



Agenda

Gateway Corridor Commission

July 10, 2014 - 3:30 PM

Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room

8301 Valley Creek Road

Woodbury, MN 55125

Note: There will be a DEIS Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting proceeding the Commission Meeting at 2:00 pm at the same location. All Commission Members are also members of the PAC

<u>Item</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Action Requested</u>
1. Introductions		Information
2. Consent Items*		Approval
a. Summary of June 12, 2014 Meeting		
b. Checks and Claims		
3. Met Council TPP Update Process*	Washington County	Information
4. DEIS Study Update*	Washington County / Kimley Horn	Approval Information
a. Action on Scoping Decision		
b. LPA schedule		
5. Orange Line Tour Recap*	Washington County / Kimley Horn	Information
6. Communications Update*	Washington County	Information
a. Outreach Activities		
b. Public Relations Activities		
7. Legislative Update*	Ramsey County	Information
a. State Update		
b. Federal Update		
8. Other*	Washington County	Information
a. Meeting Dates Summary		
b. Social Media and Website Update		
c. Media Articles		
9. Adjourn		Approval

**Attachments*

For questions regarding this material, please contact Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County at (651) 430-4338 or at andy.gitzlaff@co.washington.mn.us.

**Gateway Corridor Commission
Draft June 12, 2014 Meeting Summary
Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room**

Members	Agency	Present
Rafael Ortega	Ramsey County	X
Lisa Weik	Washington County	X
Mary Giuliani Stephens	Woodbury	X
Dan Kylo	West Lakeland Township	X
Kathy Lantry	St Paul	
Randy Nelson	Afton	
Mike Pearson	Lake Elmo	
Paul Reinke	Oakdale	X
Nora Slawik	Maplewood	
Amy Williams	Lakeland	X
Victoria Reinhardt, Alternate	Ramsey County	
Ted Bearth, Alternate	Washington County	
Richard Bend, Alternate	Afton	X
Bob Livingston, Alternate	Lakeland	
Paul Rebholz, Alternate	Woodbury	
Dave Schultz, Alternate	West Lakeland Township	
Mike Reeves, Alternate	Lake Elmo	

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	Present
Mike Amundson	Baytown Township	
Scott Beauchamp	St Paul Chamber of Commerce	X
Mike Ericson	Landfall Village	X
Tim Herman	East Side Area Business Association	X
Randy Kopesky	Lakeland Shores	X
Richard McNamara	OBPA	
Tim Ramberg	WI Gateway Coalition	
Doug Stang	3M	
Greg Watson	Woodbury Chamber of Commerce	X

Others	Agency
Kevin Roggenbuck	Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority
Andy Gitzlaff	Washington County
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County
Tommi Godwin	Washington County
Stephanie Souter	Washington County
John Kaul	Washington County Lobbyist
Susan Kent	MN Senator
JoAnn Ward	MN Representative 53A

Others	Agency
Janelle Schmitz	City of Woodbury Staff
Josh Straka	US Representative McCollum's Office
Dan Zuleger	City of Lake Elmo
Jeff Dehler	Dehler PR
Barb Thoman	Transit for Livable Communities
Pam Moore	Transit for Livable Communities
Stephen Ebner	West Lakeland Township
Andy Burmeister	Lockridge, Grindal and Nauen

The Gateway Corridor Commission convened at 3:33 p.m. by Chair Weik.

Agenda Item #1. Introductions

Introductions were made by those present.

Agenda Item #2. Consent Items

Item 2a. Summary of May 8, 2014 Meeting: Motion made by Williams to approve the May 8, 2014 meeting summary. Seconded by Reinke. **Approved.** Motion carried. Bend abstained.

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

Agenda Item #3. HIA Grant Letter of Support

Leitner gave background information on Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and a grant that the Gateway Corridor is applying for. She introduced Stephanie Souter stating this has been a joint venture between Public Works and Public Health. Leitner said locally, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota funds the Minnesota grants as well. She referred to the letter of support in the packet stating it is necessary for the grant. Souter gave a PowerPoint Presentation on what a HIA is as presented in the packet. She said the six steps of the HIA are modeled after the EIS process. Leitner said the HIA for the Gateway Corridor would focus on the health impacts of station area locations and part of the grant application process is to get five letters of support. Currently letters of support have been committed from East Metro Strong, Met Council, Living Healthy Washington County, and a joint letter from both Washington and Ramsey County HRA; the fifth letter would be from the Gateway Corridor Commission. Weik noted a typo in last sentence of draft letter in packet. Weik said it's important to know that the engagement process for the HIA would run parallel to the DEIS and the existing station planning efforts that are already underway.

Motion made by Ortega to approve submitting a letter of support for the Gateway Corridor HIA grant application. Seconded for discussion by Williams.

Reinke asked what questions will be asked or information gathered when the final station locations haven't been determined. Leitner said we are basically hoping to help areas with potential zoning or land use changes around the stations to see what uses make sense and then long-term. Souter said part of the HIA process is looking at the existing data and

research available for how access to food and education impacts health. Part of the consultant's role would be to look at that research and include it in the report. She added they will also be looking at the health of the different communities. Reinke asked if the report would generate recommendations like utilizing a two-story building versus a one-story building or will it be showing communities things that are not in their comprehensive plans. Leitner said it would probably be both; they plan to do recommendations for each community with a summary for the whole project. She added they are hoping the station area planning will align at the same time so that they can make very specific recommendations about that station planning and what would have both a positive and negative effect on health.

Pearson asked how much does it cost. Leitner said we are asking for just under \$100,000 and through the EIS, we would be contributing over \$100,000 of in-kind resources because of the coordination work already being done under the EIS contract. Leitner said this information is new; it is long-term health based on land use. It hasn't typically been thought of in the past but is becoming more and more real as health expenses are skyrocketing. One big piece is the engagement piece; meeting with communities to determine things like adding a sidewalk and what health impacts could come from that.

Bend commented that this is an incredibly complicated thing to study; certainly the communities can benefit by knowing about alternatives with regard to land use planning and other municipal planning benefits. When it comes to comprehensive plans, this presumably provides information to the Met Council and he asked how it will be used by them and/or if it is duplicative if not integrated. Leitner said health was a big component of ThriveMSP 2040 that was just adopted by the Met Council and will lead into all the policy plans. She added it was the first time they've discussed health in a regional plan and staff anticipates health becoming a big component in community comprehensive plans. This study could arm a community with data so they don't have to research it themselves. Gitzlaff said with regard to the DEIS process, in the next couple of months we will begin to look at what the stations will look like and this information will allow more things to be evaluated at the station level. This task is locally focused and is heavily relying on the city and community partners. The Commission did provide additional resources for the DEIS for station planning work and station planning is also a task within the existing contract for some level of evaluation; this grant will take the task to another level. These will be recommendations that the individual cities can then take and use for their study and comprehensive plans if they chose to.

Weik stated there are a large number of zero vehicle families along the corridor and we need to look at those populations and their needs.

Williams called the question. Weik called to vote. **Approved.** Motion carried. Pearson opposed.

Herman said as a matter of perspective, there is more grant money available to raise the level of health consciousness in communities. It impacts globally if we raise the bar of wanting people to be healthier. This proposal offers an opportunity to give more leverage to community organizations to access some of those grant dollars.

Leitner said the letter is due by June 25, 2014, and we should receive notification by September 30, 2014.

Agenda Item #4. Transit Tour Budget

Gitzlaff provided background on the proposed transit tour trip. He distributed copies of a participant packet and itinerary. There are 29 attendees; Senator Kent and Representative Ward were unable to attend. He stated we are approximately \$1,700 under the budget amount approved for stipends. Gitzlaff said staff will be finalizing the schedule and the updated packet will be sent out tomorrow; the packet will include a list of contact information for the attendees as well as their flight information. A block of 20 rooms is reserved at the Standard Hotel in Los Angeles, and staff will try to reserve a few more for those who don't have hotel reservations yet. He reviewed the itinerary and asked for questions.

Bend asked if there would be any meetings with any local municipalities with regard to how they have incorporated land use changes for the purpose of development and the increased transit opportunities for residents. Gitzlaff said yes; it is a priority to meet with some of the local representatives. One meeting will be with a metro board member who was very active on the city council for one of the local communities. He added staff will also include some of the before and after pictures in the documentation brought back.

Williams asked to be provided with what the ridership projections were and how the line is performing based on those projections. Gitzlaff said the line is very successful and the appendix on the first page of the participant packet gives a snapshot of that data; weekday boarding's are at 30,000, and the 2020 projected ridership was at 20,000.

Agenda Item #5. TIRP Transitway Research Synthesis

Gitzlaff provided background on the Transit Impacts Research Program (TIRP) as presented in the packet. A synthesis of all the work that has been done since 2006 is included in the packet. Key findings from the study include:

- Transit investment significantly improves access to jobs and workers, particularly low wage workers.
- Transitway investments are attractive for residential and commercial development.
- The marketplace is putting a value on transit access showing that property values increase.

Gitzlaff said staff has good relationships with both the programmers and the researchers and could invite a representative to give a more thorough presentation of the study if the Commission would like to learn more about the research.

Kopesky asked what the color for the Gateway Corridor will be. Weik said the rule is it must be a one-syllable word; she suggested Gold Line. Weik said East Metro Strong will have kiosks at the Green Line opening with maps that show the different lines in the tri-county metro area.

Agenda Item #6. Communications Update

Item 6a and 6b. Outreach Activities and Public Relations Activities:

Leitner discussed some of the outreach activities listed in the packet stating there were not as many meetings last month, but there was a higher amount of booths at community events. She stated staff will be at Green Line opening this weekend and the Lions Club asked for another meeting in July to provide an update. Leitner invited the Commission to let staff know if they are aware of anyone who would like a presentation on the Gateway Corridor; the best opportunity is to have a booth/display at a community event and to be able to interact with people. Additional outreach not listed in the packet includes a meeting with District One Community Council in July. Leitner said Gateway will be present at the Green Line opening this weekend at the CTIB booth and the expected attendance is well over 100,000 people. Gateway Corridor t-shirts are available to anyone planning to attend the opening; staff encourages Commission members to wear the t-shirts in an effort to engage discussion with attendees.

Agenda Item #7. Legislative Update

Item 7a. State:

Dehler invited John Kaul to co-present the update since a large part of the work was performed by both the lobbyist and the communications team. Kaul said he agrees with using Gold as the line color for the Gateway Corridor. Kaul said he was apprehensive about having a short session but it turned out to be a good session in many respects and in terms of advancing the agenda of this Commission. Before the session started, we knew that Representative Hausman would include money for the Met Council to decide how to disperse. We took a lot of effort to approach the Senate to identify our project to make sure the Met Council got a strong message that the Gateway Corridor is something the legislature had high expectations for. In the end, we got the House language and the Senate got a message that was heard. Kaul said there was intense competition and what worked for us was growing the east metro solidarity. We had strong legislative advocates: Representative Ward was successful in making sure Representative Hausman made a specific reference to the Met Council for our project, and Senator Kent was successful in working to convince Stump and leadership that it is important to break out of the mold of staying away from earmarks. Kaul noted that Republican votes for bonding bills have been tough to find in recent years; however, Senator Housley voted yes.

Kaul said all of the Commissions activities over the last couple of years have created a sizzle for the project; there are good handouts, good data, and good research. Dehler PR has helped coordinate our efforts and helped to keep focused. In terms of what we could do better, it would be important to do some kind of environmental scan to see what people in the east metro area know about the Gateway Corridor and what they think about it. We don't really know what the level of public support is and doing some kind of polling would help. He added he is very encouraged by the emergence of East Metro Strong.

Dehler complimented Kaul, Nick Riley, and Joe Magnolia on their efforts; this team helped provide information so we knew what was going on. It also helped to meet as a legislative strategy team; the group met about a half dozen times throughout the course of the session. We felt it was important to get businesses and legislators together so we organized a legislative breakfast in February; it's important to make sure legislators understand this can benefit individuals going to and from jobs, and benefit businesses by having employees

arrive on time. Dehler said he wants people to remember that many people participated in this process and that participation made a difference; it was critical that legislators see people who are interested in the project. He added that projects that don't have public support don't get funded. We want to capitalize on momentum we built during the last legislative session; it's helpful to keep the awareness by making presentations and attending events. Dehler added that we need to thank our champions: Representative Ward, Senator Kent, and Congresswoman McCollum.

Going forward, Dehler said we need to do a public opinion poll to set a baseline. The scoping meetings gather feedback and help us to understand how people want the project to be molded. The poll also helps to understand what audiences don't have information so we know where to go and how to provide information. Legislators like to see surveys that show public support for a project. Dehler said when looking long-term, we need to look at other ways to create more buzz and excitement about the project. Getting more information to people requires investment in a lot of things; at this stage of the game, the Northstar project started looking at media campaigns, which are expensive. He said when looking out a year or two or three, there are some additional activities the Commission might want to consider to continue to build up the awareness of the project.

Kaul added that he also wanted to thank Congresswoman McCollum.

Item 7b. Federal:

Burmeister congratulated the Commission on their public relation efforts and the time spent with the community; it helps members of congress and staff to do whatever they can to move forward and encourage those in the Administration to take notice. He encouraged the Commission to thank those who have been working in Washington, and do it publically. The Administration has made a significant effort to streamline in many areas in administrating public policy.

Burmeister said a bit of the action in Washington over the last couple of weeks include transportation funding, the transportation authorization bill, and the highway trust fund. Map 21 will expire and drafts have been released for transit related funding; the big question is how to make the trust fund solvent for years to come. He said it's important to be engaged here and now to ensure that in years to come, we're ready to compete for that funding. Burmeister said they are currently working on appropriation measures; the transportation bill passed the House and it's possible the Senate may take up transportation in appropriations next week.

Gitzlaff said staff is working on putting together some thank you letters for the Dashboard inclusion and will bring those forward for signatures.

