



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700
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DATE: August 28, 2014
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Bill Dermody, City Planner
RE: Gateway Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

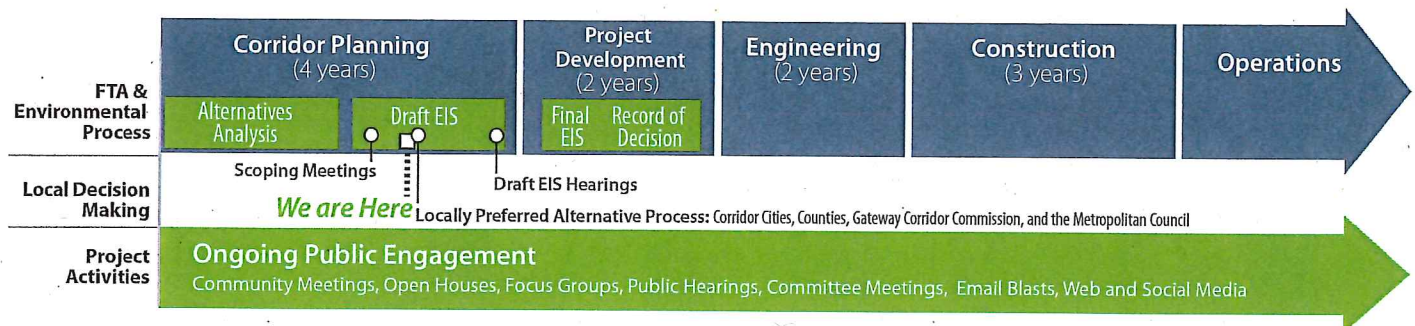
ISSUE

The City of Saint Paul is requested to take action to support the Gateway Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

BACKGROUND

The Transportation Committee suggested that a simple timeline and description of the actions taken be distilled from the Washington County Regional Rail Authority presentation and provided to the Planning Commission. That is the purpose of this memo. The full WCRRA presentation is also attached as reference.

The LPA falls within the broader Gateway Corridor study and development process as follows:



With regard to the LPA itself, the following is a general timeline for action:

July 24 Gateway Corridor Commission made its preliminary LPA decision:
Dedicated BRT on alignment A-B-C-D2-E2, generally following I-94

August 7 GCC held its public hearing (at Conway Recreation Center)

August 25 Transportation Committee made recommendation to support LPA

September 5 Planning Commission recommendation on draft LPA resolution

Sept. 17 or 24 City Council action on LPA resolution

The LPA is a preliminary indication of local government preferences. Final municipal consent is scheduled for consideration in approximately 2016.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Transportation Committee recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the attached draft City Council resolution of support for the LPA, which is Dedicated BRT on the A-B-C-D2-E2 alignment.

Attachments

1. Draft LPA resolution of support
2. TC staff report
3. WCRRA presentation

RESOLUTION TRANSMITTING THE CITY OF SAINT PAUL'S SUPPORT OF THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA)

Note: Reference to the Gateway Corridor proposed Locally Preferred Alternative is based on the July 24, 2014 PAC and GCC resolutions. The final LPA will be determined at the September 11, 2014 PAC and GCC meetings

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;

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 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.

Figure 1: BRT Alternative A-B-C-D2-E2



Transportation Committee Staff Report

Committee date: August 25, 2014

Project Name	Gateway Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)
Geographic Scope	From Union Depot in Downtown Saint Paul to Manning Avenue on the east end of Woodbury/Lake Elmo, generally along I-94.
Ward(s)	2, 7
District Council(s)	1, 4, 17
Project Description	The City of Saint Paul's City Council is to indicate support (or otherwise) for an LPA for the Gateway Corridor
Project Contact	Lyssa Leitner, Washington County Regional Rail Authority Bill Dermody, PED, City of Saint Paul
Contact email/phone	Lyssa.Leitner@co.washington.mn.us / 651-430-4314 Bill.Dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us / 651-266-6617
Lead Agency/Department	Washington County Regional Rail Authority
Purpose of Project/Plan	The LPA is a general description of the transit mode and corridor alignment preferred by local governments used for long-range planning and federal funding applications. In the Draft EIS the LPA is reviewed along with other alternatives for their impacts on the natural, physical, and socio-economic environments. Because the LPA definition is fairly general, limited changes to the LPA design may be considered during the Draft EIS and preliminary engineering without affecting the LPA selection.
Planning References	Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), Metropolitan Council 2040 TPP draft, Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Chapter
Project stage	Draft EIS
General Timeline	LPA Resolution of Support to Planning Commission on Sep. 5 and to City Council on either Sep. 17 or 24. Draft EIS complete in 2015.
District Council position (if applicable)	The District Councils have been engaged and are generally supportive of the proposed alignment along I-94. District 1 has provided a letter of support for the LPA (see attached).
Level of Committee Involvement	Development of Project: Recommend action on Resolution of Support for the Gateway LPA to the Planning Commission
Previous Committee action	Received project briefing from Washington Co RRA in September 2013 and from PED staff in March 2014
Level of Public Involvement	Involve: The public comment will influence the final LPA decision.
Public Hearing	Yes. August 7, 2014
Public Hearing Location	Conway Recreation Center (held by the Gateway Corridor Commission)
Primary Funding Source(s)	CTIB, Washington and Ramsey Counties
Cost	

