



Gateway Corridor Commission News Release

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National Expert Says East Metro will ‘Reinvent’ Meaning of Bus Rapid Transit, Lead the Nation

A room of nearly 100 policy makers and business leaders were encouraged by what they heard April 15 at the Gateway Corridor Development Forum, held at Globe University in Woodbury. Two national experts shared ideas on how communities and developers can use the proposed Gold Line bus rapid transit project to create prosperous communities.

“The kind of transit for which you’re planning is outstanding,” said Dena Belzer, president of Strategic Economics, a national leader in urban economics techniques that guide local public policy decisions.

“When you do this bus rapid transit line, you’re going to reinvent the meaning of BRT, not just in this region, but in this country,” Belzer said. “You’re taking a line and moving it out toward communities that don’t have as much development. You’re not retrofitting an urban area. So you’re really going to lead the way nationally.”

Roger Millar, director of Smart Growth America’s Leadership Institute, talked to the group about leveraging BRT and transit-oriented development to advance community goals. He offered five tests for planning community investments:

1. Popsicle Test—Can you walk home from the store before your popsicle melts?
2. Smooch Test—Is the place comfortable, safe, attractive, and intimate, suitable for a date-night stroll?
3. Kid Test—Can children safely explore a world beyond their own backyards?
4. Seniors Test—Are elder citizens a welcome part of the community? Can they get out and about and get their needs met when driving is no longer an option?

5. Commons Test—Does development contribute to the overall community something greater than what it takes in terms of natural and community resources?

Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik, chair of the Gateway Corridor Commission, said people felt empowered by the presenters and enthused to continue working together.

“The message was clear that a successful regional transitway service requires collaboration and communication between policy makers, property owners, developers, and the transit provider,” said Commissioner Weik. “Coming together for educational events like the Development Forum is one way we’re meeting that goal.”

The event was presented by the Gateway Corridor Commission and sponsored by East Metro Strong, Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce, Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, and Woodbury Area Chamber of Commerce. This was the second Development Forum presented by the Commission. The first, in 2013, focused on lessons from the BRT system in Cleveland.

About the Gateway Corridor transit project

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



Photo Cutline: Presenter Roger Millar (third from left) discusses transit-oriented development April 14 with county and federal community leaders, Ramsey County Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire, Washington County Commissioner Lisa Weik, Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Jake Schwitzer from Sen. Franken's office, Josh Straka from Congresswoman McCollum's office, and Tim Cossalter from Sen. Klobuchar's office.



Photo Cutline: Presenter Dena Belzer told of room of nearly 100 community leaders April 14 that Gateway Corridor Gold Line bus rapid transit has an excellent opportunity to redefine the meaning of BRT for the nation.



Photo Cutline: Leading the discussion April 14 at the Gateway Corridor Development Forum at Globe University were Dena Belzer, presenter from California, Will Schroeer, East Metro Strong executive director, and Roger Millar, presenter from Montana.