PLANNING COMMISSION

Barbara A. Wencl, Chair

CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Monday, September 23, 2013, 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
All meetings are held in the City Hall Annex 13th floor
Conference room at 25 West 4th Street in Saint Paul

1. Red Rock Corridor Update – Lyssa Leitner, Washington County, 20 minutes

2. Gateway Corridor Update – Lyssa Leitner, Washington County, 20 minutes

Upcoming Transportation Committee Meetings

- October 7
- October 21

Meetings are open to the public. The Chair may allow five minutes for informal public comment (from non-committee members) at the beginning of each agenda as needed. Additional time may be allocated for comments or further discussion at the discretion of the Chair. Meetings will be cancelled if there is not a quorum expected, or if there are no agenda items. For additional information on the Transportation Committee of the Planning Commission, please visit our website at bit.ly/StPaulTC or contact Hilary Holmes at hilary.holmes@ci.stpaul.mn.us *or 651-266-6612.*

Transportation Committee Staff Report

Committee date: September 23, 2013

Project Name	
Geographic Scope	The Red Rock Corridor is a transportation corridor originating in Hastings traveling through downtown St. Paul and on to downtown Minneapolis. The corridor is roughly parallel to Trunk Highway 61 and Interstate 94.
Ward(s)	2, 7
District Council(s)	1, 17
Project Description	The Red Rock Corridor is in the middle of the Alternatives Analysis Update and is releasing the initial evaluation data to the public to gather feedback about the results.
Project Contact	Lyssa leitner
Contact email/phone	Lyssa.Leitner@co.washington.mn.us / 651-430-4314
Lead Agency/Department	Washington County Regional Railroad Authority
Purpose of Project/Plan	The Alternatives Analysis Update allows the Commission to reassess the goals for the Corridor and the long and short term options to increase access to transit along the corridor. Although commuter rail was identified as the long term transit vision in 2007, many changes have occurred in the region since then and it is important to consider how those changes in travel patterns, costs, and population may affect the project decisions made initially. The updated study is a step toward incorporating the plans into the Metropolitan Council's long-range vision and seeking funding from the federal government to implement the preferred alternative.
Planning References	Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), Red Rock Corridor AA
Project stage	Planning – Alternatives Analysis
General Timeline	January 2013 – December 2013
District Council position (if applicable)	None
Level of Committee Involvement	Inform, advise & consent, involve, development of project/program (see chart on page 2)
Previous Committee action	If any, describe the action taken
Level of Public Involvement	Inform, advise & consent
Public Hearing	None (scoping meetings will take place in December)
Public Hearing Location	TBD
Primary Funding Source(s)	CTIB, Washington and Ramsey Counties, FTA (through the Met Council)
Cost	

Staff recommendation	No action requested
Action item requested of	No action requested

the Committee	
Committee recommendation	To be filled in at the meeting
Committee vote	To be filled in at the meeting

Level of Committee Involvement

***INFORM**: Informational briefings*	*Projects that are in implementation phase; projects from other jurisdictions; policy documents from other agencies/jurisdictions*
***ADVISE AND CONSENT**: Informational briefings with policy discussion, general directives to staff for follow-through*	*Project and program reviews primarily initiated by staff; or involvement with program development by others*
***INVOLVE**: Discussions to develop directions for projects & programs*	*Policy involvement from inception through design, inc. policy development; environmental documentation,*
***DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT/PROGRAM**: Discussion to form process; screening of ideas; development of recommendations; and managing outreach to the community*	*Committee has primary responsibility for concept development, and/or overseeing participation process, and/or making specific recommendations to Planning Commission, Mayor and/or City Council*

Transportation Committee Staff Report

Committee date: September 23, 2013

Project Name	
Geographic Scope	The Gateway Corridor is centered on Interstate 94 (I-94) between Minneapolis and St. Paul and the west central Wisconsin community of Eau Claire. The corridor study area extends approximately 3-5 miles either side of the freeway.
Ward(s)	2, 6, 7
District Council(s)	1, 2, 4, 5, 17
Project Description	The Gateway Corridor completed an Alternatives Analysis in early 2013 and has begun the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Draft EIS is anticipated to be complete by mid-2015.
Project Contact	Andy Gitzlaff
Contact email/phone	Andy.gitzlaff@co.washington.mn.us / 651-430-4338
Lead Agency/Department	Washington County Regional Railroad Authority
Purpose of Project/Plan	The Draft EIS will look to further refine the engineering and data available for decision makers in order to determine an LPA. It will also identify environmental impacts and mitigation strategies.
Planning References	Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis
Project stage	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
General Timeline	Spring 2013-mid 2015
District Council position (if applicable)	The district councils have been extremely engaged with this project and have not taken specific stands for one alternative over another.
Level of Committee Involvement	Inform, advise & consent, involve, development of project/program (see chart on page 2)
Previous Committee action	If any, describe the action taken
Level of Public Involvement	Inform, advise & consent
Public Hearing	None (scoping meetings will take place in December)
Public Hearing Location	TBD
Primary Funding Source(s)	CTIB, Washington and Ramsey Counties
Cost	

