff provided background information on the value of pursuing a trademark of the Gateway Corridor logo. Staff recommended not submitting an application to trademark the Gateway Corridor. Motion made by Johnston to accept staff's recommendation to not trademark the Gateway Corridor. Seconded by Kylo. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7 Communications

Item 7a. Google Analytics Update – May/June

Gitzlaff reviewed the reports in the packet for the months of May and June. They are expecting a big increase in July because of all the promoting for the open houses and the released newsletters. Weik said attendees of the open houses have commented that they visit the web site.

Agenda Item #8. East Metro Railroad Capacity Analysis Study Presentation

Rogers distributed copies and gave a PowerPoint presentation on the East Metro Rail Capacity Study. The study objectives include identifying capacity improvement scenarios with focus on technical issues and constructability, freight railroad acceptance, and limited cultural and environmental analysis. Rossbach asked who's paying for this study. Rogers said it is paid with 80% Federal funds and 20% State Bond funds; the study contains enough engineering to qualify for State funding.

Agenda Item #9. Legislative Update

Item 9a. State

Rogers discussed the state legislative update summary in the packet. Passenger rail is being funded for 2012 and 2013 at \$500,000 yearly, consistent with previous years. Transit service was cut significantly - \$25 million over the next two years; however, the appropriation increases for 2014 and 2015 which will bring it back to current funding levels. Metro Transit said there won't be any service cutbacks or fare increases; they will be able to shift some funds around to accommodate the cuts. CTIB will increase allocations of the net cost of operations to those transitways receiving sales tax funds from 50% to 75% for the next two years. Rogers also reviewed the \$20 million allocation of the Capital Investment Bill for the Transit Capital Improvement Program.

Item 9b. Federal

Rogers referred to debt ceiling increase information included in the packet. There are two separate transportation bills going forward. Right now we are running under extensions of SAFETEA-LU, which is the current six year bill. The Senate would like to pass a two-year extension or authorization bill which would allow them to fund transportation at current levels. The House is looking at passing a six-year bill that is about \$56 million less than the previous six-year bill.

Agenda Item #10. Other

Item 10a. Strategic Communication Plan Updates:

Gitzlaff said there is newly updated contact information based on legislative changes. Staff distributed copies of the section to be replaced in the communication packet.

Item 10b. Meeting Dates Summary

A schedule of upcoming meetings through the end of the year is included in the packet. There is one change; the TAC and PAC meetings in September will be combined on September 7th. There will not be a PAC meeting on September 21st.

Item 10c. Media Articles

Copies of media articles were provided in the packet. Weik said she went to Washington DC with the Transportation Alliance. She said it was very productive and she met with Senator's Klobuchar and Franken staff. She was also able to talk to Representative's Bachmann and McCollum staff, and the WI delegation staff to update them on the Gateway study.

Agenda Item #11. Adjourn

Ortega moved to adjourn. Seconded by Johnston. **Approved.** Motion carried. Weik called the meeting adjourned at 4:48p.m.



DATE: September 28, 2011
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Checks and Claims

Included below is a summary of the invoices that have been received since the previous meeting:

Gateway Corridor Commission – Advocacy Materials

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
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Communications Contract (Tunheim Partners)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Amount</u>
7/31/11	\$3,430.00
8/31/11	\$2,011.00
9/30/11	\$555.00

Note: Percent of contract utilized = 95%

Alternatives Analysis Contract (CH2M Hill)

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
June 25, 2011 – July 29, 2011	\$126,232.15
July 30, 2011 – August 26, 2011	\$74,528.57

Note: Percent of contract utilized = 49%

Detailed invoices can be made available upon request.

Action Requested: Approval of Claims and Checks



DATE: September 28, 2011
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Update on the Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis

Since the last Commission meeting, activity on the Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA) has been continuing. Stephanie Eiler, project manager for CH2M Hill, will give the presentation on the AA. There are two items where approval will be requested from the Commission:

- Revisions to Alternatives 4 and 6 in Segment 2
The memo included after this cover memo provides the detailed information that was presented to the Policy Advisory (PAC) on September 21. Based on the information presented in that memo and any discussion at the meeting, the PAC approved the following:

Approve TAC recommendation to retain Alternatives 4 and 6, and conduct analysis that would seek to minimize land use impacts on East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue based on the assumptions agreed upon between St Paul and Ramsey County staff.

Action Requested: Approval of the recommendation from the Policy Advisory Committee.

- Station Location Modifications
Based on input from the open houses in August and feedback from agency representatives, there are two proposed changes station locations for Alternatives 3 and 5:
 - Move the Johnson Parkway station to Earl Street
 - Add a station near Metro State

The PAC approved the recommendation on the modification to these station locations.

Action Requested: Approval of the recommendation from the Policy Advisory Committee

Stephanie will also provide an update on the ridership forecasting process, capital cost estimating and the next steps in the study.

Action Requested: Information

Potential Modifications to Alternatives 4 and 6 in Segment 2

TO: Policy Advisory Committee

COPIES: Project Team

FROM: Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County
Stephanie Eiler, Consulting Team

DATE: September 15, 2011

This item was originally discussed and then tabled at the August 10th joint PAC/TAC meeting. This memo replaces the memo previously dated August 3rd for this topic. This memo reflects recommendations by the TAC on September 7, 2011.

SUMMARY

During the second round of public outreach meetings and a meeting with affected St. Paul District Councils and community organization leadership, concerns were raised about the potential impacts of Alternatives 4 and 6 on City of St Paul Streets, most notably East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue. Subsequently, St. Paul city staff has submitted a letter specifying their concerns and indicated that the right of way impacts to implement an exclusive transitway for either BRT or LRT would be unacceptable on these St. Paul city streets.

A decision needs to be made on whether or not to modify Alternatives 4 and 6 based on the input received prior to proceeding into the more detailed conceptual engineering analysis. At its meeting on September 7, the TAC initially considered two viable options:

Option 1: Do not modify the alternatives prior to proceeding into conceptual engineering analysis.