Agenda Item #8. DEIS Study Update

Gitzlaff updated the Commission on the DEIS study as presented in the packet. The next TAC meeting will be held on June 23rd; at that meeting they will be making a recommendation, based on a technical document, on what to include in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). He said it's not the LPA decision but is more of a Federal step to

note what we're going to focus on and study. The CAC will be meeting on June 30th to review that recommendation from TAC and provide input. He added the newly elected CAC Chair, Paul Sawyer, is a St. Paul resident, is active in the neighborhood council, and is confirmed to attend the LA Orange Line trip. Gitzlaff requested someone from the Commission attend the June 30th CAC meeting so they can relay the messages of the CAC to the policymakers.

Gitzlaff distributed a handout of the DEIS summary including some of the scoping comments. He said at the end of the DEIS, we want a project that will be competitive, cost effective, and meet the goals and objectives of the local, regional and national context. He discussed the project evaluation and rating presented in the handout stating we have a competitive project.

Gitzlaff referred to the schedule listed in packet stating staff is proposing a public hearing during the early evening on August 7th to gather more input from the public on the LPA decision. After getting the public input, the next PAC meeting will be on August 14th to discuss the LPA and work on a draft recommendation. That draft can be refined during the next month and then the LPA decision can be presented for a vote at the September 11th PAC meeting. Gitzlaff said in order to get into the Met Council process, each community that's affected by the line would need to pass resolutions supporting the LPA decision. He asked the Commission members to let staff know if there is anything they can do to assist local partners with this process. Once the LPA decision is endorsed by those local partners and forwarded to the Met Council, it's a four to five month process to go through their different committees. Gitzlaff said the environmental document will also be in process during this time.

Williams referred to the four different price points on the cost-effectiveness sheet and asked if those costs include a rider contribution. Gitzlaff said they do calculations both with and without and he would need to confirm if these costs are offset with fare contributions. Williams said if we are getting under \$10 for the total cost, then we're talking about a very manageable expense to our communities for a very big project. Gitzlaff said this calculation is a benchmark for FTA categorization; the subsidy per passenger can be defined as we get more refined. Generally, by being in these categories of 'medium', we're getting a cost-effective project.

Williams asked if having the Gateway Corridor on President's Dashboard accelerates or streamlines the project. Gitzlaff said it has an upside; it has the potential to avoid long delays because of the sense of accountability. The project is something the Federal USDOT will be judged on as to how well they perform; they have to track the permits and how many days it takes to get them done.

Agenda Item #9. Other

Item 9a. Meeting Dates Summary:

Information on upcoming meeting dates is included in the packet.

Item 9b. Social Media and Website Update:

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

Item 9c. Media Articles:

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

Agenda Item #10. Adjourn

Chair Weik called the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

DRAFT



Agenda Item #2b

DATE: July 7, 2014
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Checks and Claims

<u>Gateway Corridor DEIS Contract (Kimley Horn)</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<u>Dates</u> 5/1/13 – 5/31/14	\$107,114.62
<i>Contract Utilization = 50%</i>	
<u>Communication Contract - (Jeff Dehler PR)</u>	
<u>Dates</u> 3/1/14 – 5/31/14	\$15,160.38
<i>Contract Utilization = 26%</i>	
<u>Public Engagement – Gateway Lapel Pin Order (Creative Incentives)</u>	\$569.54
Total	\$161,164.52

Detailed invoices can be made available upon request.

Action Requested:

Approval



Agenda Item #3

DATE: July 7, 2014
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Metropolitan Council Transportation Policy Plan Update

Background

The Metropolitan Council, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Twin Cities metropolitan area, is in the process of updating the region’s long-range 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), replacing the 2030 TPP. The updated 2040 TPP will reflect the region’s long-range metropolitan development guide, Thrive MSP 2040 (Thrive), which was recently adopted.

The TPP update process began late 2013 concurrently with the development of Thrive. The Council formed a technical working group and a group of elected officials and policy makers to guide the development of the document. Many of the entities with representation on these committees including Washington County, Ramsey County and the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) have submitted comments on the initial TPP drafts. At the Commission meeting staff will provide a verbal overview of the TPP draft and highlight some of the key issue areas.

The Metropolitan Council is now in the process of revising the plan prior to release of a draft for public comment on August 13th and it is anticipated that many of the changes already requested will be addressed in the draft for public review. If the Commission decides to provide additional comments on the TPP staff suggests that they wait until the public comment period (anticipated August 13th through October 3rd) when the latest draft will be available.

Gateway Corridor Contingent LPA

One of the requests from both Washington County and CTIB was for the Gateway Corridor LPA designation to be included in the updated TPP, which avoids the need to go through a separate 5 to 6 month TPP amendment process. This could help to save the project resources that could be better utilized elsewhere and provides an opportunity to strengthen the engagement process by allowing the public to comment this summer on the LPA through both the local LPA process and the draft TPP process.

Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh responded to this request in letters to both CTIB and Washington County stating that the Council would be willing to consider a contingent LPA for Gateway Corridor in the Draft 2040 TPP if the Gateway Corridor Commission can officially recommend a LPA in draft form in July and that 4 specific criteria are met before the plan is adopted by the Council in December. The correspondences between Washington County, CTIB and the Metropolitan Council have been attached for reference.



Staff has prepared a revised Gateway LPA schedule for the approval of an LPA that meets this schedule and specific submittal requirements. It would include an additional round of PAC and GCC meetings, tentatively scheduled for Thursday July 24th at 2:00 pm and 3:30 pm, respectfully. This proposed schedule will be presented in more detail as a part of the DEIS update for consideration by the Commission.

Action

Discussion



July 3, 2014

Chair Sue Haigh
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Chair Haigh:

I received your letter dated July 2nd related to Washington County's request to have the Gateway Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) included in the updated Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) without going through a separate amendment process. As Chair of the Gateway Corridor Commission, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to work with the Council to include Gateway Corridor's LPA in the updated TPP and express my sincere appreciation for your open door policy on this matter.

The Gateway Corridor Commission will review the approach outlined in the letter at our July 10th meeting. I am confident that we can work through our existing advisory committee process to recommend a draft/contingent LPA by the July 28 Transportation Committee meeting. We already have a robust engagement plan and timeline established to reach an LPA. The LPA approach in your letter provides us with the opportunity to strengthen the engagement process by allowing people to comment on the LPA through both the local LPA process and the draft TPP.

It is my understanding that the Gateway Corridor staff already had a meeting set up on July 11 to discuss the LPA process with Metropolitan Council staff. That meeting can now be used to solidify our collective approach to include the Gateway Corridor LPA in the TPP.

As stated in the recently adopted Thrive MSP 2040, "acting collaboratively means being open to shared strategies, supportive partnerships, and reciprocal relationships" which is how I view your willingness to work with the Commission on the LPA. It also mirrors the recent commitment on the federal level to streamline the federal permitting process for Gateway by including the project on the federal permitting dashboard.

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate.

Sincerely,

Lisa Weik, Gateway Corridor Commission Chair

C: Sandy Rummel, Metropolitan Council District 11
Harry Melander, Metropolitan Council District 12
Richard Kramer, Metropolitan Council District 13
Jon Commers, Metropolitan Council District 14
Washington County Board

July 2, 2014

Commissioner Peter McLaughlin
Chair, Counties Transit Improvement Board
c/o Mary Richardson
477 Selby Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Commissioner McLaughlin:

This letter is in response to the Discussion Outline on CTIB's Program of Projects and the Draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan provided by the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) at our June 24 joint Council-CTIB coordination meeting. This document, among other items, requested that the Draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) scheduled to be released for public comment in late July be delayed and revised to include the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Gateway Corridor. A similar comment was also received from the Washington County Board.

As you are aware, typically corridor LPAs are amended into the regional plan after the local process including extensive public outreach and input, has been fully completed. This sequencing is meant to assure that the local communities and constituencies along the corridor have been engaged, understand the proposed project and its benefits and impacts, and local governments have provided resolutions of support for the project. The regional process of amending the LPA into the TPP recognizes this local action and support, identifies viable funding sources and amounts, and provides a general timeline for implementation of the project. The TPP amendment typically occurs when all of the technical and policy factors are known and understood by policymakers.

The Council is aware that due to the timing of the Gateway LPA recommendation, expected in October, and final adoption of the TPP, expected in early December, there is a perception that the project might potentially experience delays through amending the new 2040 TPP. While the Council does not believe this to be true given that an amendment can be initiated when the LPA recommendation is made, in the spirit of collaboration it is willing to consider the possibility of including a "contingent" Gateway LPA in the Draft 2040 TPP. Including a contingent Gateway LPA in the TPP is dependent on two near-term actions as follows:

- The Gateway Corridor Commission will have an official vote in July identifying the LPA that the commission will recommend for public comment this summer and that it expects to then recommend to the Washington and Ramsey county boards in September.

- CTIB will also, in July, identify and vote on its Program of Projects indicating that the Gateway project is an approved Phase I project and identifying the level of funding that CTIB expects to provide to help assure that the project continues to move forward and is federally competitive.

In order to accommodate these two actions, the Council would delay the release of the Draft 2040 TPP for public comment by approximately two weeks. This delay would result in a Council Transportation Committee recommendation on releasing the Draft 2040 TPP on July 28 and Council approval of the release on August 13. The Draft 2040 TPP public comment process would then conclude on October 3.

Including a “contingent” LPA recommendation for the Gateway corridor in the Draft 2040 TPP would also be accompanied with additional Council expectations from the Gateway Corridor Commission and counties as follows:

1. The Commission and Washington and Ramsey counties continue the full LPA public input and local approval process including public hearings on the proposed LPA, followed by LPA recommendation votes by the Commission and both county boards this fall. The Commission and counties will also obtain resolutions of support for the LPA from all local governments along the corridor. County project staff will need to detail public involvement activities, including response to concerns identified during public involvement, and demonstrate how public input shaped and influenced the LPA recommendation.
2. Gateway project staff will produce an Alternatives Analysis (AA) report that summarizes the complete AA process to be submitted along with the final LPA recommendation. The information in this report should also be available during the public comment processes held by the Commission and counties. In addition, the Commission and counties will provide all project technical analysis and policy information requested for review by the Council and its staff, including but not limited to local government commitments to station area planning and land uses that meet regional expectations for density, level of activity and design.
3. The Council continues to expect that the County staff will work closely with MnDOT in the project development to identify and minimize potential impacts and taking of trunk highway right-of-way along Interstate 94. Given the expected growth and levels of congestion along the I-94 corridor it is important to maintain future options for strategic capacity enhancements including the future potential implementation of a MnPASS lane.

If following the public comment period for the Draft 2040 TPP, the expectations specified above have not been adequately completed, the Gateway LPA will be removed from the final version of the 2040 TPP and the Commission and counties will be required to complete the LPA selection process and add the LPA through a 2040 TPP amendment in 2015.

We have sent a similar letter to the Gateway Corridor Commission and Washington County Board and are waiting to hear whether the Commission can accommodate a vote on the LPA recommendation in July. We also would ask that CTIB provide affirmation that it intends to act on its Program of Projects,

particularly identifying the Gateway corridor as a Phase I project, at its July meeting. This issue must be resolved very soon so that revisions to the Draft 2040 TPP can begin and the revised schedule can be implemented.

Thank you for your quick consideration and action on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Haigh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Haigh, Chair, Metropolitan Council

Cc: Washington County Board members
Sandy Rummel, Metropolitan Council District 11
Harry Melander, Metropolitan Council District 12
Richard Kramer, Metropolitan Council District 13
Jon Commers, Metropolitan Council District 14

July 2, 2014

Commissioner Lisa Weik
Chair, Gateway Corridor Commission
Washington County P.O. Box 6
14949 62nd St. N.
Stillwater, MN 55082-6132

Dear Commissioner Weik:

This letter is in response to the June 17 letter sent by Washington County Board Chair Lehrke requesting, among other things, that the Draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) scheduled to be released for public comment in late July be delayed and revised to include the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Gateway Corridor. A similar comment was also received from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB).

As you are aware, typically corridor LPAs are amended into the regional plan after the local process including extensive public outreach and input, has been fully completed. This sequencing is meant to assure that the local communities and constituencies along the corridor have been engaged, understand the proposed project and its benefits and impacts, and local governments have provided resolutions of support for the project. The regional process of amending the LPA into the TPP recognizes this local action and support, identifies viable funding sources and amounts, and provides a general timeline for implementation of the project. The TPP amendment typically occurs when all of the technical and policy factors are known and understood by policymakers.

The Council is aware that due to the timing of the Gateway LPA recommendation, expected in October, and final adoption of the TPP, expected in early December, there is a perception that the project might potentially experience delays through amending the new 2040 TPP. While the Council does not believe this to be true given that an amendment can be initiated when the LPA recommendation is made, in the spirit of collaboration it is willing to consider the possibility of including a "contingent" Gateway LPA in the Draft 2040 TPP. Including a contingent LPA in the TPP is dependent on obtaining an official vote from the Gateway Corridor Commission in July identifying the LPA that the commission will recommend for public comment this summer and that it expects to then recommend to the Washington and Ramsey county boards in September.

In order to accommodate receiving this recommendation from the Commission, and including it in the Draft 2040 TPP, the Council would delay the release of the draft for public comment by approximately two weeks. This delay would result in a Council Transportation Committee recommendation on releasing the Draft

2040 TPP on July 28 and Council approval of the release on August 13. The Draft 2040 TPP public comment process would then conclude on October 3.