Staff recommendation	No action requested
Action item requested of the Committee	No action requested
Committee recommendation	To be filled in at the meeting
Committee vote	To be filled in at the meeting

Level of Committee Involvement

INFORM*: Informational briefings*	*Projects that are in implementation phase; projects from other jurisdictions; policy documents from other agencies/jurisdictions*
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Red Rock Corridor

Outline

- Where we are in the process
- What public input has indicated to date
- Review goals and objectives
- Review alternatives
- Review initial evaluation of alternatives
- Future steps and directions

Alternatives Analysis Process/Steps

1.	Review Previous Studies	Complete	Feb-Apr
2.	Initial Public Input	Complete	Feb-Apr
3.	Goals & Objectives	Complete	Apr-May
4.	Alternatives Development	Complete	May-Jun
5.	Analysis of Alternatives	Complete	Jun-Aug
6.	Additional Public Input	Upcoming	Sep-Oct
7.	Recommend Alternative	Upcoming	Oct/Nov
8.	Implementation Plan/Report	Upcoming	Nov/Dec

What Public Input has Indicated

Top Five Characteristics for Transit:

Meeting Results

1. Reliable Schedule
2. Availability Throughout the Day
3. Speed of Service
4. Frequency of Service

5. Vehicle Comfort and Amenities

<u>On-Line Survey Results</u>

1. Speed of Service
2. Availability Throughout the Day
3. Reliable Schedule
4. Frequency of Service
5. Automobile Parking at Stations

Problem Statement and Goals and Objectives

The 2007 Red Rock Alternatives Analysis focused heavily on issues related to peak hour mobility

Additional analysis is needed to better understand current and future transit markets in the corridor

Communities between St. Paul and Red Wing do not have all-day transit service

Reason for the AAU is the investigate the off-peak/all day transit service with more access to communities

Goals & Objectives

1. **<u>MOBILITY</u>:**

Provide Mode Choice and Service Plan that Meets the Demonstrated and Forecasted Needs of Corridor Communities

<u>Objectives</u>

- Time competitive with autos
- Reliable
- All day service
- Maximize ridership
- Connected regionally

- **<u>COST</u>**

Cost Effectively Address Transportation Problems in the Corridor

Objectives

- Comparable operating costs
- Comparable capital costs
- Coordinated with other transit projects, but not dependent on them

- **DEVELOPMENT**

Increase Opportunities for Community and Economic Development Throughout the Corridor

Objectives

- Support TOD
- Support businesses by increasing access
- Increase connectivity to employment centers

- **ENVIRONMENT**

Improve Quality of Natural and Built Environment

Objectives

- Limit adverse impacts
- Reduce emissions
- Equitably distribute impacts across population groups
- Address safety issues

Alternatives

The Alternatives

1. No Build (Current Conditions)
2. Express Bus – new route from Red Wing to Minneapolis
3. Bus Rapid Transit – Between Hastings and Union Depot
4. Commuter Rail – Red Wing to Minneapolis via Union Depot

1: No Build (Current Conditions)

- Service:

    - Continue #361, #364, and #365
    - Frequency increases due to increased demand
- Coverage:
    - Cottage Grove, Newport, Lower Afton Road, Union Depot, and Downtown Minneapolis
- New Infrastructure:
    - None

2: Express Bus

- Service:
    - Continue #361, #364, and #365
    - Add new express route in peak periods to provide service at stations in the Corridor that are not currently served
- Coverage:
    - New peak service stops at Red Wing, Prairie Island, Hastings, Newport, Union Depot, and Minneapolis
- New Infrastructure:
    - Coach buses
    - Bus-only shoulder lanes in congested areas