Option 2: Dismiss portions of Alternatives 4 and 6 (Local BRT and LRT) along East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue from further consideration in the Gateway Alternatives Analysis. BRT and LRT alternatives through the east side of St. Paul in Segment 2 would be limited to those adjacent to I-94 in Alternatives 3 and 5. The local portions of Alternatives 4 (BRT) and 6 (LRT) through Woodbury would remain as currently defined.

BACKGROUND

The Gateway Alternative Analysis initially proposed two concepts for transit service within the corridor: maximize speed by following I-94 as closely as possible, and maximize local access by bringing service directly into areas where people live and work. Alternatives were developed for two technologies, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT), under each concept. Alternatives 3 (BRT I-94) and 5 (LRT I-94) reflect the first concept and follow I-94 as closely as possible. Alternatives 4 (BRT Local) and 6 (LRT Local) reflect the second concept, extending into communities in St. Paul and in Woodbury.

The project team completed the second round of public outreach on July 28, with open house meetings in Hudson, Eau Claire, Woodbury and St. Paul. An additional meeting was held with the leadership from the affected St. Paul District Councils and community organizations on August 17, 2011. At all meetings attended by St. Paul residents, concerns were repeatedly expressed regarding the community impacts that would result from the additional right of way needed to implement an exclusive transitway along White Bear Avenue and East 7th Street east of Johnson Parkway. There were also comments from residents and community members that expressed the desire for enhanced transit through the near east side neighborhoods to increase access and economic development.

St. Paul city staff has submitted a letter specifying these concerns and indicating that the right of way impacts to implement an exclusive transitway under either BRT or LRT would be unacceptable on St. Paul city streets. That letter along with the summary of public comments from the open houses and the east side community leadership meeting is included with this memorandum.

The possibility of treating the BRT alternative along East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue as Arterial BRT, sharing roadway lanes with general traffic except at stations, was also addressed. Such an approach would minimize right of way impacts, but it would also significantly increase travel time. Such an approach is more consistent with a local transit study than the 90-mile Gateway corridor, and is not consistent with the Alternatives Analysis' stated number one goal: improve corridor mobility.

Separately from Gateway work, Metro Transit has initiated a study of arterial BRT along a portion of East 7th Street in the area under consideration. Both Metro Transit and Met Council consider the suggested modifications to Gateway LRT and BRT alternatives through east St. Paul neighborhoods to be improvements to the slate of alternatives for further consideration in the AA.

HISTORY

The portion of the Gateway Corridor through the east side of St. Paul has seen considerable activity throughout the AA process to date. In addition to the East 7th Street to White Bear Avenue alignment, routes considered include the following:

- Minnehaha Avenue/State Highway 5 – dismissed following first round of public meetings as a result of public comment and city staff suggestion to replace with East 7th Street. This option was initially extended through Oakdale, then cut back following Oakdale city comment.
- East 3rd Street – considered through mid-2011; dismissed as less beneficial than East 7th Street by joint PAC/TAC action on June 29. This option was initially extended through Oakdale and Lake Elmo, and then cut back following comments from both cities during first phase of community outreach.
- Johnson Parkway – briefly considered early in the process; not taken further as result of community resistance to changing the parkway nature of the corridor.
- McKnight Road – considered as north/south connector under Minnehaha Ave and East 3rd Street options, dismissed under East 7th Street options as discontinuous, requiring impacts on two additional roadways: White Bear Avenue and either Minnehaha or 3rd.

- Hazel Street – briefly considered as north/south connector; not taken further because land use is exclusively single-family residential, with narrow right of way and little opportunity for commercial redevelopment or economic benefit.

The Gateway conceptual engineering team also reviewed the existing land uses adjacent to White Bear Avenue for the one mile segment from E. 7th Street to the I-94 interchange ramps. The purpose of the review was to distinguish whether widening necessary for implementation of the LRT alternative should take place on the east or west side of the roadway. To limit the impacts to private property, the assessment concluded that the use of a combination of the west and east side of White Bear Avenue for widening would be the least impactful. This alignment would not impact the cluster of 7 commercial businesses in the southeast quadrant of E. 7th Street and White Bear Avenue intersection, or the church and school along the route. The summary of impacts would include 34 residential properties, 8 commercial properties, a community ball field and 1/3 of a mile of a utility corridor.

PROJECT TEAM ASSESSMENT

Option 1: Do not modify the Alternatives 4 and 6 prior to proceeding into more detailed conceptual engineering analysis.

Carrying these alternatives forward into conceptual engineering will allow for the continued analysis and evaluation of two concepts for transit service within the corridor: maximize speed by following I-94 as closely as possible (Alternatives 3 & 5), and maximize local access by bringing fixed guideway service directly into areas where people live and work (Alternatives 4 & 6).

Option 2: Dismiss portions of Alternatives 4 and 6 (Local BRT and LRT) along East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue from further consideration in the Gateway Alternatives Analysis. BRT and LRT alternatives through the east side of St. Paul in Segment 2 would be limited to those adjacent to I-94 in Alternatives 3 and 5. The local portions of Alternatives 4 (BRT) and 6 (LRT) through Woodbury would remain as currently defined.

The portions of Alternatives 4 and 6 along East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue could be dismissed from further consideration on technical merits if the ROW impacts are deemed to be severe enough that the alignments would no longer be viable as part of an alternative. As previously stated, the assessment conducted by the Gateway AA Engineering Team concluded that on White Bear Avenue alone impacts would include 34 residential properties and 8 commercial properties. Dismissing these portions of the Alternatives now would allow the AA study to focus in on the remaining alternatives, but would not allow for comparison of the performance of this transit concept to the other alternatives that more closely follow I-94.

TAC RECOMMENDATION

The TAC passed a motion to “retain Alternatives 4 and 6, and conduct analysis that would seek to minimize land use impacts on East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue.”

SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS

The project team met with staff from the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County on September 13. Multiple options were considered and addressed, including impacts on property, traffic capacity, availability of alternative routes, and potential benefits to the community. It was recommended that the alternatives would proceed under the following assumptions:

East 7th Street:

- East of Earl Street: one lane of traffic in each direction, LRT in the center of the street/BRT guideway on the curb side, on-street parking removed. Split side platforms at intersections to provide left turn lanes at major cross streets. Right turns only at local streets.
- West of Earl Street: one lane of traffic in each direction, LRT in the center of the street/BRT guideway on the curb side, on-street parking remaining in some areas, left turn lanes limited to major cross streets. Station platform configuration minimized (side or center) to reduce envelope needed. Right turns only at local streets.

White Bear Avenue:

- One traffic lane in each direction, LRT in the center of the street/BRT guideway on the curb side, on-street parking removed. Split side platforms at intersections to provide left turn lanes at major cross streets. Right turns only at local streets.
- Based on model results consider upgrades to Ruth Street, and possibly Kennard Street, to handle any diverted traffic from White Bear Avenue.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- Approve TAC recommendation to retain Alternatives 4 and 6, and conduct analysis that would seek to minimize land use impacts on East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue based on the assumptions agreed upon between St Paul and Ramsey County staff.

:



DATE: September 28, 2011

TO: Gateway Corridor Commission

FROM: Staff

RE: Gateway Corridor Outreach Activities

As part of the Communications Contract, Tunheim Partners has been assisting in arranging outreach meetings to stakeholders along the corridor. These stakeholders range from local community city councils, council districts, business chambers, individual businesses, community groups and others. Included below is a summary the Commission’s outreach activities.

Stakeholder	Status
Lake Elmo Rotary Club	Presentation – March 16
St Paul District Council 1	Annual Meeting Booth – March 28
Woodbury LIONS Club	Presentation – April 5
Woodbury Chamber of Commerce	Presentation – April 6
Rasmussen College	Presentation – May 2
River Falls Rotary Club	Presentation – May 3
Metro State University	Presentation – May 4
St Paul District Council 4	Presentation – May 16
St Paul Chamber – Transportation Committee	Presentation – May 19
St Paul District Council 1	Presentation – May 23
3M	Meeting – May 24
St Paul District Council 5	Presentation – June 7
St Paul District Councils – Joint Meeting of 1, 2, 4, 5, 17	Presentation – June 27
St Paul District Council 2	Presentation – July 20
St Paul Transportation Committee	Presentation – July 25
Dayton’s Bluff Business Association	Presentation – July 28
Woodbury Rotary	Presentation – August 4
East Side Area Business Association	Presentation – September 14
Woodbury Community Foundation	Presentation – September 27
Oakdale Business and Professional Assn	Presentation – October 6
UW River Falls Leadership Group	Presentation – October 13
Developer’s Forum	TBD
Hartford Financial	Contact has been made
Woodwinds	Contact has been made
Imation	Contact has been made
Target.com	Contact has been made

Action Requested: Information



DATE: September 28, 2011
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Preliminary 2012 Work Plan and Budget

Item 6. Preliminary 2012 Work Plan and Budget

Staff has prepared a preliminary 2012 work plan and budget for the Commission. Most of the information contained in the work plan is similar to years past. The one major change/addition is the inclusion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This is the next step in the development of the Gateway Corridor after the Alternatives Analysis is completed and a preferred alternative(s) is identified.

Item 6a. 2011 State Bond Funding

At the August meeting of the Commission, information was included in the agenda packet on the state bond funds that were included in the 2011 legislative session under the Capital Investment Bill. Here is a summary on the use of those funds and the recommendations put forth by the Metropolitan Council:

CAPITAL INVESTMENT BILL (BONDING BILL)

The Metropolitan Council was allocated \$20 million in bonding for the Transit Capital Improvement Program. The language included in the Bill identified nine projects/transitways that the funds could be allocated towards. Met Council staff has prepared a memo for action at the August 8 Council Transportation Committee meeting. The recommendations within that memo include:

- Allocate \$20 million in 2011 Transit Capital Improvement Program state G.O. bonds as follows, conditional upon CTIB providing a \$3.0M capital grant to the Cedar Avenue BRT in 2012:

\$11.0 M	Minneapolis Interchange
\$4.0 M	Northstar Ramsey Station
\$0.5 M	Newport Park-and-Ride
\$1.0 M	Cedar Avenue BRT
\$1.25 M	Gateway (I-94 East) Corridor
\$0.25 M	Robert Street Corridor
\$2.0 M	Rush Line Corridor Maplewood Mall Park-and-Ride Expansion

- Approve, if requested by Washington County Regional Railroad Authority, the reallocation of \$1.25 M in Gateway (I-94 East) Corridor funds to the Newport Park-and-Ride conditional upon WCRRA concurrently allocating \$1.25 M in its CTIB funding to the Gateway (I-94 East) Corridor.



Note: The proposed shift in allocation of the bond funds from Gateway to the Newport Station would allow the bond funds to build infrastructure and then an in-kind amount of CTIB funds from Washington County would be allocated to the Gateway Corridor to be used towards the draft environmental impact statement, which is the next step in the development of the corridor.

The schedule for approval of the use of these bond funds is:

- Aug 8 – Met Council Transportation Committee (Recommendation)
- Aug 17 – CTIB Meeting (Discussion / Recommendation)
- Aug 22 – Met Council Transportation Committee (Recommendation)
- Aug 24 – Met Council (Approval)

Washington County has sent a letter to the Metropolitan Council (attached) requesting the reallocation of the state bond funds from the Gateway Corridor to the Newport Station. Washington County has also submitted a grant application to the Counties Transit Improvement Board requesting this same amount in CTIB funds to be put towards the completion of the DEIS on the Gateway Corridor. CTIB will award the grants at their November meeting of this year.

