



**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AT PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES  
SCOPING OF ALTERNATIVES  
GATEWAY CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

A second series of four public open houses was held for the Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis in July 2011. The purpose of these open houses was to present the transit route alternatives, proposed station locations, and proposed evaluation criteria for public review and comment. The open houses were held at:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Attendance*</b>
July 19, 2011	St. Croix County Government Center Hudson, WI	15
July 21, 2011	Chippewa Valley Technical College, Eau Claire WI	17
July 26, 2011	Woodbury City Hall, Woodbury, MN	33
July 28, 2011	Metro State/Dayton's Bluff Library St. Paul, MN	43

\*Attendance does not include WCRRA or consultant staff but does include those PAC/TAC members that signed in at each location. Attendance numbers may not include some spouses and children that did not sign in.

Each meeting was two hours in length (5-7 pm). Each meeting was conducted in an open house format with visual display boards, a short PowerPoint presentation, and layouts of the alternatives. Project staff, consultants, and PAC/TAC members were available to answer questions. Post-it notes were provided for written input on the layouts. A form was also provided for individuals to provide written comments. Two interpreters (Hmong and Spanish) were provided at the St. Paul meeting but were not used. Meetings were advertised on multiple websites (project, cities, counties, universities); flyers were distributed to an e-list, neighborhood and business organizations, cities, counties and universities; a news release was distributed to the media; and posters were distributed to park/ride lots, transit stations, retail businesses, and community facilities in the St. Paul and Maplewood area.

The following is a summary of both verbal and written comments received at the public open houses, organized by general topic.

**Commuter Rail**

- Would travel by bus or commuter rail (preferred) between Eau Claire and Minneapolis if it was available at a reasonable price
- My family would use commuter rail between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities, especially on weekends and holidays. Depending on pricing and timing, we might also use instead of airport shuttle service.
- I prefer option 7 (commuter rail)

- In favor of commuter rail service (Menomonie) – would help community revitalization – park/ride locations are suitable
- Commuter rail may duplicate the service that would be provided by high speed rail
- Support for commuter rail between Eau Claire and Twin Cities
- Commuter rail doesn't work for St. Paul or eastern suburbs
- Rail-based mass transit is a bad policy – cost-benefit analysis will show not worth the investment
- Rail is great for freight – support that to reduce number of semi-trucks on the highway
- Commuter bus or passenger rail best for commuters
- Final preferred alternative must serve St. Paul neighborhoods – commuter rail should be removed because it violates this goal
- Concerned about CEI being a Tier 1 goal because this may keep commuter rail in as a viable option
- Need all-day, every-day service – commuter rail does not work for people who work different hours

#### **Light Rail Transit**

- Totally against light rail – too static, too expensive, few riders
- Have some personal preference for Alternatives 3-6 (LRT and BRT)
- In favor of LRT over bus – more people will use a train than will use a bus
- Could LRT operate on one track across the St. Croix River and in the eastern part of the corridor?
- Don't like the rail options
- Has a local route for LRT into downtown Hudson been considered?

#### **Bus Rapid Transit**

- BRT would be better because it would cost less
- BRT options 3 and 8 may better serve those coming into the city for work or play
- Prefer Options 1 and 2. Not convinced BRT is worth the expense

#### **I-94 Options**

- Like it on I-94 with feeder connections
- Should just add another lane on I-94 between St. Paul and Eau Claire
- Should consider removing the slopes along I-94 to use existing freeway right-of-way
- Are there any plans to reconstruct I-94 in the next ten years?
- Can the existing St. Croix River Bridge be used for LRT/BRT or will a new bridge be required?
- Prefer I-94 options – don't think will work well on local streets
- I-94 is preferred option
- How will the grade change and barrier along the north side of I-94 in St. Paul be addressed?
- WisDOT is not in favor of using the auxiliary lane on the St. Croix Bridge for LRT or BRT
- Only real options are along I-94
- Add lanes (not HOV lanes) to I-94 where possible
- Prefer alternatives in I-94
- Can St. Croix Bridge handle LRT without being rebuilt?
- Add a lane to I-94 from Eau Claire to the I-494/I-694 interchange

### **Managed Lanes**

- A managed lane is not a managed lane if it does not have tolling
- Alternative 8 is probably the most cost-effective and would have less impact on the environment and right-of-way
- Be careful not to define BRT managed lane as a MnPASS lane and don't use I-35W as a standard (it did not follow FHWA's standard process)

