



Agenda
Gateway Corridor Commission
April 12, 2012 - 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 March 15, 2012 Meeting*		Approval
4. Consent Items		Approval
a. Checks and Claims*		
5. Gateway Corridor AA	Washington County	
a. Outreach Activities*		Information
b. Open House Summary		Information
c. Contract Extension Work Scope		Approval
6. Communications	Washington County	Information
a. Social Media and Website Update*		
7. Legislative Update*	Ramsey County	Information
a. State		
b. Federal		
8. Other	Washington County	Information
a. Meeting Dates Summary*		
b. Media Articles		
9. Adjourn		

*Attachments

Gateway Corridor Commission*Agenda Item #3***March 15, 2012****Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room**

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

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

Others	Agency
Ted Schoenecker	Washington County
Andy Gitzlaff	Washington County
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County
Tim Mayasich	Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority
Rachel Horn	U.S. Representative Bachmann's Office
David Jessup	City of Woodbury
Linda Jungwirth	Assistant to Ramsey County Commissioner Rettman
Patty Busse	Oakdale Patch
Kaitlyn Egan	East Side Review
Mike Longaecker	Woodbury Bulletin

Josh Straka	U.S. Representative Betty McCollum's Office
Darin Broton	Tunheim
Tim Harlow	Star Tribune
Ann Marshall	League of Women Voters – Wdby/Cottage Grove
Mikael Carlson	East Side Prosperity Campaign

The Gateway Corridor Commission convened at 1:32 p.m. by Chair Weik. The meeting was convened without a quorum present and Chair Weik advanced to the following informational Agenda Items:

- #1. Introductions
- #5. Gateway Corridor AA
 - a. Outreach Activities
- #7. Communications
 - a. Social Media Update
 - b. Website Update

With the arrival of Ortega from Ramsey County, Chair Weik recognized a quorum of the Commission were present at 1:40 p.m.; then proceeded to action Agenda Items starting with Agenda Item #2.

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 Lantry to approve the agenda. Second by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3. Summary of February 9, 2012 Meeting

No changes were made to the February 9, 2012 meeting summary.

Motion made by Lantry to approve the February 9, 2012 meeting summary. Second by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4. Consent Items

- a. Checks and Claims

Advocacy Materials (printing of Gateway Brochure) \$187.47, Communication Contract, Tunheim Partners \$5,646.25, Alternatives Analysis Contract, CH2M Hill \$170,032.27

Motion made by Rossbach to approve checks and claims. Second by Lantry. **Approved.** Motion carried

Agenda Item #5. Gateway Corridor AA

- a. **Outreach Activities Meetings**

Schoenecker provided a regular update for AA study of the Commission's outreach meeting schedule and mentioned that there will be an additional presentation to the Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee and targeting April for that meeting.

- b. **Evaluation of Alternatives/Open House Presentation**

Chair Weik stated that the joint TAC/PAC met yesterday and brought an overview to them

today.

Schoenecker provided a brief introduction and highlighted two (2) items prior to the presentation.

- 1) To remind those present of the process, the roles and responsibilities of this study and this Gateway Corridor Commission, the Commission is the entity in charge of the decision making. They are the decision making body as to what goes forward from the study.

TAC and PAC are recommenders; TAC (is analysis and review and provides a recommendation to PAC); PAC (provides a recommendation to the Gateway Corridor Commission.)

The Gateway Corridor Commission will take information under advisement from TAC and PAC and make the best decision going forward for the Gateway Corridor Commission.

- 2) Not in packet, is a request for an extension of the study to complete more analysis and provide more time for the decision making process. At the end of the presentation, staff will be looking for direction from the Commission if that would be supported and then at the April meeting they could bring back a draft, work scope, and cost allocation.

Schoenecker stated that at the end of the presentation Staff will be looking for a recommendation from the Gateway Corridor Commission on what and how to present the data as information for the open houses to be held the last week of March and first week of April. He also stated that the Commission does have a recommendation from yesterday's joint PAC/TAC meeting to consider. Staff will also be looking for approval of the meeting materials. Schoenecker reiterated that input from the open houses will come back to the Commission for overall decision making.

Stephanie Eiler of CH2M Hill and Andy Gitzlaff of Washington County provided handouts at the meeting for the overhead presentations of the Alternatives Analysis Preliminary Findings and the Alternatives: Key Differentiators table.

Eiler reviewed the preliminary results and their findings along with the key differentiators for the Commission's consideration. She provided some background on the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI), stating that is a critical piece of the FTA's measurement. Eiler also reviewed the evaluation process. They pulled together every piece of information to evaluate it against each of the six (6) goals and every objective under each goal for a very complex intensive data analysis. They summarized the data that went before TAC and PAC at the previous meeting. They "teased" (pulled) out key factors what will allow the best for the Corridor to continue and take forward. Eiler explained the assessment and ranking (low, medium, high) of each alternative as displayed in the presentation. With the alternatives, they identified Key Differentiators as seen in the handout.

Eiler spoke about some variations (optimizations) to the alternatives they could look at carrying forward, along with an explanation for the considerations of possible FTA funding approval with each optimization:

Alternative 3 with a piece of Alternative 4

Alternative 8 with express buses, or LRT

Eiler explained that PAC and TAC would like to look at optimizing other alternatives and also have several recommendations for the Commission to consider by extending the study. They could look to continue the study as an Inter-City Corridor along with MnDOT and WisDOT rather than just a transit corridor. Eiler also suggest that Alternative 4 and 6 be seriously studied with other transportation corridors as one of the corridors that go up to Maplewood, or to the City of St. Paul in the street car analysis. Also, options should be added to Alternative 3 and 5 that connects a portion of the Hudson Road alignment, and they do recommend that Light rail continue to be studied.

Policy and Technical Advisory Committees met yesterday and are recommending to present the findings of comparative analysis and overall ranking of alternatives for public review and comment as low, medium, and high and be representative of the data that goes into those categories be presented in the type of chart displayed.

Ortega inquired if this was the only chart to be shown, expressing concern that it does not say anything and asked if they have something better that would show more information.

Schoenecker explained something with more detail and graphical information could be shown.

Giuliani Stephens asked about flexibility within each mode and change from a managed lane, or a BRT, or to light rail; she asked to summarize for those moving forward where that flexibility lies.

Eiler, explained and summarized that the “space is there”; we embrace BRT here. She explained the definition of BRT as used in Alternatives 3 and 4, and further explained it is exciting and frustrating as to what the FTA counts for funding consideration as transit and what counts as highway.

Eiler proceeded to explain the materials planned so far, that the website has the news releases for the open houses and the display posters are going out in several places in four (4) languages (English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali) and with maps.

They also printed 670 copies of a flyer at the request of the Engage East Side St. Paul group and they (East Side) will be distributing that house to house in all the St. Paul neighborhoods. The Social media is plugged in with meeting notices. They can arrange to have a translator, but requests must be in two (2) days in advance to Washington County. They have emailed notices; will make posters, and will have sign-in sheets and comment cards at each of the open houses. The comment cards will include the question. Do you have a favorite? If so, what is it? They are planning to make available a series of boards that will have simplified text boards with pluses and minuses next to every map board with the information you see here, rather than a chart. They invite all TAC/PAC members and everyone present to come and join them at the open house in their respective communities.

Gitzlaff touched on the next steps, with other approval items for meeting materials and what happens after the open houses.

Ortega asked what will take the place of the table, and expressed concern for what a Community member might see, and would there be anything on economic development.

Gitzlaff explained that the boards would contain recommendations and overall rankings and key differentiators, which is the smaller chart, and will look more like something in the power point that is more colorful and pops out a little bit more with goal by goal analysis.

Lantry expressed concern if they plan to present all of the alternatives at all of the open houses and wondered why they wouldn't ditch the low ones. Her concern was for giving people that much information and all the time spent explaining all of the alternatives and allowing them time for absorbing, and wants to give people a reasonable amount of information and she thought they would be further along with what they present.

Gitzlaff added that this is the direction taken from TAC/PAC so everyone can see where the ranking information came from with negatives and positives that came out in rating/ranking information.

Lantry is anticipating phone calls to her office after the meetings for people who might not ultimately be impacted. Lantry's concern is from past presentations given where something was shown to go down 3rd street, and didn't happen. She is concerned for how much history is shown and to what point if it is already known to be highly unlikely.

Eiler reviewed the format they normally use. They provide a short (20 minute) presentation and explain what they have done; who they are and where they are now; with two (2) dozen boards around the room and with staff members standing nearby. They have planned to use the approach they have used before, do a short presentation on the results and methodology of the study. There will be time for viewing the message boards and time to allow for more one on one time for individual questions.

Ortega expressed concern for information; the whole point of this is to allow for the public to ask more questions and he would like to err on more information to the Community and make sure the process allows for the public to ask more questions.

Chair Weik likes the Key Differentiators chart with the pluses and minuses on it. (see presentation page 3. The chart is the condensed version. She wants the information coming from the Commission to be very transparent to the public; wants to show the public that this is a data driven process, and wants the public to see what the thought process has been. Also, so the State can see what the thought process has been and what makes more sense; what has more pluses, or what might make more sense as the east metro continues to grow. The State asked them if they could add #8 to their study as that was an ongoing item with them. She asked what the other Commission members think.

Watson, of Woodbury Chamber of Commerce, stated that what has been provided isn't easy to wrap your arms around and it doesn't really drive to a conclusion. Watson agrees that they need absolute transparency, but they are also making a decision on an outcome that will affect them regionally beyond most of their lifetimes and wants that investment to be correct. He wants this to be correct and is having a difficult time deciphering all the information and how many of the pluses are they going to have, and what impact is for today, and what impact is for 2030?

Rosbach asked for clarification on what decisions they were looking for today.

Schoenecker reiterated that staff is looking for a recommendation on three (3) things:

- 1) What and how to present data and information at the open houses
- 2) What kind of boards physical materials should be used to present data
- 3) Should they look at extending the contract with CH2M Hill?

Specifically to extend the study completing more analysis; which would provide more time for the decision making process with additional analysis to optimize alternatives, allowing more time to study Impact vs. benefit.

Rossbach asking if they couldn't have a chart showing the three ranked low, along with where they were looking at enhancing (optimizing)?

Gitzlaff responded yes, for two of the three low ones.