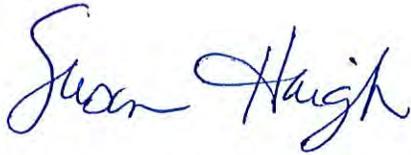
Including a “contingent” LPA recommendation for the Gateway corridor in the Draft 2040 TPP would be accompanied with the following Council expectations:

1. The Commission and Washington and Ramsey counties continue the full LPA public input and local approval process including public hearings on the proposed LPA, followed by LPA recommendation votes by the Commission and both county boards this fall. The Commission and counties will also obtain resolutions of support for the LPA from all local governments along the corridor. County project staff will need to detail public involvement activities, including response to concerns identified during public involvement, and demonstrate how public input shaped and influenced the LPA recommendation.
2. Gateway project staff will produce an Alternatives Analysis (AA) report that summarizes the complete AA process to be submitted along with the final LPA recommendation. The information in this report should also be available during the public comment processes held by the Commission and counties. In addition, the Commission and counties will provide all project technical analysis and policy information requested for review by the Council and its staff, including but not limited to local government commitments to station area planning and land uses that meet regional expectations for density, level of activity and design.
3. CTIB must also, in July, identify and vote on its Program of Projects indicating that the Gateway project is an approved Phase I project and identifying the level of funding that CTIB expects to provide to help assure that the project continues to move forward and is federally competitive.
4. The Council continues to expect that the County staff will work closely with MnDOT in the project development to identify and minimize potential impacts and taking of trunk highway right-of-way along Interstate 94. Given the expected growth and levels of congestion along the I-94 corridor it is important to maintain future options for strategic capacity enhancements including the future potential implementation of a MnPASS lane.

If following the public comment period for the Draft 2040 TPP, the expectations specified above have not been adequately completed, the Gateway LPA will be removed from the final version of the 2040 TPP and the Commission and counties will be required to complete the LPA selection process and add the LPA through a 2040 TPP amendment in 2015.

Please let us know if the Commission and Washington County Board would like to follow this proposed process. This issue must be resolved very soon so that revisions to the Draft 2040 TPP can begin and the revised schedule can be implemented. Thank you for your quick consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Haigh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Haigh, Chair, Metropolitan Council

Cc: Washington County Board members
Sandy Rummel, Metropolitan Council District 11
Harry Melander, Metropolitan Council District 12
Richard Kramer, Metropolitan Council District 13
Jon Commers, Metropolitan Council District 14



Board of Commissioners

Fran Miron, District 1
Ted Bearth, District 2
Gary Kriesel, District 3
Autumn Lehrke, Chair, District 4
Lisa Weik, District 5

June 17, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street N
St Paul, MN 55101

Chair Haigh:

On behalf of the Washington County Board (the County), thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the 2040 Draft Transportation Policy Plan (Draft TPP). Transportation plays a critical role in the economic success of our region and the quality of life of our residents and the County looks forward to continuing its partnership with the Metropolitan Council (the Council) to meet the transportation demands of a growing and changing population and economy now and into the future.

We first wanted to thank the Council for reviewing the comments submitted on Thrive MSP 2040 (Thrive) and making many of the changes we suggested including recognizing the importance of growing job and manufacturing centers and the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) as a strong regional partner in transitway development.

Included in this letter are the County's comments on the Draft TPP, divided into two areas. The first outlines concerns about the public review process and timeline. The second is general comments on the specific investment plans developed for highways, transit and pedestrian and bicycles. Bolded items are requested changes to the Draft TPP to be made before adoption.

Public Review Process and Timeline

The original schedule by the Council was to develop Thrive prior to developing the Draft TPP because the adopted policies in Thrive would inform the Draft TPP. However, due to delays in preparing and ultimately adopting Thrive, the two documents have been essentially developed concurrently. This means that a draft of Thrive containing unadopted development directions and goals was being used as the baseline for the development of the Draft TPP. This has led to confusion and frustration from technical staff on the Partner Agency Working Group and policy makers on the Task Force, the two committees Council formed to gather input on the document from the various regional stakeholders and ultimately prevented a thorough review of the Draft TPP from being completed. **The County urges the Council to address the comments submitted by TAC Planning and allow for an extended review of the Draft TPP by the various Council committees before it is released for public comment.**

Comments on Investment Plans

Highway Investment Direction and Plan

Investment Direction

The County largely supports the direction of this chapter and the Council's commitment to highlighting the opportunities that are lost under the fiscally constrained scenario. We also appreciate the Council's acknowledgement of the burden increasingly placed on local governments to manage the gap between federal and state transportation funding availability and need.

The County is pleased with the investment factors that emerged from the stakeholder engagement process for this chapter of the plan. The County supports the chapter's continued commitment to safety and security and a competitive economy, such as the inclusion of spot mobility improvements as a way to provide bottleneck relief and address safety hazards. **In particular, the County supports the chapter's inclusion of regional balance of investments as a highway system investment prioritization and strongly suggests that this be measured by tracking the total dollars/number of projects invested relative to geographic area.**

Interchange Spacing Requirements

The County would like to share its concerns about *Appendix E: Highway Interchange Requests*, specifically the qualifying criteria for the conversion of a signalized intersection to an interchange on an existing expressway/highway. While the County acknowledges that one-mile (urban) and two-mile (rural) interchange spacing is appropriate for new interchanges where no access has previously been provided; this same criteria is not appropriate for at-grade intersection conversions, largely due to differences in historical development patterns and traffic volumes. For example, TH36 historically developed with several at-grade intersections at 0.8 mile spacing, although the average spacing throughout the corridor exceeds the one-mile/two-mile guideline. There is also evidence that forecasted traffic volumes in the corridor could support safe weaving distances at limited 0.8 mile interchange spacing. With increased travel demand on this corridor and the opening of the St. Croix River Crossing, the County's long-term plan will include converting additional signalized intersections to interchanges in the TH36 corridor.

The one-size-fits-all draft qualifying criteria for intersection conversions imposed by Appendix E significantly limits engineers' ability to design the best solution for the corridor. The County recognizes that exceptions to the qualifying criteria may be granted through the MnDOT/Council Interchange Planning Review Committee. However, as the Draft TPP is being used to guide upfront conversations about project development and preliminary design; it is in effect limiting effective design options, based on policy guidance that would otherwise advance through public engagement processes. **As such, the County requests that Appendix E be modified to include a new qualifying criteria for converting at-grade signalized intersections to grade separated interchanges that recognizes less than one-mile spacing is allowable without**

seeking an exemption based on historical roadway, land use and development patterns; average spacing throughout the corridor; projected traffic volumes; crash rates at signalized intersections and documented safe weaving distances.

Spot Mobility Improvements

The Draft TPP includes projects identified through MnDOT's Congestion Management and Safety Plan (CMSP) for spot mobility improvements that provide bottleneck relief, improve design and address safety hazard. The map in the Draft TPP identifies the Century Avenue and Highway 36 intersection for a spot mobility improvement project but does not include the adjacent Hadley Avenue and Highway 36 intersection. These are the last two remaining signalized intersections along a critical segment of the Highway 36 Corridor that otherwise has freeway conditions. Converting both at-grade intersections to interchanges would improve travel times and reduce crashes and maintenance costs. **The County recommends that the Council identifies the Hadley Avenue and Highway 36 intersection in addition to the Century Avenue and Highway 36 intersection as spot improvement areas.**

Regional Solicitation

The Draft TPP includes references to the regional solicitation process where federal funds are allocated to specific projects in the region on a biennial basis. The regional solicitation process is undergoing a review and revision process concurrently with the TPP update process, one of the proposed outcomes of this revision is that MnDOT's non-freeway principal arterials will no longer be eligible for federal funding allocated through the solicitation. All principal arterials with the highway system perform a regionally significant function whether they are in the federal highway system or not. **The County opposes the proposed change and strongly urges the Council to continue to allow all principal arterials, including most notably Highway 36, to remain eligible for federal funding through the regional solicitation process.**

MnPASS System

The Highway chapter of the Draft TPP includes a map showing the MnPASS Vision dated April 2014. One of the corridors identified within the Tier III for a managed lane is I-94 from downtown St Paul to I-494. However, the map is inconsistent with the MnPASS system identified by MnDOT in the Metropolitan Highway System Investment Study (MHSIS) and the Phase 2 Managed Lane Study both adopted in 2010 where a managed lane in this corridor was screened out from further analysis. A synopsis of both of these studies is provided below

- **MnPASS System Study Phase II**

Following implementation of the I-394 and I-35W managed lane projects, MnDOT undertook the MnPASS System Study Phase II to analyze and make recommendations for the next phase of MnPASS managed lane projects in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The study reassessed short-term (two to 10 years) priorities for MnPASS implementation in light of evolving federal policies, experience with two existing MnPASS lanes, and in close coordination with the MHSIS study. The study states, "An important change in this MnPASS Phase 2 study is the desire to

avoid the need for costly road widening and right-of-way takings – factors which contribute to the high price tag of potential projects in MnPASS Phase 1.”

The study evaluated 13 corridors. The I-94 corridor between downtown Saint Paul and I-694 was among the first group to be screened from further study. The study concluded by identifying one Tier 1 corridor, three Tier 2 corridors, and five Tier 3 corridors. Tier 1 and 2 corridors were identified as potential short-term improvements, while Tier 3 corridors were more likely to be implemented mid- to long-range. The I-94 segment between downtown Saint Paul and I-694/I-494 was not included in the Tier 1, 2, or 3 corridors.

- **MHSIS**

The MHSIS was a joint effort between the Council and MnDOT to create a vision for the highway system in the Twin Cities region aimed at achieving the greatest efficiency out of the region’s highway system and manage congestion from a system-wide perspective. Completed concurrently with the MnPASS System Study Phase II, the MHSIS focused on a 20 to 50 year timeframe as opposed to the MnPASS System Study’s short-term focus.

The segment of I-94 from downtown Saint Paul to I-694 was one of 24 projects analyzed in the MHSIS and was given a composite score of “low.” The study identified five corridors for action in the 2010-2030 timeframe, and an additional seven corridors were identified in the 2030-2060 timeframe; this segment of I-94 was not included for managed lane construction in this timeframe.

There is no rationale given for why this corridor was included back into the Draft TPP. The MnPASS System Vision, as explained in the Draft TPP, is estimated to cost \$1.8 to \$2.4 billion. This estimate assumes that projects can be built in conjunction with major pavement and bridge reconstruction or rehabilitation projects and with little or no new right-of-way to promote cost-effectiveness and allow for building more of the MnPASS system.

The Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA) evaluated and ultimately dismissed a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternative operating within a MnPASS lane because it did not meet the long-term access, mobility and economic development goals established for the corridor. The AA study also showed that a MnPASS project either with or without a BRT component in the corridor would not be a low cost solution due to right-of-way constraints. The total project cost was estimated in the AA at \$586,000 with \$422,000 of those costs for right-of-way and road improvements necessary for the highway portion of the project. It is unlikely even under an increased revenue scenario that there will be enough funding available to build a MnPASS Lane in this corridor in addition to other Tier II and Tier III projects.

The County urges the Council to not include the I-94 Corridor from downtown St Paul to I-494 within the MnPASS Vision due to the fact that it has already been screened out from previous highway and transit studies based on its performance, overall cost, and inability

to address the goals and objectives established for the corridor through the Gateway Corridor AA and DEIS process. Furthermore, the Gateway BRT/LRT options under consideration in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) are closely aligned to the corridor's long-term access, mobility and economic development needs of the corridor. Preserving space in order to not preclude a future MnPASS lane that is unlikely to ever be built only adds additional impacts, costs and layers of complications to the Gateway transitway alternatives currently under consideration.

Transit Investment Direction and Plan

Transitway System Vision

The Draft TPP references the importance of developing a network of transitways that will act as a catalyst for economic development in the region. However, the Draft TPP lacks a vision for transitway expansion in the Twin Cities by only putting forth three new fixed guideway transitways within the borders of Hennepin County and no call for transitways serving Washington County. It will be challenging for local communities in the County to respond to calls for transit-oriented development when there is no corresponding vision to bring transitways to the East Metro area. **The Draft TPP should present an aggressive and regionally balanced vision for transitway expansion, which in turn will drive transformative land use policies and economic development.**

Setting Regional Transitway Priorities

The Council's proposed approach to prioritizing transitways for project development and New Starts/Small Starts grant funding applications duplicates and undermines efforts led by locally-driven planning processes.

- The ultimate determination of whether projects advance to funding should rely on local project prioritization that is driven by the priorities of the funding partners. CTIB and the Federal Transit Administration are the major investors in these projects. Additional areas of concern with the Council's suggested prioritization process includes the following:
- Adding an additional layer of prioritization beyond local, CTIB and Federal project development processes is duplicative and confusing to local agencies, businesses and residents; introduces unnecessary delays; and wastes technical and financial resources.
- The Council's proposed transitway prioritization measures are not transparent. There are nineteen primary measures and nine secondary measures, which are not weighted or ranked in the draft plan. It is the relative priority of these measures that will determine the outcome of the prioritization process. It is premature to include these measures in the Draft TPP in the absence of their rank. It deprives stakeholders of the opportunity to fully understand and comment on the proposed approach.

- The Council’s proposed approach to prioritizing transitways also implies that a slate of projects will be presented to the Council at a single moment in time for comparison and prioritization when in reality projects advance singularly and independently after crossing rigorous federally prescribed milestones. This makes a complete prioritization of projects at any given time with the purpose of eliminating projects for further advancement not practical nor technically feasible.
- It is also unclear how a single set of measures could be used to evaluate transitways across modes as each mode has unique factors that emphasize certain measures over others based on local need and context sensitive design.

The Council should remove the transitway prioritization measures from the Draft TPP and continue to work collaboratively through existing local, regional, and federal processes that have effectively prioritized transitway projects for project development for the last several years.

