



The Gateway Gold Line is moving forward -- with your help

By Lisa Weik

The Gateway Corridor Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is making great progress this summer on environmental work, conceptual design and refinement of the route. In order to create the best transit service possible for this corridor between Saint Paul and Woodbury/Lake Elmo, we need your help. I have already heard from many of you, and I wanted to share answers to some of the most common questions.

Q. Is work progressing even though Gateway Gold Line didn't receive state funding this spring?

Yes! We are in the middle of completing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS). This began in spring 2014 and is scheduled to be completed early next year. The Draft EIS will study the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of the project, as well as ways to minimize or eliminate those impacts. We are also working on the beginning stages of engineering and design, and we are very close to refining the route the BRT would take east of I-694. Finally, we are exploring a number of different options which could provide funding for the next phase of work to begin next year.

Q. What will happen to express bus service when Gateway Gold Line begins operation?

Express bus service will continue even after Gold Line service begins. Metro Transit recently released a Rider Alert affirming this, and describing how the Gateway BRT and existing bus services would be complimentary. Once the Gold Line is in operation, express bus riders will have an easy alternative to

get home outside of regular express service hours, such as in the middle of the day or later at night. While we are on this topic, it should be noted that express buses will be able to use the Gold Line's exclusive lane.

Q. Where will stations be located in Washington County?

The Gateway Commission is now taking public comment on a recommendation for station sites near the eastern end of the line - please see a map on our website. While the purpose of BRT is to move people to and from jobs, a secondary goal is development. Based on input from the community, land owners and policy makers, we are putting stations where areas are ripe for development or redevelopment. For example, the proposed alignment along 4th Street North through Oakdale serves the existing and future job centers around Helmo Avenue and the existing express bus park-and-ride at Guardian Angels Church. It would service future development areas in Lake Elmo near Keats Avenue and in Woodbury closer to Manning Avenue.

It is important to note that transitways work best with feeder bus routes, shuttles, and pedestrian and bike paths. The Commission will be working on these elements to ensure Gold Line passengers get to where they need to go, to the north and south of the corridor.

Q. I've been hearing conflicting information about the Gold Line project, how do I make sure what I am hearing is accurate?

It is the Commission's intent to be very transparent about the development process. Please come to us for information. Our monthly meetings are open to the public. A Community Advisory Committee meets regularly. We have done hundreds of presentations at meetings and in other public venues and we are happy to come and give a presentation to any group that is interested. You can always contact us through our website and Facebook pages, or by mail or phone if you have questions.

We need your help

There are a number of opportunities for public comment during our planning process. Please attend one or all of these meetings, or review project information online and contact us with your comments and questions.

- Now through September 24: Comment period on routing on the eastern end of the corridor in Lake Elmo and Woodbury.

- September 10, 5:00 p.m.: Public hearing on routing on the eastern end of the corridor in Lake Elmo and Woodbury, Woodbury City Hall.
- Early 2016: Draft EIS public hearing and 60-day comment period.
- Other comments: www.TheGatewayCorridor.com,
GatewayCorridor@co.washington.mn.us, 651-430-4300.

We are excited by the growth our area is experiencing, and we are committed to proactively meet transportation needs with a cost-effective, safe, convenient transit service to complement our highway system. Thank you for keeping informed about the project.

Lisa Weik is a Washington County commissioner and chair of the Gateway Corridor Commission

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