Lantry stated that people will ask, 'When it will start? Shovels will go in the ground when? What year? And decided by whom?' Residents will want to know when their houses will go and when and who will get back to them if their house will be taken. Lantry would like to show a timeline, or information presented as a "hybrid." She is concerned about the time it will take to talk about the most expensive alternatives and expressed that they need to make some decisions or they are going to confuse people with so much information. It will be too hard to figure out, and it needs to be more explicit. If they could figure out a way to show the YouTube video in a fly over so people can see it, she thinks it will help.

Giuliani Stephens asked if they could make a recommendation to take off Commuter Rail, at this point, if agreeable, as MnDOT and WisDOT have plans for further study on their own.

Schoenecker stated that everyone has the same feelings with the high cost, low ridership, but strongly encourage that it somehow remain in the presentation because of Wisconsin open house presentations and it was one of the things they were very interested in and will be asking about.

Motion made by Lantry to display information about the Commuter Rail, but take off the list of Alternatives to be discussed as they present information going forward. Second by Giuliani Stephens. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Rossbach asked about arterial BRT line and when he looks at the neighborhoods would rather have a BRT line running into his city. He expressed concern for what his city may be lacking for transportation without it.

Lantry thinks that as part of the presentation they need to talk about it as a system and need to explain that this is a part of a public transportation system.

Chair Weik, referred to a slide on the lower portion of page 5 of the presentation handout and the project team's recommendation of further study for portions of Alternatives 4 and 6. Chair Weik suggested that the Commission formally endorse or recommend for further study.

Schoenecker asked for clarification, and stated that staff is looking for recommendations and a separate action is not needed, rather how the Commission would like to present this information for the open house.

Chair Weik agrees with the project team's recommendation and expressed concern as there are things outside their scope, different transportation options, with different funding assumptions.

She is concerned with who has responsibility and where those funds will come from, as there are different funding sources.

Lantry is concerned if the average person off the street would understand the presentation. She expressed that it might be clear to them, the Commission members, but is concerned what would the average person think, and would they think that they are just going to keep studying it. She wants them to be reminded that if those things were gone, it doesn't mean there won't be transportation in this area.

Rossbach reiterated that if they don't take something out, they are going to keep it in; so they are continuing to study.

Lantry was concerned for what will happen on Apr 25th, and thought there was a slide showing that they were going to make a decision on that date.

Gitzlaff stated that if they are looking at an extension of the contract to optimize alternatives, then Apr 25th would no longer be a decision meeting. Gitzlaff answered, there would be some more coordination and additional meetings, then April 25th would no longer be a decision type meeting and staff would also look at what is coming back from the open houses. Staff will have a better understanding of what kind of optimizations could be done as a part of that final step with 2 or 3 additional meetings.

Giuliani Stephens asked to back up one second and she inquired about taking Commuter Rail out at this point and asked Eiler if there were Federal requirements in the past that it be included; are they jeopardizing the process in any way by taking it out now or is this the appropriate time? Are they jeopardizing Federal funding by removing, or will it be ok to take out now?

Eiler explained that the Fed's pay a lot of attention to the process; "it's about the process", this is the decision making body, and the Commission could take that step after seeing a full and credible data intensive evaluation. This body could take that step and it could be done at this time.

Chair Weik stated that the recommendation is for a short extension of the study to look at doing some of the optimizations of some of the alternatives and asked if the Commission would give staff the direction to look at doing so. She stated that staff is asking for time to do that and have some discussions and she agrees with it.

There was some brief discussion as to what may happen with the various Alternatives and how portions of those Alternatives may be used or considered with various modes of travel and within other systems.

Ortega explained that the process is very important, better to take our time now; it is the Commission's job to make them aware of what the options are, they need to cover all of the bases at the foundation level. "It is our job to try and educate people and make them aware of what the options are." "Just don't think this is the very beginning, nobody here is trying to pick and choose one mode over the other, just saying all information should be included."

Giuliani Stephens reiterating to go on the record, earlier they received a lot of data too fast and did need more time and other questions came up as they were comparing it to other lines. At

that time, to consider comparing apples to apples the response back was they need that process. She thinks that they still need to compare apples to apples and thinks there is a little more work yet to be done on that, and they need that process. She agrees with Ortega to make sure they do all, they need that process and do not want to work up to this point and jeopardize the whole process.

Lantry agrees that “the process is critical, it’s key,” also from her experience, “you can’t study everything.” She is fine with the way they want to proceed, she was trying to find if there was a way they could be more concise. Lantry feels it shouldn’t be about circumventing the process It’s more about hitting those points where they start to decide and make some decisions because they can’t study everything.

Chair Weik responded that it is critical that they look around at the various options and around the country and see what is there; they will need to study the data and she also does not want to circumvent the process; at some point in the future they will need to compete with other cities around the country for scarce Federal funds and how they will proceed is critical. Chair Weik explained where the funding assumptions are right now, and they will need to keep monitoring that as they go forward in case there are changes to be made. Weik went on to explain where some changes have already taken place in relationship to cost and CEI.

Kyllo provided a suggestion in the presentation, he does not care to see a chart with all the modes mixed together, he likes to look at charts from top to bottom. Placing the best ones on top, then medium next, and separate the ones least considered on the bottom. Then he feels you can concentrate on the ones most likely to be considered. The chart shown jumps around from medium, to high, then low, then back and forth. He suggests not looking at the ones least considered, and wants to focus on the few things really being considered. He agrees with Lantry and that he wants to look mainly at the few things they are really considering and how it impacts.

Giuliani Stephens stated that the challenge will be to make it simplified with highlights, but have the data details available in case it is challenged or there are people who have more questions.

Lantry cautioned about use of all the acronyms, and how confusing they are to people when explaining the various Alternatives. She suggests calling the Alternative what it is rather than how it is abbreviated and likes anyway that they can simplify and also likes the high to low suggestion.

Chair Weik asked, regarding the approval items, if staff has enough information on what and how to present.

Schoenecker responded that they have already taken action on Commuter Rail, and it will be presented but it is basically taken off the table as an alternative carried forward. It will be included in the ranking, and the ranking will be presented as high, medium, and low. They will do their best to try and streamline the information. Open house boards will reflect the discussion.

Motion by Ortega to recommend that all Alternatives still be presented with it shown that Commuter Rail has been taken off the table as an alternative carried forward; Alternatives will be presented as ranked high, medium, and low; and open house boards will reflect the discussion. Second by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Schoenecker is looking for direction on what to move forward with, to bring to the April meeting. He stated that they can include scope of work, information outreach and engagement from open houses. He is looking for direction on preparing work with the funding partners and identifying what that funding cost and funding split will be; then he will bring it forward to the April meeting for their consideration.

Chair Weik inquired if they should now be looking at the BRT mode bias and including the portion of South Hudson road.

Schoenecker will not need that information at this time and would bring it forward to the April meeting.

Ortega stated that they should put everything in and then decide later what to take out.

Motion made by Ortega to present all findings of comparative analysis as outlined in the presentation. Second by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #6. Insurance Coverage for Commission

See packet information, provided for February 2010, the Gateway Corridor Commission approved the selection of the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust to provide insurance coverage of the Gateway Corridor Commission. As part of their annual operating procedure, they request that the Commission submit a Property/Casualty Coverage Application. There are two main parts: Liability Coverage Waiver and Expenditure Worksheet.

Schoenecker summarized that it is the same coverage as last year and comes with the same recommendation. The Washington County Risk Manager reviewed the application and recommends that the Commission does not waive the monetary limits on tort liability established by Minnesota statutes.

Motion made by Ortega to approve the Insurance Coverage Application as recommended by the Washington County Risk Manager and does not waive the monetary limits on tort liability. Second by Nelson. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7 Communications

Item 7a. Social Media

Schoenecker provided a brief update on Facebook since it was launched on February 20th the page currently (as of today) has 118 "Likes." They are continuing to work with Tunheim, to expand the "Likes." There are four YouTube videos and the "views" of the videos ranges from 31-77 and the video view only counts if it has been viewed in its entirety. New content has been added every other day and so far there have been no instances where comments have been removed.

Item 7b. Website Update – February

Schoenecker updated just one aspect of the website and stated that there were 990 website visits during the month of February; not a whole lot going on and anticipates the same number of visits with same level of activity throughout the month of March with the open houses. Plus an additional outreach activity, partnering with East Side Prosperity Campaign, who will be doing a large mailing with the upcoming open house information.

Chair Weik testified last night at the Legislature, House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee meeting and stated that they are ready to move to the next phase – Environmental Impact Study and she will make a post to the Gateway social media site. See House Representative John Kriesel, House file 2133.

Agenda Item #8. Legislative Update

Item 8a. State

Schoenecker provided a brief highlight; yesterday there was a hearing in the House of the Transportation Committee. Every bill that they heard yesterday was laid over to be contained in the Omnibus Bill. Another meeting will be held today with the Transportation and Finance Committees and they are considering the Bonding and it will be posted as a list tomorrow by 1:00 p.m. of the proposed bonding projects. They should know by tomorrow if the project is moving forward.

Chair Weik clarified they do have the revenue needed to proceed ahead with the environmental impact study. The strategy is to get the funding request before the State law makers early and often.

Item 8b. Federal

Chair Weik just returned from Washington D.C. and Federal transportation changes hourly. Senate passed their transportation 2-year bill, and the House has not, still struggling with what to include with and the timeline for that bill and have until the end of the month deadline. Chair Weik was at Capitol Hill for the National Association of Counties. Commissioner Banner removed Transportation Committee Chair John Mika and removed him from the duties as Chair of the House Transportation Committee. She had hoped that the President would have signed the St. Croix River Crossing Bridge while she was there. They were able to meet with the Minnesota Delegation. It was a very positive trip and they were able to discuss Gateway.

Agenda Item #9. Other

Item 9a. Meeting Dates Summary

Schoenecker stated there were no changes to the proposed Commission meeting dates. With the extension of the work that they will be doing, the TAC and PAC dates might change from what is on the schedule.

Agenda Item #10. Adjourn

Motion made by Lantry to adjourn the meeting. Second by Rossbach.

Approved. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.



Agenda Item #4

DATE: April 4, 2012
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>
3/9/12	Printing of Gateway Materials	\$67.28
2/29/12	CenturyLink Conference Call	\$18.98
3/28/12	Woodbury Expo Registration	<u>\$225.00</u>
Total		\$311.26

Communications Contract (Tunheim Partners)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Amount</u>
3/1/12-3/31/12	\$3,910.97

Note: Percent of contract utilized = 51%

Alternatives Analysis Contract (CH2M Hill)

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
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Note: Percent of contract utilized = 86%

Detailed invoices can be made available upon request.

