

Honorable Council Members,

I urge you to reject the findings of the Gateway Corridor Commission Alternatives Analysis and return it to the Commission for additional study.

The alternatives proposed have a disproportionate impact on the residents of East St. Paul while providing only minimal benefit. Below are my comments, with additional details, that I provided to the Gateway Corridor Commission.

Since I provided those comments, I have learned about the Red Rock Corridor where similar consideration is being given to construction a transit corridor down Warner Road and Shepard road. This aligns with the alternative that I suggested below to route the Gateway Corridor down US 61 to Warner Road. While residents along Hudson Road between US 61 and White Bear Ave would still bear a disproportionate adverse impact to benefit ratio, the alternative I am suggesting has the potential to reduce overall construction costs and eliminate a large portion of the adverse impacts to residents of East St. Paul.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Quintin Kidd
St. Paul.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Quintin Kidd** <quintinkidd@gmail.com>

Date: Fri, Nov 9, 2012 at 12:58 PM

Subject: Comments on the Alternatives Analysis, Gateway Corridor

To: GatewayCorridor@co.washington.mn.us

Cc: stpaul-db@forums.e-democracy.org, Sherry Johnson <sherryjohnson@gmail.com>, Kathy Lantry <Kathy.Lantry@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Honorable Members of the Gateway Corridor Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alternatives Analysis of the Gateway Corridor. As a fairly recent resident of the Dayton's Bluff community, I wasn't as aware of the Gateway Corridor Study as I probably should have been. I wish I had the opportunity to comment earlier in the process.

As the owner of a 1902 “historical” Dayton’s Bluff house, I am deeply concerned about the impacts of any large scale project on the fabric of the neighborhood in which I live. As a former elected official in the San Francisco Bay Area and participating member of the Association of Bay Area Governments regional planning body, I also am very interested in transportation issues as they relate to economic development, affordable housing and urban sprawl.

I have several concerns about the Alternatives Analysis (AA) including the duplication of existing service; calculation of commute times; economic impact within Dayton’s Bluff and East St. Paul; impact on affordable housing; quality of life impacts; and impact on urban sprawl.

I choose to live in the Dayton’s Bluff community, not because it is the only place I can afford to live, but rather, because of the qualities that the community brings to my life with its diversity, proximity to an urban core and mass transit access.

Duplication of Service

The two walk-up transit stops which are proposed for Dayton's Bluff in the alternatives analysis duplicate transit services already available in the neighborhood via the 70 and 63 bus routes, and to a lesser extent the 74 bus route. Excluding wait times, I can catch the 70 Bus at Pacific and Earl and be a Union Depot in about 5 minutes or at my downtown St. Paul office in about 10 minutes, times comparable to drive times. I seriously doubt either the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or the Light Rail Transit (LRT) alternatives will offer significantly better service levels to either me or my neighbors.

Adverse Impact of Community Quality of Life

The addition of a restricted transit way is another tear in the fabric of the Dayton’s Bluff community.

The marginalization of the Dayton's Bluff began back in the 1960's when the first bulldozer blade dug into the homesteads which were once along Pacific Street and Hudson Road to start construction of I-94. In the public meetings held in East St Paul regarding the alternatives under consideration, residents continually brought up concerns about the impacts of all of the various alternatives in individual neighborhoods which are not being adequately addressed.

Not only is there the risk of loss of historical homes which constitute part of one of the largest inventories of Victorian-era homes in the country, the moving of the BRT and LRT alternatives from the median of I-94 to neighborhood street level along Hudson Road has a severe, adverse impact on the quality of life of the families who live there. The potential loss of affordable housing inventory spreads this adverse impact throughout the entire community.

Lack of Economic Development Opportunities

One of the stated goals of the Gateway Corridor Commission is to promote economic development. However, I feel that both Alternative 3 (BRT) and Alternative 5 (LRT) further marginalize the Dayton's Bluff community and other East St. Paul neighborhoods along Hudson Road by promoting, "For the greater good," economic development elsewhere in the more affluent areas along the Gateway Corridor and yet not providing that same opportunity within East St. Paul. I am disappointed that an alternative could not be developed which takes advantage of the existing East 7th Street / Phalen Blvd. economic corridor or the Beacon Bluff site.