Gateway Corridor Status

Washington County, as a part of the Gateway Corridor Commission, has already completed a data-driven alternatives analysis that has narrowed the preferred alternative down to one general alignment and two potential modes for the Gateway Corridor. The Gateway Corridor is now in the process of preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and will be identifying the Locally Preferred Alternative in September 2014. At the same time that the Draft TPP is still under development and out for public comment. **The Gateway Corridor LPA designation should be included in the Final Draft of the TPP that will be reviewed and approved by the Council and it’s advisory committees this Fall, which avoids the need to go through a separate lengthy TPP amendment process and the undefined prioritization process avoiding duplicative work and project delays.**

Transitway Map

The County is pleased that the Council added the CTIB transitways to the overall transitway map. However, both the Rush Line Corridor and the Highway 36 Corridor have been cut short near the Washington County border. These corridors are still under study and the end points have not yet been defined. **The County insists that the map is revised to show end points for the corridor consistent with the CTIB approved map.**

Comparative Level of Financial Data for Bus System

There is a striking disparity in the level of financial information provided about the bus and support system “existing” and “expansion” costs in comparison to transitways. The bus and support system costs include “operating, capital and modernization” line items. In contrast, project-level cost information is provided for transitways. Bus and support system investments exceed transitway investments for the next sixteen years. The disparity suggests that the Council is obscuring bus and support system cost information while applying overreaching scrutiny and control to transitway development. **In order to increase transparency within the plan, the**

County believes it is necessary to include greater detail about operating, capital and modernization investments in the Draft TPP.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Definition

The County is pleased to see that Dedicated Guideway BRT is defined within the Draft TPP as a type of transitway for consideration within the region. Dedicated Guideway BRT is also a mode that is eligible for federal New Starts funding under the latest surface transportation bill. However, other references to BRT in the report often note that BRT projects can be constructed in phases or can be scalable to demand with different elements of the project being planned, designed, built and opened before other elements. While this may be true for some Arterial and Highway BRT projects that are seeking Small Starts funding it is not the case for dedicated guideway BRT. Under the New Starts Program there is not a funding mechanism for building in phases or feature by feature. **The Draft TPP should be revised to make a distinction between Small Starts type BRT projects and New Starts BRT projects.**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Investment Direction

The County appreciates that the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan recognizes the growing influence of pedestrian and bicycling activity on the regional transportation system and recognizes the cumulative benefits of well-developed bike and pedestrian amenities in relation to transit infrastructure.

However, the plan focusses too much on bicycle commuting to job centers and veers significantly away from the trail system the County has been investing in collaboration with the Council for over two decades. For the past two decades the County has worked in partnership with the Council to develop a trail system that serves a broad range of users and connects communities to parks, open spaces, local businesses and attractions, and other community resources. The Draft TPP seems to abandon that broad range of users and shifts the focus to commuting to job centers. Since the vast majority of bicycling commuting trips are not work related this seems like an unwise shift of investment. **The County urges the Council to revise the Plan to focus beyond bicycle commuting to job centers and trips for other purposes including recreation.**

Furthermore, many of the regional trail corridor priorities for the County were not included in the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) plan map and previously unidentified corridors were added to the map. Notable absences include: Brown's Creek State Trail and Central Greenway Regional Trail. Additionally, the County is concerned that the last remaining section of a 40+ mile regional trail corridor that extends from St. Paul to North Branch is rated as a Tier 2 alignment. The investment in this corridor in the past decades alone should elevate this corridor to a Tier 1 alignment. Less than four miles of trail are needed to complete this regionally significant corridor. **The County suggests that the Council revise the RBTN to add Brown's Creek State Trail and Central Greenway Regional Trail and elevate the rail corridor from St. Paul to North Branch as a Tier 1 alignment.**

The plan seems to suggest that simply building biking infrastructure in and near job centers will spawn more bicycling commuting to work. While this may be true in the short-term, the County believes that this investment direction is short-sighted and may negatively impact the culture of bicycling that has grown in recent decade in the Twin Cities. Bicycling is a lifetime pursuit, which suggests that people who begin biking at a young age are more likely to continue that activity into their adulthood than adults who didn't bike when they were young. Therefore, we think it is important to continue to invest in communities and projects that advance a culture of biking and pedestrian movement in the Twin Cities region. The shift in priority regional trail corridors, combined with a short-sighted investment direction could jeopardize the emerging impact of biking on the Twin Cities transportation system.

Lastly, the plan oversteps responsible regional planning authority by recommending specific engineering treatments, including prescribing the use of "Bike Route" and "Share the Road" along roadways with wide shoulders. These signs have not been demonstrated to improve safety or bicyclist comfort, and the range of facility types listed each have significant safety tradeoffs which must be analyzed and considered by project staff in accordance with existing guidance and regulations, which are appropriately referenced in the plan. **The County recommends removing the entire list of bicycle facility types, especially recommendations for specific engineering and signing treatments, from the plan.**

Thank you for your careful consideration of these comments on the Draft TPP and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the Council to make the Twin Cities area a great place to live, work and play for the next 30 years and beyond.

Sincerely,

Autumn Lehrke
County Board Chair

cc: Molly O'Rourke, County Administrator
Kevin Corbid, Deputy County Administrator



Agenda Item #4

DATE: July 7, 2014
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: DEIS Update

4a. Action on Scoping Decision

The Commission will be asked to make a recommendation on a scoping decision based on the results of the technical analysis and input from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). Once the Commission makes a scoping recommendation it is forwarded to the Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA), the responsible governmental unit (RGU) for the preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

TAC Input

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on June 23rd to evaluate the results of the technical analysis to date, including ridership, costs, impacts and overall project competitiveness, for the different alignments and modes under consideration. The TAC made the following recommendation to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) on the scoping decision which identifies what modes and alignments will be included for further study within the environmental impact statement document:

- Advance BRT for further study and that the LRT and the Managed Lane alternative should not advance based on the results of the technical analysis.
- Both the D1 and D2 and the E1, E2, and E3 alignment options advance for further analysis

Additional detail on both the TAC recommendation can be found in the TAC recommendation to the PAC working document distributed to the PAC. From an environmental standpoint it is good to have some alignments variations in the DEIS for comparative purposes to create a more defensible document. The TAC asked for some more information on job access to be prepared comparing the D and E alignments to help inform their upcoming Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) recommendation which is separate from the scoping decision. The next TAC meeting is scheduled for July 16th where the TAC will be making a draft recommendation on the LPA decision.

CAC Input

The CAC on June 30th to review the technical analysis to date along with the TAC scoping recommendations and provided the following input regarding the modes, alignments and issues to be studied in the Draft EIS:



- In regards to modes, all members of the CAC agreed that that managed lane alternative, which would include a freeway facility shared by transit, high occupancy vehicles and tolled single occupancy vehicles, should be eliminated as this would not support economic development goals of the cities and no funding source has been identified. Most CAC members present stated the LRT mode should be dropped due to cost; however, a few CAC members supported moving LRT forward due to concerns about how inconsistency of modes in the regional transit system (BRT on Gateway with LRT on the Green and Blue lines) would impact ridership and create confusion. All CAC members agreed that the BRT mode should be studied in the Draft EIS.
- Regarding alignments, the CAC supported that alignments recommended by the TAC allowing for some minor modifications. A few CAC members suggested that an alignment within the freeway in the D/E segments supported by circulator bus system may have merit and avoid the “north versus south” alignment concern.
- The CAC also suggested including the following issues for study in the Draft EIS: modal transfers/ease of use; circulator/feeder system; benefits/impacts to western Wisconsin; project financing.

PAC Input

The Commission will review the results of the technical analysis along with the input from the CAC and recommendations from the TAC and will make a recommendation on a scoping decision to the Commission at their July 10th meeting, which will be held directly before the Commission meeting.

4b. DEIS/LPA Schedule

Next Steps

A schedule of the remaining key milestones in the DEIS process and the LPA process are listed below:

DEIS Process

- PAC / GCC approves recommendation on scoping decision – July 10, 2014
- WCRRA action on scoping decision – July 22, 2014
- DEIS Document Preparation – August 2014 – May 2015

LPA Process

- PAC/GCC Action on Draft / Contingent LPA Decision (*submitted to Metropolitan Council for inclusion in Draft TPP public review draft*)
- PAC LPA Public Hearing– August 7, 2014
- PAC / GCC LPA Discussion / Review of Public Hearing Comments – August 14, 2014
- PAC / GCC approve LPA decision – September 11, 2014
- City, WCRRA and RCRRA Approval of LPA decision – September –October 2014



- Met Council Approval of Gateway LPA as part of TPP Update – December 2014

The Locally Preferred Alternative schedule listed above reflects the assumption that the Metropolitan Council's review of the Gateway Corridor LPA is anticipated to occur as part of the overall Draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) review process; provided the submittal dates are met, and the required documents submitted to the Metropolitan Council as outlined in the July 2, 2014 letter. If submittal dates as noted in this schedule are not met, then the Gateway Corridor project would pursue inclusion of the Gateway LPA into the TPP through the defined amendment to the TPP process which would add approximately 5-6 months to the overall LPA process.

A more detailed schedule is also attached that includes review from all project committees.

Federal Dashboard Update

The Gateway Corridor project was recently selected by President Obama to be included in the Federal Infrastructure Permits Permitting Dashboard. This is one of eleven projects nationwide added (the only project in Minnesota added this cycle) as part of a call for expanded permitting reform government-wide through modernization and streamlining of the federal review process. The program includes increased oversight and accountability of the federal permitting process to ensure the projects are moving forward without delay. For Gateway, potential efficiencies could include early and active coordination between agencies and a concurrent, rather than sequential, permitting process with the agencies involved including the Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Staff has a conference call with the FTA on July 16th and will discuss the process for incorporating the Gateway project into the dashboard and any additional reporting requirements that may need to be met. Thank you letters from the Chair to Representative McCollum and President Obama on behalf of the Commission for including the Gateway Corridor project in the dashboard are also attached.

Action Requested

Approve recommendation on Scoping Decision based on committee input

Gateway Corridor Environmental Impact Statement

PROGRESS REPORT TO THE GATEWAY CORRIDOR COMMISSION –JULY 2014

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

Key Work Activities/Progress during June and early July 2014

▪ Meetings

- *Project management team (PMT)* - Held meetings on June 11 and July 2. Meetings focused on preparation for upcoming Orange Line trip, supporting documents for the TAC scoping decision recommendation, refinement to the ridership forecasts, overview of the LPA decision making process, and the “project footprint” to be evaluated in the Draft EIS.
- *Meeting with FTA*– Participated in meeting with FTA staff in Oakdale. Meeting focused on importance of interagency coordination, Gateway’s designation on the federal permitting dashboard, and the New Starts evaluation process.
- *Meeting with City of Woodbury* – Held meeting on July 1 to discuss upcoming scoping decision, locally preferred alternative, and follow up to items City identified in their Scoping Comment letter. .

▪ Technical Advisory Committee

Prepared advance materials and participated in TAC meeting held on June 23 and prepared meeting summary. This TAC meeting focused on the TAC’s recommendation to the PAC/GCC on the Scoping Decision.

▪ Policy Advisory Committee –

The PAC did not meet in June.

▪ Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

- The CAC met on June 30, 2014. This meeting focused on the CAC’s recommendation to the PAC/GCC on the Scoping Decision. The CAC received and reviewed the TAC’s recommendation as background information.

▪ Orange Line Tour

- Prepared advance materials, arranged meeting/travel logistics, participant’s packages, coordinated with Metro staff in Los Angeles regarding the Gateway Corridor tour of the LA Orange Line BRT and participated in tour held June 25-27.
- Prepared follow up materials from the trip.

▪ Other Project Activities

- Prepared DRAFT TAC Scoping Decision Background Document for discussion at June 23 TAC meeting. Updated following input from the TAC.
- Updated project schedule, with focus on FTA review times, and upcoming Advisory Committee and local agency recommendations/actions specific to the SDD and LPA.
- Refined capital cost estimates based on input from the TAC on June 23.
- Weekly coordination with KHA/SRF project team and Washington County.
- Preparation for upcoming FTA coordination meeting scheduled for June 20, 2014.

Upcoming Activities

- Prepare for upcoming TAC, CAC, PAC/GCC meetings which will focus on the Scoping Decision recommendations.
- Prepare for upcoming TAC, CAC, PAC/GCC meeting which will focus on the Locally Preferred Alternative recommendations.
- Prepare required background materials for WCRRA resolution on Scoping Decision.
- Finalize Scoping Decision Document based on WCRRA resolution.
- Finalize participating and cooperating agencies and updated Coordination Plan.
- Hold coordination meeting with FHWA, FTA, MnDOT, Ramsey and Washington County following FTA's review of Managed Lanes Tech Memo
- Continue to advance and refine concept alignments/typical sections.
- Continue to advance data collection in preparation of Draft EIS technical analysis
- Continue to work on follow up activities from the Orange Line tour.

National Environmental Policy Act/ Minnesota Environmental Policy Act: Scoping Decision Activities & Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The Scoping Decision details the information that will be included in the Draft EIS: mode(s), alignments, and issues. The Scoping Decision will guide the environmental analysis to be conducted over the following year and documented in the Draft EIS.

TAC recommendation based on technical data and public input

June 23

CAC recommendation based on TAC recommendation and public input

June 30

PAC recommendation based on TAC, CAC, and public input

July 10

Analysis of items included in the Scoping Decision/
Preparation of the Draft EIS

July – early 2015

Publication of Draft EIS. Includes identification of LPA and Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Summer 2015

The Draft EIS will address existing environmental conditions, potential impacts resulting from the alternatives studies, and potential mitigation measures to reduce those impacts. This analysis provides the foundation for determination of the Environmentally Preferred Alternative, which may be identified in the Draft EIS and is confirmed in the Final EIS. The Environmentally Preferred Alternative is based on the alternative's ability to meet the project Purpose and Need, its feasibility (including cost and ridership), and potential environmental impacts. The Environmentally Preferred Alternative is typically determined after the Locally Preferred Alternative and is much more specific in terms of engineering, operations, and environmental mitigation. When agreed to by the FTA, the Environmentally Preferred Alternative becomes the basis for final engineering on the project.

Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

The schedule shown below assumes incorporation of the Gateway LPA into the 2014 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) update

The LPA is a general description of the transit mode and corridor alignment preferred by local governments used for long-range planning and federal funding applications. In the Draft EIS the LPA is reviewed along with other alternatives for their impacts on the natural, physical, and socio-economic environments. Because the LPA definition is fairly general, limited changes to the LPA design may be considered during the Draft EIS and preliminary engineering without affecting the LPA selection.