Action Requested: Discussion

Gateway Corridor Commission

2012 Work Plan and Budget

Draft – October 13, 2011

1. Collaboration / Partnerships

The Gateway Corridor Commission will work with corridor municipalities, the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Federal Agencies to promote the advancement of the I-94 Corridor. To accomplish this, the Commission will do the following:

1. Offer guidance, monitor progress and prepare formal comments on studies that are being conducted in the I-94 corridor.
2. Coordinate corridor studies with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and other interested parties.
3. Work with state and local agencies to identify regional priorities for the corridor.

2. Public Involvement

The Commission's public involvement activities will be developed to increase the awareness of the corridor, the Commission, the importance of investing in transit in the corridor and the need for regional equity. Specific activities will include:

1. Utilize and implement recommendations from the Strategic Communication Plan.
2. Develop a supporter base email distribution list.
3. Present to civic and community groups, businesses and chambers of commerce, and local agencies throughout the Corridor.
4. Distribute materials including press releases, newsletters, fact sheets, and other public information items.
5. Identify media recognition opportunities of Commission meetings and events through print, radio, and public access television.
6. Maintain / update the project website as new information about or affecting the corridor becomes available.

3. Advocacy and Outreach

The Commission will advocate for improved transit to serve the Corridor and the Twin Cities region. In addition to advocacy, the Commission will reach out to other interested parties who are also working towards improvements in the I-94 corridor. Commission activities include:

1. Advocacy
 - a. Inform local, state and federal elected officials of the need for transitway improvements in the I-94 Corridor.
 - b. Promote increased transit funding to improve and expand the existing transit service in the Corridor.

- c. Establish positions and specific requests on legislative initiatives that affect the I-94 Corridor.
2. Outreach
 - a. Identify and establish communication and action plan with the business community along the corridor.
 - b. Engage the various and diverse community groups along the corridor.
 - c. Coordinate with the western Wisconsin communities, Wisconsin DOT, and Wisconsin legislature on issues that impact the corridor in both states.
 - d. Coordinate initiatives with other joint powers coalitions, the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) and other regional planning groups.

To aid in advocacy and outreach activities, the Commission will select a consultant that brings communications expertise to the Commission.

4. Alternatives Analysis

The Commission began the Alternatives Analysis (AA) for the corridor in 2010 with an expected completion date of spring 2012. For the 2012 time period, the Commission will continue to work with the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the consultant team and staff to facilitate decision making and public outreach activities, including.

1. Selection of the screened alternatives to proceed into detailed analysis including their station locations.
2. Evaluation of screened alternatives that have undergone detailed analysis.
3. Approval of the Alternatives Analysis and its recommendations for alternatives to proceed to the environmental assessment.
4. Attendance at open houses / meetings in individual members' communities.
5. Update advocacy material and website as new information becomes available.

5. Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS)

The next phase in the development of the Gateway Corridor is to undertake the completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The purpose of the DEIS is to conduct a full and open evaluation of environmental issues and alternatives, and to inform decision-makers and the public of reasonable alternatives that could avoid or minimize adverse impacts and enhance the quality of the environment. The Corridor Commissioner will:

1. Identify and program the necessary funding needed for completion of the DEIS.
2. Develop and approve the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the selection of a consultant to complete the DEIS.
3. Continue to engage the various affected interests along the Gateway Corridor for the entire duration of the DEIS.

6. Management, Policy, and Administrative Activities

Commission activities will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Prepare and adopt the 2012 Work Plan and Budget
2. Prepare the annual financial report – 2011
3. Review insurance needs and procure appropriate insurance
4. Provide Commission and staff administration
5. Manage Commission expenses
6. Manage the consultants selected for any of the various work tasks undertaken by the commission

Commission Priorities for 2012

- Select consultant for on-going communications needs
- Manage consultant to complete the Alternatives Analysis
- Develop and release a Request for Proposals to select a consultant for the completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Continue to actively engage the business community, community advocacy groups, and the various other stakeholders in the corridor.
- Funding Support and Requests
 - Support Washington County's request for \$1,000,000 in state bond funding for preliminary engineering in the 2012 State Legislative Session

Gateway Corridor Commission

2012 Expenditures

Draft - October 13, 2011

Expenditure Category	Amount
Public Involvement Communications Consultant Contract - Public relations, material development, website maintenance, etc.	\$ 25,000
Advocacy and Outreach Federal and State Advocacy/Lobbying ⁽¹⁾ Public Information Materials / Advertising Travel to Washington DC ⁽²⁾ Travel to National Transit Conferences ⁽²⁾	\$ - \$ 7,000 \$ - \$ -
Data Collection and Summary	\$ -
Management / Administration Supplies / Materials / Printing / Memberships Insurance Website Hosting	\$ 5,000 \$ 2,000 \$ 1,000
Studies / Capital Projects Draft Environmental Impact Statement	\$ 3,000,000
Contingency	\$ 10,000
TOTAL	\$ 3,050,000

(1) Ramsey and Washington County currently have existing contracts with federal and state lobbyists for the Gateway corridor and other transit priorities. These services would be provided through existing contracts.

(2) Travel to out of state events/conferences would be the responsibility of each individual member. Total cost per person for a trip to DC is approximately \$1,500 and trip to a national conference is approximately \$2,200.

Gateway Corridor Commission

2012 Revenues

Draft - October 13, 2011

Revenues	Amount
Federal Appropriations	\$ -
State Appropriations	\$ -
Regional Railroad Authorities ⁽¹⁾	
Ramsey County	
- Commission Operations	\$ 25,000
- DEIS	\$ 875,000
Washington County	
- Commission Operations	\$ 25,000
- DEIS (via CTIB grant request)	\$ 875,000
Other	
Counties Transit Improvement Board	\$ 1,250,000
Local Communities	\$ -
Private Contributions	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 3,050,000

(1) Per the JPA, the financial contribution is split 50/50 between Ramsey and Washington County Regional Railroad Authorities.

TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Tunheim
RE: Gateway Corridor Website July Analytics
DATE: August 15, 2011

The attached document outlines all important statistical information regarding the Gateway Corridor's website from the period of July 1-31, 2011. Below is a guide for understanding the numbers and percentages:

Visits: This is the total number of unique visitors to the website. Over the past month, there were 981 visitors to the Gateway Corridor website, a triple increase compared to the 343 visitors that the website received in June. Since the start of the website, monthly visits now average 513 visitors. The dramatic increase is clearly a result of a successful second round of open houses and the media coverage generated during this period.

Pageviews: This is the total number of pages that were viewed by visitors. Each visitor will view anywhere from 1-5 pages during a visit. Over the past month, there were 3,204 page views on the Gateway Corridor website, more than a triple increase of the 1,063 page views of June. This is also a result of the open houses.

Pages/Visit: Accordingly, the ratio of pages viewed per visit has increased to 3.27 in July. Based on the consistent average of 3.1, and given that some people leave the website right away (see 'Bounce Rate'), people who do explore the website are clearly interested in viewing all the pages that the website has to offer.

Percent Bounce The bounce rate represents the number of people who

Rate:	visit the Gateway Corridor website, view one page (generally the homepage) and leave the site completely. July's bounce rate was only 30 percent, which is very similar to June's 29 percent. A bounce rate of less than 50 percent is ideal.
Avg. Time on Site:	On average, visitors spent 3:10 minutes on the Gateway Corridor website in July. Typically, the average person spends approximately one minute on a new website, so all values are within an excellent range.
Percent New Visits:	The percentage of new visits in July for the Gateway Corridor website was <u>68</u> percent. In fact, at least two out of three visitors have been new to the website every month, proving that it continues to consistently attract attention even a year after its launch.
Traffic Sources Overview:	<p>Referring Sites, Search Engines, and Direct Traffic are the three sources that lead visitors to the Gateway Corridor website.</p> <p>In July, referring sites, including news outlets and city websites led 40 percent of July visitors to the site, while search engine tools drove 35 percent of traffic.</p> <p>Finally, direct traffic made up 25 percent. Direct traffic represents the number of people who typed the link into their web browser. These are people who are familiar with the website, and are regularly checking for updates.</p>
Referring Sites:	<p>The following sites have successfully directed traffic to the Gateway Corridor website through referrals in July:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Facebook (personal)</i> – 52 visits • <i>Woodbury Patch</i> – 34 visits • <i>Ramsey County Regional Rail News</i> – 29 visits • <i>Star Tribune</i> – 27 visits • <i>WQOW 18 News</i> – 27 visits

- *Engage Twin Cities* – 21 visits

Content Overview: This section of the Google Analytics shows which pages within the Gateway Corridor website have been most visited. The following numbers show how many visitors clicked each page in July:

- Transit study page – 1,139 (36 percent)
- Homepage– 1,039 (33 percent)
- Corridor page– 232 (8 percent)

E-Newsletter:

The e-newsletter *Gateway Corridor Study Continues to Make Progress* was sent on August 1, 2011. According to our email provider, 164 contacts (30 percent) opened the email. Only four contacts have bounced and only one person has unsubscribed, which demonstrates the health of the existing email list.

E-mail Sign-ups: The Gateway Corridor gained an additional 22 newsletter recipients in July via website sign-up, and numerous contacts were added from previous stakeholder lists. The e-newsletter list now comprises 555 subscribed contacts.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the Gateway Corridor website, or any of the Google analytic terms.

TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Tunheim
RE: Gateway Corridor Website August Analytics
DATE: September 15, 2011

The attached document outlines all important statistical information regarding the Gateway Corridor's website from the period of August 1-31 2011. Below is a guide for understanding the numbers and percentages:

Visits: This is the total number of unique visitors to the website. In August, there were 434 visitors to the Gateway Corridor website. While there is a notable drop compared to July, where visitors were driven to the website because of the open houses, there were more visitors in the month of August than anytime during this spring or early summer.

Pageviews: This is the total number of pages that were viewed by visitors. Each visitor will view anywhere from 1-5 pages during a visit. Over the past month, there were 1,220 page views on the Gateway Corridor website. Again, this is a very high number for a month that saw no open houses and earned media opportunities.

Pages/Visit: The ratio of pages viewed per visit has stayed high at 2.8 in August, showing that visitors who stay on the site continue to browse through the complete content of the website.

Percent Bounce Rate: The bounce rate represents the number of people who visit the Gateway Corridor website, view one page (generally the homepage) and leave the site completely. The bounce rate in August was 35 percent. A bounce rate of less than 50 percent is ideal.

Avg. Time on Site: On average, visitors spent 2:09 minutes on the Gateway Corridor website in August, significantly more than the average person, who spends approximately one minute on a new website.

Percent New Visits: The percentage of new visits in August for the Gateway Corridor website was 60 percent, proving that it continues to attract attention month after month.

Traffic Sources Overview: Referring Sites, Search Engines, and Direct Traffic are the three sources that lead visitors to the Gateway Corridor website.

In August, referring sites, including news outlets and city websites drove 42 percent – a half-year high— of traffic to the site. Search engines have led 36 percent of August visitors to the Gateway Corridor website.

Finally, direct traffic made up 22 percent. Direct traffic represents the number of people who typed the link into their web browser, because they are familiar with the website, and are checking for updates.

Referring Sites: The following sites have successfully directed traffic to the Gateway Corridor website through referrals in August:

- *Minnescraper Forum*– 45 visits
- *Wikipedia* – 24 visits

- *Woodbury Patch* – 12 visits
- *Regional Rail (blog)* – 11 visits
- *Hennepin County* – 8 visits
- *City of Woodbury* – 8 visits

Content Overview: This section of the Google Analytics shows which pages within the Gateway Corridor website were visited most. The following numbers show how many visitors clicked each page in August:

- Transit study page – 411 (34 percent)
- Homepage– 350 (29 percent)
- About– 96 (8 percent)

E-Newsletter: No newsletter was scheduled for this period.

E-mail Sign-ups: The Gateway Corridor gained an additional six newsletter recipients in August. A total of 561 subscribed contacts have signed-up for the newsletter.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the Gateway Corridor website, or any of the Google analytic terms.