Action Requested: Approval of Claims and Checks



DATE: April 4, 2012
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Gateway Corridor Outreach Activities

The Gateway project team has been 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.

Upcoming Outreach

Stakeholder	Status
Met Council Transportation Committee	Presentation – April 9, 2012
King of King's Church	Presentation – April 10, 2012
Woodbury Chamber – Eggs and Issues	Presentation – April 13, 2012
Woodbury Expo	Booth – April 14, 2012
White Bear Avenue Business Association	Presentation – April 17, 2012
Woodbury City Council Workshop	Presentation – May 30, 2012
Developer's Forum	TBD

Previous Outreach

Stakeholder	Status
Lake Elmo Rotary Club	Presentation – March 16, 2011
St Paul District Council 1	Annual Meeting Booth – March 28, 2011
Woodbury LIONS Club	Presentation – April 5, 2011
Woodbury Chamber of Commerce	Presentation – April 6, 2011
Rasmussen College	Presentation – May 2, 2011
River Falls Rotary Club	Presentation – May 3, 2011
Metro State University	Presentation – May 4, 2011
St Paul District Council 4	Presentation – May 16, 2011
St Paul Chamber – Transportation Committee	Presentation – May 19, 2011
St Paul District Council 1	Presentation – May 23, 2011
3M	Meeting – May 24, 2011
St Paul District Council 5	Presentation – June 7, 2011
St Paul District Councils – Joint Meeting of 1, 2, 4, 5, 17	Presentation – June 27, 2011
St Paul District Council 2	Presentation – July 20, 2011



St Paul Transportation Committee	Presentation – July 25, 2011
Dayton’s Bluff Business Association	Presentation – July 28, 2011
Woodbury Rotary	Presentation – August 4, 2011
East Side Area Business Association	Presentation – September 14, 2011
Woodbury Community Foundation	Presentation – September 27, 2011
Oakdale Business and Professional Assn	Presentation – October 6, 2011
UW River Falls Leadership Group	Presentation – October 13, 2011
Sunray Businesses and St Paul D1	Meeting – October 18, 2011
Landfall City Council	Presentation – October 25, 2011
Harley Davidson Dealership	Meeting – October 31, 2011
Engage East Side	Meeting – November 15, 2011
Oakdale City Council	Presentation – January 10, 2012
St Paul District Council 17 Development Review Cmte	Presentation – January 10, 2012
St. Paul Transportation Committee	Presentation – January 30, 2012
St Paul Chamber Event at Globe University	Presentation – February 3, 2012
St. Paul District Council 4 Board Meeting	Presentation – February 6, 2012
East Side Business Association	Presentation – February 8 , 2012
St. Paul District Council 5 Board Meeting	Presentation – February 8, 2012
St. Paul District Council 2 Board Meeting	Presentation – February 15, 2012
St. Paul District Council 1 Board Meeting	Presentation – February 27, 2012
Stillwater LIONS Club	Presentation – February 28, 2012
Engage East Side	Meeting – March 2, 2012
Washington County Regional Rail Workshop	Presentation – March 20, 2012
Woodbury Chamber – Government Affairs Committee	Meeting – March 23, 2012
Lower St Croix Valley Alliance	Presentation – March 26, 2012
3 rd Round of Open Houses – St Paul, Harding HS	Presentation – March 27, 2012
3 rd Round of Open Houses – Eau Claire, CVTC	Presentation – March 29, 2012
3 rd Round of Open Houses – Hudson, St Croix Gov Center	Presentation – April 4, 2012
Met Council Transportation Accessibility Advisory Council	Presentation – April 4, 2012
3 rd Round of Open Houses – Woodbury, City Hall	Presentation – April 5, 2012

Action Requested: Information



Agenda Item #6

DATE: April 4, 2012
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Communications

Facebook

The Gateway Corridor Facebook page was launched on Monday, February 20. The page currently has 148 'Likes'. New content has been added, on average, every other day. There have not been any instances where comments have had to be removed.

YouTube

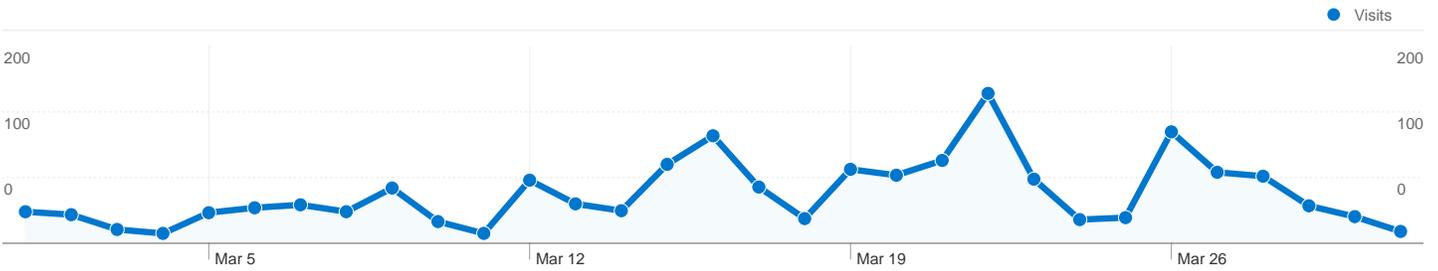
The four YouTube videos of the various alignments are still posted. The "views" of these videos ranges from 50-140.

Website

For the month of March, there were 1,544 visits. This number increase significantly from February because of the open house at the end of March and first week in April.

Attached is the Google Analytics summary page, memo and a summary of the visits per month since the Gateway Corridor website's launch.

Action Requested: Information



Site Usage

1,544 Visits

34.84% Bounce Rate

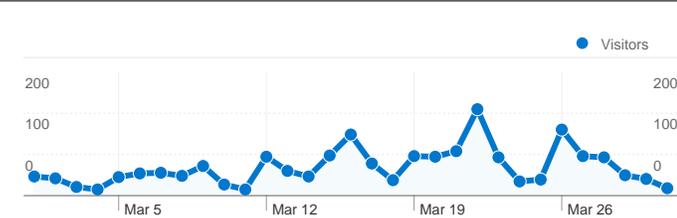
4,776 Pageviews

00:02:47 Avg. Time on Site

3.09 Pages/Visit

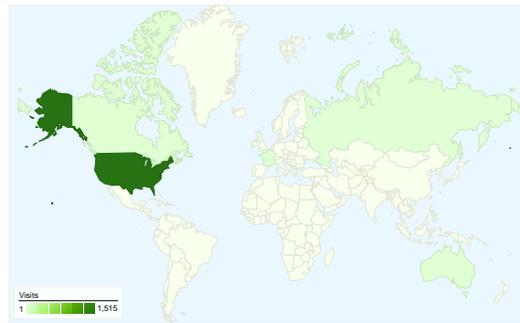
69.69% % New Visits

Visitors Overview

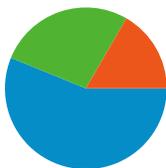


Visitors
1,200

Map Overlay



Traffic Sources Overview



- **Referring Sites**
867.00 (56.15%)
- **Search Engines**
420.00 (27.20%)
- **Direct Traffic**
257.00 (16.65%)

Content Overview

Pages	Pageviews	% Pageviews
/html/transit-study-gateway-	1,496	31.32%
/	1,438	30.11%
/html/about-gateway-	438	9.17%
/html/recent-news.php	393	8.23%
/html/commission-	248	5.19%



DATE: April 4, 2012
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Gateway Corridor Website Analytics - March

Visits: There were a total of 1,544 unique visitors to the Gateway Corridor website. This increase in unique visitors was expected with the open houses in March /April.

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 4,776 page views on the Gateway Corridor website.

Pages/Visit: The ratio of pages viewed per visit is at 3.1. This is a fairly high rate especially when considering that a few people leave the site right away. Those who stay are clearly interested in exploring all of the content.

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 March was just 35 percent. A bounce rate of less than 50 percent is ideal.

Avg. Time on Site: On average, visitors spent 2:47 minutes on the Gateway Corridor website in March.

Percent New Visits: The percentage of new visits in March for the Gateway Corridor website was 70 percent, proving that the website remains attractive to new visitors month after month.

Traffic Sources Overview: Three sources lead visitors to the Gateway Corridor website: referring sites, search engines, and direct traffic.

In March, referring sites, including news outlets and city websites have led 56 percent of traffic to the site while search engines drove 27 percent of March visitors.

Direct traffic made up 17 percent. These are people who type the link directly into their web browser, either because they are familiar with the website and are checking for updates, or because they have seen the URL in a community newsletter or at a business engagement presentation.



Referring Sites:

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

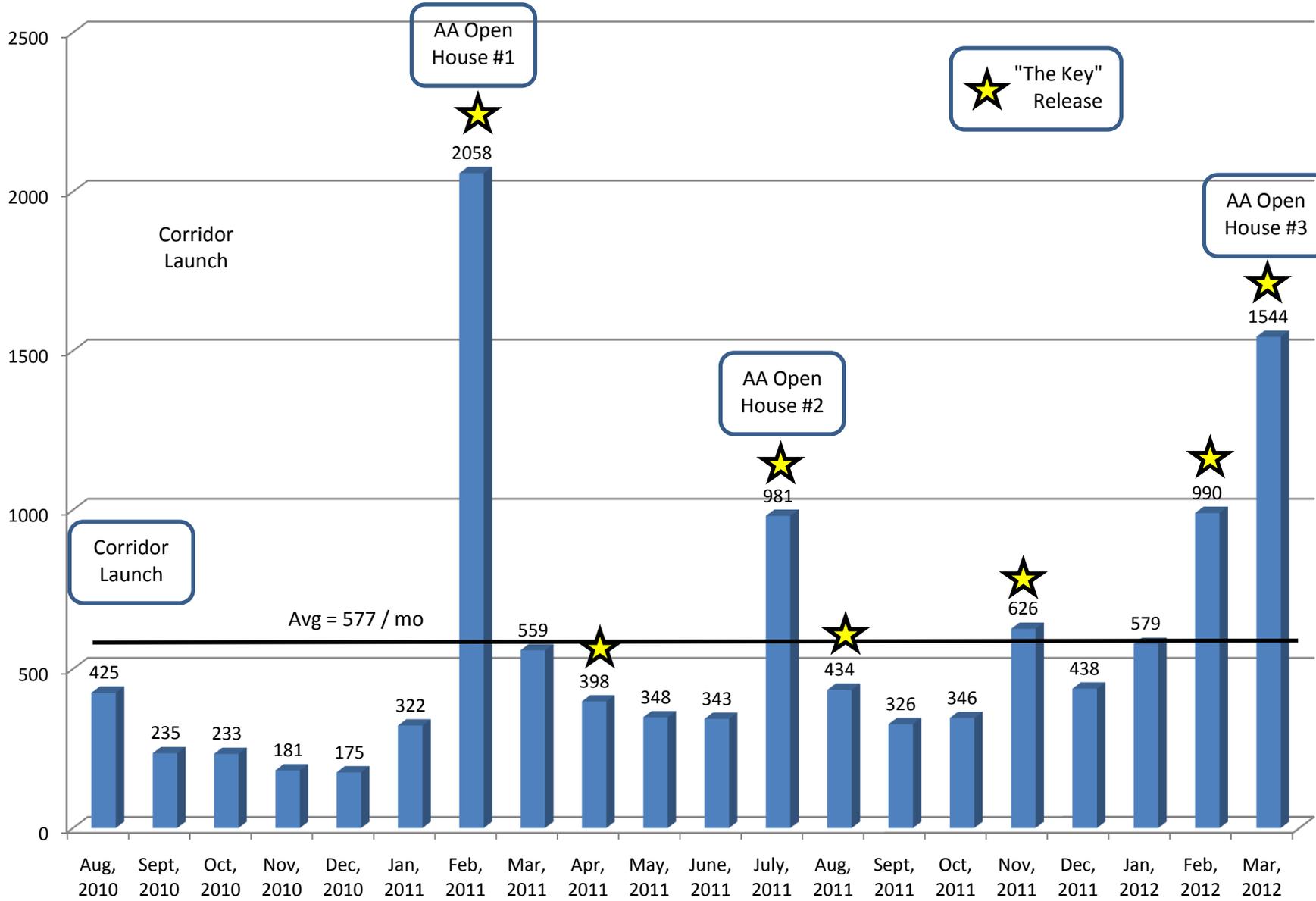
- *Met Council* – 134 visits
- *Metro Transit* – 114 visits
- *Facebook* – 77 visits

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 March:

- Transit study page – 1,496 (31 percent)
- Homepage– 1,438 (30 percent)
- About– 438 (9 percent)

Gateway Corridor Website Visits





DATE: March 8, 2012
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: State and Federal Legislative Update

Item 8a. State Legislative Update

Included below is information provided by the Transportation Alliance

Minnesota Senate Proposes Its Capital Bonding Bill

The Senate Capital Investment Committee passed a capital bonding bill that totals almost \$500 million with an appropriation of \$25 million for restoration of the capitol building as opposed to the \$221 million for the capitol restoration moving through the House. The Senate bill is moving quickly with passage today in the Finance committee and a plan to have the bill taken up by the full Senate tomorrow.

Here is how the transportation provisions are shaping up:

	Gov. Recommendation	House	Senate
Local Bridge Program	\$25 million	\$20 million	\$20 million
Local Road Imp. Program	0	\$10 million	\$14.2 million*
Railroad warning devices	\$2.5 million	\$2.5 million	\$2.5 million
Wetland mitigation for roads	0	\$2 million	\$6 million
Rail Service Improvement	0	\$1 million	0
Ports and Waterways	\$3 million	\$1 million	\$2 million
St. Croix River Crossing	0	\$1 million**	0
I-35W Storm Tunnel	0	\$4 million	0
I-94 Gateway Corridor	0	\$1 million	0
Transportation Economic Dev.	\$10 million	\$5 million	\$5 million
Greater MN Transit	\$10 million	0	\$4 million
Mpls. Interchange Project	0	0	\$5 million

* Up to \$10M for four-lane bridge between Carver and Scott Counties

**Grant to the City of Oak Park Heights



Item 8.b. Federal Legislative Update

Denny McGrann, federal lobbyist with Lockridge Grindal Nauen, will be present at the meeting to give an update on the activities occurring in Washington DC.

Included below is the latest federal update from Lockridge Grindal Nauen and the Minnesota Transportation Alliance.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION:

On Thursday, March 29, the Senate sent a three-month extension of surface transportation programs to President Obama for his signature, averting a potential shutdown of highway, transit and infrastructure projects. The Senate cleared the bill (HR 4281) by unanimous consent just a few hours after the House passed by a vote of 266-158. The current extension (PL 112-30) expires March 31.

House Majority Leaders expressed confidence they will be able to move a longer-term measure shortly after the two-week recess. But it was clear Thursday that the majority will have to pass its five-year, \$260 billion measure (HR 7), or more likely a modified version, with little if any Minority support.

Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) repeated her caucus's insistence that the Chamber vote on a House version (HR 14) of the two-year, \$109 billion transportation bill (S 1813) the Senate passed with bipartisan support earlier this month.

House Majority Leaders say they need more time to round up support for the five-year package that has been stalled since mid-February. That bill, introduced January 31 by House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John L. Mica, (R-FL), ran into opposition from conservatives who called it too expensive. Members from both parties objected to the bill's elimination of guaranteed funding for public transportation.

2013 BUDGET:

The "lame duck" session after the November election is already being discussed in Congress: Members will have only seven weeks to disarm the across-the-board spending cuts (sequestration) that were put in place as self-imposed punishment for the failure of the Congressional "Supercommittee" last fall. Without enacting an alternative, \$98 billion in indiscriminate reductions will be triggered in early January, 2013. Members from both Chambers and both sides of the aisle are eager to replace that approach with one involving targets.

Chairman Ryan (R-WI)'s budget attempts to mitigate the sequestration as it instructs six committees - Agriculture, Energy and Commerce, Financial Services, Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform, and Ways and Means - to spend April finding a collective \$261 billion in cuts to mandatory programs over 10 years. Those recommendations will then be put to a vote in the House in early May, a move that is designed by Republicans to put pressure on the Democratic Senate to respond, if not before the election then soon thereafter. The panels are directed to submit their recommendations for the cuts to the Budget Committee by April 27. The panel, in turn, will compile the recommendations into a reconciliation bill, which the House is expected to consider as early as May. Reconciliation can formally proceed only if both Chambers adopt a budget resolution containing reconciliation instructions, however, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has said he won't bring a budget resolution to



the floor this year, insisting that it is unnecessary since last year's debt limit agreement set a discretionary spending level of \$1.047 trillion for fiscal 2013.

The "shadow" reconciliation process planned in the House, therefore, is aimed at putting the question of how to deal with budget sequestration squarely in the Senate's court. The process of producing a package of mandatory cuts, some House Republicans say, may give them leverage later in the year when the two chambers begin to negotiate over fiscal 2013 spending, the extension of the Bush-era tax rates and dealing with the sequester.

FEDERAL ADMINISTRATION

HUD: Sustainable Housing and Communities BROAD STAKEHOLDER CALL:

Peter Kovar, HUD's Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs and Shelley Poticha, Director HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC), will discuss legislative and programmatic developments. There will also be time for questions from the callers. As you may know, HUD's proposed FY13 Budget restores 100 million for the Sustainable Communities Initiative, which creates incentives for communities to develop comprehensive housing and transportation plans to achieve sustainable development, reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and increase affordable housing near public transit. This includes \$46 million to fund about 20 additional regional planning grants to help enable communities to align public and private investments in housing, transportation, and infrastructure to strategically integrate goals for mobility, regional housing choices and economic development. In addition, \$46 million will be invested in neighborhoods and communities to update building codes, zoning, and local planning efforts as complementary strategies to the regional grants.

DATE: Monday, April 2, 2012

CALL TITLE: OSHC Broad Stakeholder Call

TIME: 12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. EST.

CALL IN NUMBER: (866) 847-7863

Confirmation Number: 243418

EPA: Hearing Reviews Budget Priorities for EPA

The Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, chaired by U.S. Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-OH), held a hearing on March 28, 2011 to receive testimony from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA has the primary responsibility for carrying out the Clean Water Act, which provides for a major federal/state program to protect, restore, and maintain the quality of the nation's waters. However, significant parts of the program are administered by the states with EPA's approval. EPA also administers the Superfund program, which is aimed at investigating and cleaning up uncontrolled and abandoned sites contaminated with hazardous substances. To read a press release, click [here](#).



Agenda Item #8a

DATE: April 4, 2012
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Summary of Meetings

Included below is a summary of the Commission and AA Study meetings through May 2012.

Month	Meeting	Date	Planned Start Time
March	Joint PAC/TAC	March 14	1:30 PM
	Gateway Commission	March 15	1:30 PM
	Open House – St Paul	March 27	6:00 PM
	Open House – Eau Claire	March 29	5:00 PM
April	Open House - Hudson	April 4	5:00 PM
	Open House - Woodbury	April 5	5:00 PM
	Gateway Commission	April 12	3:30 PM
	Joint PAC/TAC	April 25	3:00 PM
May	Gateway Commission	May 10	3:30 PM

Action Requested: Information



Published March 15, 2012, 04:59 PM

Buses get early nod in I-94 transit study

The concept of high-speed buses on Interstate 94 is rising to the top.

By: **Mike Longaecker**, Woodbury Bulletin

The concept of high-speed buses on Interstate 94 is rising to the top.

Officials on Thursday shared findings that show two options for bus rapid-transit as the most preferred among a slate of possibilities an east metro panel has been studying for more than a year.

One of the two preferred options calls for high speed buses to operate in a bus-only lane out of St. Paul that would also run down the I-94 median, where possible. That option comes with a projected \$420 million price tag.

The other preferred option, with a \$590 million cost estimate, proposes a managed lane on I-94 that would be accessible for high-speed buses and other high-occupancy vehicles.

Woodbury Mayor and Gateway Corridor Commission Member Mary Giuliani Stephens was among those who supported the ascension of bus rapid-transit (BRT) to the top.

"The more I learn about BRT, I'm liking the flexibility of it," she said.

Supporters of BRT plans said proposed routes create an infrastructure that could one day be utilized by light rail. If that comes to pass someday, "the system's in place to do it," Stephens said.

Members of the Gateway Corridor Commission met Thursday at Woodbury City Hall, where they approved a plan to roll out the ranked options to the public through a series of open houses.

Thursday's announcement highlighted the top choices – compiled by a research team with input from commissioners and the public – and kept all but one option left on the table: commuter rail, a possibility that commissioners voted out after seeing its \$1.23 billion price tag and extensive hurdles it faced.