PAC discussion on Scoping Decision lays groundwork for LPA decision

July 10

TAC recommendation on LPA

July 16

CAC input on LPA

July 21

PAC/GCC approves Draft/Contingent LPA and submits to Met. Council for inclusion in Draft TPP released for public comment

July 24

PAC/GCC public hearing on LPA

August 7

PAC/GCC resolution on LPA

August 14

Washington and Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authorities hold public hearings

September

Ramsey and Washington Counties, St. Paul, Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale, Lake Elmo, and Woodbury pass resolutions in support of LPA

August – October

Cities' and counties' LPA resolutions and final alternatives analysis to Met. Council

Early October

Met. Council adopted TPP identifies Gateway LPA

December

The LPA decision is based on technical, community, and policy input and is documented in the Met. Council's TPP (long-range plan). Once the LPA is adopted into the TPP, the Met. Council can seek entry into the competitive federal New Starts program which could ultimately provide up to 50% of the funds to construct the project. The LPA tells the FTA which alternative the local agencies expect to be the most competitive and achieve support at the local, regional, and federal level.



July 2, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC, 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Gateway Corridor Commission (MN), and all of County, City and business partners, I would like to sincerely thank you and your administration for working to advance transit projects which seek to increase mobility and advance economic growth. Of specific note, we are extremely honored that you have chosen the Gateway Corridor transit project to be included as a part of your comprehensive plan to accelerate and expand permitting reform and look forward to working with your Administration to advance this important transit project.

As you may know, the Gateway Corridor stretches from downtown St. Paul to Wisconsin border, parallel to Interstate 94. It is the doorway to and from Minnesota and Wisconsin's diverse communities. Not only does the Gateway Corridor represent the front step to urban, suburban and rural areas, it also is an entry point to corporate campuses including 3M's global headquarters with 16,500 employees, educational institutions, commercial centers, and recreational destinations

Today, more than 64,600 people live within one mile of the Gateway Corridor. By 2030, that population is expected to grow by nearly 40% and add more than 61,500 jobs. The corridor's transportation network as it currently stands will be inadequate to handle this growth. A more sustainable, multimodal transportation network is needed to provide viable travel options for users. The Gateway Corridor Commission is also working in close collaboration with East Metro Strong, a coalition of businesses and governments working to help bring more and better transit investments like the Gateway Corridor to the east metro of the Twin Cities.

Once again, thank you for your leadership in reforming the federal permitting process and your support of the Gateway Corridor transportation project. We look forward to working with you and your staff as this project moves forward. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance to you or your staff on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Weik".

Lisa Weik
Chair, Gateway Corridor Commission

C: The Honorable Anthony Foxx - Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
The Honorable Peter Rogoff - Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
The Honorable Victor Mendez –Administrator, Federal Highway Administration



July 2, 2014

Honorable Congresswoman Betty McCollum
U.S. Representative, Fourth District
1714 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Betty:

On behalf of the Gateway Corridor Commission (MN), and all of our County, City and business partners, I would like to sincerely thank you for your work to advance great projects in the East Metro like the Gateway Corridor which seeks to increase mobility and advance economic growth. Of specific note, we are extremely grateful for all your efforts to raise the profile of the Gateway Corridor at the federal level resulting in its inclusion in the federal dashboard, the Obama Administrations comprehensive plan to accelerate and expand permitting reform.

As you know, the Gateway Corridor stretches from downtown St. Paul to Wisconsin border, parallel to Interstate 94. It is the doorway to and from Minnesota and Wisconsin's diverse communities. Not only does the Gateway Corridor represent the front step to urban, suburban and rural areas, it also is an entry point to corporate campuses including 3M's global headquarters with 16,500 employees, educational institutions, commercial centers, and recreational destinations

Today, more than 64,600 people live within one mile of the Gateway Corridor. By 2030, that population is expected to grow by nearly 40% and add more than 61,500 jobs. The corridor's transportation network as it currently stands will be inadequate to handle this growth. A more sustainable, multimodal transportation network is needed to provide viable travel options for users. The Gateway Corridor Commission is also working in close collaboration with East Metro Strong, a coalition of businesses and governments working to help bring more and better transit investments like the Gateway Corridor to the east metro of the Twin Cities.

Again, thank you for your efforts to support this critical transportation corridor. You have been a great champion and we sincerely appreciate it. We look forward to working with you and your staff as this project moves forward. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance to you or your staff on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Lisa Weik
Chair, Gateway Corridor Commission



Agenda Item #5

DATE: July 3, 2014
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Orange Line Tour Update

Background

The Commission's 2014 travel budget and work plan identifies going to a peer region as a priority for 2014. The purpose of the trip was to experience another transit system/line with similar characteristics as what is being proposed in the Gateway Corridor and identify strategies and lessons learned that could be applied to our region. Since BRT within a dedicated guideway does not exist in Minnesota traveling to another region was required.

In February the Commission identified the important characteristics to incorporate into a tour and staff worked with the DEIS consultant team to prepare a short list of potential options. At the March meeting the Orange Line BRT in Los Angeles, California was chosen because of its similar transit characteristics to those being proposed on Gateway (ratio of corridor length to number of stations, use of dedicated guideway, level of transit station and vehicle amenities) as well as the diverse communities, variety of land uses from urban to suburban and TOD along the line.

Trip Details

The trip took place from Wednesday June 25th through Friday June 27th. About 30 people from Minnesota, including representatives from the PAC, CAC, and TAC, attended the trip. The group toured the Orange Line using a BRT bus. The Operations Director from Metro in LA was the tour guide. After the tour, the group heard from Metro staff about development around the corridor and the Draft EIS process. A highlight of the trip was the opportunity to speak with Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (known as the Godfather of the Orange Line) and outgoing Metro Board Chair, Diane Dubois.

Trip Materials

Pictures of the trip and the presentations from the staff are available online. Picture highlights will be shown to the Commission at the meeting and attendees can share their insights.

- Pictures: <https://kimley-horn.securevdr.com/d/scb509eea0f94c50b>
- Presentations: <https://kimley-horn.securevdr.com/d/s83525e0c7e34126a>

A debrief session was held at the end of the trip. A draft summary of this session has been prepared and is included in the packet.



Staff will also be assembling pictures, video, and attendee testimonials to prepare a lessons learned/overview video. Video footage was taken during the tour from the front of the bus. That footage is being prepared into a format that can be easily viewed by the public. Both items will be available in the coming weeks.

Action

Information

Orange Line Site Tour

Los Angeles, CA • Wednesday, June 25, 2014 – Friday, June 27, 2014

Notes from Lessons Learned Debrief Session

Friday, June 27, 2014 – Kimley-Horn Downtown Los Angeles Office

On Friday, June 27, 2014 trip participants gathered at the Kimley-Horn downtown Los Angeles office to discuss lessons learned on the Metro Orange Line tour held the day prior. In an hour and a half long session facilitated by Beth Bartz, attendees were asked:

- What did you learn? What surprised you?
- How has your thinking about Gateway changed as a result of this trip?
- What do you want to know more about? How would it apply to Gateway?

The following summary documents notes taken during this session.

Attendees:

Lisa Weik, Washington County
Commissioner

Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County
Commissioner

Nora Slawik, City of Maplewood Mayor

Mary Giuliani Stephens, City of
Woodbury Mayor

Amy Williams, City of Lakeland
Councilmember

Randy Koepesky, City of Lakeland
Shores Mayor

Tim Swanson, Woodbury Chamber of
Commerce

Scott Beauchamp, St. Paul Area
Chamber of Commerce

Tim Herman, East Side Area Business
Association

Katie Roth, Metro Transit

Kevin Roggenbuck, Ramsey County

Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County

Lyssa Leitner, Washington County

Kathryn O'Brien, Metro Transit

Mark Finken, City of St. Paul

Jan Lucke, Washington County

Paul Sawyer, Community Advisory
Committee Chair

Tabitha DeRango, Community Advisory
Committee

Lindsey Wollschlager, CTIB

Beth Bartz, SRF

Jeanne Witzig, Kimley Horn

Ashley Ver Berg, Kimley Horn

What did you learn? How has your thinking about Gateway changed as a result of this trip?

- The corridor is a lot more than one can envision. The visual and experience is important to understanding the proposed improvement.
- Take this experience back to Minnesota. Get the community to share in what the group saw. Create a Prezi video of the experience to share.

- Make the system look good. The majority of people who see this on a regular basis will not be riders. If it looks good, it will be seen as a success.
- Consider the noise and visual sensitivities of corridor residents. There may be surprises (similar to chain fencing along the Green Line) when the system is built.
- Often the focus of the mode is the vehicle. Direct attention to the guideway. This is impressive.
- Build a line that is an amenity, not just a transitway. Think of economic development through tourism and involve tourist groups in the development process. Consider iconic art to make the transitway a destination and an attraction. People seek out the Hollywood and Vine Station in LA for its art features.
- Remember operating costs are forever. Consider the operational cost of amenities. Educate communities about what does and does not work and why. Consider elements such as flowers that attract bees and should be kept away from station waiting areas.
- Plan for vehicular and pedestrian safety. Engage pedestrian safety groups early. Orange Line had too many accidents in opening weeks. Ensure safety indicators are visible to drivers—not behind or under them. Conduct dry runs before fare service begins.
- The Gateway Corridor needs to be a gateway to communities. Engage the communities early.
- Need to address pedestrian concerns (these already exist on the East side).
- Minnesotans have a rail bias, so the bus needs to look like a train, perhaps more so than the Metro Orange Line vehicles do.
- Be transparent with addressing community issues. Highlight solutions.
- Consider Minnesota’s climate as it relates to landscaping and public art.
- Tell people the system will put \$XXX back in your pocket. Reference Metro State study.
- Apply elected official perspective: do not promise anything, commit to the project, work with the cities, consider how this can save traveler money and time to change lives
- Consider what traffic signals can do for project, even where guideway is not dedicated
- Brand the line as a permanent investment, “Gateway: the permanent rapid transit.” Understand that this may not be perceived as a benefit by some in the community.
- Need to address the perception that “roads are free but transit requires a subsidy to work.”
- Many people have a fear of change. A permanent guideway means consistency of where to find service and how it will work. East metro transit routes are not currently very reliable or consistent. Changing service means it is difficult to understand where the routes are and when buses will arrive. Gateway would be reliable, simple, predictable.
- Pull data on economic development and testimonials from local community members for commission members to use as talking points
- Consider community and elected official roles moving forward. The transition from “Gateway Corridor” to a Metro color will be difficult. Need to support the project through operations. The work is not done once the line is built—need to work with the community to improve function/service.

What surprised you?

- Permanence of the system
- How the fixed guideway looked and felt (like rail!)
- Predictable route: reliable, comfortable, simple
- Changed visual – be able to see it, didn't expect this
- Ridership outperformed forecasts (estimated at 7,500, started with 16,000, grown to 32,000)
- One-third of riders were new riders
- The amount of economic development and that developers approached Metro
- Importance of moving all the way through the corridor with minimal delays—resulting time improvement is critical
- Sound barriers present along the corridor change the way the corridor feels – could be a positive to some, a negative to others
- Idea that it is an amenity not just a transitway
- Height of station, low curb
- Simple, functional stations—do not need to spend a lot of money on details to achieve an appealing and attractive design
- The art on the sidewalk—needs to be up, particularly in winter climates
- How similar this is to what we're looking at
- Bike and pedestrian path adjacent to corridor – great amenity, but surprising that less than 2 percent of riders are bicyclists
- Local officials' commitment to the project in saying, "We can do what we can to accommodate your needs, but the No Build is not an option."
- Multi-functionality of bus over LRT (could drive off the corridor)
- Permanence of line is good for economic development
- Development and redevelopment at North Hollywood station
- How "not dense" some of the corridor was
- Elected official perspective that giving people more time changes lives

What do you want to learn more about? How would it apply to Gateway?

- It was mentioned that the Orange Line has higher ridership than one of the LRT lines in Los Angeles—which line?
- How did the "Design-Build" process go? How did the project come in under budget?
- How did you work with the local communities on the station design?
- You mentioned that the technology of the guided bus wasn't advanced enough at the stage of implementation. Have you considered implementing this technology now? Why or why not?
- How did the transit agency work with local units of government to stimulate transit oriented development?
- Our corridor has a major corporate headquarters along the line. How did the Orange Line coordinate with major corporations along the corridor?

- What are the details on Warner Center? Population and employment?
- What portion of ridership is transit dependent?
- What are the rental rates per square foot?
- What are the origins and destinations of riders?

DRAFT



DATE: July 3, 2014

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.