Gateway Corridor Talking Points on the Alternatives Analysis Study

By developing reliable and consistent transit, communities can plan for job growth along the corridor. By 2030, the corridor's population is expected to grow by 30% (adding 90,000 more people) and 30,000 jobs are expected to be added to the corridor.

Legislators, local government officials and many in the public have their own opinions and preferences on the preferred mode and route of transit in the corridor; it is important that everyone allows the Alternatives Analysis study process to guide the Commission to making a final decision on transit options in the Gateway Corridor.

The Alternatives Analysis Study will determine the best mode and route of transit in the corridor, taking into account improved mobility, economic viability and development opportunities, environmental impacts, preservation of individual communities' quality of life, and improved safety.

As our study continues, we're learning from the opportunities and challenges associated with the region's other corridors, from the construction of Central Corridor, the planning of Southwest Corridor and implementing BRT along Cedar Avenue in Dakota County.

The Twin Cities' other transit corridors help ensure the Gateway Corridor will be well-prepared for development when the time is right.

The Gateway Corridor Commission's goal is to conduct outreach activities to promote coordinated transportation planning in the corridor by collaborating with local communities, business owners, and developers to identify the needs of the region. The PAC and TAC are seen as an integral part in the collaboration with local communities.



DATE: September 28, 2011
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Bus Tour Options

At a previous meeting, the Commission expressed interest in setting up a bus tour and looking at options for visually viewing projects in the region and the alternatives that are being brought forward for more detail through the Alternatives Analysis. Some options and anticipated costs are provided below:

Bus Tour of Regional Transitways

The Red Rock Corridor Commission recently conducted a bus tour of Cedar Avenue BRT, Hiawatha LRT and the Northstar Commuter Rail with stops at key locations along each of the transitways. Some of the key pieces of information include:

- Duration of tour – approximately four hours.
- Attendance capacity – 55 people could fit on the bus
- Itinerary – asked key speakers to be present at each of the stops to talk about the transitway, the station area and surround development
- Cost – approximately \$1,000 (includes bus rental and lunch)

Bus Tour of Gateway AA Alternatives

It would be expected that a bus tour of the eight alternatives identified in the Alternatives Analysis would have very similar needs as a tour of the regional transitways.

Van Tour of Gateway AA Alternatives

This option would include the use of a Washington County van that can seat approximately 10 people at a time. The cost for use of the van would be free. The tour would last approximately 2 hours and would drive the various alignments and stop at station locations along those alignments.

Tour Map of Gateway AA Alternatives

Staff would create a tour map of the alternatives, including alignment and station locations. The map could be provided to Commission members and others interested in the project and they could drive the routes in their own vehicle at a time when it is convenient to them. There would be costs associated with creating and printing the map. They are not known at this time, but it would be anticipated that it would be around \$500. This map could also be provided on the Gateway Corridor website for use by others.



Google Fly-through of Gateway AA Alternatives

Utilizing Google Earth, a fly-through of each alternatives alignment could be created. This fly through would be at about a 30 degree angle from the ground and show the aerial imagery that is available in Google. This provides a unique perspective on the corridor. It is anticipated that there would be costs associated with developing the fly-through, but they are not fully known. We would work with our website manager and review any licensing agreements to see if this is something that could be posted on the Gateway Corridor's website.

Action Requested: Discussion



DATE: October 7, 2011
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Federal Update

Include below is the latest federal update from Lockridge Grindal Nauen and other sources.

Action Requested: Information

Federal Update – Week of September 26, 2011

CONGRESS IN ACTION

Although we traditionally do not provide a federal update during Congressional recesses, enough significant action has taken place since our last update that we thought it appropriate to send this special shortened update. The full Lockridge Grindal Nauen Federal Update will return next Friday. As alluded to previously, the House and Senate have - for all intents and purposes - adjourned for the week to observe Rosh Hashanah.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION (CR)

As you may recall, September 30, 2011 marks the end of the fiscal year for the federal government. Throughout the last several weeks, House and Senate leaders have been working behind the scenes and on the floor of their respective Chambers to come to an agreement which could avert a shutdown. Late last week the House passed a CR was not passed by the Senate. It was unclear as to whether or not an agreement between the two chambers could be reached given the division between House and Senate leaders.

On Monday, the Senate moved two options to avoid a government shutdown and put an end to a dispute over offsets to disaster aid money. The first measure the House could consider would be a six-week CR which would provide \$2.65 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other disaster aid programs. The amount of emergency funding and the offset is one of the sticking points between the two Chambers.

As of today however, it appears that the House will take up a short-term spending bill on Thursday during a pro-forma session that would keep the government running through Oct. 4. This would allow time for further deliberations on a longer-term bill.

If a single House member objects to the short-term measure, that could force GOP leaders to quickly reconvene the chamber and clear the bill by a roll call vote. A Republican aide said Tuesday that leaders did not expect anyone to object to the short-term measure.



While the House appears on track to approve the brief stopgap to continue government spending through Oct. 4, it remains uncertain whether a longer-term continuing resolution will encounter significant resistance from House Republicans.

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION

Significant steps have been taken in recent days, bringing House and Senate leaders closer to a new long-term Transportation Authorization law. At a meeting last week, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) said he has been given the green light from Republican leaders to search for additional revenue for the bill.

Sources indicate that the goal is to find enough revenue to pay for a six-year bill that would continue current spending levels. This would require an additional \$15 billion annually to supplement the funds projected to be available in the Highway Trust Fund. At this point it remains unclear as to what will be on and off the table in terms of revenue except that gas tax increases will not be a part of the mix. This is a game-changing type moment. Until now, Mica has said the House surface transportation bill would be limited to spending that the Highway Trust Fund could support, which would require a reduction from current levels.