Expecting East St. Paul communities to bear the adverse impacts of this project without providing associated economic development opportunities within the community, or mitigation, is simply unfair.

Adverse Impact to Existing Neighborhood Businesses

Further, as seen by the Green Line LRT project in St. Paul, these types of projects have a significant adverse impact on local, neighborhood business with a disproportionate burden falling on minority business owners. Small business owners simply do not have sufficient capitalization to withstand the adverse business impacts of projects of this magnitude and the mitigation provided by the Green Line LRT project has not been sufficient to assist them in overcoming those burdens. I would expect a similar, negative impact to the existing neighborhood commercial development along Hudson Road in East St. Paul.

Unrealistic Commute Times

As a long-time commuter within multiple large metropolitan areas in various parts of the country, my decision to use, or not use, mass transit, basically comes down to these factors:

1. Does it take me to where I need to go?
2. Can it get me there with a minimal risk to not meeting my required arrival time?
3. Are travel times comparable to commuting in a private vehicle?
4. Is it comparable to the cost of commuting in my private vehicle?

Over my 30 year-plus work career, using these factors I have made different decisions to be a bus rider, rapid transit passenger, car pooler, van pooler, private vehicle commuter, or some combination of the above.

With these thoughts in mind, I have some concerns about the stated travel times in the AA. (17 minutes from Oaks Business Park for BRT; 15 minutes, LRT).

If I were a commuter considering using this transit service, I would need to consider more than the time spent in the seat of the bus. I also need to consider the amount of lead time it would take to get my posterior in a bus seat and then move it to my ultimate destination from the end of the route.

This study does not appear to take into consideration total commute time. When I look at the current times to get from the Oaks Business Park to the intersection of Mounds Blvd & I-94, Google Maps tells me that I could expect it to take 13 minutes. As a commuter, I would have to allow wait time depending on the frequency of service (0 to

10 minutes), to allow time to get off I-94 to the transit stop (imbedded in the Google estimate), park (90 seconds), walk from the parking spot to the on-boarding area (120 seconds), on-boarding / off loading of passengers at each stop (30 to 60 seconds each), travel time from the Mounds Blvd stop to Union Depot (45 seconds) and then off-load at Union Depot. I believe realistic commute times are more in the 28 minute range rather than 15 to 17 minutes stated for Oaks Business Park.

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To think of Union Depot as a destination from a daily commuter's viewpoint is simply not accurate. It is not a destination; it is a transit point to somewhere else. The commuter would have to switch buses, get on light rail, or walk to their ultimate destination; all additional commute time which would be included in their decision to use, or not use, the BRT or LRT.

Urban Sprawl

One of my disappointments about living in the Twin Cities area is the lack of attention that is paid to the impacts of urban sprawl on the transportation system, consumption of resources, and general impact on our quality of life. In many ways, the expansion of transportation corridors promotes leapfrog development which in turn provokes the need for additional transportation resources. Local elected officials and planners should be cognizant of this to ensure that a vicious cycle does not continue to develop.

When taking a holistic view of community development, I believe it is important to consider whether there is sufficient economic development opportunities to provide for the overall community's need(s), a sufficient inventory of affordable housing for those individuals who work, or want to work, within the community and a transportation system sufficient enough to support commerce within the community and beyond. I do not believe that this alternatives analysis takes such a view, instead singularly focusing on moving people from point A to B.

As I mentioned above, I have severe concerns about the two alternatives being considered. I believe both of these alternatives have a disproportionate impact, and minimal benefit, to the neighborhoods of East St. Paul. I am deeply disappointed by the lack of economic development opportunities being provided to East St. Paul and the risk that is being presented to existing neighborhood businesses. I am also concerned about the lack of consideration that is being paid to the promotion of urban sprawl.

As a an alternative, I hope you would consider one of these two options: (1)Moving the transit way back to the original proposed location in the median of I-94 or, (2) re-routing the transit-way down US 61 and Warner Road.

Sincerely,

Quintin Kidd

Dayton's Bluff Community

St. Paul, MN

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"If at first, the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it" - Albert Einstein