"This is just stupid," St. Paul City Council Member and Gateway Commissioner Kathy Lantry said of the commuter rail option. "We have to make some decisions, for goodness sakes."

Commissioners decided information on commuter rail should be presented at the meetings, so long as it is understood that it no longer is on the table.

Besides the two favored high-speed bus choices, the remaining options in play are bus rapid-transit that includes stops in St. Paul neighborhoods and two light rail options.

Also in play is the so-called "no build" option, which leaves things as they are and is mandated to be part of the study.

Those transit possibilities – even those with lower rankings – will be presented at open houses as active options, however.

That scenario caused some consternation among commissioners at the meeting who wondered if including the lower-ranked options might do more harm than good.

"I think it's a lot to absorb for folks," Lantry said, adding that additional confusion could emerge by examining some lower-ranked plans, which call for more property acquisitions along those routes.

Though commissioners signed off on plans for the open-house presentations, some continued to call for a simplification of what will be shown to the public.

"This doesn't seem to drive to a conclusion that's easy to wrap your head around," said Greg Watson, an ex-officio commissioner representing the Woodbury Chamber of Commerce, urging presentations that describe the impact and the flexibility.

Lisa Weik, a Washington County commissioner and chairwoman of the Gateway panel, said the idea behind the thorough presentation was to illustrate the data and research that went into the results.

"I want the public to see what our thought process has been," she said.

Washington County Transportation Manager Ted Schoenecker said he heeded the commissioners' recommendations.

"We will do our best to try and streamline it," he said.

The options fell into three categories: "high," "medium" and "low."

The managed lane and the Hudson Road/I-94 BRT options were categorized as "high."

The "no build" option and a projected \$980 million light rail option fell into the "medium" ranking.

Three options received "low" rankings in the study, beginning with the BRT option through St. Paul neighborhoods. That received lower marks due to the number of property acquisitions, traffic impacts and transit time.

Also receiving a "low" ranking was light rail through east St. Paul neighborhoods – an option that was flagged for its \$1.28 billion cost, property acquisition possibilities and traffic impact.

The last "low" option was commuter rail, which in addition to its price tag, sank due to its projected ridership and minimal opportunity for economic development.

Moving forward, the commission will seek out data from other cities – likely including Kansas City, Mo. – that currently have BRT systems in place. That study will be used in hopes of offsetting what Weik called "LRT bias" of lawmakers who are knowledgeable about light rail transit, but not high-speed buses. Minnesota has yet to implement its first high speed bus line, though one is scheduled to go live in the south metro.

Tags: news, woodbury, traffic, government

Commuter rail from Twin Cities to Eau Claire off table for I-94

Article by: TIM HARLOW

Star Tribune

March 15, 2012 - 9:44 PM

A proposal for a commuter rail line to run along Interstate 94 from the Twin Cities to Eau Claire, Wis., was swept off the planning map Thursday, but otherwise the Gateway Corridor Commission has miles to travel before deciding specifics for a transit corridor along the busy stretch of freeway.

The commission voted unanimously to eliminate the proposed 99-mile line at an estimated cost of \$1.23 billion, but several ideas for reducing east-metro traffic congestion remain under consideration.

That decision came after representatives of the consulting firm CH2M presented results of an 18-month study that rank commuter rail the least desirable alternative. Other plans propose rapid transit buses or light-rail trains for the segment that runs from Union Depot in downtown St. Paul to Manning Avenue in Woodbury.

One of two plans scoring highest in the study was a \$420 million plan to use a bus rapid transit line along I-94 and Hudson Road. The other was for \$590 million for buses on I-94 to share an HOV lane with other vehicles, similar to those on I-35 and I-394.

In a separate motion, commissioners voted to ask CH2M to collect more information from residents during a series of door-to-door house calls over the next month.

"The study is the process of elimination," said Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik, who leads the commission. "We'll shake down and shake some more, and at some point it will become pretty clear."

What was not clear, commissioners said, were charts and informational graphics that will be shown at public meetings starting March 27 at Harding High School in St. Paul. Commissioners voted to revise materials to help residents more easily decipher rankings assigned to each plan as well as perceived benefits to neighborhoods.

They will make more than 600 posters in four languages to advertise the meetings and use Facebook, YouTube and Washington and Ramsey County websites to get the word out.

Plans were ranked on projected daily ridership, costs, opportunities for economic development, traffic patterns, travel time and how many homes and businesses would be lost.

One of the low-ranking plans, using light-rail trains traveling through St. Paul's East Side neighborhoods via 7th Street and White Bear Avenue, would have the most daily riders at 10,100. But the plan received a low ranking because of its \$1.2 billion price tag. It also would require displacing 92 property owners and acquiring 349 partial properties.

A second low-ranking plan, costing \$500 million, would use buses along the same routes but travel time would be slow. 84 full properties and 331 partial properties would have to be acquired.

A plan receiving a medium ranking called for a light- rail line along I-94 and Hudson Road. It scored well for its projected 9,100 daily riders and 14-minute travel time from Oakdale, but it earned negative marks for average opportunities for economic development and its cost of \$980 million.

After the St. Paul open house, others will be held in Eau Claire on March 29, Hudson on April 4 and Woodbury on April 11. A policy and technical committee and the consultants will review public comment before the commission meets on April 2.

Tim Harlow • 651-925-5039 Twitter: @timstrib

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Minneapolis-to-Eau Claire commuter-rail proposal nixed by transit commission

By Andy Rathbun arathbun@pioneerpress.com TwinCities.com-Pioneer Press

Posted:

TwinCities.com

The Gateway Corridor Commission has eliminated a proposal for commuter rail between Minneapolis and Eau Claire, Wis., which was one of its plans to relieve traffic on Interstate 94.

The commission voted Thursday, March 15, to strike the plan due to a number of factors, including estimated ridership, economic development and cost, said commission chair Lisa Weik.

Though the commission will not be moving forward with the plan, it is recommending the Minnesota and Wisconsin transportation departments continue to study commuter rail between the cities.

"We are saying it could be option, but it's not our charter," said Weik, who also serves as a Washington County commissioner.

At an estimated \$1.23 billion, the commuter-rail plan was relatively expensive. Weik said the commission's preferred plan, which involves bus rapid transit between Hudson, Wis., and Minneapolis, comes in at an estimated \$420 million.

The agency is studying seven plans, two of which include light rail.

The Gateway commission anticipates that the federal government will pay for half of the plan ultimately selected, with five metro-area counties and the state of Minnesota paying the other half, Weik said.

Next steps in the process include the development of an environmental-impact statement and open houses where the public can get information and provide feedback about the plans.

"We're not operating in a vacuum," said Weik, adding the public has a "huge influence" in the commission's decisions.

Weik said 90,000 vehicles cross the St. Croix River on I-94 daily, and the corridor is one of the most congested in the Twin Cities.

Andy Rathbun can be reached at 651-228-2121. Follow him at .

TO LEARN MORE

Open houses about plans for Gateway Corridor transit will be held:

- From 6 to 8 p.m. March 27 at Eastside Community Center at Harding High School in St. Paul.
- From 5 to 7 p.m. March 29 at the Health Education Center at Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire.
- From 5 to 7 p.m. April 4 at the St. Croix County Government Center in Hudson, Wis.
- From 5 to 7 p.m. April 5 at Woodbury City Hall.

For more information, go to thegatewaycorridor.com.

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Bus Rapid Transit Options Top List for the Gateway Corridor

Both options that got the "high" ranking included a bus rapid transit component. One would be on a dedicated lane; the other would add a lane similar to existing MnPASS lanes.

By [Patty Busse](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 16, 2012

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Related Topics: [Interstate 94](#), [Transit](#), and [the gateway corridor](#)

Bus rapid transit is emerging as a top option for mass transportation in the Interstate 94 corridor from St. Paul to Wisconsin, according to a report to the [Gateway Corridor Commission](#) by its advisory committees.

The committees ranked two of the [seven transit options being considered](#) "high" and two "medium," based on their projected daily ridership, cost, potential for economic development, need for property acquisitions, traffic impacts and travel times. The commission also eliminated one of the options at its meeting Thursday, March 15.

Here's information on the high, medium and eliminated options:

HIGH—

- [Alternative 3](#), bus rapid transit in a dedicated 11.5-mile long lane along Hudson Road and Interstate 94, scored high in the areas of cost (\$420 million) and travel time (16 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It scored in the midrange on daily ridership at 5,400.
- [Alternative 8](#) includes bus rapid transit in a 14.4-mile long managed lane—similar to a [MnPASS](#) lane—that would also be used by carpoolers and individual drivers who pay a fare. It's the only option that would measurably improve traffic flow in the Manning Avenue to Woodbury Drive/Keats Avenue segment of the interstate, said Stephanie Eiler of [CH2M Hill](#). The option also ranks high in the area of cost (\$590 million) and travel times (15 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It ranked low in daily ridership at 4,600.

MEDIUM—

- [Alternative 2](#), adding simple upgrades such as shoulder lane improvements for buses and park-and-ride lots, scored high in the area of cost (\$65 million) and travel times (15 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It scored low in its impact on economic development and daily ridership, at 3,300.
- [Alternative 5](#), light rail transit for 11.5 miles along Hudson Road and Interstate 94 scored high in daily ridership, at 9,100 and travel times (14 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). At \$980 million, it scored low on cost.

ELIMINATED—

Alternative 7, a 99.9 mile commuter rail line on existing track that would have passed through Oakdale, going from Eau Claire to St. Paul, was eliminated Thursday by the Gateway Corridor Commission.

"Where that track is, it just doesn't lie within the dense population and employment areas of Minnesota," Eiler said.

It ranked low in cost at \$1.23 billion and projected daily ridership at 3,900.

The Gateway Corridor Commission is scheduled to choose a preferred option in early summer. To learn more about the different options and give feedback, visit <http://thegatewaycorridor.com/>, or attend an [upcoming open house](#).

Which option do you prefer? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

Enter your email address

[Keep me posted](#)



Published March 16, 2012, 07:32 AM

Gateway Corridor I-94 study winds down

Traffic along I-94 from Wisconsin to Minnesota and vice versa has experienced a steady increase in volume as population spikes on both sides of the St. Croix River.

By: Jon Echternacht, New Richmond News

Traffic along I-94 from Wisconsin to Minnesota and vice versa has experienced a steady increase in volume as population spikes on both sides of the St. Croix River.

