



Gateway Corridor Commission News Release

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BRT, Route Preference Recommended for Gateway Corridor

The Gateway Corridor Policy Advisory Committee passed a resolution July 24 recommending a locally preferred alternative, which includes bus rapid transit (BRT) in a dedicated guideway as the mode of transit and a more specific route than previously identified along I-94 and Hudson Road.

The Policy Advisory Committee is made up of community representatives, key partnering agencies, and business and education interests along the corridor. They had a good discussion prior to the vote, according to Scott Beauchamp of the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik, the chairperson of the Gateway Corridor Commission.

"Cost efficiency was the deciding factor in our recommendation of bus rapid transit instead of light rail," Weik said.

"Coming to an agreement on the right route required more discussion," said Beauchamp. "The different routes were similar in technical scope and cost. We chose to adopt a route that provides the best opportunities for long term job access and economic development."

The transit mode and route alignment considered by the Policy Advisory Committee were recommended by the Gateway Corridor's Technical Advisory and Community Advisory Committees. Committees reviewed technical information and community input on four different route variations through Oakdale, Lake Elmo and Woodbury. Each route is in a dedicated, bi-directional guideway for BRT covering 12 miles along Interstate Highway 94 and Hudson Road with 12 stations between Union Depot in Saint Paul and Manning Ave. in Woodbury.

The Policy Advisory Committee chose to concur with the Technical Advisory Committee and the input of the Community Advisory Committee and recommend a route that travels north of I-94 until Lake Elmo Ave then crosses over to the south side of I-94 into Woodbury and finishes at Manning Ave.

The locally preferred alternative (LPA) is conceptual and will be further refined through the engineering process.

The Policy Advisory Committee will hold a public hearing to continue the LPA conversation on Thursday, Aug. 7, 2014, 6 p.m., Conway Recreation Center, 2090 Conway Avenue, Saint Paul. Written comments will be accepted on the LPA recommendation until Aug. 13. In addition, Gateway Corridor staff will work specifically with the city of Lake Elmo to provide additional information to property owners, businesses, and residents that are adjacent to the route. Over the next few months, Gateway Corridor Commission member cities and county regional railroad authorities also will review and vote on the LPA.

The Commission's goal is to have the locally preferred alternative included in the Metropolitan Council's 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

The selection of a LPA is a local decision-making process, which informs local and federal funding and project development. It is a separate process from the federal Draft Environmental Impact Study, also occurring at this time. The LPA selection process does not replace or override the requirement to fully examine alternatives and determine the adverse impacts that must be avoided or mitigated under the federal and state environmental review process. More information can be found at www.theGatewayCorridor.com under the Transit Studies tab.

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PHOTO OUTLINE:

This map shows the locally preferred alternative route of the Gateway Corridor Bus Rapid Transit project. The route will be further refined through the engineering process.