3: Bus Rapid Transit

- Service:
    - # 361, #364 and #365 remain in service
    - Service every 15 minutes
- Coverage:
    - Hastings, Cottage Grove, Newport, Lower Afton, Union Depot
- New infrastructure:
    - Infrastructure to provide direct access to stations in Cottage Grove and Lower Afton Road
    - BRT buses and stations

    - Bus-only shoulder lanes in congested areas

4: Commuter Rail:

- Service
    - 10 trips per day in the peak periods every 30 minutes in peak direction
    - #361, #364 and #365 discontinued
- Coverage:
    - Red Wing, Prairie Island, Hastings, Cottage Grove, Newport, Lower Afton, Union Depot, Minneapolis
- New infrastructure:
    - Track improvements and new stations

Evaluation Measures

Need to consider multiple factors

Ridership comparison to costs over 25 years (both capital and operating costs)

Funding potential

How the alternatives perform compared to other transit in the region that has been funded

Is there a local or federal funding potential

Goals and objectives evaluation

Each goal separately

Overall evaluation should be based on weighting to put more emphasis on mobility and cost

Initial Evaluation

Express Bus

- Corridor will continue to have strong peak period ridership
- Ridership south of Hastings is not strong
- No existing funding model to increase service in corridor, especially south of Cottage Grove

- Increasing express bus service between Hastings and St. Paul/Minneapolis could continue to be a good first step

Bus Rapid Transit

- BRT is emerging as a viable option based on the 2030 ridership numbers and established goals
- BRT could potentially be a Small Starts project – local funding share may need to be higher
- BRT has promising development potential because of the all-day service
- Newport Station and Cottage Grove are high ridership generators

Commuter Rail

- 2030 ridership numbers would not be competitive in the federal New Starts process
- Based on East Metro Rail Capacity Study, it is now understood that commuter rail's operating characteristics necessitate significant rail improvements
- Ridership south of Hastings is not strong

Future Steps and Directions

- Additional Public Input
  - Citizen Advisory Committee (Sept 24)
  - Park-n-Ride Engagement (Sept 25 and 26)
  - Present at Corridor Boards/Councils/Commissions (Sept/Oct)
- PMT will review all input and prepare a technical recommendation for the Commission's consideration (Oct/Nov)

<u>Gateway Corridor</u>

Today's Agenda

- Gateway Project Update & Alternatives Analysis Review
- Draft EIS & Scoping Overview
- Advisory Committees
- Corridor Design Walkthrough

Gateway Project Update & Alternatives Analysis Review

Objectives for the Corridor

- Established common goals that directed the vision:
    - Improve mobility
    - Provide a cost-effective solution
    - Support economic development
    - Protect natural environment
    - Preserve and protect community
    - Improve safety
- How do you utilize these goals to find a transit solution that will work for all communities?

Types of Transit Considered

Graphic: Maps of alternatives considered in the AA

Graphic: Evaluation Table included in presentation

Graphic: Timeline 2010-2012 AA, 2013-2015 Environmental Impact Statement, 2015-2017 Engineering, 2018-2021 Construction

Draft EIS and Scoping Overview

What is the Draft EIS?

- Builds off of Alternatives Analysis decisions
- Evaluates alternatives for potential social, economic, and environmental impacts

- Outlines proposed mitigation measures
- Provides opportunity for public and agency review
- Scoping process/evaluation used to inform Locally Preferred Alternative Decision

Typical Issues Covered in an EIS

- Land Use/Economics
- Community Facilities
- Displacements/Relocations
- Historic Resources
- Visual/Aesthetics
- Environmental Justice
- Safety
- Farmlands
- Water Resources
- Vegetation and Wildlife
- Utilities
- Stormwater
- Air Quality
- Hazardous Waste
- Noise and Vibration
- Energy
- Transportation (roads, transit, bike/ped, freight)

Who is involved?

- **Local Project Sponsors:**
- **Washington County**
- **Ramsey County**

- **(Gateway Corridor Commission)**
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**
- **Project Funder**
- **Met Council/Metro Transit**
- **Regional Operator**

Graphic: EIS process elements

Advisory committees and decision making

Summary of Decision Making Process

Corridor design walk through

EIS Project Definition

- Light rail transit or bus rapid transit
- Project limits: St. Paul at Union Depot to Manning Avenue in Woodbury
    - Existing service connections to Minneapolis
    - Future service extension to Hudson, WI
- Other alignments/stations requested to be evaluated in Scoping