Moving people efficiently along the Gateway Corridor has been under study by the Gateway Commission in Minnesota since 2009. Wisconsin joined the party in 2010, said Tim Ramberg, St. Croix County highway commissioner.

Ramberg presented basics of the study during the March 6 county board meeting along with a slide show and mountain of statistics. The commissioner's most important point was a public input open house on Gateway Corridor transit alternatives is set for 5-7 p.m., April 4 in the lower level of the St. Croix County Government Center.

All the maps and charts and transit options will be on display and questions answered at the meeting, said Ramberg. Anybody with a stake in the corridor, which is considered three to five miles on either side of I-94 from Eau Claire to Minneapolis, is encouraged to attend the meeting and get a first-hand view of the project.

"It's like picking raspberries," said Ramberg, "You've got to move a few leaves. You've got to see it to make a choice."

The commission has a target date of this spring to wrap up the study and settle on a solution.

Ramberg emphasized the project addresses transit-moving people, as opposed to traffic-moving vehicles, along the route.

The commission has tackled the transit issues for a number of reasons including current traffic levels on I-94 exceed capacity and the predicted population and job growth along the corridor is expected to increase 30 percent by 2030. Ramberg said that from Baldwin to Minnesota, 90,000 vehicles a day cross the St. Croix River.

The Gateway Commission evaluated four types of transit modes for evaluation including conventional and express bus, bus rapid transit, light rail transit and commuter rail line.

"I think Rapid Bus Transit (BRT) will be the chosen alternative," said Ramberg. A BRT proposal along Hudson Road and I-94 is one alternative that has been carried forward for consideration by the commission with the note, "this alternative meets project goals better than other alternatives."

Ramberg pointed out the study showed a relatively small number of passengers boarding in Hudson along the bus route because of a factor he called "behavioral economics."

"People tend to drive to the point of congestion then use the alternative transit," said Ramberg. "The study not only took in time of travel but also time to drive, park your car and get on the bus in the study...all factors used to determine shortest distance and shortest time for the commuter."

Another interesting statistic from the study is St. Croix County imports more jobs than it exports, said Ramberg.

For more information contact the commission's website at www.thegatewaycorridor.com.

Tags: communities, wisconsin, traffic

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Editor [Micheal Foley](#): Hudson Patch provides news, information and conversations about the city of Hudson, the town of Hudson and the village of North Hudson in western Wisconsin.

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Gateway Corridor Commission Axes Option With Rail Station at County U

The commission has rated two options as "high" and two as "medium." All four call for a park-and-ride bus station near I-94 and Carmichael Road in Hudson.

By [Patty Busse](#) and [Micheal Foley](#) [Email the authors](#) March 16, 2012

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Related Topics: [Bus](#), [Gateway Corridor](#), [Interstate 94](#), [Rail](#), and [Transit](#)
Which option do you prefer? [Tell us in the comments.](#)



Bus rapid transit is emerging as a top option for mass transportation in the Interstate 94 corridor from St. Paul into Wisconsin, according to a report to the [Gateway Corridor Commission](#) by its advisory committees.

The committees ranked two of the [seven transit options being considered](#) "high" and two "medium," based on their projected daily ridership, cost, potential for economic development, need for property acquisitions, traffic impacts and travel times. The commission also eliminated one of the options at its meeting Thursday, March 15.

All four of the high-to-medium options call for a park-and-ride bus station in Hudson near I-94 and Carmichael Road. Late last year, the commission [eliminated the possibility of commuter rail or light rail crossing the St. Croix River on I-94](#). Some Hudson residents are advocating for the vacant tourism information center on Crestview Drive to become a that bus station. Hudson Center LLC [acquired the property in November 2011](#) for \$1.3 million.

Here's information on the high, medium and eliminated options from Thursday's meeting:

HIGH

- [Alternative 3](#), bus rapid transit in a dedicated 11.5-mile long lane along Hudson Road and Interstate 94, scored high in the areas of cost (\$420 million) and travel time (16 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It scored in the midrange on daily ridership at 5,400. The dedicated lane would end at Manning Avenue. A bus shoulder lane would be used from there to Hudson.
- [Alternative 8](#) includes bus rapid transit in a 14.4-mile long managed lane—similar to a [MnPASS](#) lane—that would also be used by carpoolers and individual drivers who pay a fare. It's the only option that would measurably improve traffic flow in the Manning Avenue to Woodbury Drive/Keats Avenue segment of the interstate, said Stephanie Eiler of [CH2M Hill](#). The option also ranks high in the area of cost (\$590 million) and travel times (15 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It ranked low in daily ridership at 4,600. It's unclear how this option would get across the St. Croix River bridge to service Hudson riders.

MEDIUM

- [Alternative 2](#), adding simple upgrades such as shoulder lane improvements for buses and park-and-ride lots, scored high in the area of cost (\$65 million) and travel times (15 minutes from Oakdales to the Union Depot). It scored low in its impact on economic development and daily ridership, at 3,300.
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ELIMINATED

[Alternative 7](#), a 99.9 mile commuter rail line on existing track that would have passed through Hudson on existing tracks from Eau Claire to St. Paul, was eliminated Thursday by the Gateway Corridor Commission. This option called for a park-and-ride facility near the rail line at County Road U.

"Where that track is, it just doesn't lie within the dense population and employment areas of Minnesota," Eiler said.

It ranked low in cost at \$1.23 billion and projected daily ridership at 3,900.

The Gateway Corridor Commission is scheduled to choose a preferred option in early summer. To learn more about the different options and give feedback, visit TheGatewayCorridor.com, or attend the [April 4 open house in Hudson](#).

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Gateway Corridor funding provided in House bonding bill

ST. PAUL -- Minnesota House Republicans want to borrow significantly less than Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton to fund public works projects.

By: **Don Davis**, Woodbury Bulletin

ST. PAUL -- Minnesota House Republicans want to borrow significantly less than Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton to fund public works projects.

The GOP plan leaves out or drastically trims most city projects, such as civic centers in St. Cloud and Rochester. The bill includes funding for the Gateway Corridor project – which looks to improve Interstate 94 transit between Minneapolis and Eau Claire, Wis. – which was not on Dayton's list.

The House bonding request includes \$1 million for the Gateway project, which includes plans for transit through Woodbury.

Among items not in the House bill is a \$4.75 million request to build a wellness center in Wadena to replace facilities destroyed by a 2010 tornado.

The House bonding proposal, to be heard in a House committee Wednesday, concentrates on fixing state facilities such as college and university buildings. It also funds \$30 million in road and bridge improvements, more than Dayton suggested in his bonding proposal.

An example of the differences between Dayton and House Republicans comes in a state emergency operations center, proposed for northern Ramsey County. The governor suggests \$26 million for the project, while the House bill includes \$2 million to get the project started.

For flood protection, Dayton included \$20 million statewide. The House specifies \$4.1 million for the Red River area and \$300,000 for Lake Oscar in Douglas County, but does not provide as much flood-relief money.

The House would spend \$35 million for the University of Minnesota to work on repairing facilities, while Dayton suggested \$20 million. Both propose \$20 million for repair work on Minnesota State Colleges and Universities campuses.

On specific MnSCU requests, the House bill includes funding for some projects that Dayton does not, including projects at Bemidji State University, Itasca Community College and Northland Community and Technical College. Both proposals would fund projects at Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Worthington, Bridgewater College in Willmar and math, technology, science and engineering work on nine campuses.

Dayton would fund a half-dozen projects that get no money in the GOP plan, including a \$26 million North Hennepin Community College bioscience and health center, the most expensive MnSCU request.

The public works projects would be funded by the state selling bonds, to be repaid over up to 30 years.

Senate Republicans have not released their bonding plans, but Senate Majority Leader Dave Senjem, R-Rochester, has said he expects the bill to be close to \$500 million. He also is chairman of the committee that deals with public works funding.

Don Davis reports for Forum Communications Co.

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House panel votes to move 'smallest' bonding bill along

By Bill Salisbury bsalisbury@pioneerpress.com TwinCities.com-Pioneer Press

Posted:

TwinCities.com

The state of Minnesota would make a small down payment on a new Lowertown ballpark for the St. Paul Saints, spend \$12 million to expand the downtown Minnesota Children's Museum and fund several other east metro projects under a relatively modest \$280 million public works bill approved Wednesday, March 21, by the House Capital Investments Committee.

But the bill faces stiff opposition, not because it spends too much but because it isn't generous enough to satisfy many lawmakers.

It pales in comparison to the \$775 million that DFL Gov. Mark Dayton proposed to borrow for construction work in January, and it does not fund many of the pet projects legislators want to take home to their districts.

The committee chairman, Rep. Larry Howes, R-Walker, said he held down the cost because House Republican leaders put a \$500 million cap on the bonding bill, and he and the committee on Tuesday approved spending \$221 million of that sum to renovate and restore the deteriorating Capitol over four years.

Despite what some lawmakers consider a bargain-basement price tag, St. Paul-area projects fared relatively well under the bill. It would provide:

-- \$2 million for preliminary work on a \$50 million, 7,000-seat ballpark across from the St. Paul Farmers' Market for the Saints and amateur baseball teams. Dayton had requested \$27 million for the project. The city and the Saints would split the rest of the cost.

-- \$12 million to expand the Children's Museum, with an emphasis on early childhood programs. The museum would have to match the state grant with other funding sources.

-- \$5 million to fix up the dolphin exhibit at the Minnesota Zoo.

-- \$2 million to convert the former St. Paul's Monastery in Maplewood into a crisis center for families and individuals.

-- \$1.5 million for an addition to Saint Paul College for health and science programs.

-- \$1 million to Washington County for studies and designing an Interstate 94 "Gateway" transit corridor.

-- \$350,000 for improvements to the Beacon Bluff Business Center on St. Paul's Phalen Boulevard.

The big "winners" under the bill would be the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, which would get \$56 million, and the University of Minnesota, budgeted for \$39 million. Most of that money would go for "asset preservation," including roof repairs, heating and ventilating systems, electrical upgrades and other fixes to existing structures.

But that's only about half of the \$112 million Dayton proposed for MNSCU and \$78 million for the U.

Several veteran legislators said it is the smallest bonding bill they have seen. DFL Rep. Alice Hausman of St. Paul, the lead Democrat on the committee, pronounced it "meager."

She proposed an \$879 million bonding alternative that would have increased funding for state colleges, transportation projects, sewer and water systems and regional economic development proposals. Those projects, she said, would create jobs and "give the private sector the shot in the arm it needs at this critical juncture in the state's economic recovery."

