



Gateway Corridor Commission News Release

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President fast-tracks Gateway Corridor rapid transit project

The hard work and collaborative effort of partners advocating for improved transit in the Gateway Corridor, from Saint Paul to Woodbury, was rewarded last week when President Barack Obama announced that 11 projects will receive expedited review and permitting. Gateway is one of them, and one of two Minnesota projects on the list.

President Obama spoke about building a 21st century infrastructure May 14 while at the Washington Irving Boat Club in Tarrytown, New York.

“We’re announcing 11 more projects to accelerate, to get moving faster.... We’re cutting bureaucratic red tape that stalls good projects from breaking ground. We’re launching a new national permitting center to implement these reforms. We are aiming to put every major infrastructure project on a public dashboard so everybody can go online; track our progress; hold us accountable; make sure things are coming in on time, on budget; make sure your taxpayer money is being used well, but also make sure that we’re putting folks back to work rebuilding America. That’s our goal,” President Obama said.

In 2012, 50 projects were put on the Federal Infrastructure Projects Permitting Dashboard, including the Southwest Light Rail Transit project in Hennepin County. Thirty of those projects are complete. Gateway Corridor Commission Chair Lisa Weik, a Washington County commissioner, sees the announcement as a boost for the project.

“Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the counties, cities, the State of Minnesota, Metropolitan Council, our Congressional delegation – especially Congresswoman McCollum, businesses, educational institutions, and residents, our project has been recognized on the national level,” Weik said. “When I

think of all of the other projects in the queue hoping for federal funds, I'm so grateful to have Gateway in this group."

Gateway rapid transit was included in the bonding bill finalized by the Minnesota Legislature this past weekend. Project planners just completed public hearings on the scope of its current study, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

"We are extremely happy that Gateway has been recognized by the President of the United States," said Gateway Corridor Commission Vice Chair Rafael Ortega, a Ramsey County commissioner. "We believe the dashboard will benefit our constituents by adding even more transparency, accountability, and certainty into the permitting and review processes for this project."

About the Gateway Corridor transit project

Gateway Corridor transit would run between Union Depot in Saint Paul and Woodbury next to Interstate 94 and Hudson Road in a dedicated guideway. All-day transit service would stop at 11 stations and include connections to the growing regional transit system. Light rail transit or bus rapid transit is being considered. 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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