Upcoming Outreach

Stakeholder	Status
Woodbury Lion's Club	Presentation – TBD
Wabasha Street Block Party	Booth – July 24 th , 2014

Previous Outreach

Stakeholder	Status
Community Advisory Committee	Meeting – June 30 th , 2014
Orange Line Tour	Field Trip – June 25 - 27, 2014
Make it Happen on E. 7 th St. Night Out Business & Community Fair	Event Presence – June 20, 2014
FTA Tour and Workshop	Tour and Presentation – June 20 th , 2014
District 4 Community Council	Presentation – June 16 th , 2014
Green Line Opening	Booth at Depot/Wanderers – June 14 th , 2014
Community Advisory Committee	Meeting – June 3 rd , 2014
Target Station Opening	Booth – May 17 th , 2014
National Train Day	Booth – May 10 th , 2014
Future of 4 th Event	Booth – May 8, 2014
St. Transportation Summit	Booth – May 6, 2014
Woodbury Expo	Booth – May 3, 2014
St. Paul Port Authority	Presentation – April 17, 2014
Corridor Cities and Market Analysis Consultant	Meetings - Week of April 14, 2014
Met Council Transportation Committee	Presentation - April 14, 2014
Globe University – Students	Presentations – April 9, 2014
Engage East Side – Gateway Event	Presentation/Panel – April 8, 2014
Globe University – Staff	Presentation – March 28, 2014
Gateway Day at the Capitol	One-on-ones - March 26, 2014
DEIS Scoping Open House, Conway Rec Center	Open House – March 25, 2014



DEIS Scoping Open House, Guardian Angels	Open House – March 24, 2014
District 1 Community Council Open House	Booth – March 22, 2014
Interagency Scoping Meeting	Meeting – March 20, 2014
River Valley Action	Presentation – March 18, 2014
FHWA	Meeting – March 13, 2014
Landfall HRA	Presentation – March 12, 2014
Environmental Quality Board	Meeting – March 12, 2014
Park and Rides	Flyer handout – March 12, 2014
Legislative Strategy	Meeting – February 28, 2014
Engage East Side – Gateway Event	Meeting – February 25, 2014
Washington County Board	Workshop – February 25, 2014
Gateway Legislative Kick-Off Breakfast	Meeting – February 20, 2014
Guardian Angels Finance Committee	Meeting – February 19, 2014
Legislative Strategy	Meeting – February 14, 2014
Policy Advisory Committee/Commission	Meeting – February 13, 2014
Woodbury Chamber	Presentation – February 12, 2014
FTA Call	Call – February 12, 2014
Community Advisory Committee	Meeting – February 10, 2014
D1/D2 Open House	Open House – February 6, 2014
St. Paul Area Chamber	Presentation – February 6, 2014
Harley Davidson	Meeting – February 3, 2014
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – January 29, 2014
Legislative Strategy	Meeting – January 3, 2014
Washington County Administrators	Presentation – January 22, 2014
St. Paul East Side Groups	Meeting – January 21, 2014
TAC Staff from Woodbury, Oakdale, and Lake Elmo	Meeting – January 9, 2014
FTA Call	Call – January 7, 2014
Driving tour of Corridor w/ Senator Housley	Tour – December 27, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – December 18, 2013
“Get to Know Woodbury” Realtors event	Booth – December 18, 2013
3M Staff	Meeting – December 16, 2013
Policy Advisory Committee	Meeting – December 12, 2013
Community Advisory Committee	Meeting – December 9, 2013
FHWA Staff	Meeting – December 6, 2013
Fostering an East Side Transit Conversation	Transit Summit – December 5, 2013
District 2 Community Council	Presentation – November 20, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – November 20, 2013
FTA Conference Call	Meeting – November 13, 2013
Fostering an East Side Transit Conversation	Town Hall – November 7, 2013
MnDOT, Met Council, County leadership	Meeting – November 1, 2013
FTA Tour	Tour – November 1, 2013
St. Paul District 1 Community Council	Presentation – October 28, 2013
Landfall	Meeting – October 25, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – October 16, 2013



Lake Elmo	Presentation – October 15, 2013
MnDOT/Met Council/County Staff	Meeting – October 11, 2013
East Side Area Business Association	Presentation – October 10, 2013
East Side Partners	Meeting – October 8, 2013
Policy Advisory Committee	Meeting – October 10, 2013
Community Advisory Committee	Meeting – September 30, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – September 25, 2013
FTA	Coordination Call #2 – September 25, 2013
Fostering an East Side Transit Conversation – Engage ES	Presentation – September 25, 2013
St. Paul Transportation Committee	Meeting – September 22, 2013
Woodbury staff	Meeting – September 12, 2013
Oakdale staff	Meeting – September 12, 2013
Maplewood staff	Meeting – September 11, 2013
Lake Elmo staff	Meeting – September 10, 2013
3M	Meeting – September 4, 2013
Metro State	Meeting – August 29, 2013
St. Paul staff	Meeting – August 29, 2013
Community Advisory Committee	Meeting – August 26, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – August 21, 2013
FTA	Coordination Call – August 15, 2013
East Side Groups Update	Meeting – August 13, 2013
Policy Advisory Committee	Meeting – August 8, 2013
Hot Dogs and Transit – Engage East Side	Booth – August 3, 2013
Technical Advisory Committee	Meeting – July 24, 2013
Hot Dogs and Transit – Engage East Side	Booth – July 13, 2013
Development Forum	June 24, 2013
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability	Staff level meeting – June 7, 2013
Engage East Side Resident Network staff	Discussion on CAC – May 31, 2013
Start of DEIS	
Woodbury Chamber – Eggs and Issues	Presentation – April 12, 2013
District 1 Community Council	Booth at open house – March 25, 2013
Woodbury Lions Club	Presentation – March 5, 2013
Maplewood Lions Club	Presentation – January 28, 2013
Cottage Grove City Council	Presentation – January 16, 2013
Maplewood Planning Commission	Presentation – January 15, 2013
District 4 Community Council	Staff Meeting – January 9, 2013

Action Requested: Information



DATE: July 1, 2014
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 coordinated a number of strategies to communicate with legislators, attended community events to raise project awareness, and planned for upcoming community events.

Legislative

Presented the legislative session report to the Gateway Corridor Commission as well as created a myth/fact document for Congresswoman McCollum.

Media and Community Relations

The communications team drafted talking points and counsel for Commissioner Weik for reference during a public television interview. The team also drafted and distributed a press release about the trip to review the Orange Line BRT system in Los Angeles. Staff also coordinated with Barb Thoman of Transit for Livable Communities to partner on common priorities.

The communications team provided staffing for the Green Line opening at Union Depot. Staff at this event answered questions regarding transit and helped raise awareness for the Gateway Corridor by spreading various Gateway materials to attendees throughout the day and guiding the public through transit trivia.

Ongoing Strategy

The communications team drafted and distributed an e-newsletter. The team held a meeting to discuss upcoming events and continuing strategy for public engagement for the Gateway Corridor.

Next Steps

In July, the communications team will support staff and commission members who will attend the Wabasha Street Block party to increase publicity for the Gateway Corridor Project. The team is beginning work on a Communication Plan update. We will also continue to draft communications pieces for the community.



Agenda Item #7

DATE: July 7, 2014
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: State and Federal Legislative Update

State Update

A verbal update will be provided at the Commission meeting

Federal Update

Below is the Federal Updates prepared by Lockridge, Grindal and Nauen (LGN) for the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB).

Weekly Update for Week of June 23rd

The majority of legislators have already departed Capitol Hill for their Districts in anticipation of the July Fourth recess. The Senate Finance Committee announced it had reached an agreement to rescue the Highway Trust Fund, though a vote on the measure was suspended until the second week of July. President Obama visited Minneapolis this Friday to host a town hall meeting and present a speech on economic equality before returning to Washington.

In this Update:

[Progress on Spending Bills Slows in Both House and Senate](#)

[Senate Finance Committee Announces Highway Trust Fund Agreement](#)

[President Obama Addresses Economic Equality at Minneapolis Event](#)

[Key Upcoming Dates](#)

[Minnesota Delegation Notes](#)

[Additional Media](#)

Progress on Spending Bills Slows in Both House and Senate

House and Senate Appropriations Leaders are beginning to doubt their ambitious plans for quickly moving fiscal 2015 spending bills, in the face of partisan opposition and a tightening legislative calendar. If lawmakers are unable to pass appropriations legislation on time, a continuing resolution to keep the government funded past September 30th will again be necessary.



In the Senate, negotiations to move the stalled three-bill spending package containing the Commerce-Justice-Science, Transportation-Housing and Urban Development and Agriculture measures, will continue ahead of the July Fourth recess. Appropriators said they may examine other options to salvage at least some of their fiscal 2015 work and avoid a continuing resolution for nearly all federal agencies come the end of the fiscal year in September. With only three other spending bills ready for Senate floor consideration and legislative days quickly disappearing ahead of the August recess, Senate Leaders do not have many options.

Some Appropriators are suggesting that if the chamber's leaders cannot come to an agreement on the package of spending bills, it may prove more successful taking up single, noncontroversial bills on the floor next month. Moving bipartisan, popular bills such as Military Construction-Veterans Affairs might deter Senators from offering as many controversial amendments. Any floor action on that legislation would likely wait until after the Joint House-Senate conference committee completes its work on an emergency Veterans Affairs health care bill - negotiations that could easily stretch through the summer months.

House appropriations work also appears to be slowing down this week. Earlier this year, Appropriations Chairman Harold Rogers (R-KY) had stated his goal was to move all 12 spending bills out of his committee by the July Fourth recess and pass them before the August break. However, his timeline has since changed and his new goal is now to pass all the bills through committee by the August recess. The leadership shake-up in the House following Majority Leader Eric Cantor's (R-VA) recent primary defeat has significantly slowed appropriations work, and no spending measures have been considered this week. The House is due to consider the Energy-Water spending bill in early July, but it would only be the sixth of the 12 annual measures to pass. In committee, House Appropriators have done better, approving 10 bills overall, but the panel has yet to take up the most controversial titles, including Labor-HHS-Education and Interior-Environment.

Senate Finance Committee Announces Highway Trust Fund Agreement

On Thursday, the Senate Finance Committee unveiled a series of changes to a proposed short-term Highway Trust Fund rescue, seeking additional bipartisan support by stripping out a provision for higher fees on heavier trucks and adding in tax savings for liquified natural gas.

The proposal would strip out a higher tax level for extra-weight commercial trucks that was included in an earlier plan offered by Senate Finance Chair Ron Wyden (D-OR), and opposed by Senate Minority Members. Wyden had proposed a higher cap for that heavy vehicle use tax to raise \$1.35 billion over 10 years. Wyden said this change would also reduce the proportion of revenue raisers in his package, relative to the spending curbs Senate Minority Members are seeking.

In a significant policy change for the trust fund's dedicated excise taxes, Wyden's new package would equalize the trust fund's tax treatment of liquefied natural gas motor fuels to the same per-gallon energy output of diesel. Currently, truckers burning natural gas pay the same 24.3 cents a gallon federal fuel tax that applies to diesel fuel. However, truckers say it takes about 1.7 gallons of natural gas to produce the same power of diesel, meaning they are effectively taxed higher to travel the same distance



by paying for more gallons used. The Wyden modification would drop the natural gas fuel tax to 14.1 cents a gallon, to reflect its energy equivalence to diesel.

The measure also includes Senate language in support of a long-term surface transportation reauthorization. The Committee intends to markup the proposal early in the next week of July 7th.

President Obama Addresses Economic Equality at Minneapolis Event

On Friday morning, President Barack Obama presented a speech focused on economy equality to more than 3,000 Minnesotans at the Lake Harriet Bandshell in Minneapolis. During his address, the President criticized ongoing "obstructionism" in Congress, commenting that House Majority Members had blocked or voted against the majority of his proposals intended to assist the middle class, including extending unemployment benefits and raising the minimum wage.

It has been reported that a key reason the White House chose Minnesota for the event was due to recent passage of a \$3-an-hour increase in the state's minimum wage, which will increase the overall wage from \$6.15 to \$9.50 an hour by 2016. So far in Obama's second term, Congress has ignored his call to raise the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour.

Governor Mark Dayton and Senator Amy Klobuchar briefly introduced the President, while former and current Minneapolis mayors R.T. Rybak and Betsy Hodges and Congressman Keith Ellison attended the event.

KEY UPCOMING DATES

July 25, 2014

Expected date the Highway Trust Fund will drop below \$4 billion, the minimum cash balance the Transportation Department says it must maintain to avoid a potential crisis of highway project funding.

July 29, 2014

Minnesota State Society Forum "Coffee and Conversation" with *Congresswoman Betty McCollum*

Time: 8:30am

Location: United States Capitol

Room: 121 Cannon House Office Building

September 12, 2014

Minnesota State Society Forum "Coffee and Conversation" with *Minnesota Delegation Chief's of Staff*

Time: 8:30am

Location: Washington, DC

September 16, 2014

"Minnesotan's Salute McCollum"



Reception Honoring *Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4)*

Time: 5:30- 7:30

Location: Washington, D.C.

September 30, 2014

The comprehensive federal budget Congress passed in January of this year will expire on September 30th, which marks the end of Fiscal Year 2014.

November 4, 2014

General Election day for all 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives, 33 of the 100 seats in the United States Senate, as well as 38 state governorships.

March 15, 2015

While Congress passed legislation to raise the debt ceiling, action must be taken again prior to March 15, 2015 or the nation once again runs the risk of defaulting on its loans.

MINNESOTA DELEGATION NOTES:

Senator Amy Klobuchar, (D-MN), issued a statement celebrating President Obama's signing of the Water Resources Development bill, which will deliver much-needed funding to water resource projects across Minnesota. Read more [here](#).

Senator Al Franken, (D-MN), praised Senate passage of the "Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act," which he said would get Minnesotans back to work and help businesses fill high-demand job openings all across the country. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Tim Walz, (D-MN-01), presented the opening statement at the Joint House-Senate Veterans Affairs Conference Committee. Read more [here](#).

Congressman John Kline, (R-MN-02), sent a letter to Governor Mark Dayton urging him to request the President issue a disaster declaration for areas of the state affected by heavy flooding. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Erik Paulsen, (R-MN-03), celebrated House passage of his legislation, 'the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act,' a bill encouraging states to adopt 'Safe Harbor' laws that discourage prosecution of sex trafficking victims and connect them with needed services to help them escape. Read more [here](#).

Congresswoman Betty McCollum, (D-MN-04), visited Fourth District communities affected by flooding; the Congresswoman was joined by local leaders and elected officials in Stillwater, St. Paul and Newport as she assessed the situation on the ground. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Keith Ellison, (D-MN-05), applauded the release of a White House memo outlining the government's authority for using drones to kill U.S. citizens overseas. Read more [here](#).



Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, (R-MN-06), introduced bipartisan legislation that prohibits federal funding for medical experimentation on a ward of the State. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Collin Peterson, (D-MN-07), along with several other members of the Minnesota Delegation, introduced legislation honoring the late U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar, renaming the Chisholm Post Office and portions of Highways 35 and 61 in Oberstar's memory. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Rick Nolan, (D-MN-08) issued a statement celebrating House passage of his amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill, prohibiting funding for all military infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. Read more [here](#).

ADDITIONAL MEDIA

CQ NEWS

June 25, 2014 - 12:29 p.m.

Ex-Im Bank Opponents Point to Compromise on Reauthorization

Congressional Republicans are signaling movement toward a compromise on a reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank that would extend and overhaul the financing agency's charter.

House Financial Services Chairman Jeb Hensarling , a fierce critic of the bank, suggested Wednesday the bank must be "reformed" even if Ex-Im's charter does not fully lapse at the end of September, as he supports.

"I will admit that Republicans may disagree on whether Ex-Im should be reformed or allowed to expire, and I certainly hope this hearing will help illuminate that decision. But we are united in believing we cannot reauthorize the status quo," the Texas Republican said at a hearing on Ex-Im on Wednesday.

