



# Agenda

## Gateway Corridor Commission

### August 8, 2013 - 3:30 PM

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

*Note: The Draft EIS Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting will take place prior to the Commission meeting at 2:00.*

<u>Item</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Action Requested</u>
1. Introductions		Information
2. Consent Items*		Approval
a. Summary of June 13, 2013 Meeting		
b. Checks and Claims		
3. DEIS Study*	Washington County	Information
4. Communications Update*	Washington County	Information
a. Outreach Activities		
b. Public Relations Activities		
5. Legislative Update*	Ramsey County	Information
a. State		
b. Federal		
6. Other*	Washington County	Information
a. Meeting Dates Summary		
b. Social Media and Website Update		
c. Media Articles		
7. Adjourn		Approval

*\*Attachments*

**Draft Meeting Summary**  
**Gateway Corridor Commission**  
**July 11, 2013**  
**Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Present</b>
Jim McDonough, Alternate	Ramsey County	X
Lisa Weik	Washington County	X
Kathy Lantry	St Paul	X
Will Rossbach	Maplewood	X
Paul Reinke	Oakdale	X
Mary Giuliani Stephens	Woodbury	X
Mike Pearson	Lake Elmo	
Randy Nelson	Afton	X
Dan Kylo	West Lakeland Township	X
Bob Livingston	Lakeland	
Victoria Reinhardt, Alternate	Ramsey County	
Ted Bearth, Alternate	Washington County	
Paul Rebholz, Alternate	Woodbury	
Brett Emmons, Alternate	Lake Elmo	
Pat Snyder, Alternate	Afton	
Dave Schultz, Alternate	West Lakeland Township	
Amy Williams, Alternate	Lakeland	

<b>Ex-Officio Members</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Present</b>
Mike Amundson	Baytown Township	
Greg Watson	Woodbury Chamber of Commerce	
Richard McNamara	Oakdale Business and Professional Association	
Doug Stang	3M	
Tim Ramberg	WI Gateway Coalition	
James McClean	St Paul Chamber of Commerce	

<b>Others</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Mike Rogers	Ramsey County
Andy Gitzlaff	Washington County
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County
Klay Eckles	City of Woodbury
Abby Kylo	West Lakeland
JoAnn Ward	State Representative 53A
Shelly Schafer	Office of Senator Al Franken
Susan Kent	MN State Senator/District 53
Steve Ellenwood	Woodbury

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

**Agenda Item #1. Introductions**

Introductions were made by those present.

**Agenda Item #2. Consent Items**

**Item 2a. Summary of June 13, 2013 Meeting:** Motion made by Lantry to approve the June 13, 2013 meeting summary. Seconded by Reinke. **Approved.** Motion carried.

**Item 2b. Checks and Claims:** Motion made by Lantry to approve the checks and claims. Seconded by Reinke. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Rossbach arrived at 3:39 p.m.

**Agenda Item #3. DEIS Study**

**Item 3a. Committee Overview**

Gitzlaff stated we are in the process of getting our committee structures in place. He gave a brief update of the committees as presented in the packet. At the last meeting there was a general discussion on ways to improve efficiency with the PAC. Gitzlaff discussed the four suggestions for improvements as listed in the packet.

**Item 3b. Schedule / Next Steps**

Gitzlaff discussed the first meeting dates for the committees as listed in the packet. He noted that staff will try to keep the Gateway Commission agendas lighter on the dates that include the PAC meeting. The PAC will meet every other month and the TAC will meet monthly. The first CAC meeting will be sometime in mid-August once the enrollment is confirmed.

Weik asked if the PAC will have a public comment period. Gitzlaff stated this may be an opportunity to explore having something like that as a part of the Advisory Committee. Giuliani Stephens said it's a good idea; it would provide an opportunity for people to have input and comment at the time of the policy discussion. Lantry suggested having the public sign up for what they want to talk about in order to keep public comment within certain ground rules. Giuliani Stephens concurred stating there are ways to moderate comments and still get good feedback.

**Agenda Item #4. Communications Update**

**Item 4a. Outreach Update**

Leitner referred to the previous and upcoming outreach meetings to stakeholders along the corridor as listed in the packet. The list will expand to include the PAC and TAC meetings in the future. She added there is another upcoming meeting not listed; Hot Dogs in Transit on Saturday July 13<sup>th</sup>. They are basically a group from the east side that has an Engagement Grant from the Met Council and they have put together two

presentations/open houses; one on the Earl Street Station and one at the Mounds Boulevard Station. Staff will be there to join in on those conversations.

#### **Item 4b. Public Relations Activities**

Leitner showed photos from the Development Forum that are also posted on Facebook. She stated it had great attendance and great conversation; Joe Calabrese, keynote speaker, took a tour of the Central Corridor and Union Depot after the event and he was extremely impressed with our region, the attendance at the forum, and the questions that he received. It was a great event and articles printed on it are included in the packet.

Leitner stated the video production is in full swing and the goal is to have them ready for viewership by the Commission in September.

Weik commented on Joe Calabrese's presentation that it was very interesting to have that deeper-dive on a system in another city and what that has done for them. Gitzlaff stated we do have copies of his presentation and he will send a link to it to the Commission members.

Weik asked about the Business Action Kit noted in the packet. Leitner stated we have only seen a draft version of it at this point and should see the final in the next couple of weeks. It will basically be a folder of advocacy items; what businesses can do to get involved, fact sheets, and who to contact. The kit should be available in the next month or so. The consultant team has made a suggestion to make a list of those business and people who say yes, I support this project.

#### **Agenda Item #5. Legislative Update**

##### **Item 5a. State**

Rogers said the Office of Management and Budget has asked for State bonding requests for the upcoming year. This is an attempt to get the requests into the Governor's budget; Washington County did put in a request for \$5 million in State Bonding that would be used for Gateway Corridor's engineering and preparation of applications for seeking Federal funds in the future. It's not all the money we'll need, but it's a down payment on the 10% portion that the State will pay for.

Weik asked Representative Ward and Senator Kent if they had any comments to add. No additional comments were made. Weik thanked them for attending.

##### **Item 5b. Federal**

Rogers stated there is discussion on House side on Transportation and Urban Development about what to do with Community Development Block Grants and what to do with the TIGER Program. The House has taken the position that they want to eliminate TIGER, the Senate wants to increase funding by 10%, and the White House wants billions of dollars into TIGER. The TIGER Program has shown that it's a very popular program, it's a very rigorous process to get through, and it seems like it has lots

of support on both sides of the isle. Rogers stated the Secretary of Transportation is new on the Federal level; Anthony Foxx, former Mayor of Charlotte, NC was unanimously approved. Giuliani Stephens suggested the Commission send a congratulatory note to Mr. Foxx.

Rogers said another issue is the tax overhaul; things that may impact transit are parking credits and the transit tax credit. Senators need to justify tax breaks and why it makes good economic sense for the Country to have the tax break.

Weik asked Shelly Schafer if she had any updates from Senator Franken's Office. No updates were given.

**Agenda Item #6. Other**

**Item 6a. Meeting Dates Summary**

Information on previous and upcoming meeting dates is included in the packet.

**Item 6b. Social Media and Website Update**

An update is printed in the packet for Commission member's information.

**Item 6c. Media Articles**

Recent media articles are printed in the packet for Commission member's information.

**Agenda Item #7. Adjourn**

Motion made by Lantry to adjourn. Seconded by Giuliani Stephens. **Approved.** Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.