Republicans voted down her amendment.

"It seems to be funding for everything under the sun," said Rep. King Bannian, R-St. Cloud. "We can't afford to have everything."

The committee passed Howes' bill on a 10-6 vote - but only after three skeptical members abstained and at least two others left the hearing room before the vote.

Howes hinted the size of the bill would grow as it moves through the Capitol pipeline. "I'm sure it will change many times," he said.

The bill now moves to the House Ways and Means Committee. Senate Republicans are expected to propose a bonding bill next week.



THE ONLINE COMMUNITY SERVING THE EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOODS OF ST. PAUL

EastSideReviewNews.com

Monday, March 26, 2012

Commuter rail no longer option for Gateway Corridor

*East Side routes unfavorable, bus alternatives emerging frontrunners***Kaitlyn Egan**
news editor

Monday, March 26, 2012

The Gateway Corridor Commission members axed a proposal for a 100-mile long, \$1.3 billion commuter rail line at its March 15 meeting.

The commissioners unanimously voted to remove that option after Stephanie Eiler from consulting firm CH2M Hill presented them with the results of an 18-month analysis on all the proposed plans for the Gateway Corridor.

The Gateway Corridor project is a transportation line that will connect urban, suburban and rural communities along Interstate 94 between St. Paul and the St. Croix River, with connections to Minneapolis and Eau Claire, Wis.

The Metropolitan Council will ultimately make the final decision on which option will be implemented, and the Gateway Corridor could be up and running by 2019.

Two bus rapid-transit, or "BRT," options following I-94 emerged as frontrunners, the only two options to receive high rankings.

Three options received low rankings, including the eliminated commuter rail.

The local bus rapid-transit and light-rail options, traveling north of I-94 into the East Side via East Seventh Street, White Bear Avenue and Hudson Road before continuing along the interstate, received the other poor rankings.

It was determined these two options would require substantial acquisitions of homes and businesses along the route, negatively impact local traffic, and have comparatively longer transit times.

The analysis ranked all eight options on a scale of low, medium and high, depending on how each stacked up to the project's mobility, cost, economic development, environment, community quality of life and safety goals.

'High rankings'

Alternative 3, a bus rapid-transit system using an exclusive bus-only lane running along the north side of I-94 from St. Paul to somewhere near Manning Avenue in Woodbury/Lake Elmo, was considered to be the best option based on the analysis.

This option includes stops at Mounds Boulevard, Earl Street, White Bear Avenue, Sun Ray and 3M.

This option met the project goals better than any other alternative, Eiler told the commission, and had the best potential for success.

This 16-minute bus commute would attract a projected 5,400 daily riders and cost \$420 million. It would serve high population and employment concentrations and its high number of stations would promote economic development around those areas, Eiler said.

The transit line wouldn't cause any changes in local street access or take away any vehicle traffic lanes. This option would require three full and 54 partial property acquisitions.

Alternative 8, basically a designated bus rapid-transit MNPass lane along I-94, received the second "high" ranking. This option would benefit those who travel on I-94 and additional highway funding could be sought to reduce capital costs, Eiler said.

Stops on this option include Earl Street, White Bear Avenue and McKnight Road.

This 15-minute bus commute would attract 4,600 daily riders and cost \$590 million. It, too, would serve areas with high population and employment concentrations. However, its stations are in the freeway median, which are not proven to support economic development as much in the surrounding area, Eiler said.

This option is the only one that would improve I-94 traffic in certain areas, but it would require the acquisition of five full and eight partial properties.

'Medium rankings'

Alternative 5, a 14-minute light-rail line running along the same path as the high ranked bus rapid-transit, has all the perks of that preferred option plus an expected 9,100 daily ridership. However, the light-rail comes with a price tag of \$980 million and would require eight full and 51 partial property acquisitions.

Public comments

The Gateway Corridor Commission will host several open houses to explain the bus and rail transit options and routes being studied for this major transportation corridor. Attendees can share their ideas and opinions on the transit options and routes being considered.

March 27, 6 - 8 p.m.
Eastside Community Center
Harding High School
1526 E. Sixth St., St. Paul

March 29, 5 - 7 p.m.
Chippewa Valley Technical
College
Health Education Center Room
118
615 W. Clairemont Ave., Eau
Claire, Wis.

April 4, 5 - 7 p.m.
St. Croix Government Center
Lower Level (enter by Sheriff's
Department office)
1101 Carmichael Road,
Hudson, Wis.

April 5, 5 - 7 p.m.
Woodbury City Hall
Ash/ Birch Room, main floor
8301 Valley Creek Road,
Woodbury

Though very similar to its bus counterpart, Eiler said this option received a "medium" ranking because the train would only require one car at its most crowded, and that may be too few riders to justify the investment. She also added light-rail stations in freeway medians don't usually offer as much economic development compared to those in neighborhood or business areas.

Alternative 2, "transportation system management" that basically includes more park and ride lots, received the other "medium" ranking. However, this option is considered merely a baseline for comparison required by the Federal Transit Administration rather than a viable option.

'Low rankings'

Alternative 4, a bus rapid-transit route traveling through the East Side, was given a "low" ranking. Although the route would serve high concentrations of residents and employers, and promote economic development, the \$500 million option would require 84 full and 331 partial property acquisitions, reduce traffic lanes and left turns on the East Side, and take 26 minutes since there would be several stops.

Alternative 6, the local light-rail equivalent, also received a "low" ranking for similar reasons. This option would also serve high population and employment concentrations and promote economic development, but with the highest price tag of \$1.28 billion, 92 full and 349 partial property acquisitions, and many lane and left turn reductions, it's a tough sell.

However, Eiler did note there's a demand for public transit in this area of the East Side. She suggested investigation into a separate travel market from the Gateway Corridor including looking at the area for Metro Transit's "Rapid Bus" service, as part of the Rush Line study and in an upcoming St. Paul streetcar analysis.

The final "low" option was the commuter rail, which was rejected because of its high price tag and low benefit to east metro area residents.

Local impact important

St. Paul City Council member Kathy Lantry made the starting move against the costly commuter rail at the March 15 Gateway Corridor Commission meeting.

"The ridership and the local impact just didn't stand up to the high cost of it," she said.

Lantry wasn't a big fan of the local East Side options either. "The idea that we're just going to rip down a bunch of houses, it just doesn't make sense to me."

A bus rapid-transit or light-rail line following I-94 would be her Gateway Corridor option of choice.

District 1 Community Council executive director Betsy Leach echoed Lantry's opinions.

"We support the Gateway Corridor in an alignment that includes a station at the Sun Ray shopping center and an alignment to the west that preserves residential neighborhoods," she said.

"We do not support the White Bear and East Seventh (options)," she added. "It displaces too many people... It just doesn't make sense."

Leach said opinions of District 1 residents appear to be split between light-rail or bus rapid-transit along I-94. Personally, Leach feels the light-rail would be especially encouraging to the local economy, and that ridership would increase as time moves on.

The Payne-Phalen District 5 Planning Council board "has not yet taken a clear position on any alternative," said executive director Leslie McMurray, noting there is a concern about the relative cost benefits that are emerging with each plan.

McMurray said there is a lot of community interest in having light-rail transit in District 5, and that the council would like to see some north-south connectivity, rather than just east-west, that would build on what is already being planned for the area.

As for the potential property takings, "the community would definitely need to hear more concretely the benefits that would offset the costs," McMurray said.

Public input

No decisions have been made on which plan is preferred or what will move forward, and the Gateway Corridor Commission is looking for public input to help inform future decisions.

Residents will have an opportunity to comment on the possible transit plans at several open houses, including one on the East Side at the Eastside Community Center on March 27.

As part of an education initiative by Engage East Side St. Paul, the Payne-Phalen District 5 Community Council sent 780 mailings to residents and businesses along Hudson Road, White Bear Avenue and East Seventh Street, alerting them to the transit plans and upcoming open house.

"Getting people engaged is tough," Lantry said. The long timeline for the Gateway Corridor can make it seem less imminent, but people need to get involved now.

"[The open houses are] really an opportunity for constituents to talk to people who are working on this all the time," Lantry pointed out. "What I'm hoping happens is people will get a baseline of information that is easily understandable."

Kaitlyn Egan can be reached at kegan@lillienews.com or 651-748-7816.



14

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Commission: Bus route best option to Twin Cities

Posted: Thursday, March 29, 2012 11:33 pm | Updated: 11:33 pm, Thu Mar 29, 2012.

By Breann Schossow Leader-Telegram staff |

With a Chippewa Valley commuter rail route off the table, the two highest-ranked options to relieve traffic on Interstate 94 involve bus transit from Eau Claire to the Twin Cities, according to the Gateway Corridor Commission.

The commission, an organization that's leading an alternative study to find the best method of transportation to relieve traffic on I-94, shared seven options with attendees during a public forum Thursday evening. One of those options is to not build anything. The others include a Federal Transit Administration option with little change, light rail, express bus routes and bus rapid transit.

The commission's top two options involve bus rapid transit, which involves buses operating in their own exclusive lanes, such as in the center of a freeway, in the curb lanes or in separate lanes along one side of a freeway.

One option would feature bus rapid transit with a bus-only lane from St. Paul to Manning Avenue in Woodbury, Minn. From there bus service would continue onto Eau Claire to a proposed park-and-ride station. This alternative would provide users with a trip at all times of the day. The bus-only lane would start at St. Paul Union Depot and use the north side of I-94 between the freeway and Hudson Road, and the I-94 median when possible.

The other option also involves bus rapid transit, but on managed lanes. The lanes would be shared with certain personal vehicles, such as those containing more than one person or toll-paying motorists.

Earlier this month the commission eliminated an Eau Claire-to-Twin Cities commuter route as an alternative, in part because of an estimated \$1.23 billion cost.

With the commuter rail option out, area political advisory committee representative James Dunning said he prefers the latter of the two top options, a managed-lane bus route.

"It looked like it would be faster," he said.

Dunning said the need for some kind of transit between the Twin Cities and Eau Claire is evident, given the number of commuters and students who travel between Minnesota and Wisconsin. So far, it is too soon to determine how the bus routes would be paid for or what the cost to use them would be, Dunning said.

Despite the elimination of a rail option, attendees Thursday evening asked about any remaining possibilities of a commuter rail line. Andy Gitzlaff, the commission's project manager, said some residents have supported a rail line because of the area's historical connection to railways. However, it's not the best option, according to extensive data analysis that compared it with other options, he said.