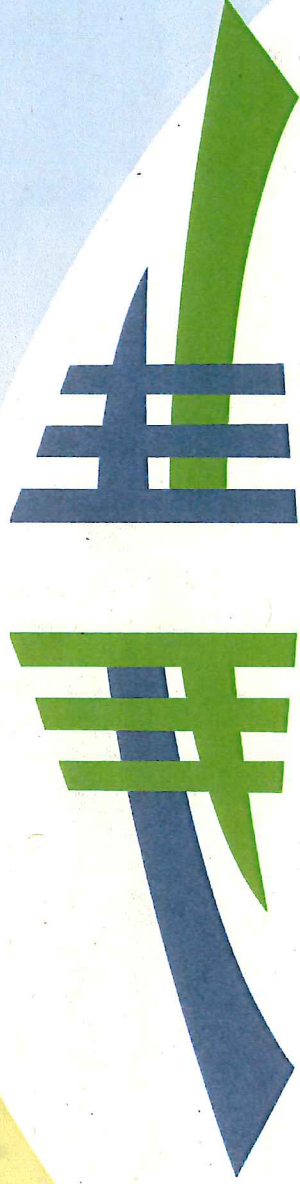
PED Staff to fill in

Staff recommendation	Approval of Resolution of Support for the LPA (draft resolution to be
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	provided 8/25 at the meeting)
Action item requested of the Committee	Recommend action on Resolution of Support for the Gateway LPA to the Planning Commission
Committee recommendation	<i>To be filled in at the meeting</i>
Committee vote	<i>To be filled in at the meeting</i>

Level of Committee Involvement

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



GATEWAY CORRIDOR

Locally Preferred Alternative Workshop
City of Saint Paul

August 25, 2014

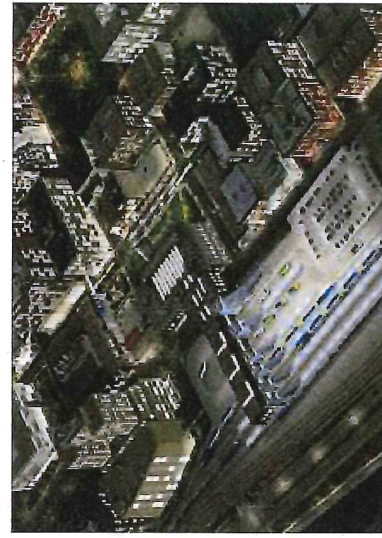
The Gateway Corridor Project will provide:



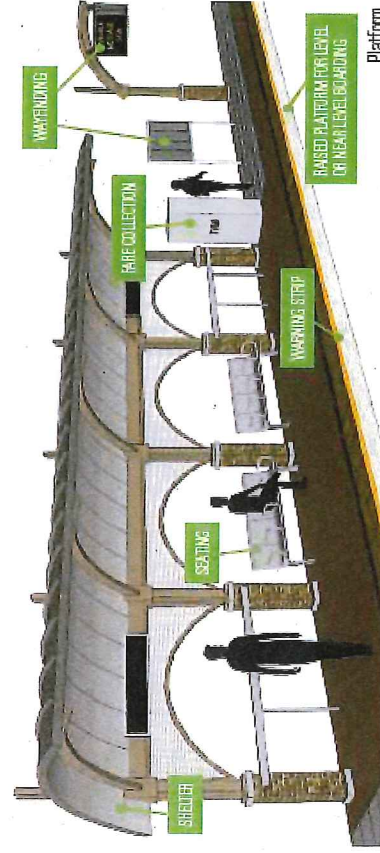
All day bi-directional service every 15 minutes or better



Reliable travel time between stations



Connections at Union Depot to Green Line LRT and local and express buses



Comfortable transit stations with weather protection, seating, lights, and ticket vending machines



Stations become focal points for housing, jobs, and commercial activity



GATEWAY CORRIDOR

The Purpose & Need for the Gateway Corridor Project

The purpose of the Gateway Corridor 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 in the project area.

