GATEWAY CORRIDOR

Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

Draft Meeting Summary
Thursday, August 8, 2013
2:00 – 3:20 pm
Woodbury City Hall

PAC Member Attendees

Lisa Weik, Washington County Commissioner
Rafael Ortega, Ramsey County Commissioner
James McClean, St. Paul Area Chamber
Harry Melander, Metropolitan Council Member
Scott McBride, MnDOT
Council President Kathy Lantry, City of St. Paul
Mayor Mary Giuliani Stephens, City of Woodbury
Tim Herman, East Side Area Business Association
Greg Watson, Woodbury Chamber of Commerce

PAC Alternate Member Attendees

Arlene McCarthy, Metropolitan Council
Denny Darnold, City of Hudson

Other Attendees

Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County
Lyssa Leitner, Washington County
Kathryn O'Brien, Metro Transit
James Shoemaker, Ramsey County
Mike Rogers, Ramsey County
Kevin Roggenbuck, Ramsey County
Jeanne Witzig, Kimley-Horn
Lisa Rasmussen, Kimley-Horn
Beth Bartz, SRF Consulting Group
Kristina Nesse, SRF Consulting Group

1. Introductions

2. PAC Roles and Responsibilities – *Beth Bartz, SRF Consulting Group*

- The PAC will meet every two months immediately prior to the Gateway Corridor Commission (GCC) meeting.
- Comprised of GCC members and ex-officio members, as well as other stakeholders who are important to the LPA decision making process. Relative to the Alternatives Analysis (AA), PAC membership was restructured to focus more on current geographic definition of the project.
  - Mayor Giuliani Stephens noted that appropriate communication take place with the FTA regarding the Gateway project definition.

- The PAC will remain an advisory committee to the Commission but will be delegated more responsibilities to oversee incremental steps throughout the process, the Gateway Corridor Commission would still have final approval authority at key project milestones (scoping decision, LPA decision, DEIS approval).
- The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is comprised of key staff from PAC member agencies that are best suited to facilitate resolution of design, environmental, and community issues. The committee will meet monthly and assist project staff with alternatives development, technical analysis, and preparation of the EIS.
  - The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will be a new committee that will advise the PAC and TAC. A subcommittee of the Gateway Corridor Commission selected 22 members from the 42 applications received, and this selection has been communicated to the applicants. Selection was based on creating a diverse committee with a balance of perspectives, activity within their respective communities, and geographic diversity. In addition to advising the PAC and TAC on key decisions, the CAC will provide advise on the Public Engagement Plan, assist with issue identification, provide information for analysis, and assist with project communications within their respective communities.
  - Decision making process: TAC → CAC → PAC → GCC → Ramsey and Washington County Regional Railroad Authorities → Metropolitan Council

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair – *Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County*

- The role of the PAC Chair is to facilitate all meetings and provide consultation on agenda items on a monthly basis. The Vice-Chair will fill in on the meeting facilitation role whenever the chair is not able to attend.
- Mary Giuliani Stephens (Woodbury Mayor) was nominated by Rafael Ortega, seconded by Lisa Weik, and confirmed by a voice vote as the Chair of the PAC.
- Kathy Lantry (Council President, City of St Paul) was nominated by Tim Herman, seconded by Rafael Ortega, and confirmed by a voice vote as the Vice-Chair of the PAC.

4. Gateway Project Update & Alternatives Analysis Review – *Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County*

- The Gateway Corridor AA was conducted from August 2010 to February 2013; study identified LRT or BRT along Hudson Road, 11 station stops, and a connection to the region's transit system via Union Depot in St. Paul.
- Full Gateway Corridor AA is available on the Gateway Corridor website under the "Transit Study" tab.
- In addition to the website, the Gateway Corridor Facebook page is updated with weekly posts, and an E-Newsletter is occasionally used to distribute information on the project.

5. Draft EIS & Locally Preferred Selection Overview – *Jeanne Witzig, Kimley-Horn*

- Scoping process – June 2013 to February/March 2014. Request for analysis of additional alignments and station locations will be reviewed as part of the Scoping phase. All information from this process will be prepared and included in the Scoping Booklet, including the results of the AA and recommendations for detailed further analysis in the Draft EIS process. The Scoping Booklet is followed by the Scoping Decision Document, which sets the blueprint for what is studied in the Draft EIS..

- Locally Preferred Alternative – November 2013 to July 2014
- Draft EIS Preparation – January 2014 to January 2015
- Following the Draft EIS, the third stage of the EIS process is the Final EIS, which culminates in a federal Record of Decision from the FTA, per National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, and a state Determination of Adequacy, issued by the Metropolitan Council under Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) requirements. The Final EIS will identify a single Preferred Alternative for the project.
- As part of the federal environmental review process; coordination with federal, state and local agencies will occur, including the designated cooperating and participating agencies. Cooperating agencies are formally designated, have a larger stake in the project, and receive Draft EIS previews (courtesy review prior to full Draft EIS distribution). Participating agencies are those who have an interest in the project.
- The current project definition now includes an eastern terminus at Manning Avenue in Woodbury, and a western terminus at St. Paul Union Depot. During the Scoping phase, the request was made by a community group, through the FTA to further evaluate what is identified for study purposes as Alignment B2, which follows East 7th Street to White Bear Avenue. Additionally, what is referred to as Alignment D2, which shifts the alignment north in Oakdale, was also requested for evaluation by the City of Oakdale. A comparative analysis of alignments will include, but not be limited to, impacts to right-of-way, parking, and traffic, among other factors.
    - The Vice-Chair commented about the decision making process used during the AA to eliminate the East 7th Street/White Bear Avenue alignment from future consideration. She also encouraged the PAC to decide quickly on the potential of this alignment to ease the strain on home and business owners in the area who are again uncertain about the future of their property values.
    - An additional comment was made from Arlene McCarthy about the East 7th Street/White Bear Avenue alignment that although it was eliminated, the Metropolitan Council is well aware that the White Bear Avenue corridor is still in need of transit service improvements. The Vice-Chair agreed that the decision to eliminate the alignment in the AA did not mean that White Bear Avenue should not have transit service.
    - Jeanne noted that the Arterial BRT and streetcar studies planned for or being conducted in the area will be highlighted in the comparative analysis conducted during scoping and in the communication with the FTA.
    - Andy noted that Washington County staff and the consultant team are working to prepare a list of FAQs to address these types of questions for the committee and general public. This FAQ list will first be distributed to the PAC and TAC and subsequently posted to the GCC website.
        - The Chair encouraged the PAC to ensure that Washington County staff is aware of any recurring questions that should be added to the FAQ list.

6. Corridor Design Overview – *Lisa Rasmussen, Kimley-Horn*

- During Scoping, the engineering analysis will be focused on critical areas where solutions may have greater potential to affect operations and maintenance and capital costs (which can affect project competitiveness in subsequent phases of the project)
- BRT and LRT have some distinctive differences when considering design solutions – BRT has smaller station platforms, more flexibility in vertical grade, can make tighter turns, offers flexibility between fixed guideway/existing roadways, and does not require relocation of utilities located underneath the roadway. LRT has 270 foot station platforms, a constrained

turning radius, requires 100% fixed guideway, and requires relocation of utilities located underneath the roadway to avoid major service disruption.

- There are several stations that will be refined at this point in the project based on traffic impacts, topography constraints, optimal vehicle circulation, pedestrian connections and circulation, parking, development impacts, and other issues. Stations addressed in this corridor design overview included Earl Street, Etna Street, Sunray, 3M, Greenway Avenue, and Woodbury Avenue/Keats Avenue.
  - A question was asked from Tim Herman regarding whether transit connections between the Metropolitan State University campus and station would be studied or decided by the PAC.
    - Witzig replied that this is an element that will be addressed during Scoping phase. Review will include analysis of a station's distance from activity centers.
- It should be noted that D1 and D2, for example, do not indicate prioritization of alignments, as they are only numbered for organizational purposes.

7. Next Steps – *Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County*

- August 15 - FTA coordination call. Andy emphasized that the Counties and Metro Transit are working closely together on the Gateway Corridor project.
- August 21 – Second TAC meeting
- Week of August 26 - The first CAC meeting will be scheduled for this week. The final date/time has not been confirmed yet. The meeting location has not been determined, but will likely be at a location on the eastern side of St. Paul with transit accessibility.
- October 10 – Second PAC meeting
- The Chair acknowledged U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar's office for their work in arranging Secretary of Transportation Foxx's recent trip to Minnesota. The trip was very well organized and provided a great highlight of projects and concerns in MN to bring back to the FTA.

8. Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.