Rep. John Campbell , R-Calif., said at the hearing that he and a collection of Republicans had participated in a working group to come up with compromise "reforms" of the bank.

He said this "broad spectrum of Republicans," some of whom want to see the bank expire, had developed a "third option" that includes legislative language. Campbell posted a discussion draft (PDF) on his website during the hearing.

Rep. Stephen Fincher , R-Tenn., who voted against the bank's reauthorization in 2012, expressed concerns that Ex-Im's outright expiration would cost jobs in his district.

"Please, let's don't overreact," he said. "Let's try to make it better. ... We're going to reform this and hopefully make it better."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid pledged on Tuesday that he would bring the bank's reauthorization up for a vote before it expires Sept. 30.

And Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell suggested Tuesday that he would not filibuster legislation to reauthorize the bank, even if he opposed the legislation, as he did in 2012.

"I think we ought to take it up," said the Kentucky Republican. "I haven't decided what I'm going to do.



But I do think it's an issue that, you know, is important enough to be debated and voted on here in the Senate."

The bank received a blow over the weekend when newly elected House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy , R-Calif., said he would not support the bank's reauthorization, even though he voted for it in 2012.

In the interview on Fox News Sunday, McCarthy said the 2012 measure "directed the president and the Treasury secretary to wind down the Ex-Im bank, negotiate with other countries to wind them down so we have a level playing field." That may offer an opening for McCarthy to change his position depending on what is in a new reauthorization bill

Action

Information



DATE: July 3, 2014
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Other Items

Items 8a. Meeting Dates Summary

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

Month	Meeting	Date	Planned Start Time
July	PAC	July 10	2:00 PM
July	Gateway Corridor Commission	July 10	3:30 PM
July	PAC (tentative)	July 24	2:00 PM
July	Gateway Corridor Commission (tentative)	July 24	3:30 PM
August	PAC Hearing on LPA (tentative)	August 7	Evening
August	PAC	August 14	2:00 PM
August	Gateway Corridor Commission	August 14	3:30 PM
September	PAC	September 11	2:00 PM
September	Gateway Corridor Commission	September 11	3:30 PM

Item 8b. Website and Social Media Updates

Facebook

The Gateway Corridor Facebook page was launched on Monday, February 20, 2012. The page currently has 426 '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 72-937.

Website

For the month of February, there were 750 visits to the website. The website is averaging 751 visits per month in the last month. Attached is a summary of the visits per month for 2013 and 2014.



Item 8c. Media Articles

Attached are media articles about the Gateway Corridor from the last month.

Action Requested: Information.

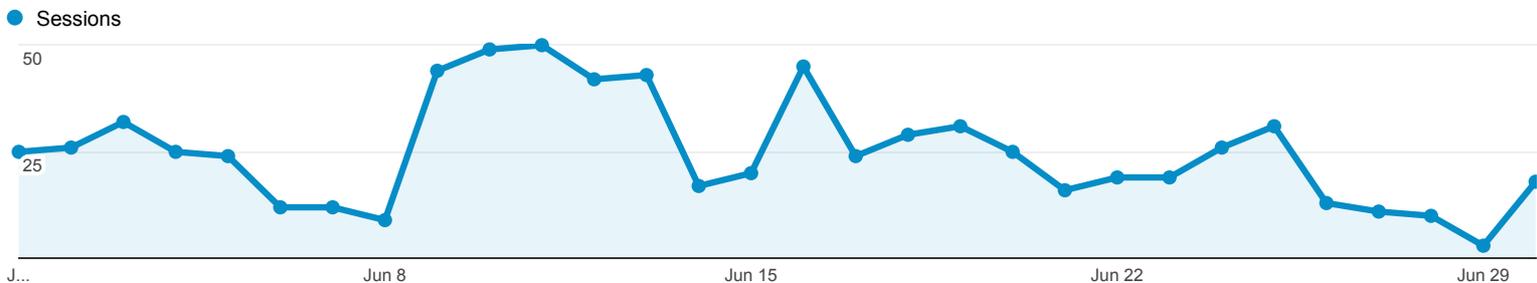
Jun 1, 2014 - Jun 30, 2014

Audience Overview

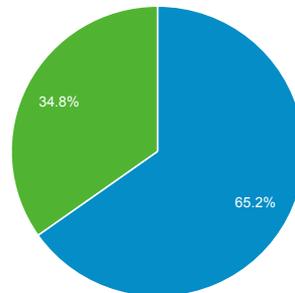
All Sessions
100.00%

+ Add Segment

Overview



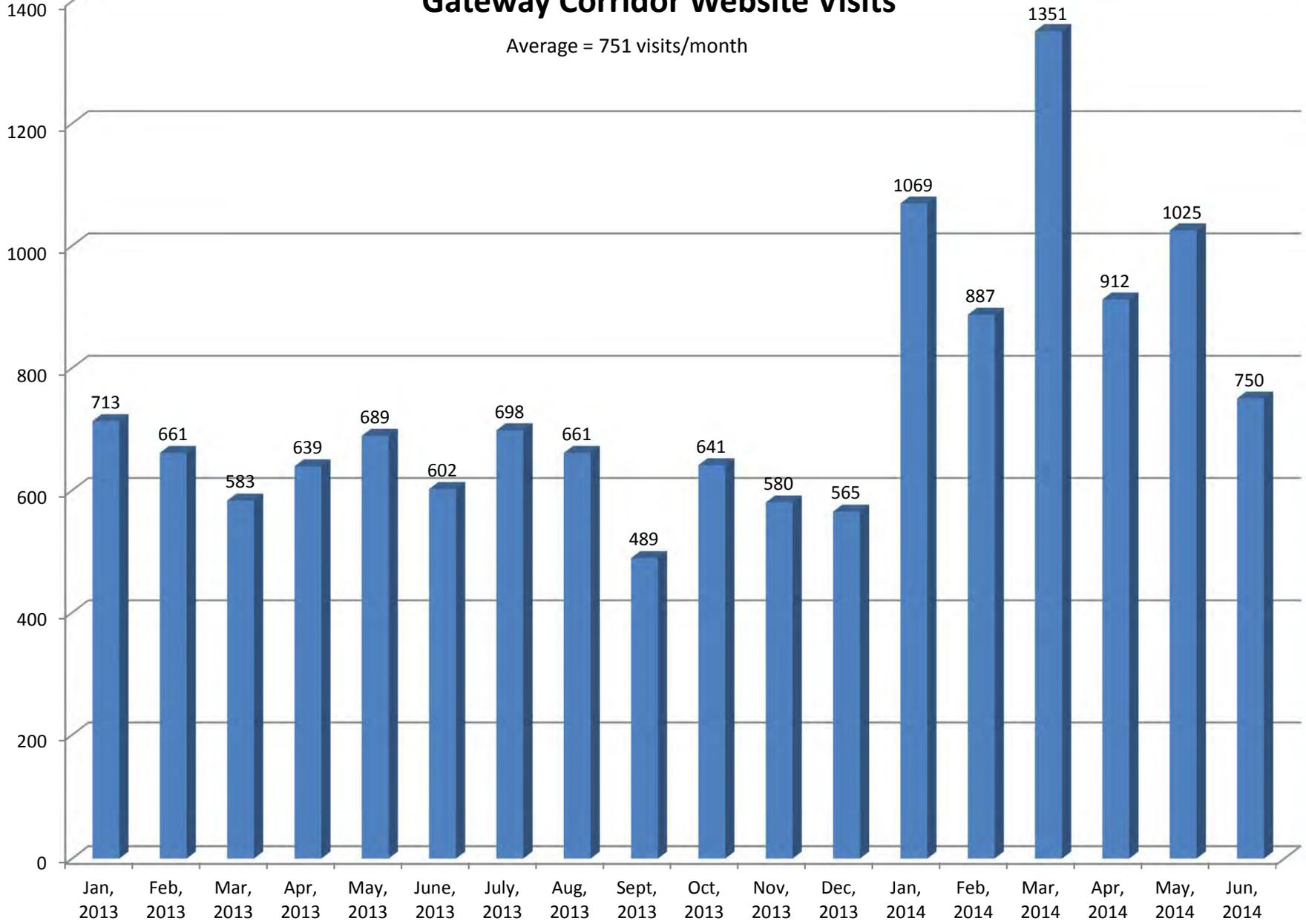
■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor



Language	Sessions	% Sessions
1. en-us	724	96.53%
2. en	5	0.67%
3. en-gb	4	0.53%
4. pt-br	4	0.53%
5. fr-fr	2	0.27%
6. zh-cn	2	0.27%
7. el	1	0.13%
8. en-ca	1	0.13%
9. es-ar	1	0.13%
10. es-us	1	0.13%

Gateway Corridor Website Visits

Average = 751 visits/month



Vision for Gateway, east metro coming into focus

With the recent news of the Gateway Corridor's funding comes a great deal of encouraging progress regarding improved transit in the east metro. Between the collaborative efforts of the state Legislature, Metropolitan Council and federal government, we can rest assured that residents of Senate District 53—Woodbury, Landfall, and southern parts of Maplewood and Oakdale—will see increased development and convenience when it comes to rapid transit.

If you're unfamiliar with the Gateway Corridor, here is a bit of background information: It would run between the Union Depot in Lowertown St. Paul through Woodbury, along Interstate 94 in a dedicated guideway. It would stop at 11 stations and would serve as a connection to our growing regional transit system. The Gateway Corridor Commission has used a highly methodical, data-driven process in planning and evaluating alternatives. The commission completed an analy-

sis of the route in 2013, and there will likely be a dedicated guideway for bus-rapid transit (BRT), featuring stations with level boarding, similar to light-rail trains, for route efficiency and accessibility. BRT is new transit technology—unlike anything else currently in the metro—and will ultimately serve as an efficient and cost-effective alternative for transportation and economic development in the east metro.

We're hoping that the Gateway Corridor will be transporting passengers by 2022—so we have eight years of planning to adequately accommodate the people of the Twin Cities region presently and the people who will come in the future. Nearly 300,000 people live along the corridor, along with some of Minnesota's largest employers, including 3M, Ecolab, Imation, and Securian Financial. What's more, the population of the corridor is expected

SEN. SUSAN KENT

Legislator's Viewpoint

to grow by 90,000 people by the year 2030, as well as an expected 30,000 jobs. The Gateway Corridor is not only important in terms of transit in the east metro; it's necessary to manage the exciting growth that I am happy to see.

We're lucky that our proposal was recognized by the White House this year as one of 11 projects nationally that will receive expedited review and permitting. Before we know it, we'll have the convenience of a rapid transit system that parallels those of other major metropolitan regions across the country. This is important because we're learning more and more just how much the Twin Cities region serves as a mecca for businesses and citizens seeking to raise their families in a flourishing state.

The Gateway Corridor was a project that I advocated strongly for this session in the Senate bonding bill. After negotiations among Capital Invest-

ment Committee members and legislators, funding for Gateway was incorporated into the Met Council's allocation, which will go toward property acquisition, engineering, and analysis of the impact on the surrounding communities. We are certainly off to a good start with this project, thanks to the hard work of many community leaders and involved citizens. The work and vision is important because our community continues to grow, and it's important that we continue to plan and prepare so that the east metro remains the best place possible for current and future residents and businesses. Striving for the best is something we do day in and day out—it's a Minnesota way of life—and I'm excited as the vision for a bright future for the Twin Cities and East Metro comes into focus.

Kent, a Woodbury Democrat, represents Senate District 53

Feds to Gateway officials: Reconsider managed lane

By [Michael Longaecker](#) on Jun 27, 2014 at 4:29 p.m.

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Washington County planners have resubmitted documents to a federal agency after officials there demanded a discarded transit option be given a second look.

The county received two letters between March and April asking for Gateway Corridor planners to revisit the possibility of a bus-rapid transit (BRT) managed lane alternative as the project moves ahead. Planners in 2013 whittled the transit options to two – a dedicated BRT transitway that hugs Hudson Road or light rail through the same corridor.

The managed lane option called for a center lane to be constructed in the median between the eastbound and westbound Interstate 94 traffic lanes. BRT buses would operate in the lane, which would also allow passenger vehicles via a toll system.

Projections place the managed lane option's \$520 million cost between BRT (\$400 million) and LRT (\$920 million).

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The Gateway project wrapped its scoping process in April and is poised to narrow down plans in September, when the Gateway Corridor Commission is expected to select a transit mode and the preferred alignment.

Requests made by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration to revisit the managed lane option have not slowed the process, said Jan Lucke, a transit and planning manager for Washington County.

She said Gateway planners gathered additional data on the managed lane option and sent it to FTA officials in response to the request.

“We’re waiting to hear from them,” Lucke said, adding that Gateway planners are “optimistic” that the data will satisfy FTA officials.

The project’s alternatives analysis phase gave “careful” consideration to the managed lane option, Lucke said, though the process has moved forward without it in the mix.

“Right now we’re comfortable looking at the BRT and LRT options moving forward,” she said.

Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik said the managed lane was largely shelved because it would not have been eligible for a key federal funding source. Weik, who also chairs the Gateway Corridor Commission, said the managed lane option would have been eligible for a smaller federal funding package that would only go toward the construction of transit stations, but not for lane construction.

“The lack of an identified federal funding source is a big deal,” Weik said, noting that a dedicated BRT or LRT transitway would be eligible for federal New Starts funding. “If we don’t secure that, then we’ll be looking to local property owners.”

Also working against the managed lane was the commission’s alternatives analysis, which concluded that the position of its stations – in the center of the interstate – would yield fewer economic development opportunities.

Weik noted ridership projections for the managed lane option were lower than they

were for the Hudson Road project.

However, a March 10 letter from FHA Division Administrator Derrell Turner states it would be “in the public’s best interest” for Gateway planners to carry a managed lane option along as it moves into the draft environmental impact statement process.

In his letter, Turner outlines how the managed lane option achieves the project’s purpose with “fewer adverse impacts.”