TO: Counties Transit Improvement Board
FROM: Dennis McGrann // Andy Burmeister
DATE: September 20, 2011
RE: Federal Update

Below you will find the September update for the *Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)*. We have included relevant federal activities and an outlook on the fiscal year 2012 appropriations and transportation authorization process. Additionally, we outline the expected legislative agenda for the 112th Congress as framed by the recent debt and deficit discussions and subsequently provide strategy recommendations for consideration by CTIB.

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE:

The House and Senate returned to Washington from their August district work period with a number of important and timely legislative items to accomplish prior to the end of September when they will recess once again. Technically the new fiscal year starts October 1, 2011, however, the annual appropriations process is far from complete as both Chambers continue efforts to move legislation forward. With this said, they will have to pass a Continuing Resolution in order to keep the government funded.

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION:

With the latest extension of federal transportation programs set to expire at the end of the month, the House and Senate agreed to legislation which would extend funding through March 2012. This short-term extension provides House and Senate transportation leader's time to continue their efforts to draft a new long-term transportation bill. Although passing a multi-year surface transportation bill in six months is ambitious, House and Senate leaders have proposals on the table which they intend on moving forward. In the Senate, Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Ranking Member James Inhofe (R-OK) have drafted a two year \$109 billion plan which has yet to be



formally introduced. Currently they are waiting to introduce their measure until Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) comes up with \$12 billion in revenue above and beyond what the Highway Trust Fund can currently support.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) has introduced a six-year plan which will provide \$230 billion, which is what the Highway Trust fund is expected to be able to sustain over that period of time.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION:

According to Congressional sources, Leaders in both chambers have suggested that they would like to finish the fiscal 2012 appropriations process by late November. Currently, lawmakers are negotiating a Continuing Resolution (CR) which is necessary to keep the federal government funded. Leaders in both chambers are aiming to clear only one continuing resolution, which would keep the government running through November 18th. That is the date on which both chambers plan to leave for the Thanksgiving recess. In the interim, the staff and members of the Appropriations panels in both chambers will be working behind the scenes to try to resolve their differing views on funding federal agencies.

The House is moving forward on a Continuing Resolution this week which would keep government spending at an annualized rate of \$1.043 trillion, in accordance with the fiscal 2012 budget caps set by the debt limit agreement (PL 112-25). It contains a total of \$3.65 billion in disaster aid, of which \$1 billion would be available in the current fiscal year. The House is expected to send that legislation to the Senate on Wednesday.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) said he would move to amend the House CR to include the \$6.9 billion in disaster relief funding contained in an earlier Senate-passed appropriations measure (H J Res 66). In the process, Reid plans to strike out existing House language on disaster relief and a House offset for supplemental disaster aid in fiscal 2011. This will set up a battle with House Leaders over spending levels and may prolong the process.

TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS BILLS:

The House and Senate Appropriations Committee continue to move forward their respective transportation funding measures.

The House Appropriations Transportation-Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee took up and passed their fiscal year 2012 Appropriations bill. The draft measure would provide \$55.2 billion in discretionary spending. Specifically, it would provide \$16.7 billion for the Transportation Department (\$3 billion more than fiscal 2011 levels), and \$38.1 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (\$3 billion below fiscal 2011 levels).

- **Rail** – The Federal Railroad Administration is funded at \$1.3 billion, which is \$7 billion below the President’s request and \$36 million above last year’s level. Of this amount, \$1.1 billion is targeted to Amtrak, primarily for capital improvements to the nation’s rail lines. The bill also includes policy reforms for Amtrak, such as requiring overtime limits on Amtrak employees to reduce unnecessary costs, and reinstates a provision that prohibits federal funding for routes where Amtrak offers a discount of 50% or more off normal, peak fares. In addition, the bill does not include funding for High Speed Rail or Intercity Passenger Rail Service.



- **Transit** – The bill contains a total of \$1.8 billion for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which is \$1.9 billion below the President’s request and an increase of \$169 million over last year. The legislation also provides \$5.2 billion in state and local bus grants – the amount estimated to be available from the Mass Transit Account (trust fund) for fiscal year 2012. Like the highway program, the transit program still requires reauthorization to operate beyond September 2011, and the Committee is prepared to support a higher formula bus spending level should a new, multi-year authorization bill be enacted.

The legislation also limits transit capital investments – only funding “Small Starts” projects and those projects that have signed Full-Funding Grant Agreements with the FTA prior to November 1, 2011. The legislation also includes language that prohibits new Full-Funding Grant Agreements if the project is more than 50% federally funded.

The Senate Appropriations Committee passed their version of the bill which includes budget authority of \$55.3 billion, \$100 million less than the 2011 enacted level. Total funding, including limitations on obligations related to programs funded by the Highway Trust Fund, is \$109.5 billion. The total funding level is \$100 million or 0.1 percent below the equivalent 2011 enacted level.

The Senate Appropriations Bill includes:

TIGER Funding: \$550 million for grants to support significant transportation projects in a wide variety of modes, including highways and bridges, public transportation, passenger and freight railroads, and port infrastructure. The bill requires the Secretary to allocate no less than \$120 million for projects in rural communities. The funding level included in the bill is \$23 million higher than the fiscal year 2011 enacted level.

Transit Investments: An additional \$358 million above the fiscal year 2011 enacted level for the transit “New Starts” program. This funding supports projects across the Nation that will provide new or expanded public transportation services.

Sustainable Communities Initiative: \$90 million within HUD’s Community Development Fund to promote integrated housing and transportation planning. Joining HUD in this initiative will be the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. The funding included in the bill will provide grants for integrated housing and transportation planning efforts on both the regional and local level.

Transit Energy Efficiency Grants: \$25 million for grants to help transit agencies make cutting edge and innovative capital investments that will reduce the energy consumption or greenhouse gas emissions of their operations.

PRESIDENT OBAMA’S JOBS ADDRESS TO CONGRESS:

President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress to introduce an approximately \$447 billion package which is aimed at creating jobs. The package – termed “The American Jobs Act” - is composed of tax cuts, aid to states, and infrastructure spending.