There are five factors that describe the need for the project:

- Limited existing transit service
- A policy shift toward travel choices and multimodal investments
- Population and employment growth in the corridor
- Needs of people who depend on transit
- Local and regional objectives for growth and prosperity



Customers boarded Metro Transit buses and trains nearly 81.4 million times in 2013. 70.4 million rides were on local and express buses, 10.2 million rides were on the Metro Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail).



Gateway Corridor service will run every 10-15 minutes throughout the day.



The Lyric is a new 170-unit artist loft and apartment building near the Raymond Station on the Metro Green Line in St. Paul.

Regional Transitways (2040)

Existing and Potential High-Frequency Arterial Routes

New / Improved Arterial Routes

Current Arterial Routes

Potential Arterial BRT

Transit Centers and Stations

served by Arterial Routes

Transit Center

Future Transit Center

Transit Station

Transitways

Blue Line

Green Line

Red Line

Green Line

Orange Line

Gateway Dedicated BRT *

*Contingent upon resolutions of support and commitments to local land use from local governments along the locally preferred alternative and commitment to addressing use of highway right-of-way in the DEIS process.

Reference Items

Principal Arterial Highways

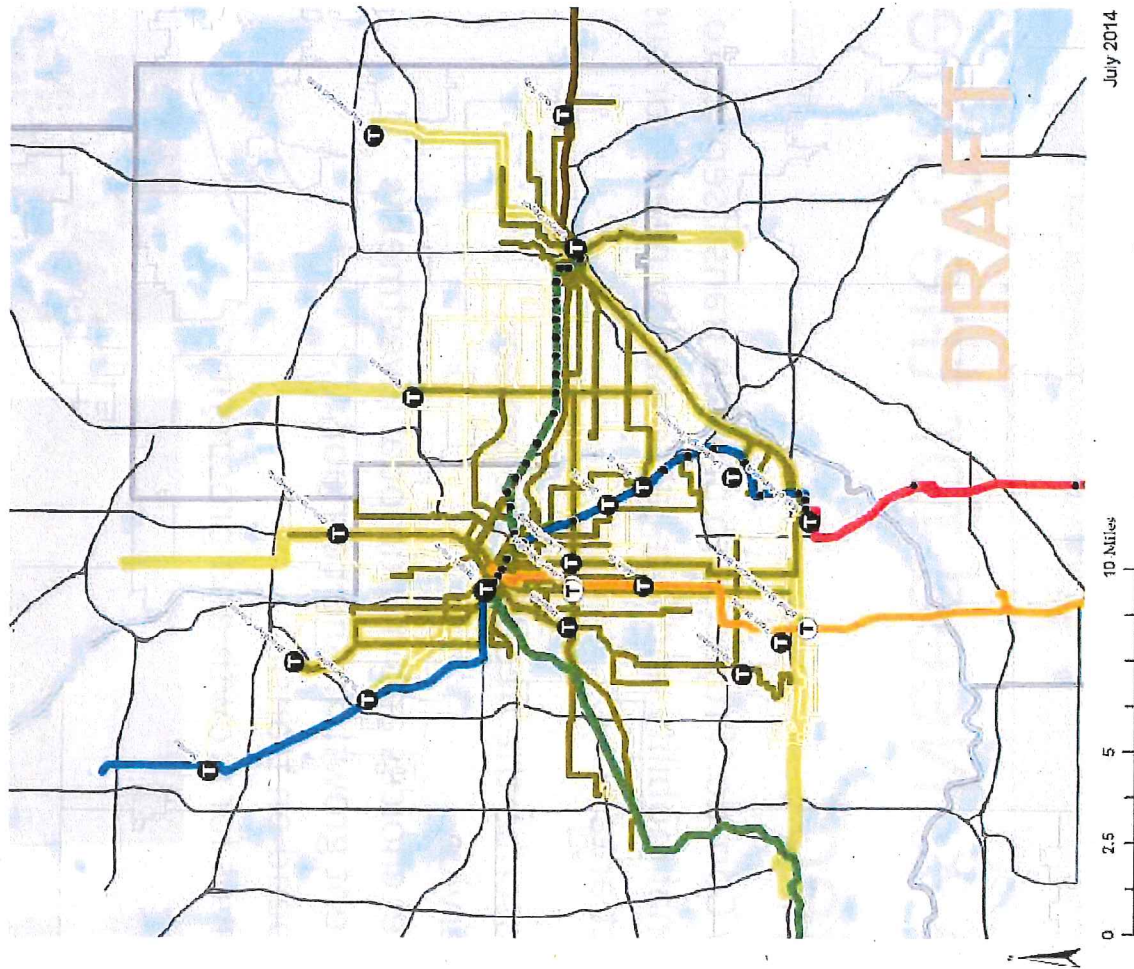
Levees and Rivers

City Boundary

County Boundary

2540 Urban Services Area

MPO Area



July 2014

Current Status

- Alternatives Analysis Completed 2013
- Draft EIS Underway

Transitway Development Process





Public Engagement informs Project Decisions

The project has actively sought community input since planning began in 2009. Most recently, engagement efforts were focused on the Draft EIS Scoping Process, which included:

- User Friendly Materials
 - Scoping Booklet and Project Fact Sheets
 - Informational Video – [945 views on YouTube](#)
- Official Scoping Meetings and Scoping Comment Period – [97 comments received](#)
- Additional Engagement Events – [over 100 held since start of DEIS](#)
 - “Pop-up” information sessions
 - Presentations to interested stakeholders, community and business groups, local government boards and commissions



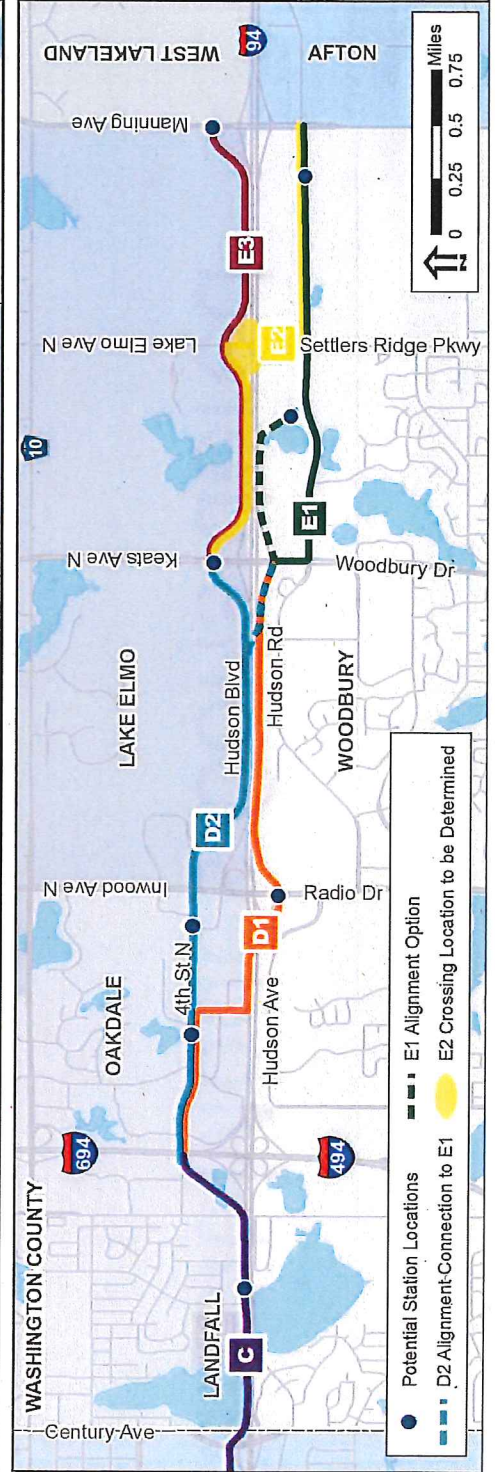
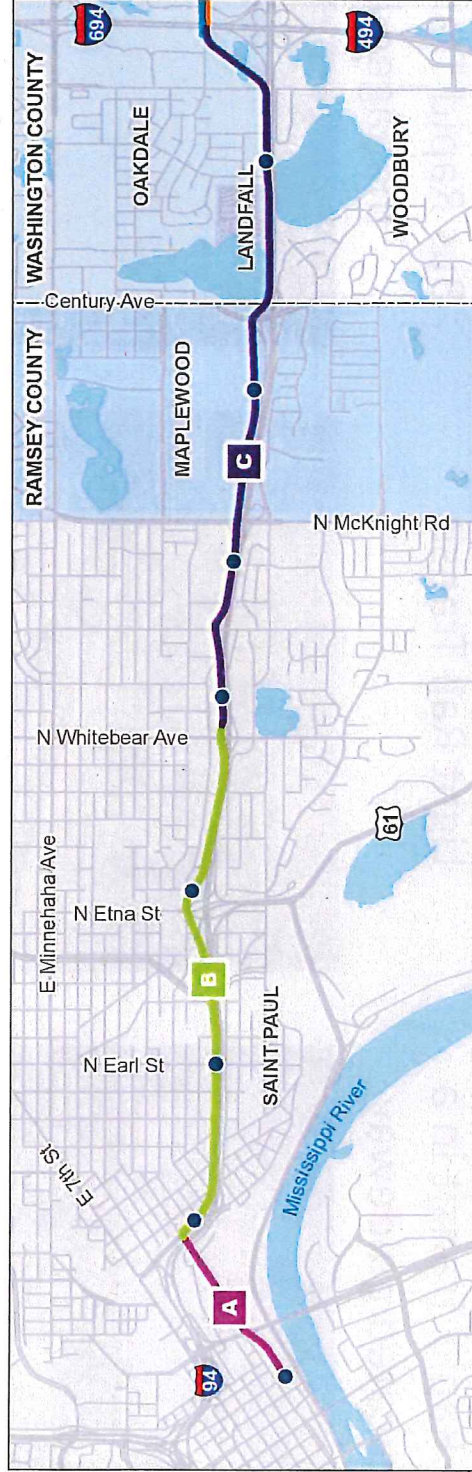
Gateway Corridor Alternatives