The letter also cites concerns over whether limited right-of-way along Hudson Road near I-94 would accommodate future capacity expansion. The potential wear and tear on interstate ramps “due to the interaction with the facilities under consideration” is also among concerns noted by Turner.

Gateway commissioners in September are expected to make a number of key decisions. One mode – BRT, LRT or, possibly, managed lane – will be determined, though the process allows other modes to be studied for comparative purposes in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).

While Turner’s letter terms the federal request a “determination,” an April 9 letter from FTA Regional Administrator Marisol Simon contained stronger language.

“The FTA will require Washington County to analyze the BRT-managed lane alternative in the DEIS,” a portion of the letter states.

The FTA is required to evaluate all reasonable alternatives as part of its review of environmental requirements. According to the FTA, the commission continues to deem the managed lane option as a reasonable alternative for Gateway.

Weik said she is not discouraged by Simon’s letter. She said it’s likely the Gateway process will now move ahead with the third option in play, at least – though not in the lead.

“I think that’s a strong possibility,” she said. “I’m not concerned with doing that.”

Weik said that's because while data continue to suggest the BRT corridor along Hudson Road is the strongest model, she sees vetting the merits of additional options as a step toward strengthening the process. Local officials will be better able to defend a final selection after it has undergone a rigorous and robust study – and comparison.

That, Weik said, is what the federal agencies would like to see as well.

“I think they want to make sure our study is as robust as possible,” she said. “I don't think it hurts anything to have additional comparisons.”

Also to be determined by Gateway commissioners is the route, which departs St. Paul north of I-94. Commissioners will decide whether the line continues on the north side of the highway as it continues on toward Manning Avenue or if it will cross south into Woodbury.

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Gateway Corridor officials head to Los Angeles to study bus rapid transit

By [Joe Kimball](#) | 06/25/14

A team from the [Gateway Corridor Commission](#) — which is considering rapid transit options between Woodbury and downtown St. Paul — is in Los Angeles this week, looking at the Metro Orange Line bus corridor there.

Thirty people, including commission members, business people, community members and staff from city, county, regional, state and congressional offices are on the trip, which runs Wednesday through Friday.

The plan, said Commission Chair and Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik in a statement, "is to identify strategies and lessons learned that could apply to Gateway Corridor":

"The trip will be an opportunity to interact with the people operating the service to learn about economic development opportunities, community engagement, and nuances of operating a dedicated guideway BRT system. These are valuable lessons for Gateway Corridor Commission and project partners to learn prior to making significant decisions, such as route alignments and preferred modes of transit."

The Orange Line was chosen for study, official said, because of its:

- Use of a dedicated guideway — none exists in Minnesota at this time
- Ratio of corridor length to number of stations
- Level of transit station and vehicle amenities
- Diverse populations and land uses along the line
- Transit oriented development examples

The commission, which has representatives from the Washington and Ramsey County boards, and members from the area cities, is looking at both bus rapid transit and light rail transit options along a 12-mile stretch between Union Depot in Saint Paul and Woodbury, along Interstate 94 and Hudson Road.

An optimistic goal, depending on study findings and availability of funds, is to have service running by 2022.

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UPDATE: Armed Woodbury robbery ends with fatal self-inflicted gunshot

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Woodbury Bulletin

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A park and ride facility that was set for construction at Manning Avenue and Interstate 94, like this one at Woodbury 10 Theatre, has been put on hold while Gateway Corridor alignment options are studied. (Staff photo by Riham Feshir)

Manning Avenue park and ride project shelved

By [Riham Feshir](#) on Jun 18, 2014 at 8:56 a.m.

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A new park and ride facility that was set to relieve congestion at existing locations has been put on hold as discussions regarding Gateway Corridor alignments continue.

Metro Transit was set to construct the lot this year at Manning Avenue and Interstate 94, but Woodbury officials asked to pump the brakes on the project, which is the end point of the proposed Gateway Corridor transit plan.

Woodbury Mayor Mary Giuliani Stephens said Gateway Corridor planners are studying two different alignment options – one on the north side of I-94 and one on the south – and the city didn't want the end point to dictate the rest of the alignment.

“It wouldn't make any sense to have a (transit) line up north and a park and ride down here,” she said.

City officials said they prefer to wait until further studies are done on where best to build a light rail or a bus rapid transit before adding a new park and ride facility.

“The city remains interested in having that park and ride at 94 and Manning,” City Planner Eric Searles said. “But we just feel it's appropriate to tie the two together to make sure the right decision is made.”

Metro Transit had received \$7.28 million in federal funding and \$1.82 million in regional transit capital funding to construct the park and ride, purchase

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buses and add a new express service from Woodbury to Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The agency has not lost out on the funding, Metro Transit spokesman Drew Kerr said, and the money will continue to be held for future use.

Woodbury commuters currently use four park and ride locations, with the majority of spaces continuing to swell at or near capacity.

The most utilized sites are lots at Woodbury Theatre and Guardian Angels Catholic Church, which were at 97 percent and 100 percent capacity in 2013, according to Metro Transit.

Christ Episcopal Church has 100 spaces with 61 percent filling up, while Woodbury Lutheran is sitting at 81 percent capacity at its 91-space lot, according to the 2013 figures.

Metro Transit said it's now pursuing alternative locations for a new park and ride. The site selection is being conducted in conjunction with planning efforts for the Gateway Corridor.

"As the work moves along, we want to make sure we're building infrastructure that aligns with that plan," Kerr said.

Metro Transit has in the past temporarily used locations to provide short-term relief when existing park and ride facilities are at or above capacity, but an interim location has not been identified for Woodbury.

The city of Woodbury is hoping a decision on which side of I-94 Gateway Corridor transit will be comes later this fall, as planners wrap up the scoping and public feedback part of the project.

Searles said the city will continue to work with all parties involved in the process, including surrounding communities, to make sure a park and ride that makes sense will be built.

“We’re committed to working with regional partners to ensure all of the development or redevelopment opportunities that transit may bring can be realized,” he said.

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[Riham Feshir](#)

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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The Green Line? That's just for starters

Updated: 06/11/2014 02:18:08 PM CDT

TwinCities.com

The Green Line? That's just for starters

ON THE GREEN LINE



The Pioneer Press kicks off a week of stories examining the impact of the Green Line ahead of its June 14 debut.

Stories will look at the changing face of University Avenue, public safety along the corridor, the trailblazers who made it happen and the future of transit in Minnesota.

Find them all at TwinCities.com/Transportation.

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When the Green Line debuts Saturday, East Metro Strong's informational kiosks will greet passengers at nine stops, urging them to look beyond the new \$957 million light rail.

After all, more than two-dozen transit projects of varying scope and intensity are somewhere on the horizon. Their theme: "The Green Line is Just the Beginning."

East Metro Strong executive director Will Schroeer will launch the informational campaign at 11 a.m. Thursday by the Union Depot light rail stop on St. Paul's Fourth Street.

The transit advocacy partnership, which launched in April, includes Dakota, Ramsey and Washington counties, as well as several east-metro cities and businesses. They say employers throughout the metro would benefit if east-metro workers had access to them via public transit.

"We think the east metro needs a lot more lines," said Schroeer. "It's not good for anybody in the region -- east or west -- for the transit system to be lopsided to the west."

The key challenge to their efforts is funding for construction. The state's first light rail line, the \$715 million Blue Line, rolled out in 2004, followed by the \$320 million Northstar commuter rail in 2009.

At that rate, it would take at least 70 years to complete the 14 high-speed rail, commuter rail, light rail and streetcar projects envisioned throughout the metro.

To jumpstart construction, Met Council Chair Sue Haigh and other advocates are urging lawmakers to consider a new metro-wide half-cent sales tax for transit, which she believes could fund two major projects at once.

Not all efforts center on tracks. Calling modern, limited-stop, express buses a cheaper and more flexible alternative, Metro Transit hopes to launch a new rapid-transit bus route each year for the next 12 years.

EAST METRO

GREEN LINE: Metro Transit's \$957 million light rail project runs 11 miles from Union Depot in St. Paul to Target Field Station in Minneapolis. Its June 14 debut caps decades of planning. The proposed Southwest Corridor would extend the Green Line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie.

Transit network of the future?

The Green Line is the latest expansion of public transportation in the Twin Cities, which planners envision as a web of light rail, specialty buses and even streetcars.



metrotransit.org/greenline

GATEWAY CORRIDOR: Proposed transit link from the Union Depot to Woodbury along Interstate 94 could roll out in 2022. The \$400 million -- \$920 million project would use light-rail trains or rapid-transit buses, based on the results of a study expected next year. thegatewaycorridor.com

RIVERVIEW: The corridor would connect the Union Depot to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and Mall of America. It could involve rapid-transit buses, streetcars, light rail or a combo. Ramsey County will study options this

summer. Metro Transit plans to debut a rapid-transit bus line on West Seventh Street by 2016. St. Paul is considering a possible \$250 million streetcar project from Randolph Avenue to Arcade Street.

ROBERT STREET: Authorities are studying three possible transit routes from downtown St. Paul to northern Dakota County. A modern streetcar or "arterial" Bus Rapid Transit service would operate in traffic along Robert Street. Otherwise, a rapid-transit bus could follow U.S. 52 on shoulder lanes to the 80th St. exit near Inver Hills Community College. robertstreettransit.com

RUSH LINE: The 80-mile line could run from Union Depot to Hinckley, though officials are currently studying a segment that goes as far north as Forest Lake. Metro Transit coach buses currently serve the route up to Running Aces Harness Park in Columbus. rushline.org

RED ROCK: The Red Rock Corridor Commission recently voted to push for a rapid-transit bus from Hastings to downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis as a near-term measure. Officials still dream of someday converting the route to commuter rail, a \$350 million project, according to studies from 2007.) redrockrail.org

BUS RAPID-TRANSIT LINES

CEDAR AVENUE BRT / RED LINE: In June 2013, the state's first rapid-transit bus debuted along Cedar Avenue from Apple Valley to the Mall of America.

The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority's hybrid buses complete the 11-mile stretch on highway shoulder lanes. Project cost: \$112 million project. metrotransit.org/metro-red-line

SNELLING AVENUE "A" LINE: Metro Transit hopes to launch a dozen rapid-transit buses, one yearly, beginning with the Snelling Avenue "A" line in 2015. The \$25 million "arterial" BRT route would start at the

46th Street station in Minneapolis and use Ford Parkway and Snelling to get to the Rosedale Shopping Center. A potential extension could reach the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in Arden Hills.

metrotransit.org/snelling-brt

WEST SEVENTH STREET "B" LINE: Metro Transit is \$6 million away from completing funding for the \$28 million "B" Line along West 7th Street between downtown St. Paul, MSP Airport and the Mall of America in Bloomington. The B Line could open in late 2016.

ADDITIONAL BRT: Metro Transit's additional bus rapid transit lines could include routes along Penn Avenue North in Minneapolis, East Seventh, Chicago-Fremont, Lake Street, Central Avenue, Nicollet Avenue, Robert Street, West Broadway, Hennepin Avenue and American Boulevard.

ORANGE LINE: The Metro Orange Line is a planned rapid-transit line between downtown Minneapolis and Burnsville along Interstate 35W. A future extension could reach Lakeville. The 16-mile corridor has been the most heavily-traveled express bus corridor since the 1970s, with about 14,000 daily rides.

STATE RAIL PROJECTS

EMPIRE BUILDER: Amtrak's Empire Builder offers a daily round-trip between Chicago and Union Depot. The state is working with Amtrak on adding a second round-trip.

NORTHERN LIGHTS: MnDOT is studying a possible high-speed passenger rail from Target Field Station to Duluth. The \$1 billion Northern Lights Express would operate on 155 miles of existing BNSF right-of-way. [NLX](#)

HIGH-SPEED TO CHICAGO: A proposed high-speed passenger rail to Chicago would need major track upgrades to get up to 110 miles per hour, let alone the longer-term goals of 150 or even 210 miles per hour. The "River Route" would connect St. Paul, Red Wing, Winona, Milwaukee and the Windy City.

mnhighspeedrail.com

ROCHESTER ZIP LINE: High-speed rail from Rochester could someday roll into Union Depot, the airport, or both. MnDOT says a route selection is probably three years out, with preliminary engineering wrapping up in 2019. The Zip Line from Rochester would travel the 100-mile corridor in about 50 minutes or less.

GoZipRail.org

WEST METRO

HIAWATHA: Launched in 2004 as the Hiawatha line, the \$715 million Blue Line connects downtown Minneapolis to the Mall of America. It exceeded its projected year 2020 ridership by 2006, and carries more than 31,000 passengers each weekday, about 10.5 million per year. The 12-mile, 19-station corridor shares five stations with the Green Line. [Metro Transit facts](#)

NORTHSTAR: The 40-mile commuter rail line connects Big Lake, Minn. to Target Field Station, with seven stops. The \$320 million project opened in November 2009, and offers 12 arrivals and departures each weekday and three round-trips each weekend. northstartrain.org

SOUTHWEST: In April, the Met Council approved the general scope for the Southwest Line, an extension

of the Green Line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie. Spanning 16 stations and 16 miles of track, the \$1.68 billion light rail would run about a mile in shallow tunnels. If Hennepin County and five host cities consent, service could begin in 2019. swlrt.org

BOTTINEAU: A future extension of the Blue Line could run from Target Field Station to Brooklyn Park near the Target corporate campus. The 13-mile, \$1 billion corridor would serve Golden Valley, Robbinsdale and Crystal. [Bottineau Transitway](#)

MINNEAPOLIS STREETCAR: The city of Minneapolis is exploring a possible \$200 million streetcar corridor along Nicollet, Hennepin and Central avenues from Lake Street to Columbia Heights.

MIDTOWN RAIL: Some form of transit along the Midtown Greenway or Lake Street could someday connect the Green Line's Southwest station near Lake of the Isles in Minneapolis to the Blue Line's Lake Street station.

WEST BROADWAY: Over the next year, Metro Transit will study transit options along West Broadway Avenue, a commercial corridor in North Minneapolis. Options include bus or streetcar service.

Frederick Melo can be reached at 651-228-2172. Follow him at twitter.com/FrederickMelo.