Agenda Item #2b

**DATE:** August 1, 2013  
**TO:** Gateway Corridor Commission  
**FROM:** Staff  
**RE:** Checks and Claims

**Item 2b. Checks and Claims**

<u>Communication Contract (Jeff Dehler PR)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<u>Dates</u> 6/1/13 -6/30/13	\$14,290.94

*Percent of contract utilized = 42%*

<u>Development Forum Direct Costs (Jeff Dehler PR)</u>	\$3,235.61
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*The development forum expenses included keynote speaker travel, room, AV equipment and stage rental, food and signage. The Woodbury Chamber of Commerce co-sponsored the event and contributed \$300 towards event expenses bringing total Commission costs under \$3,000. The other co-sponsor, St Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, contributed in kind contributions of using of their event registration and advertisement services.*

<u>Total</u>	<b>\$17,526.55</b>
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*Detailed invoices can be made available upon request.*

**Action Requested:** Approval



*Agenda Item #3*

**DATE:** August 2, 2013  
**TO:** Gateway Corridor Commission  
**FROM:** Staff  
**RE:** Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Study Update

During the month of August the first Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting was held on Wednesday, July 24th and the first Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) will be held prior to the Commission meeting. The purpose of the kick-off meetings is to confirm the scope of the project area and provide an overview of the DEIS process, the anticipated project milestones and the roles of the different committees.

The attached memo from the consultant provides more details on the work performed in August.

#### **Community Advisory Committee Selection**

Gateway Corridor project team staff solicited applications in late June and early July 2013 using a variety of methods that were intended to reach as many stakeholders within the Corridor as possible. Staff sent emails to key stakeholders on St. Paul's east side (district councils, Engage East Side, etc.), requesting their participation in the (CAC) process. Emails were also sent to staff in St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale, Woodbury, and Lake Elmo on July 9 with a request for them to make a call for applications via their own social media channels and personal contacts. The request for applications was posted on the Gateway Corridor's Facebook page on June 28 and July 1, and e-news notices were distributed on June 28 and July 15. Articles requesting applicants were printed in the Hudson Patch on July 1 and Woodbury Bulletin on July 10.

The result of staff's initial review was a summary based on interest group and geography. This summary was distributed to the review sub-committee that was charged with making the final selections. This group was made up of Gateway Corridor Commission members:

- Commissioner Weik
- Mayor Giuliani Stephens
- Councilwoman Williams
- Council President Lantry

Several of the interest groups had only one representative apply, and those applications were selected as recommended members for the CAC. Other interest groups had several representatives apply, and therefore, staff assessed the applications and made recommendations based on several criteria including the ability for the applicant to bring a unique perspective to the committee, represent a broader viewpoint beyond oneself and be a contributor within the committee structure. In some cases, the applicants within a largely-represented interest group were equally qualified, based on the evaluation criteria. In these cases, the project team recommended a smaller pool of equally qualified



applicants within the original group, and the sub-group made selections based on their knowledge of the interest group and the applicants.

After all the applications were reviewed, it was determined that there were no applications from key interest groups including Lake Elmo, Maplewood and current express bus riders. In these cases, staff reached out to specific people and requested applications after the deadline.

Considering the recommendations given by staff, the original applications, and their own set of evaluation tools, the sub-group made the final selection on which applicants would make up the CAC. A total of 22 members were selected out of the pool of 40 applicants. All applicants will be contacted about the selections during the week of August 5<sup>th</sup> with the intent of holding the first CAC meeting in mid-late August. Applicants who were not selected will also be contacted and encouraged to remain engaged in the process through other means. The final list of CAC members will be distributed at the Commission Meeting after staff has had a chance to notify all applicants.

**Schedule / Next Steps**

The initiation of the scoping phase will occur late summer with the official scoping meetings in the early fall timeframe. The attached handout which will be distributed at the PAC meeting and posted on the Gateway Corridor website provides more detail about the DEIS scoping process.

**Action Requested:**

Information

## Gateway Corridor Environmental Impact Statement

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE GATEWAY CORRIDOR COMMISSION – AUGUST 2013

SUBMITTED BY JEANNE WITZIG, KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

### Key Work Activities/Progress During July 2013

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- Meetings
  - Held project management team (PMT) meetings on July 17 and 31, 2013. Key items addressed at meeting included confirmation of CAC application process, TAC and PAC membership and preparation for upcoming meetings, approach to the Scoping process, specifically related to alignment and station options, proposed project description, FTA coordination, upcoming areas of alignment/station focus during Scoping, preliminary ridership analysis, and MnDOT involvement in the cultural resource evaluation (Section 106 process).
  - Held Concept Design Review meetings (2) to continue to review areas of engineering focus and lay out upcoming coordination activities with stakeholders.
- Technical Advisory Committee
  - Held kick off meeting on July 24, 2013 at Woodbury City hall. Meeting focused on roles/responsibilities of TAC, Draft EIS process/schedule, proposed project description, corridor walk through, with a focus on key areas, and introduction to station area planning process.
- Citizen Advisory Committee
  - Developed CAC evaluating criteria, and assisted Washington County staff in CAC application review and recommendations.
- Documents in Progress
  - Refinement to Purpose and Need Statement (from Alternatives Analysis to EIS)
  - Coordination Plan and Public Engagement Plan
  - Project Management Plan
  - Relevant Issues Memo
  - Notice of Intent Outline/Scoping Booklet Outline
  - Approach to Scoping/Summary of Project Description
- Prepared Gateway Corridor Summary Handout and Draft EIS Scoping Process Graphic
- Federal Transit Administration Coordination
  - Developing project documents to review and discuss with the FTA.

### Upcoming EIS Activities

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- Prepare for upcoming PAC and CAC meetings in early August 2013.
- Coordination with MnDOT and Metropolitan Council
- Hold EIS coordination meeting with FTA on August 15
- Continue to develop Scoping related documents listed above



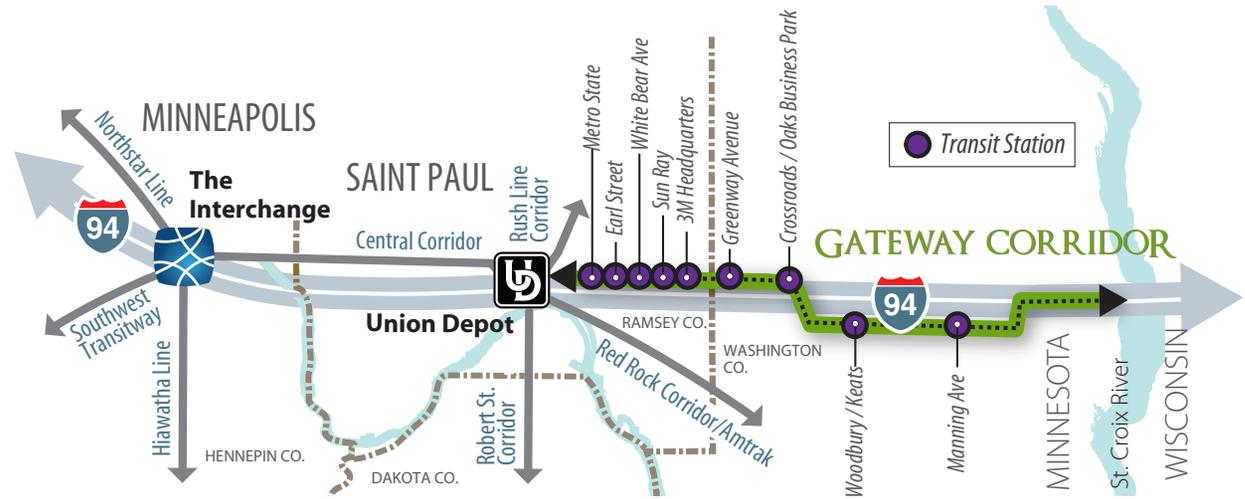
# GATEWAY CORRIDOR

## What is the Gateway Corridor?

The Gateway Corridor is a proposed transitway intended to improve mobility in the eastern part of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Located in Ramsey and Washington Counties, the Gateway Corridor transitway will extend approximately 12 miles from downtown St. Paul east through the East Side neighborhoods of St. Paul and the suburbs of Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale, and Woodbury with transit connections to Minneapolis. The route would run generally parallel to I-94 in dedicated right-of-way. Beyond the transitway, Gateway Corridor would serve a broader commuter market to the east, including the communities of Lake Elmo, West Lakeland Township, Afton, and Hudson, Wisconsin.

## What studies have been done on the Gateway Corridor?

Most recently, the Gateway Alternatives Analysis compared the benefits, costs, and impacts of a range of light rail transit (LRT), commuter rail, bus rapid transit



(BRT), and express bus alternatives in the Gateway Corridor. The Alternatives Analysis identified two transitway alternatives to be carried forward for study in the Draft EIS: Alternative 3 – BRT on I-94 and Hudson Road and Alternative 5 – LRT on I-94 and Hudson Road. The Metropolitan Council’s 2030 Transportation Policy Plan, the region’s long-range transportation plan, identified the Gateway Corridor for implementation prior to 2030.

## How are decisions made for the Gateway Corridor?

The Gateway Corridor Commission, comprised of the Washington and Ramsey County Regional Railroad

Authorities and the Gateway Corridor cities, with input from the public and corridor stakeholders, will identify and recommend a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the project to the Metropolitan Council. Action on the LPA by the Metropolitan Council is anticipated in Summer 2014. The Gateway Corridor intends to seek federal funds from the Federal Transit Administration’s New Starts program for capital investments. Ongoing community input, the requirements of the FTA New Starts program, and adherence to federal and state environmental regulations are central to realization of the Gateway Corridor, as illustrated below.

## Transitway Development Process

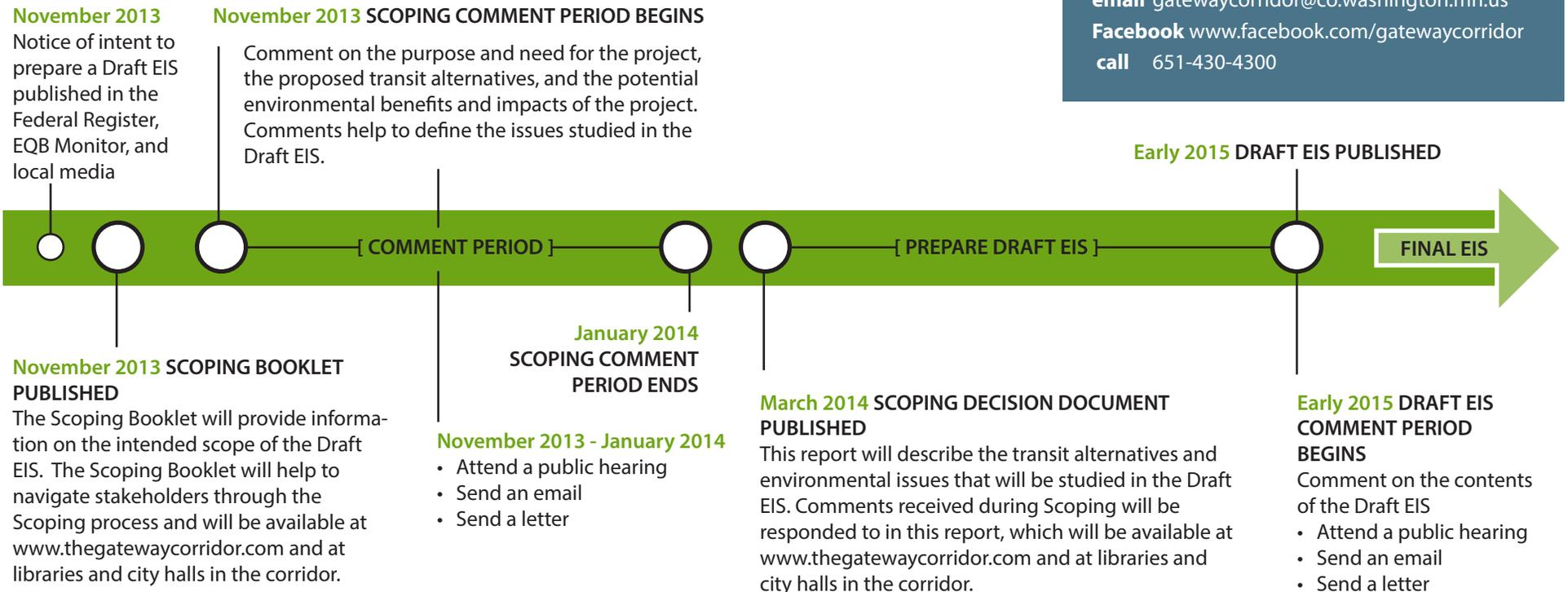


## What is the Gateway Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement?

The Gateway Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) will provide decision-makers and the public with a full discussion of the environmental impacts of constructing and operating each of the transit alternatives under consideration for the Gateway Corridor. The Draft EIS will disclose potential impacts to the built and natural environment and reasonable ways to avoid or minimize those impacts. Agencies and the public will have the opportunity to provide comments on the contents of the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS will be followed by a Final EIS, which will identify the preferred alternative and describe the mitigation measures that will be incorporated into the transitway project.

## Study Process



Preparation of the Draft EIS and Final EIS will satisfy both federal and state environmental requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act and Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, respectively.

## What is Scoping?

Scoping is the process of determining which transit alternatives and issues will be evaluated and assessed in the Draft EIS. Scoping is an opportunity to: confirm the purpose and need for the project; identify appropriate transit alternatives that address those needs; name significant issues that should be studied in the Draft EIS; and eliminate issues that are not significant or have already been adequately addressed in earlier studies.

## How can I share my ideas about the Gateway Corridor?

Submit your questions, comments, and ideas for the Gateway Corridor to [gatewaycorridor@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:gatewaycorridor@co.washington.mn.us) or Washington County Public Works, 11660 Myeron Road, N., Stillwater, MN 55082. Additional opportunities to share your input on the project will occur throughout the scoping process, beginning in Fall 2013.



### For more information

**visit** [www.thegatewaycorridor.com](http://www.thegatewaycorridor.com)

**email** [gatewaycorridor@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:gatewaycorridor@co.washington.mn.us)

**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/gatewaycorridor](http://www.facebook.com/gatewaycorridor)

**call** 651-430-4300



**DATE:** August 1, 2013  
**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 of the Commission’s outreach activities in 2012 and ongoing in 2013.