Transit Mode

- BRT or LRT
- Managed Lane

Alignment

- Segments A, B, and C common to all alternatives
- Segments D1 vs. D2 and E1 vs. E3



Transit Modes Considered

Bus Rapid Transit in a
dedicated guideway



Light Rail Transit



Bus Rapid Transit in a
managed lane



Scoping Decision vs. LPA

Scoping Decision

- Why study transit improvements?
- Which alternatives?
- Evaluation methods
- LPA will be one of but not the only alternative studied in the Draft EIS

LPA

- **Early** indicator of local preferences
- General description of alignment and mode
- Process is governed by Met Council for adoption into their Transportation Policy Plan
- Key step in pursuit of federal funding

PAC/GCC Scoping Decision

- BRT Alternatives recommended for further evaluation in the Draft EIS:

- BRT A-B-C-D1-E1
- BRT A-B-C-D2-E1
- BRT A-B-C-D2-E2
- BRT A-B-C-D2-E3

These BRT alternatives will be further refined to minimize impacts, enhance economic development potential and reduce capital costs

- Managed Lane Alternative

- Managed Lane Alternative will be further studied in the Draft EIS as requested by FHWA/FTA.
- The PAC continues to support the findings of the AA that the Managed Lane Alternative does not support the Purpose and Need for the project.