### **7<sup>th</sup> Street and White Bear Avenue Alignment**

- It might be good idea to consider other transit alternatives for 7<sup>th</sup> Street
- Concerned about LRT running on White Bear Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street – would push more traffic onto parallel local streets
- LRT and BRT make sense along East 7<sup>th</sup> Street but not down White Bear Avenue
- Support LRT in east St. Paul – makes area more desirable place to live
- LRT impacts to White Bear Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street would be significant
- Concerns about White Bear Avenue
- Sending LRT or BRT along White Bear Avenue doesn't add any speed to service and is disruptive to neighborhoods
- Prefer LRT on 7<sup>th</sup> Street if data supported outcomes of improved economic and residential opportunities for Dayton's Bluff
- Local option along White Bear Avenue would destroy White Bear as a north-south route
- Favor local connections to the East Side but not sure could implement LRT stations without impacts to neighborhoods. BRT with local walk-up stations makes more sense (Alt 4)
- Route that includes White Bear Avenue/7<sup>th</sup> Street is the least sensible
- Support the local LRT option – will provide a stimulus for development around the former 3M campus – East 7<sup>th</sup> and White Bear are already main corridors so will be minimal impacts to residential areas – will connect East Metro to rest of region and make it a more desirable place to live – better access to jobs and entertainment districts
- White Bear Avenue and Old Hudson Road alignments have negative impacts on the Ruth/3<sup>rd</sup> neighborhood
- Very concerned about the White Bear alternative
- Significant impacts on White Bear Avenue
- White Bear Avenue/7<sup>th</sup> Street not a good route

### **Other St. Paul Alignments**

- Consider using McKnight instead of White Bear Avenue
- Alignment along Hudson Road is a good idea
- Glad to hear that 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is no longer a route alternative
- Why was Minnehaha Avenue dismissed as a route alternative?
- Hudson Blvd is close to I-94 so adding a lane would be difficult

### **Stations and Park/Ride Lots**

- In favor of new transit bus station near Manning and I-94
- Current park/rides too far west to serve people in east Woodbury
- Station plan provided for LRT at Woodbury/Keats Ave.
- Like to see stops in Landfall and near the Carlson Business Park
- How will additional park/ride be added at SunRay – lot is inadequate now

- A station at White Bear Avenue is a good idea
- A station at Johnson Parkway doesn't make sense – no feeder service, no dense population, no businesses, buses not permitted on parkways – perhaps move west to Earl?
- Must have a walk-up station within no more than four blocks of Metro State University
- Stations at 3M and Carlson Business Park good
- SunRay already has a “hide and ride” problem – making it a larger park/ride will take away the potential for economic development
- Would new park/ride lots be built in Wisconsin?
- Carmichael (rest area) may not best long-term location for transit station due to congestion at this interchange – areas to the north may be better served by station at Hwy 12 interchange (Exit 4)
- Station locations and surrounding impacts affect all alternatives, not just LRT/BRT
- How large will the stations be?

### **Bus Service**

- Will there be feeder bus service in the corridor?
- Will there be service outside the peak periods?
- Feeder bus service is important
- Can more bus service be added now to the I-94 corridor?
- Would bus service between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities continue with commuter rail?
- Need feeder bus service
- Need feeder bus service to access the LRT system
- Transit Link is a good option for seniors and people with disabilities
- Free fares in downtown would be great
- Speed, frequency, flexibility are important for people that travel far distances

### **Traffic Impacts**

- Prefer the option that has the greatest impact on reducing the number of cars on roads (maybe LRT)
- Concerns about traffic impacts in residential neighborhoods
- Alternatives that have grade-level crossings (McKnight and Century) would have significant traffic impacts.
- Century Ave and Hudson Blvd is a dangerous intersection – how will alternatives affect intersection?

### **Other Potential Impacts**

- Concerns about impacts to businesses during construction
- Avoid right-of-way impacts to homes and churches
- Alternatives 3, 4, 5,6 would impact environment around Tanner's Lake/Marina

### **General Comments**

- I love transit
- Is the region prioritizing transit routes to meet the highest needs first?
- How does this line integrate with other public transit options?
- Gateway would make it a lot easier to get from Hudson to St. Paul but shorter travel times to outer ring suburbs than to inner ring suburbs and urban locations encourages sprawl

- Does this plan encourage smart growth?
- Options seem to primarily benefit Washington County and eastern Wisconsin, not the east side of St. Paul
- Overall support for transit
- Will ridership be projected accurately?
- Provide linkages/services for bicycles
- Interested in going out of the city to western Wisconsin for recreation
- Consider emergency response plans – add flexibility in alternative routes so system still functions if something major happens
- Dedicated routes/lanes would be best even if they cost more

#### **Public Involvement**

- St. Paul event was well planned and staff well prepared – but no people of color attended – should make separate contacts with communities of color on the East Side
- Request for a presentation to the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce