



Gateway Corridor Commission News Release

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Gateway Corridor to Ask for \$3 Million from Legislature to Advance Bus Rapid Transit Proposal

Gateway Corridor Commission members at their December meeting voted unanimously to support a request for \$3 million from the 2015 Minnesota Legislature to fulfill the state's share of the next phase of work on the proposed bus rapid transit project between Saint Paul and Woodbury along Interstate 94 and Hudson Road. The money would fund engineering and environmental analysis work in the Project Development phase of the Federal Transit Administration process.

The Gateway Corridor Commission is looking for the state to contribute 10 percent of the proposed project's costs, which is a wise investment, according to Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik, chair of the Commission.

"We believe continued funding support from the state makes sense," Commissioner Weik said. "Gateway bus rapid transit is a cost effective, flexible transit alternative that provides residents all along the corridor access to job opportunities—today and in the future as we attract more Fortune 500 companies to relocate or expand here."

The business community is on board, according to Commissioner Weik.

"The project has strong support from the business community, including the Saint Paul Area and Woodbury chambers of commerce, the East Side Area Business Association and the Oakdale Business and Professional Association," Commissioner Weik said.

Gateway also has the backing of Ramsey and Washington Counties, the Counties Transit Improvement Board and each of the six communities along the 12-mile corridor, according to Commissioner Weik.

Last year, Washington County, acting as the project's fiscal agent, requested \$5 million and received \$2 million from the Legislature. Timing on the remaining funding is important. Commissioner Weik expects an application asking for up to 50 percent of construction costs will be submitted next year to the Federal Transit Administration.

"The requested \$3 million from the state keeps us competitive in the federal funding process, keeps the project on schedule, and demonstrates our commitment to connect the eastern metropolitan area to a growing regional transit system," Commissioner Weik said.

Support is strong on the regional and federal levels, too, according to Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega, vice chair of the Gateway Corridor Commission.

"The Met Council just released their draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan and it includes Gateway Corridor, labeled the Gold Line," Commissioner Ortega said. "President Obama announced a few months ago that Gateway Corridor was designated a Federal Infrastructure Permitting Dashboard Project which means a streamlined approval process. The momentum is building on all levels."

The resolution passed by the Gateway Corridor Commission Dec. 11 made a case for state funding by pointing out the robust employment and population growth occurring in the corridor. Providing economic development opportunities and reliable links for employees commuting to their workplaces are key goals for the project.

Planners are currently completing a Draft Environmental Impact Study. The Project Development phase is scheduled to begin in late 2015.

About the Gateway Corridor bus rapid transit project

Gateway is a proposed bus rapid transit line that would run 12 miles in its own lane between the Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul and Woodbury next to Interstate 94 and Hudson Road. All-day transit service would stop at 12 stations and include connections to the growing regional transit system. The system could open for service by 2022 and will provide a focal point for new economic development opportunities as the region grows. The work is led by the Gateway Corridor Commission, which is comprised of local elected officials, business and community leaders. More information is available at www.theGatewayCorridor.com.

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