Other communities' input also was a factor. Stephanie Eiler, a commission consultant, said the group's goal was to "come up with ideas for transit that meet the needs of all."

Two more public forums on the transportation options will be offered next month, one in St. Croix County and one in Woodbury, Minn. After that, Gitzlaff said the next step is a two-year environmental impact study. The earliest a transportation project could be finished is 2021.

"We're looking forward to the next phase," Gitzlaff said.



THE ONLINE COMMUNITY SERVING THE EAST SIDE NEIGHBORHOODS OF ST. PAUL

EastSideReviewNews.com

Sunday, April 01, 2012

Residents, officials divided along Gateway Corridor

*Potential property condemnations not highlighted in presentation***Kaitlyn Egan**
news editor

Sunday, April 01, 2012



Heated words were exchanged between residents and community representatives at the Gateway Corridor Commission's first public open house Tuesday night.

The only East Side open house, held at the East Side Community Center March 27, attracted about 150 concerned and curious residents, as well as many community representatives, including community council and board members.

Chuck Repke, executive director of the District 2 Community Council and the North East Neighborhoods Development Corporation, was less than thrilled with Tuesday's open house.

photos by Linda Baumeister/Review
Lyssa Leitner, Washington County staff, answered Bob Smith's questions about the Gateway Corridor as he studied the ideas of the future.

Repke charged that Ramsey County Board commissioner Jim McDonough "hijacked" the open house and used it as a town hall meeting to "tout" his preferred option for the proposed transit corridor. He also accused McDonough of skirting the possible condemnation of substantial amounts of private properties to make way for the construction of the transit line.

"You're lying and it's not fair," Repke told McDonough in a heated exchange after the open house.



"The real issue for me is for him to just steal the meeting and distort it. It's tragic," Repke said in a follow-up interview. "He did everything he could to interfere with the community meeting."

At the open house, McDonough spent a good deal of time outlining his preference for the East Side local light rail line. For his part, McDonough stressed that it's too early in the planning process to give definitive answers regarding the need for eminent domain proceedings, and that many specific property takings would be based on community input.

"We know how much room we need to get this (transit line) through," McDonough said, but "a lot of it depends on the community."

"Right now, to say with complete certainty what properties are going to go is really tough."



Ranking the options

The Gateway Corridor project is a transportation line that will connect urban, suburban and rural communities along Interstate 94 between St. Paul and the St. Croix River, with connections to Minneapolis and Eau Claire, Wis.

The Metropolitan Council will ultimately make the final decision on which option will be implemented, and the Gateway Corridor could be up and running by 2019.

Stephanie Eiler from consulting firm CH2M Hill presented open house attendees with the results of an 18-month analysis on all eight proposed plans for the Gateway Corridor.

The local bus rapid transit and light rail options, traveling north of I-94 into the East Side via East Seventh Street, White Bear Avenue and Hudson Road before continuing along the interstate, received poor rankings, along with the recently eliminated commuter rail option.

At a recent Gateway Corridor commission meeting, Eiler said an estimated 84 full and 331 partial property acquisitions would be required for the East Side bus rapid transit route, and the light rail equivalent would require about 92 full and 349 partial property acquisitions.

However, this information was not verbally presented to open house attendees. It was noted on one of the many information boards on display, but was easy to miss among the numerous maps and charts.

Two bus rapid transit, or "BRT," options along I-94 emerged as frontrunners and were the only two options to receive high rankings.

Uncertainty

Repke expressed concern for businesses like Little Oven and The Cherry Pit Bar & Grill, which are located on the proposed East Side transit route. Both businesses are right against the sidewalk, he said, there is no room for the transit line unless the buildings are torn down.

The Gateway Corridor planners told District 2 representatives that taking certain properties along the local route, like these businesses, might be inevitable, Repke said at the open house.



Editor [Micheal Foley foleymo@patch.com](mailto:foleymo@patch.com)



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News

Concept Image Shows How Transit Station Fit at Old Tourism Center

The Gateway Corridor Commission unveiled a preliminary concept image of how a potential transit station may be configured at the vacant tourism information center on Crestview Drive.

By [Micheal Foley](#) and [Patty Busse](#) | [Email the authors](#) | 11:20 am

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This concept image by the Gateway Corridor Commission shows how a transit station could be configured at the site of the vacant tourism center on Crestview Drive. Credit Gateway Corridor Commission

Members of the [Gateway Corridor Commission](#) held an open house and presented information, including concept images of Hudson transit stations, to the Hudson community Wednesday afternoon at the [St. Croix County Government Center](#).

Lyssa Leitner, planner with Washington County Public Works, and Stephanie Eiler of [CH2M Hill](#) presented the information, which includes eight transit alternatives that are currently being studied and considered by the commission.

Among those options, bus rapid transit (BRT) is emerging as a top option for mass transportation in the Interstate 94 corridor from St. Paul into Wisconsin. The process has been underway for some time and this was the commission's third open house in Hudson since the process began.

One option, Alternative 7 (Commuter Rail), was eliminated last month. Two options, Alternative 3 (BRT) and Alternative 8 (BRT Managed Lane), were ranked "high," and two options, Alternative 2 (Transportation System Management) and Alternative 5 (Light Rail Transit), were ranked "medium."

All four of the high-to-medium options call for a park-and-ride bus station in Hudson near I-94 and Carmichael Road. Late last year, the commission [eliminated the possibility of commuter rail or light rail crossing the St. Croix River on I-94](#).

One concept image showed a Hudson transit station at the site of the vacant tourism information center on Crestview Drive. The image shows an additional access point to the property directly across from the intersection of Crestview Drive and O'Keefe Road.

Hudson Center LLC [acquired the property from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation \(WisDOT\) in November 2011](#) for \$1.3 million. Eiler and Leitner said the commission also is looking at the possibility of using the current [park-and-ride lot at Carmichael Road and Coulee Road](#). That lot currently has spaces for 168 vehicles, according to WisDOT. The concept image of the Crestview Drive station indicated that it would have spaces for 500 vehicles.

Another concept image showed what a commuter rail station would have looked like at County Road U and Highway 12, but the commuter rail option already has been eliminated.

Leitner cautioned that the images presented Wednesday are drafts and the numbers are estimates that use rounded numbers. The commission is still in the early phases of the project, and construction isn't expected to begin before 2018.

Here's information on the high, medium and eliminated options as presented at Wednesday's meeting:

HIGH

- [Alternative 3](#), bus rapid transit in a dedicated 11.5-mile long lane along Hudson Road and Interstate 94, scored high in the areas of cost (\$420 million) and travel time (16 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It scored in the midrange on daily ridership at 5,400. The dedicated lane would end at Manning Avenue. A bus shoulder lane would be used from there to Hudson.
- [Alternative 8](#) includes bus rapid transit in a 14.4-mile long managed lane—similar to a [MnPASS](#) lane—that would also be used by carpoolers and individual drivers who pay a fare. It's the only option that would measurably improve traffic flow in the Manning Avenue to Woodbury Drive/Keats Avenue segment of the interstate, said Stephanie Eiler of [CH2M Hill](#). The option also ranks high in the area of cost (\$590 million) and travel times (15 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It ranked low in daily ridership at 4,600. It's unclear how this option would get across the St. Croix River bridge to service Hudson riders.

MEDIUM

- [Alternative 2](#), adding simple upgrades such as shoulder lane improvements for buses and park-and-ride lots, scored high in the area of cost (\$65 million) and travel times (15 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). It scored low in its impact on economic development and daily ridership, at 3,300.
- [Alternative 5](#), light rail transit for 11.5 miles along Hudson Road and Interstate 94 scored high in daily ridership, at 9,100 and travel times (14 minutes from Oakdale to the Union Depot). At \$980 million, it scored low on cost. The light rail would end at Manning Avenue. A bus shoulder lane would be used from there to Hudson.

ELIMINATED

- [Alternative 7](#), a 99.9 mile commuter rail line on existing track that would have passed through Hudson on existing tracks from Eau Claire to St. Paul, was eliminated Thursday by the Gateway Corridor Commission. This option called for a park-and-ride facility near the rail line at County Road U. "Where that track is, it just doesn't lie within the dense population and employment areas of Minnesota," Eiler said. It ranked low in cost at \$1.23 billion and projected daily ridership at 3,900.

The Gateway Corridor Commission is scheduled to choose a preferred option in early summer. To learn more about the different options and give feedback, visit [TheGatewayCorridor.com](#).

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He claimed McDonough "would be lying" if he didn't say he had some idea of what properties would need to be condemned and buildings demolished.

McDonough responded that it was too early in the planning and engineering phases to say with certainty what property acquisitions would be required if the transit line is built through the East Side.

However, Gateway Corridor Commission planners told attendees if they had specific questions about individual properties, they could talk with Gateway Corridor staff about potential impacts.

McDonough said more time is needed to examine the properties along the potential local routes and identify foreclosed, vacant, rundown or poorly managed properties that the community might be more willing to see go.

"We have to get a better sense of what the properties actually look like," McDonough said. "That might relieve some of the angst."

A light rail route through the East Side would "maximize" the community's future, McDonough said, but "I'm a proponent for what the community wants."

Repke said he has sent a letter to the East Side St. Paul City Council members and others tied to the Gateway Corridor expressing his displeasure and concern for the county commissioner's actions and statements at the open house.

Will neighborhoods be split up?

Public opinions still seem to be divided over what transit plan would be best, and many residents are still weighing the options. Some said they wanted more information about the negative and positive impacts of the local bus rapid transit or light rail transit options traveling through East Side neighborhoods.

Some attendees agreed with McDonough's uncertainty on property condemnations. "All they've done is drawn a line on a map," one resident said.

Local bus rapid transit and light rail transit routes would limit vehicle traffic to one lane in each direction, eliminate many left turns and severely impact on-street parking. A few residents questioned what would happen to that displaced traffic and where residents would park their cars.

Many others expressed concern for the future of their homes and worried a light rail line cutting through the East Side would divide long-standing neighborhoods.

"Where this railroad is going to go is part of our history," another resident said. "Please consider that when (the Met Council members) vote."

Residents should be able to have their own vote, another resident asserted. "We're the one's that have to live with it."

Visit www.thegatewaycorridor.com for more information on the Gateway Corridor and to share your thoughts on the project.

Kaitlyn Egan can be reached at kegan@lillienews.com or 651-748-7816.



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