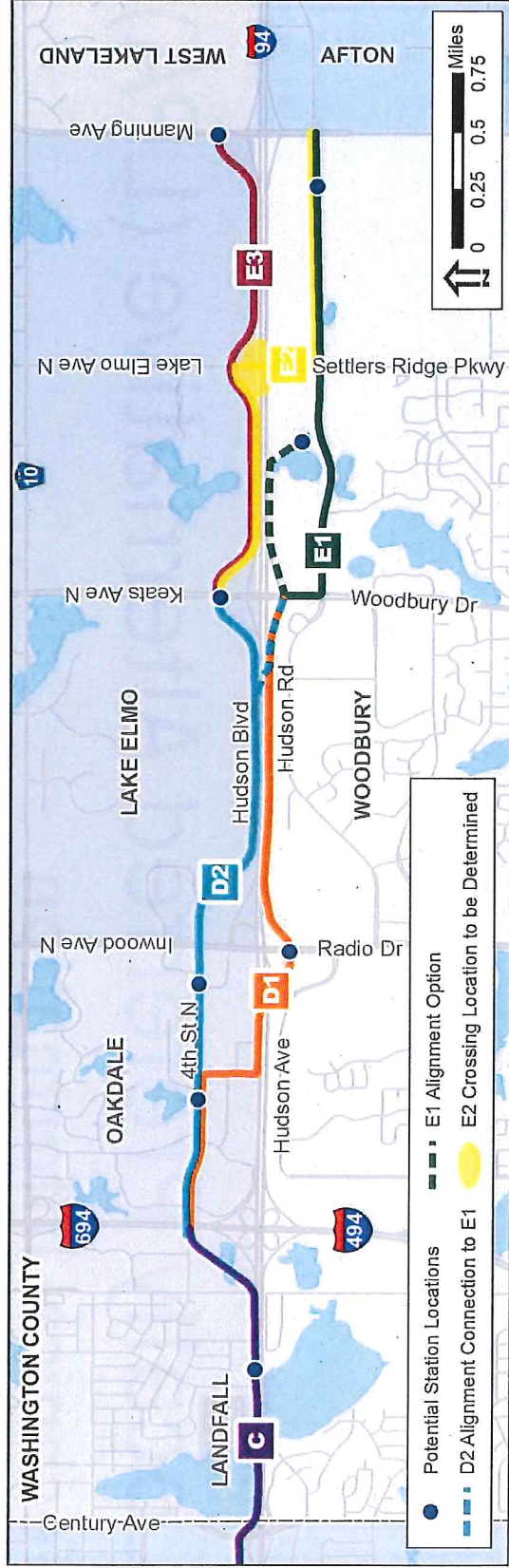
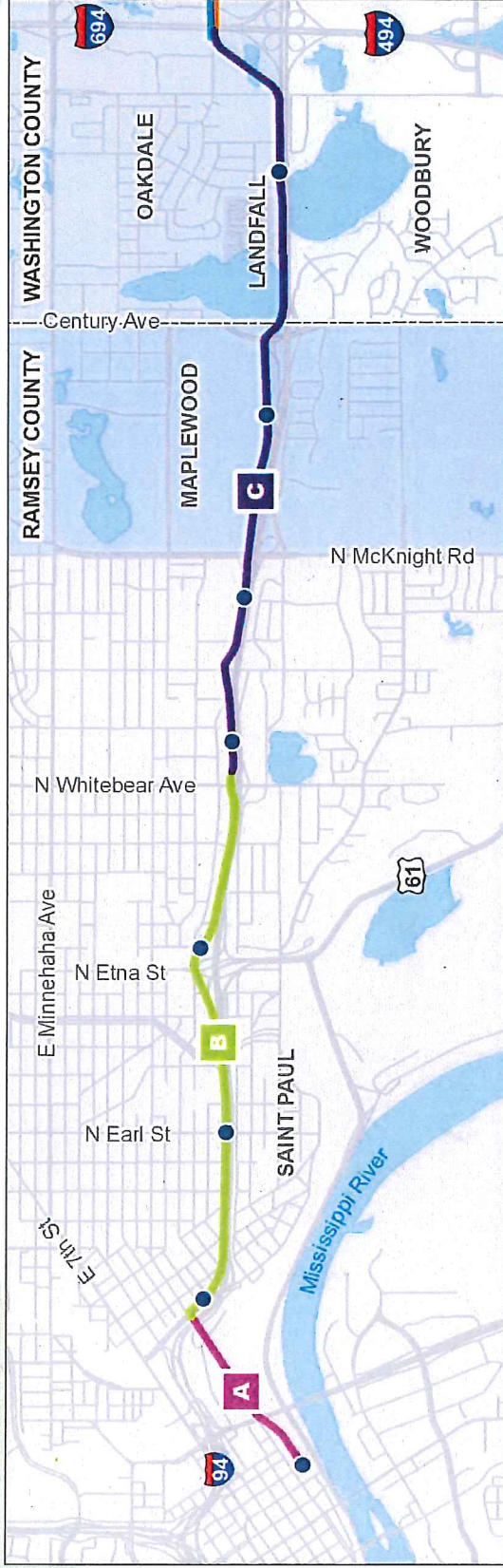
- LRT Alternative was not recommended for study in the Draft EIS.

Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)

Technical Information



GATEWAY CORRIDOR

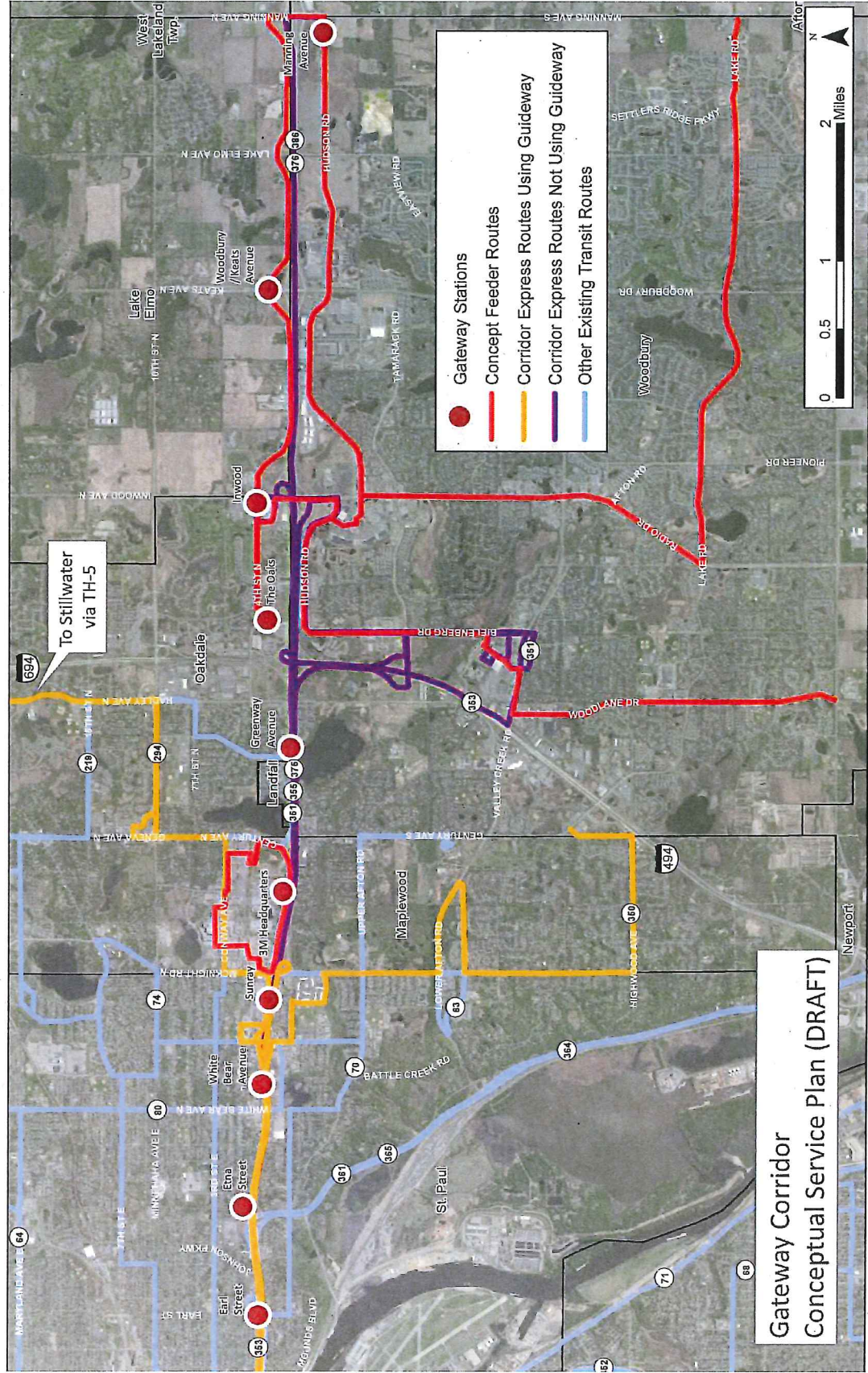


BRT Alternatives under consideration for LPA.