**Upcoming Outreach**

Stakeholder	Status
FTA	Coordination Call – August 15, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – August 21, 2013
Community Advisory Committee	TBD – Mid-Late August

**Previous Outreach**

Stakeholder	Status
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 <sup>rd</sup> Round of Open Houses – St Paul, Harding HS	Presentation – March 27, 2012
3 <sup>rd</sup> Round of Open Houses – Eau Claire, CVTC	Presentation – March 29, 2012
3 <sup>rd</sup> Round of Open Houses – Hudson, St Croix Gov Center	Presentation – April 4, 2012
Met Council Transportation Accessibility Advisory Council	Presentation – April 4, 2012
3 <sup>rd</sup> Round of Open Houses – Woodbury, City Hall	Presentation – April 5, 2012



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
St. Paul District Council 2 Annual Meeting	Booth – April 25, 2012
Washington County Workforce Investment Board	Presentation – May 16, 2012
APA-MN Brownbag	Presentation – July 18, 2012
St. Paul East Side Community Groups	Meeting – August 28, 2012
District 5 Land Use Committee	Presentation – September 11, 2012
Woodbury City Council Workshop	Presentation – September 19, 2012
Woodbury Community Foundation	Presentation – September 25, 2012
APA-MN State Conference	Presentation – September 26, 2012
St. Paul Transportation Committee	Presentation – November 5, 2012
Met Council Transportation Committee	Presentation – November 26, 2012
Union Depot Grand Opening	Handouts at CTIB booth – December 8, 2012
East Side Gateway Forum	Presentation – December 18, 2012
District 4 Community Council	Staff Meeting – January 9, 2013
Maplewood Planning Commission	Presentation - January 15, 2013
Cottage Grove City Council	Presentation – January 16, 2013
Maplewood City Council	Presentation – January 28, 2013
Woodbury Lions Club	Presentation – March 5, 2013
District 1 Community Council	Booth at open house – March 25, 2013
Woodbury Chamber – Eggs and Issues	Presentation - April 12, 2013
<b>Start of DEIS</b>	
Engage East Side Resident Network staff	Discussion on CAC – May 31, 2013
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability	Staff level meeting – June 7, 2013
Development Forum	June 24, 2013
Hot Dogs and Transit – Engage East Side	Booth – July 13, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – July 24, 2013
Hot Dogs and Transit – Engage East Side	Booth – August 3, 2013
Policy Advisory Committee	Meeting – August 8, 2013

**Action Requested:** Information



**DATE:** August 1, 2013

**TO:** Gateway Corridor Commission

**FROM:** Jeff Dehler Public Relations

**RE:** Gateway Corridor Communications and Public Relations Update

### **Summary of Activities**

The Communications and Public Relations team continued promotion of the Communications Advisory Committee application process, continued video production work, and created the first draft of the Business Action Kit in July.

### **Video Production**

The video production team recorded 5 additional interviews with two elected officials and three Metropolitan State University students. The first step in the editing process has been completed; additional editing will be completed in August. The videos are expected to be ready for view by the Commission at the September meeting.

### **Next steps**

In August we will complete the Business Action Kit; Susan Youngs, our Community and Business Liaison, will be meeting with businesses and organizations; a number of pages on the website will be updated; and we will coordinate with staff and the DEIS consultant as necessary.

**Action Requested** Information



Agenda Item #5

**DATE:** August 1, 2013  
**TO:** Gateway Corridor Commission  
**FROM:** Staff  
**RE:** State and Federal Legislative Update

Item 5a. State Update

There are no updates to provide at this time

Item 5b. Federal Update

Below is the federal legislative update prepared by Lockridge, Grindal and Nauen (LGN) for CTIB for the week of July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Weekly Update for Week of July 22nd**

With just one week until Congress breaks for August recess, both the House and Senate were busy this week taking votes on respective spending bills, finding compromise on student loan legislation and preparing for negotiations on a stopgap funding bill to keep the government operating beyond September. President Obama traveled to Illinois, Missouri and Florida as part of the White House recent efforts to talk about the economy, emphasizing the country's need to invest in infrastructure and manufacturing.

## In this Update

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[House Passes Defense Spending Bill](#)

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### **Senate Continues Debate on Transportation-HUD Spending**

This week, the Senate brought the FY14 Transportation-HUD spending bill to the floor in spite of opposition from the Senate Minority on the overall spending cap established by the Senate Appropriations Committee. As introduced and where it stands now, the Senate version assigns nearly \$10 billion more in the Transportation-HUD bill than the House version, which has proven to be an obstacle. The Senate includes funding for many projects that the House has voted to zero out, including the TIGER Grant program.

Among the amendments waiting for a floor is a provision introduced by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) to strike \$6 million in funding for the Small Community Air Service Development Program, which was designed by Congress to help small, rural communities attract or retain commercial air service. Coburn argues that the program, which has received more than \$146 million since its inception, is ineffective and overlaps with the Essential Air Service program, which subsidizes commercial flights to small community airports.

Earlier in the week, Senator Rob Portman's (R-OH) provision to clarify uses for a \$500 million account focused on the repair and reconstruction of bridges found to be "functionally obsolete" and "structurally deficient" was adopted by the Senate on a voice vote.

On Thursday, the Senate rejected an effort to reduce overall funding in the transportation and housing bill to align it with the spending cap established in the 2001 debt limit law. On a 56-42 vote, the Senate agreed to kill the motion to send the legislation back to Committee and set a new spending limit. This has been the main point of contention for Congress, as the House and Senate have yet to come to an agreement on overall spending levels, as the Senate Minority now attempts to block or send the spending bills back to the Appropriations Committee to set new levels established under the 2011 debt limit law.

### **House Passes Defense Spending Bill**

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On Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, the House passed a \$595.5 billion Defense spending bill on a 316-109 vote. The House was scheduled to vote on the legislation last week, but leadership decided to delay the vote because of hot button issues and amendments including the National Security Agency (NSA) funding and Syrian intervention.

The final vote came shortly after the House defeated a contentious and bipartisan effort to bar the use of funds in the bill to execute Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court Orders and regulate the information NSA can collect under law. Opponents of the amendment feared this would make the nation more vulnerable to terrorist attacks, while supporters argued it violates Americans right to privacy. The White House released a statement earlier in the week voicing their opposition to "dismantling one of the Intelligence Community's counterterrorism tools."



While not banning the NSA surveillance activities, an amendment from Mike Pompeo (R-KS.) was approved into the bill which guarantees that no funds allotted to the Defense Department through the spending bill be used to intentionally target U.S. citizens, or store their communications data.

The House spending bill includes \$512.5 billion in non-war funding and a slimmed down \$82.3 billion for overseas contingency operations, the majority of which are in Afghanistan. Noting nonessential building overseas, members also cut \$140 million from the Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund.

Senate leaders announced this week they hope to take a full chamber vote on their Defense Appropriations bill before August recess, which begins August 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Student Loan Bill Passed by Senate**

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After months of legislative debating and delays, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill on Wednesday that will effectively affix federally sponsored student loan rates to the economy. The measure allows student loan rates to fluctuate to match the financial market but also caps interest rates at 8.25% for undergraduates, 9.5% for graduate students, and 10.5% for parents. The White House and House Majority have been pushing for a market based approach, but faced opposition in the Senate until this week. Before the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, the House passed a similar bill that did not lock in rates or set any caps on interest rates. House Majority leaders have suggested they will consider and vote on the Senate version of the bill before they return home for August recess.

The Senate backed the measure 81-18 through a compromise negotiated by Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), Richard Burr (R-NC), and Lamar Alexander, (R-TN). After Senate failed to act before the July 1 deadline that marked the expiration of student loan rate measures, interest rates on loans jumped from 3.4% to 6.8%. In response, Senators worked quickly to pass a student loan bill that would retroactively lower the spiked interest rates. Wednesday's enactment of the new policy has reduced the rate from 6.8% to 3.9%. Many Senators voiced their skepticism of the bill and hopes Congress could find a long-term solution in the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

### **Leaders Remain Confident in Farm Bill Conference Committee**

This week, Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) ruled out the possibility of extending the farm bill, asserting her hope that Ag Committee leaders in the House and Senate could work out a deal during the August recess. In the House, Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) has been holding meetings with his Majority leaders to find ways to reduce



the growth of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP) which was left out of the farm bill passed by the House earlier this month. After his week of meetings, Cantor suggested the House would "eventually" go to conference with the Senate, but the nine legislative days in September makes the timeline for compromise very limited.

The current farm bill is set to expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>, with the dairy programs then expiring in December of 2013 and crop program expiring in the spring of 2014 if Congress cannot reach a deal. Both the House and Senate have agreed on cuts to subsidies and significant farm program reforms, but the greatest divide remains in the proposed cuts to SNAP.

### **White House and Senate Leaders Discuss Entitlement Reform**

**White House Chief of Staff Dennis McDonough, a Stillwater, MN native and University of St. John's graduate**, met with a group of Senator Minority leaders to discuss Social Security and Medicare reforms that could be part of a future agreement to rework the cuts under the 2001 debt agreement. Since taking over the Chief of Staff's Office in the White House, McDonough has established himself as one of the President's greatest resources and deal makers on Capitol Hill.

### **KEY UPCOMING DATES**

#### **August 5, 2013**

Congressional August recess begins.

#### **September 9, 2013**

Congress returns from August recess.

#### **October 1, 2013**

Fiscal 2014 begins, meaning a stopgap Continuing Resolution (CR) would be required to finance the federal government if a full year budget has not been passed.

### **SPECIAL NEWS, NOTES AND EVENTS**

#### **LGN Federal Team Host Reception for Congressman Keith Ellison at Home of Dennis McGrann**

On Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, the Lockridge Grindal Nauen Federal Relations Team hosted a reception for Congressman Keith Ellison at the home of Dennis McGrann on Capitol Hill. Attendees had the chance to talk with the Congressman about a variety of issues, as he



offered insight on the most recent developments in the House on the Defense Appropriations legislation and upcoming votes ahead of August recess.

### **LGN Federal & State Team Host Reception for Congressman Erik Paulsen**

On Monday, July 1st, the Lockridge Grindal Nauen Government Relations Team hosted a reception for Congressman Erik Paulsen at their Minnesota Offices in downtown Minneapolis. Congressman Paulsen updated those in attendance on the latest developments in Washington, D.C.

### **Reception Honoring Congressman Tim Walz**

*Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30PM EST*

Home of Dennis McGrann on Capitol Hill

150 North Carolina Ave SE

Washington, D.C. 20003

### **Reception Honoring Congressman Rick Nolan**

*Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30PM EST*

Home of Dennis McGrann on Capitol Hill

150 North Carolina Ave SE

Washington, D.C. 20003

### **Minnesota State Society Congressional Staff Appreciation Reception**

*Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-8:00PM EST*

Porter Gordon Silver Communications

11 D Street SE

Washington, D.C. 20003

### **MINNESOTA DELEGATION NOTES:**

**Senator Amy Klobuchar, (D-MN)** Chair of the Judiciary Antitrust Subcommittee held a hearing highlighting the need for Congressional action to prevent brand name drug companies from paying generic drug manufacturers to stay out of the market. [Read more.](#)

**Senator Al Franken (D-MN)** introduced an amendment to the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act that would redirect an estimated \$715 million in government profit generated by the bill to help with college affordability by increasing funding for the federal Pell Grant Program. [Read more.](#)

**Congressman Tim Walz, (D-MN-01)** introduced a bipartisan veterans jobs bill that would grant qualified members of the Military Reserve Components tiered preference in hiring for



civil service jobs. [Read more.](#)

**Congressman John Kline (R-MN-02)** passed a major K-12 education bill off the House floor with solely majority support. The legislation would significantly scale back the federal government's role in education and grant greater power to state and local governments to determine how to best improve schools. [Read more.](#)

**Congressman Erik Paulsen, (R-MN-03)** introduced a bipartisan bill intended to fight child sex trafficking in the United States by improving data systems that track missing children and ensuring victims receive proper care and assistance. [Read more.](#)

**Congresswoman Betty McCollum, (D-MN-04)** issued a statement urging fellow House members to oppose a proposed spending plan that would eliminate nearly 80% of funding towards the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a program intended to alleviate some of the Great Lakes' most longstanding ecological problems. [Read more.](#)

**Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN-05)** testified before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs regarding legislation authorizing the Secretary of the Army to take action, including potentially closing the St. Anthony Falls Lock, to manage the threat of Asian carp traveling up the Mississippi River in Minnesota. [Read more.](#)

**Congresswoman Michele Bachmann (D-MN-06)** spoke on the House floor in opposition to the immigration bill her colleagues in the Senate and House have been negotiating for months. [Watch here.](#)

**Congressman Collin Peterson (D-MN-07)** attended an acre signing celebration at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen to recognize the long awaited completion of a land transfer process under the White Earth Land Settlement. The Congressman congratulated the White Earth Reservation and expressed his continued support of tribal affairs. [Read more.](#)

**Congressman Rick Nolan, (D-MN-08)** announced that a \$906,000 grant aimed at helping to protect and preserve Lake Superior will be awarded to the Minnesota Department of Resources Division of Ecological and Water Resources. [Read more.](#)

## ADDITIONAL MEDIA

### McDonough Budget Meetings With GOP Senators Hit New Stage With Talks on Entitlements

By Alan K. Ota, CQ Roll Call

The White House and a group of eight Republican senators have started discussing



potential curbs on Social Security and Medicare spending that could be part of a broad agreement to restructure most of the remaining cuts over the next decade under sequester.

The senators, led by Johnny Isakson of Georgia, met on Thursday with Dennis McDonough, President Barack Obama's chief of staff, to discuss potential entitlement cuts and other items in a pact that could replace automatic spending cuts in the 2011 debt limit deal (PL 112-25). It was the latest in a series of meetings, and the second this week, between McDonough and the GOP senators.

Participants said the two sessions this week marked a new stage in talks with McDonough that began in April. Earlier sessions focused on the scope on the nation's debt problems, but the week's two meetings focused on possible components of a deal to replace remaining cuts under the Budget Control Act from fiscal 2014 through fiscal 2022.

Several GOP senators said this week's sessions included a discussion of entitlement cuts similar to proposals in Obama's fiscal 2014 budget blueprint: a tighter cost-of-living adjustment called the chained Consumer Price Index (CPI) that could raise more than \$200 billion over 10 years and proposals for means testing for Medicare that would include higher premiums for individuals making more than \$85,000 and couples making more than \$170,000 that could raise \$35 billion over 10 years.

Republicans have also discussed their own proposals for Medicare means-testing that could raise additional funds.

"We're trying to be a sounding board to come up with ideas," said John Hoeven of North Dakota, one of the eight senators that met with McDonough this week. "We're discussing what's in the president's budget, what he's willing to work on as far as entitlement reform."

Another GOP senator who took part and spoke on condition of anonymity played down the significance of the discussions.

"We discussed concepts," this senator said. "There were no negotiations."

And another senator, who also requested anonymity, said the discussions at least are identifying areas for negotiation. "It's starting to take shape," the senator said.

According to senators in the talks, the discussion focused on trying to reconfigure \$872 billion in combined cuts over the final eight years of the sequester from fiscal 2015 to fiscal 2012. They said that talks were not focused, for now, on dealing with about \$90 billion in sequester cuts for fiscal 2014 that are at the center of the debate over different



discretionary spending levels in House and Senate appropriations bills

John McCain of Arizona, Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire confirmed they met with McDonough this week. Other participants included members of Armed Services and appropriators who have expressed concern about the impact of cuts on military readiness.

In an earlier set of five meetings with McDonough, roughly a dozen GOP senators discussed the scope of debt problems last spring. Those sessions began after Obama hosted a group of GOP senators for dinner April 10, hours after unveiling his fiscal 2014 budget.

A GOP senator familiar with this week's talks with McDonough said they came after the White House asked to winnow the number of senators from a dozen to eight. Participants said the smaller size of the group was intended to focus talks on laying groundwork for a sequester replacement deal.

Still, there were suggestions that there was more to the scaling down.

Orrin G. Hatch of Utah, ranking member on Finance, confirmed he was no longer part of the group of GOP senators meeting with McDonough. He said he doubted Democrats would agree to entitlement cuts in a possible budget deal in coming months. "When the rubber meets the road, they are simply not willing to engage in a real debate of entitlement reform," Hatch said.

Dan Coats of Indiana said the "constructive sessions" were focused on both short-term and long-term questions surrounding the budget, "short-term obviously being the impact of the sequester and the long term is what kind of policies do we need to put in place in order to address our long-term problem."

"All of us would like to replace that sequester but in my opinion the key to replacing the sequester is putting a long term budget agreement together. But again we're not negotiating the details, we're talking concepts," Coats said.

Senior Democrats praised McDonough for his talks with Republicans. "Let's hope it leads to an agreement," said Majority Whip Richard J. Durbin of Illinois said.

Health, Education Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Tom Harkin of Iowa has adamantly opposed the use of chained CPI, which critics describe as a shift that would sharply reduce Social Security benefits over time. But Harkin said he was open to looking at means testing for Medicare means tests. "I'd like to see what it is," he said.

[top](#)



## **GOP Digs in on Sequester With Continuing Resolution; Democrats Seek Reset**

By Kerry Young, CQ Roll Call

Democrats and Republicans are locking into positions that signal an intense standoff in September over a stopgap funding resolution, with GOP lawmakers looking to use the measure to effectively entrench spending cuts through sequester and Democrats arguing for a bigger agreement that resets fiscal policies.

Republicans in both chambers want a continuing resolution that would carry the government into fiscal 2014 to reflect annual discretionary spending of \$967 billion, the sequester level dictated by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (PL 112-25).

"My goal is to not walk away from the commitment we made on a bipartisan basis to the American people just two years ago to reduce spending, largely on the discretionary side, by \$2.1 trillion over the next 10 years," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said this week.

Although some GOP conservatives want to use a CR to block funding for the implementation of the health overhaul, many Republicans dismiss that idea and instead are focusing on extending the reduced spending levels that began with automatic budget cuts in March.

Democrats in both chambers, meanwhile, are focused on using the need for a continuing resolution by Sept. 30 to seek a broader budget deal that would replace the sequester ahead of the start of fiscal 2014 on Oct. 1. That would restore the pre-sequester spending cap of \$1.058 trillion for discretionary programs.

Neither side, however, has spoken to the other about the potential terms for continuing resolution that will have to be worked out barely three weeks after Congress returns Sept. 9 from its August recess.

"Nobody has called me to ask me how I believe we can get to the end of this year with a continuing resolution," House Minority Whip Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland said on the floor on Thursday. "Nobody's asked me that."

Democrats said they want a comprehensive economic plan that replaces the sequester and restores funding to government programs they argue will help spur economic growth.

"The president is prepared, I think, to insist that the sequester be dealt with, or he won't sign a series of short-term spending bills," said Rob Andrews of New Jersey, co-chairman of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee.

That would risk a government shutdown, but Andrews said he believes there already is a



"shutdown" in place for many vital government services that affect the economy. Serious budget talks have been widely expected to begin only when Congress must consider raising the debt limit, perhaps in November, but Andrews said the CR could be the trigger.

"That fight is likely to occur around the 30th of September," Andrews said, when Republicans will press to move the CR with the sequester still in place. "I am confident that there will be widespread Democratic opposition to that," he said. "I think that the president wouldn't sign it, and shouldn't sign it."

A coalition of moderate Republicans and Democrats since 2010 have passed repeated CRs that have been kept mostly free of highly contentious policies. The House last year passed a five-month fiscal 2013 CR (PL 112-175) with a combination of votes from 165 Republicans and 164 Democratic ones.

That likely could be the end result again this time. House GOP appropriators have the option of extending the fiscal 2013 (PL 113-6) spending law for a few months. That would mark a compromise, keeping spending at roughly \$988 billion, the post-sequester level for the current year.

Democrats say they are looking for more but it's unclear how they will push Republicans to undo a law with spending levels that Democrats agreed to in 2011.

"I have talked to so many Republicans who also want to get rid of the sequester, but they don't have plan for doing it," said Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. "They want it to just kind of disappear. Well, this is one way to do it. Do the CR based upon the non-sequester level. Let's get this behind us."

Harkin noted, "There's going to be a fight." September, he said, "will be an interesting month."

### **Action**

Information



Agenda Item #6

**DATE:** August 1, 2013  
**TO:** Gateway Corridor Commission  
**FROM:** Staff  
**RE:** Other Items

**Items 6a. Meeting Dates Summary**

Included below is a summary of the upcoming Commission and DEIS Study meetings.

Month	Meeting	Date	Planned Start Time
August	TAC	August 21	2:00 PM
September	Gateway Corridor Commission	September 12	3:30 PM
September	TAC	September 18	2:00 PM
October	PAC	October 10	2:00 PM
October	Gateway Corridor Commission	October 10	3:30 PM

**Item 6b. Website and Social Media Updates**

Facebook

The Gateway Corridor Facebook page was launched on Monday, February 20, 2012. The page currently has 304 'Likes'. There have not been any instances where comments have had to be removed during this reporting period.

YouTube

The four YouTube videos of the various alignments are still posted. The "views" of these videos ranges from 100-280.

Website

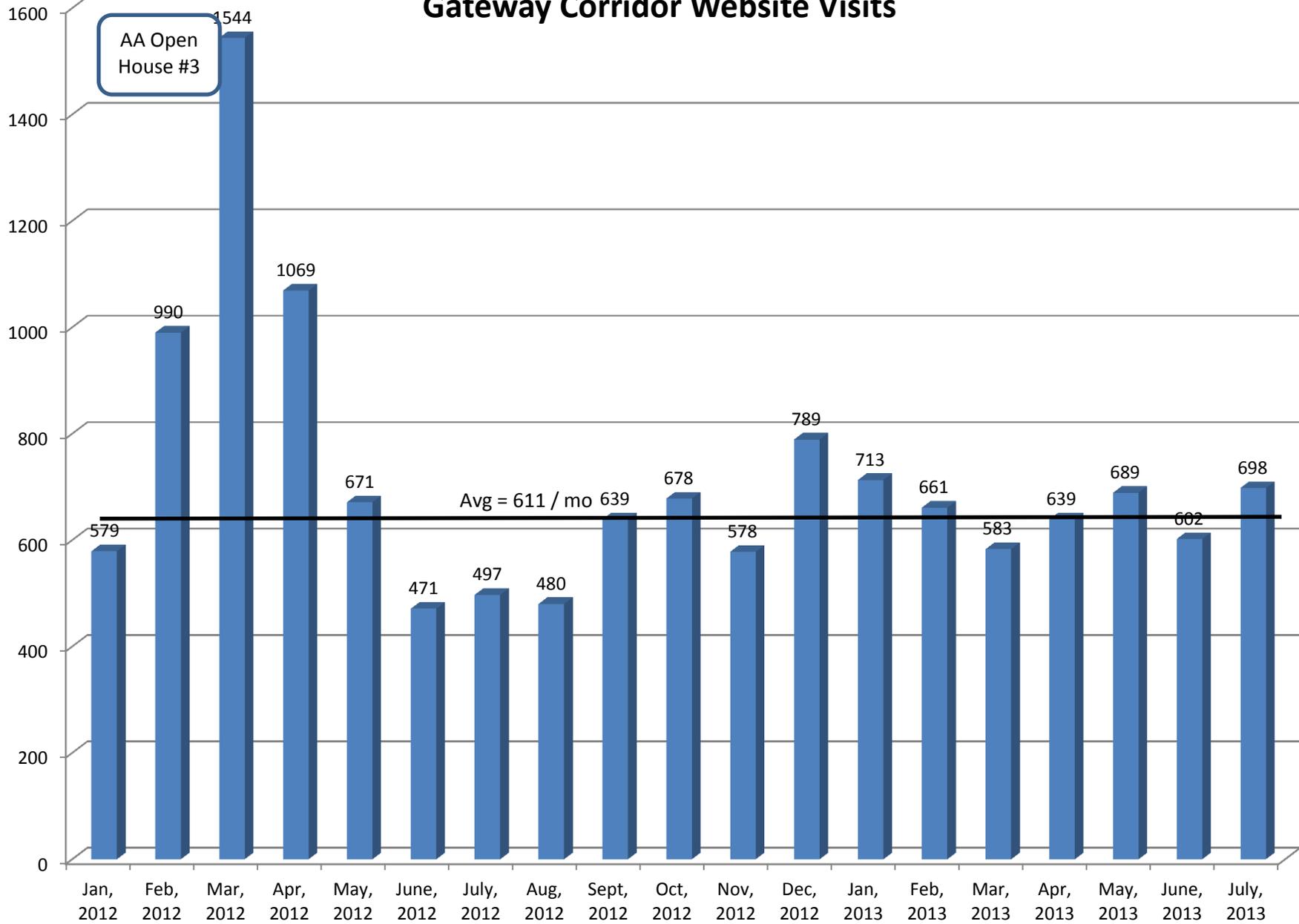
For the month of July, there were 698. The website is averaging 611 visits per month. Attached is a summary of the visits per month for 2012 and 2013.

**Item 6c. Media Articles**

Attached are media articles about the Gateway Corridor from July.

**Action Requested:** Information.

# Gateway Corridor Website Visits



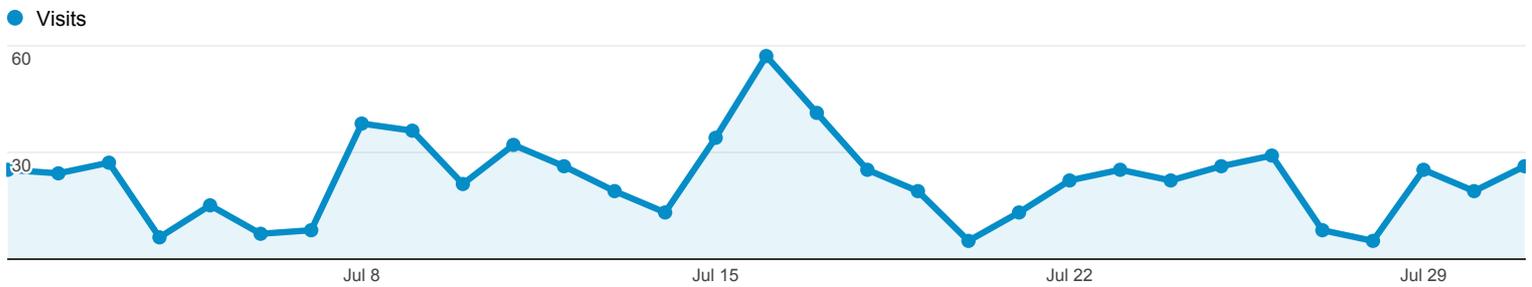
http://www.thegatewaycorridor.com - http://www.thegateway...  
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## Audience Overview

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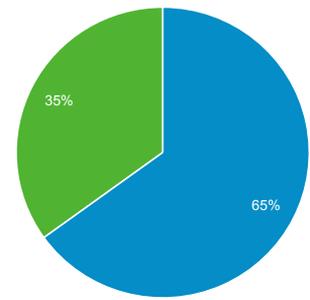
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### Overview



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Language	Visits	% Visits
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2. en	4	0.57%
3. c	2	0.29%

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## Gateway Corridor transit plan talks continue Saturday

By Frederick Melo [fmelo@pioneerpress.com](mailto:fmelo@pioneerpress.com) *TwinCities.com-Pioneer Press*

Posted:

TwinCities.com

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A series of talks about the future of public transportation on St. Paul's East Side continues Saturday with "Hot Dogs and Transit," an informal gathering focusing on the Gateway Corridor's proposed Earl Street station.

The forum, organized by the Engage East Side coalition, takes place from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday at Leo's Chow Mein parking lot, near the intersection of Earl Street and Hudson Road. Chalk art will be provided for kids to draw.

Presenters will provide updates on the Gateway Corridor, a proposed transit line from downtown St. Paul to Woodbury. The light rail or Bus Rapid Transit route someday could travel over the St. Croix River Bridge and into Eau Claire, Wis.

An additional forum will take place at 1 p.m. Aug. 3 at 652 Conway St., near the future Mounds Boulevard station. More information is online at [eesresidentnetwork.wordpress.com](http://eesresidentnetwork.wordpress.com).

## What's happening with the Gateway Corridor?

By [Sherry Johnson, Dayton's Bluff Forum](#)

July 09, 2013

Despite some setbacks with transportation funding this legislative session, the Gateway Commission will move toward the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) phase, with its route from the Union Depot through Woodbury. The path would take it along Kellogg and Mounds Boulevards and Hudson Road.

The Gateway Commission will form three committees over the summer: Community, Policy, and Technical Advisory Committees will oversee the planning process. The Engage East Side Resident Network is working closely with Commission members to ensure that the Community Advisory Committee (the CAC), will receive appropriate representation from East Side residents and business owners.

This fall, a number of "scoping hearings" will take place as the first step in the DEIS process. These hearings will seek public input into the variables for inclusion in the Environmental Impact study.

The primary decision during scoping is whether the DEIS will move forward with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or Light Rail Transit (LRT) as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), which they hope to complete by July 2014. After more public engagement and a great deal of engineering, the project aims to break ground in 2020.

