



Legislation Text

File #: RES 14-1497, **Version:** 2

Transmitting support of the Gateway Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

WHEREAS, the Gateway Corridor is a proposed project that will provide for transit infrastructure improvements in the eastern portion of the Twin Cities; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the project is to provide transit service to meet the existing and long-term regional mobility and local accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public within the project area by providing all day bi-directional station-to-station service that compliments existing and planned express bus service in the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Gateway Corridor is located in Ramsey and Washington Counties, Minnesota, extending approximately 12 miles, and connecting downtown Saint Paul with its East Side neighborhoods and the suburbs of Maplewood, Landfall, Oakdale, Lake Elmo, and Woodbury; and

WHEREAS, the Gateway Corridor Commission (GCC), in partnership with the Metropolitan Council and other project stakeholders, completed the Gateway Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study that in addition to the No-Build alternative recommended on bus rapid transit (BRT) and one light rail transit (LRT) alternative be advanced for further study in the federal and state environmental review process; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); the Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA), serving on behalf of the GCC; and the Metropolitan Council have initiated the environmental review process for the Gateway Corridor project, with FTA designated as the lead federal agency for this project; and

WHEREAS, the Gateway Corridor project recently received the important Presidential designation as a Federal Infrastructure Permitting Dashboard Project; and

WHEREAS, the Gateway Corridor project recently completed the Scoping phase of the environmental process, which resulted with the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and the GCC recommending further study of the No-Build alternative, four BRT alternatives with a dedicated guideway (A-B-C-D1-E1, A-B-C-D2-E1, A-B-C-D2-E2, A-B-C-D2-E3) and a managed lane alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) at the request of the FTA and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); and

WHEREAS, the BRT alignments that advance into the Draft EIS will be further defined and evaluated to minimize adverse impacts to surrounding properties and the I-94 corridor, enhance economic development potential, and reduce capital costs while providing required operating efficiency, with attention to mobility options for environmental justice populations; and

WHEREAS, through the Scoping process, the PAC and the GCC recommended that the LRT alternative be eliminated from further study due to its higher costs while generating a similar ridership; and

WHEREAS, the identification of an LPA is a critical first step in pursuing federal funding for the Gateway Corridor project; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of the LPA into the Metropolitan Council's Transportation Policy Plan concludes the FTA Alternatives Analysis process; and

WHEREAS, the LPA will be one of the Build alternatives identified and studied in the Draft EIS; and

WHEREAS, the LPA includes the definition of the Gateway Corridor mode and a conceptual alignment which can be refined through further engineering efforts; and

WHEREAS, the LPA selection process does not replace or override the requirement to fully examine alternatives and determine the adverse impacts that must be avoided or mitigated under the federal and state environmental review process; and

WHEREAS, the comments submitted by agencies, the business sector, and the public during the Scoping phase, as well as the additional comments received from adjacent communities since the Scoping phase, will be addressed accordingly through the Draft EIS process; and

WHEREAS, the PAC and GCC each passed resolutions on July 24, 2014 recommending BRT Alternative A-B-C-D2-E2 (see attached figure) as the proposed LPA for review at the August 7, 2014 PAC-sponsored LPA public hearing and inclusion in the Metropolitan Council's Draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Gateway Corridor PAC/GCC held a public hearing on August 7, 2014 as part of the LPA decision making process. A total of 35 comments were received through the proposed LPA review process; and

WHEREAS, the Cities will be working collaboratively with the GCC to complete a market analysis and plan for the areas around the BRT Guideway stations as a part of the Draft EIS process; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul's Comprehensive Plan, in Figure T-C of the Transportation Chapter, identifies the I-94 corridor heading east from Downtown Saint Paul as being a desired transitway within its Preferred Transit Network; and

WHEREAS, the City of Saint Paul's Planning Commission, upon receiving recommendation from its Transportation Committee, recommended support for the LPA on September 5, 2014;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Saint Paul supports the LPA recommendation of the PAC and GCC and identifies the dedicated BRT alternative generally on the Hudson Road - Hudson Boulevard (A-B-C-D2-E2) alignment that crosses to the south side of I-94 ~~at approximately Lake Elmo Avenue~~ to between approximately Lake Elmo Avenue and Manning Avenue as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Gateway Corridor project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Saint Paul commits to undertaking and developing station area plans with the support of the GCC for the proposed BRT guideway station areas within its jurisdiction based on the results of a market analysis, community input, and Metropolitan Council guidelines for development density, level of activity, and design.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Saint Paul commits to working with the Washington County Regional Railroad Authority, on behalf of the Gateway Corridor Commission, and the Metropolitan Council to address the comments submitted by agencies, adjacent communities, the business sector, and the public during the Scoping phase, as well as additional comments received during the development of the LPA and through the Draft EIS process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution adopted by the City of Saint Paul be forwarded to the Metropolitan Council for its consideration.