Of note, the President is asking for \$50 billion for “immediate investments” in transportation infrastructure, and for the creation of an infrastructure bank capitalized with \$10 billion in federal



money. The proposal would expand the TIFIA program, which provides loans, loan guarantees and lines of credit for large transportation projects, and would fund the Transportation Department's discretionary grant program, known as TIGER. He also wants \$15 billion to rehabilitate vacant property in neighborhoods with high concentrations of foreclosures.

DEBT AND DEFICIT AGREEMENT/ONGOING DISCUSSIONS:

On August 2, 2011 Congress cleared a debt ceiling deal at the 11th hour in an effort to avoid a government default. The current \$14.3 trillion ceiling on federal borrowing will now be increased by an amount between \$2.1 trillion and \$2.4 trillion, a sum presumed sufficient to allow the Treasury Department to operate beyond the 2012 election and into 2013. The increase will come in two steps: \$900 billion immediately and the second increase of \$1.2 trillion to \$1.5 trillion would be available later. The size of the second increase will be determined by actions Congress takes to curtail growth in the debt). The deal cut about \$1 trillion (over 10 years) in current spending and created a special "Super Committee" to recommend more than \$1 trillion in additional reductions.

For reference, the debt reduction panel timeline is below.

Panel Timeline:

- **Oct. 14:** Deadline for standing committees to forward their recommendations to joint committee.
- **Nov. 23:** Deadline for joint committee to vote on legislative proposals, with a 10-year deficit reduction goal of \$1.5 trillion.
- **Dec. 2:** Deadline for joint committee to formally report proposals.
- **Dec. 23:** Deadline for House and Senate to vote on proposals, without amendment.
- **Jan. 15:** Deadline for enactment of at least \$1.2 trillion in deficit reduction, or across-the-board spending cuts will be triggered.
- **Jan. 2, 2013:** If triggered, across-the-board cuts will take effect.

The legislative discussions surrounding the debt and deficit have taken and will continue to take up a significant amount of time on Capitol Hill over the next six months and beyond. With this said, almost every portion of the federal budget has the potential to be impacted as the "Super Committee" takes up the work of finding cuts which seek to produce long-term savings (including transportation and transit funding). In an effort to educate Members of Congress about the importance of transit, this will be a critical time to be engaged in advocacy on the Hill.

As a refresher, here are the 2011 House and Senate Calendars for your review.

These are the recesses planned for the House and Senate this year:

- Week of Sept. 26 for the House and the Senate
- Week of Oct. 17 for the House
- Week of Oct. 24 for the Senate, which has nothing noted on its calendar after that
- Week of Nov. 7 for the House
- Week of Nov. 21 (Thanksgiving) for the House



Agenda Item #10b

DATE: September 29, 2011
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Summary of Meetings

Included below is a summary of the Commission and AA Study meetings through June.

Month	Meeting	Date
October	AA TAC	October 12
	Gateway Commission	October 13
November	AA PAC	November 2
	Gateway Commission	November 10
	AA TAC	November 30
December	Gateway Commission	December 8
	AA PAC	December 14

Action Requested: Information



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Vacant Info Center Site Pits Hudson Against WisDOT

WisDOT expects to begin accepting bids for the 16-acre site in October

By [Jeff Roberts](#) | [Email the author](#) | September 27, 2011 | [Print](#) | [2 Comments](#)

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What would you like to see at the old visitor center property? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

Interested in a follow-up to this article? [Keep me posted!](#)



The [City of Hudson](#) is hoping that the defunct visitor information center on Crestview Drive—adjacent to Carmichael Road—remains a public use facility but officials at the [Wisconsin Department of Transportation](#) (WisDOT) are touting other plans.

According to WisDOT real estate specialist Anne Giese, the site is being put up for public bid in October, despite the city's preliminary plans to transform the 16-acre eyesore into a public safety facility, park-n-ride or mass transit site.

The information center opened its doors in 1972 and was decommissioned in 2009.

As it stands, the site is owned by WisDOT and can be sold at the discretion of the transportation department. But Hudson community development director Dennis Darnold is hoping for a bit of latitude.

"The City of Hudson feels it would be premature for the state to sell the property for commercial development," Darnold told Patch. "Right now (the site) is zoned for public use and until we exhaust the potential for that use, hopefully, the city would retain the policy that was adopted in 2009 and continue using (the land) for the public."

Darnold points to extensive commercial development surrounding the visitor center as one cause of increased traffic congestion in the area. Retaining the visitor center land for public use would help alleviate that congestion, he explained.

The vacant information center site also plays an integral role in the plans of the [Gateway Corridor Commission](#)—a joint committee tasked with planning a mass transit system that will run along I-94 from downtown Minneapolis to Eau Claire.

"While its too early to say what's best for the Hudson community, a great option for the area would be a park-n-ride system," Gateway Corridor Commission project manager Ted Schoenecker said.

In August 2010, the [Gateway Corridor Commission released its Alternatives Analysis Study](#) that outlined eight options for the land that sits 3-5 miles on either side of I-94 from Minneapolis to Eau Claire.

Of the seven options that address Wisconsin transit, the Hudson site features prominently in six of them. Only a commuter train would bypass the Carmichael Road area.

While Giese would not speculate on whether a public or private facility would better serve the Hudson community, she does see a role for the municipality.

"Whoever wins the bid, would have to work with the City of Hudson on any rezoning or repurposing of that land," Giese explained. "So the city would continue to play an integral part in its use."

Giese expects to start accepting sealed bids in October and close bidding by the end of November.

Darnold anticipates the visitor center issue to be included in the Hudson City Council's Oct. 3 agenda.

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COMMENTS (2)



Thurston Howell III

6:58am on Wednesday, September 28, 2011

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Who needs to promote Tourism? This property would be an excellent location for an assault weapons shop!

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Mark Felton

9:01am on Wednesday, September 28, 2011

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Commuter train!? We need to NOT have a butt-ugly eyesore bringing Minnesota's urban problems, to Hudson! If you want to live in the city, move there!

[Log in to reply](#)

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