This fall's scoping meetings will attempt to gauge resident and business-owner concerns with respect to the Gateway Corridor. Below are some possible issues to be included in the scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Study:

- **Effects on neighborhood resources**, including parking, Mounds Boulevard views, pedestrian and bikeways, and Sun Ray/Earl Street/Mounds Boulevard businesses.
- **Noise and vibration**, particularly when compounded by I-94 noise.
- **Historic and cultural resources**. Some historic district buildings are on the preliminary property-takes list, including a half-million-dollar DBNHS renovation of a brick duplex on Conway Ave.
- **Parks and public land**, including possible changes to Johnson Parkway.
- **Water resources, wetlands, and habitat**, including possible effects on Bruce Vento and Phalen Creek.
- **Air quality and climate change**. BRT will contribute to poor air quality near I-94. Depending on how its electricity is generated, LRT can have a smaller carbon footprint than BRT.
- **Land use and zoning**, particularly within ¼ mile of station areas. Sun Ray, Earl Street, and Mounds Boulevard stops could markedly change their surrounding areas, with respect to business development, property values, and parking issues
- **Consistency with local plans**. What about MNDOT's proposed noise wall new-builds and re-builds? How do Gateway's SunRay station plans compare with District 1 Community Council's Strategic Transportation Plan? How do Gateway's Earl Street station plans compare with streetscape designs drawn up by Dayton's Bluff Community Council?
- **Right-of-way impacts**. How will all modes – pedestrians, bikes, cars, buses – easily get to Sun Ray shopping center? What will Mounds Boulevard look like with another dedicated lane, turning left onto the Kellogg Bridge?

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- **Economic development and redevelopment.** How can we leverage a dedicated transitway for the most improvements to our station-area business hubs, particularly Sun Ray and Earl Street?
- **Visual and aesthetics.** Is there a way to design for aesthetics, especially running next to an Interstate? How will this affect the look of Dayton's Bluff's historic district?
- **Transportation.** How will people travel to and from the stations? How will buses, bikeways, and pedestrian routes change to accommodate the Gateway?
- **Safety and security.** What about vagrancy, crime, and personal safety at and around stations? How can we ensure traffic safety along the transitway, especially for children?
- **Environmental justice.** What might be the effects of the proposed alternatives on minority and low-income populations and communities? The East Side has a very high concentration of these groups, many of whom are transit-dependent.

If you want more updates and details on the Gateway Corridor and on East Side transit issues, visit Sherry's blog at [eesresidentnetwork.wordpress.com](http://eesresidentnetwork.wordpress.com).

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**Sherry Johnson**

## COMMUNITY VOICES



Community Voices is a space for reader contributions—including news articles, opinion essays, and personal stories—moderated, but not edited, by Daily Planet staff. We invite you to post stories, send us stories, or suggest stories for inclusion in Community Voices. The opinions expressed by Community Voices contributors are their own and not necessarily the opinion of the TC Daily Planet.

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# Woodbury Bulletin

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## New park and ride expected to relieve congestion

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2013 - 8:57AM

RFESH | WOODBURY BULLETIN

23 4

A new park and ride location near Interstate 94 is expected to relieve congestion at existing facilities with 10 additional express bus trips leaving from Woodbury.

Metro Transit officials said they are in the process of acquiring a property at I-94 and Manning Avenue that will have 550 parking spaces for commuters to downtown Minneapolis.

"There will be expanded service to Woodbury," said Maurice Roers, manager of facilities planning at Metro Transit. "We'll be adding new express service, but we won't be adding any mid-day (service)."

Metro Transit had previously considered expanding the most used park and ride lot at Woodbury Theatre into a parking ramp. The \$13 million project would've been funded in part by the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality federal program.

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But Metro Transit officials decided not to submit the grant application in 2011 since they were already planning to start construction on the new Manning Avenue facility in 2014.

"We think we maybe would've been competitive for the funding," Roers said, "but we likely would've gotten funding for something that we didn't need."

So the organization decided to wait and assess new demand after opening the Manning Avenue park and ride in late 2014.

And since nearly doubling the number of spaces at Oakdale's Guardian Angels Catholic Church in 2009, demand for the Woodbury Theatre location has decreased.

"After the Guardian Angels (park and ride) was expanded we found that growth at the Woodbury Theatre kind of plateaued," Roers said.

According to a 2012 Metro Transit survey, the Woodbury Theatre park and ride, which has 550 spaces, was at 86 percent of capacity, while the Guardian Angels site one was almost full with 405 out of the 435 spaces being used.

Metro Transit expects about 200 of those using existing locations, including Christ Episcopal Church and Woodbury Lutheran Church, will use the new park and ride on the northeast side of Woodbury.

The new location was also chosen based on anticipated population growth, Roers said, and it's conveniently located to tie into existing I-94 bus service.

Five additional trips are planned for the morning rush hour and another five will run during the evening. Metro Transit isn't planning midday service at this point since ridership projections, based on population, employer locations and other factors, don't call for it.

"In the case of Woodbury there is likely a lower demand," Roers said.

Service has been added as ridership in the east metro has grown. According to Metro Transit figures, from the end of 2007 to the end of 2012, the number of trips on routes 351, 353, 355, and 375 has

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increased from 54 to 64. Two more trips were added to Route 355 in May, bringing the current total to 66.

Studies are under way for expanded transit as part of the Gateway Corridor project. Planners are currently assessing the social, economic and environmental impact of a dedicated bus rapid transit or light rail transit line along Hudson Road from downtown St. Paul to Woodbury.

The 20-month study began in June and is the second phase in the process of identifying the best transit system for the east metro. Depending on federal and local funding, a new system could be operational by 2022.

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Riham Feshir has been a reporter/ photographer with the Woodbury Bulletin since 2011. She covers Woodbury City Hall, Washington County Board of Commissioners and business news around the city. Riham holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communication from the University of Minnesota. She previously worked for two other Forum Communications newspapers in Central Minnesota.

Follow Riham on Twitter [@RihamFeshir](#) for the latest updates.

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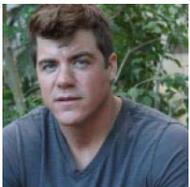


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**Woodbury native Griswold tracking the sound to California**

## METRO Red Line averages 800 riders per weekday

Posted In: [Transportation](#)

Date: 7/24/2013

ST. PAUL – (July 24) – After three weeks of regular service, customers are boarding METRO Red Line buses an average of 798 times each weekday, and an average of about 450 times on weekend days. The new bus rapid transit (BRT) service, which operates along Cedar Avenue and Highway 77 from Apple Valley to the Mall of America, began on June 22 and is the first of its kind in the Twin Cities.

Average weekday ridership is forecast to reach 975 after the first full year of service, growing to 1,600 in 2017. The [METRO Red Line](#) provides additional options for those travelling the Cedar corridor and complements existing express bus and local connecting bus service.

“It’s encouraging to see solid METRO Red Line ridership during the earliest days of regular service,” said Pat Born, regional administrator for the Metropolitan Council. “Cedar is a strong corridor for commuters, and these early figures illustrate the additional demand for frequent, all-day service which the Red Line also provides.”

Promotional free rides were offered on the line from June 22 to 30. More than 1,000 people rode the line during these first days. Total ridership from June 22 through July 19 is nearly 22,000.

The Red Line offers 15-minute service for most of each weekday, and 30-minute service during evenings and weekends between the Apple Valley Transit Station and the Mall of America, where it connects to the [METRO Blue Line](#) (Hiawatha LRT). It also serves the 147th and 140th Street stations in Apple Valley and the Cedar Grove Transit Station in Eagan.

The METRO Red Line is a service of the [Metropolitan Council](#), provided under contract by the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA). It is funded in part by proceeds from the 5-county, metro-area sales tax administered by the Counties Transit Improvement Board.

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