

I-94 transit on east metro's wish list

by Drew Kerr September 13th, 2012

In an article in *Finance and Commerce*, information is presented about the Gateway Corridor and the best performing alternatives. Below are some excerpts from the article and the link to the full text.

David Johnson has spent the last several years trying to finish the redevelopment of a 25-acre area northeast of the interchange for Interstates 94E and 694 in Oakdale.

While the slow economy has played a role in holding up the final piece of the project — a 55,000-square-foot office building planned at [7400 Hudson Blvd.](#) — Johnson believes something else may be halting progress: lack of transit.

“We’re very excited that that dot on the map [for the transit station] is either on or near our property,” Johnson said Thursday.

While the vision remains years in the making — the earliest projected in-service date is 2022 — officials building support for the transitway believe they have a compelling case and are forging ahead with the work they say is needed to make their dreams a reality.

Numbers are still being crunched, but planners estimate building a light rail line on I-94 would cost around \$1 billion and attract as many as 10,000 passengers a day. A bus rapid transit system is expected to draw around 6,000 passengers and cost between \$400 million and \$520 million, depending on its final design.

The early estimates have already led some commission members to voice support for bus rapid transit, a high-speed, all-day service that would operate in much the same way as light rail. Station areas and a dedicated traffic lane are among the possible features of a BRT system.

“I’m neither for or against light rail, but I am for the most cost-effective transit option, and right now light rail isn’t one of them,” Lake Elmo Mayor Dean Johnston said.

Lisa Weik, chairwoman of the Gateway Corridor Commission, said Woodbury in particular needs more transit options. Despite being home to nearly 63,000 residents and sitting just 10 miles east of St. Paul, the city does not have any afternoon, evening or weekend bus service.

“It’s hard to get economic development in a border county, which is why transportation improvements can be such a great asset for a community,” she said.

Full Story: <http://finance-commerce.com/2012/09/i-94-transit-on-east-metros-wish-list/>