Travel Time, Ridership, & Costs

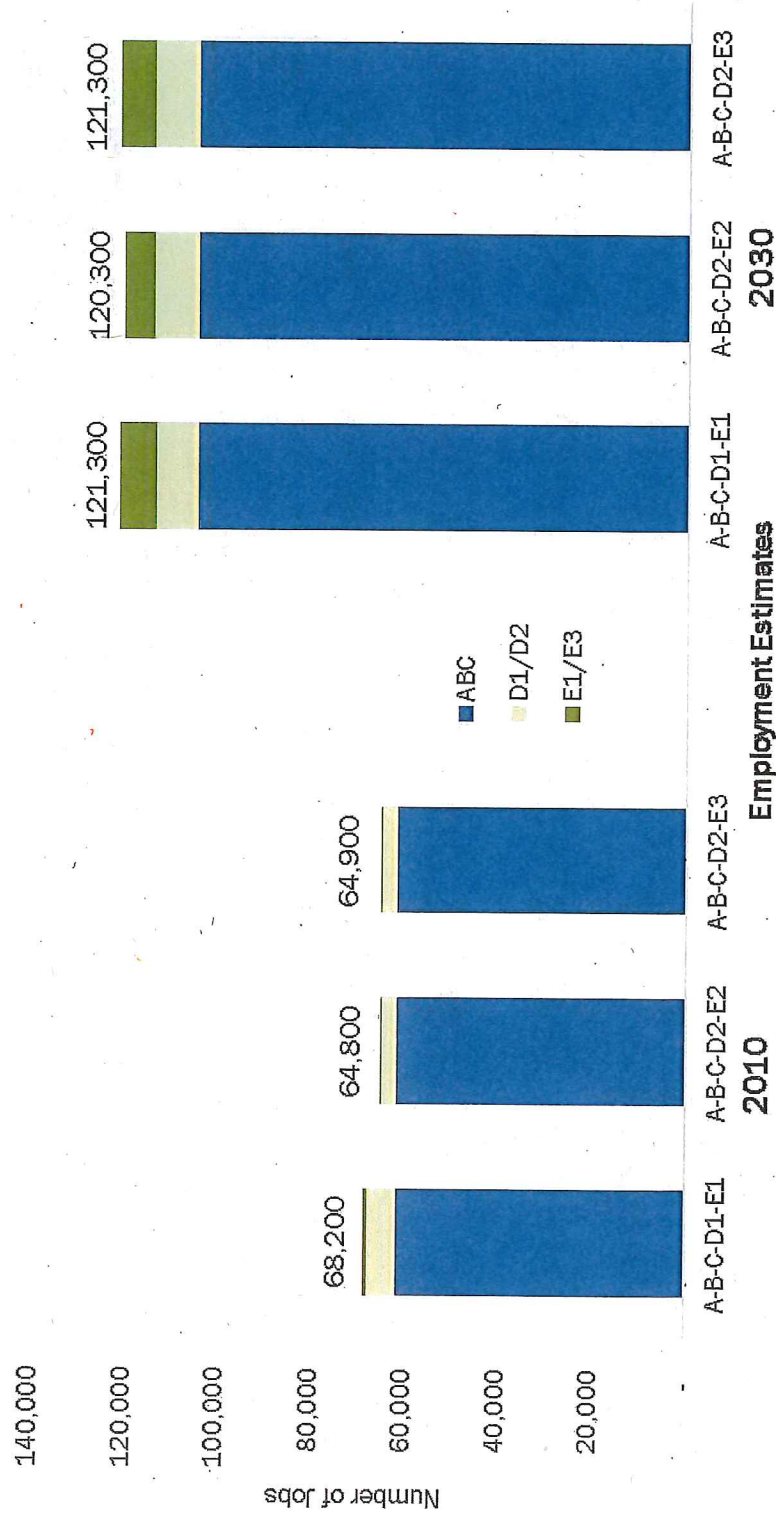
	BRT Alternatives			
	A-B-C-D1-E1	A-B-C-D2-E1	A-B-C-D2-E2	A-B-C-D2-E3
Length (miles)	12	12	12	12
Number of stations	12	12	12	12
2030 Daily Ridership: Station to Station BRT	8,600	8,800	8,800	8,900
2030 Daily Ridership: Total Corridor	13,100	13,300	13,300	13,500
Estimated Travel Time (minutes from Union Depot to Manning Avenue)	30.0 – 30.3	30.2 – 30.5	29.5 – 30.3	29.4
Estimated Capital Cost	\$500 - \$505	\$470 - \$475	\$460 - \$465	\$460

Feeder & Express Bus Network



Access to Jobs

- While A-B-C-D2-E2 provides access to slightly fewer jobs today, employment projections account for planned growth in Lake Elmo, and the number of jobs along each alternative will be nearly the same in 2030.
- The A-B-C-D2-E2 alternative has a slightly higher number of non-retail jobs than other alignments.



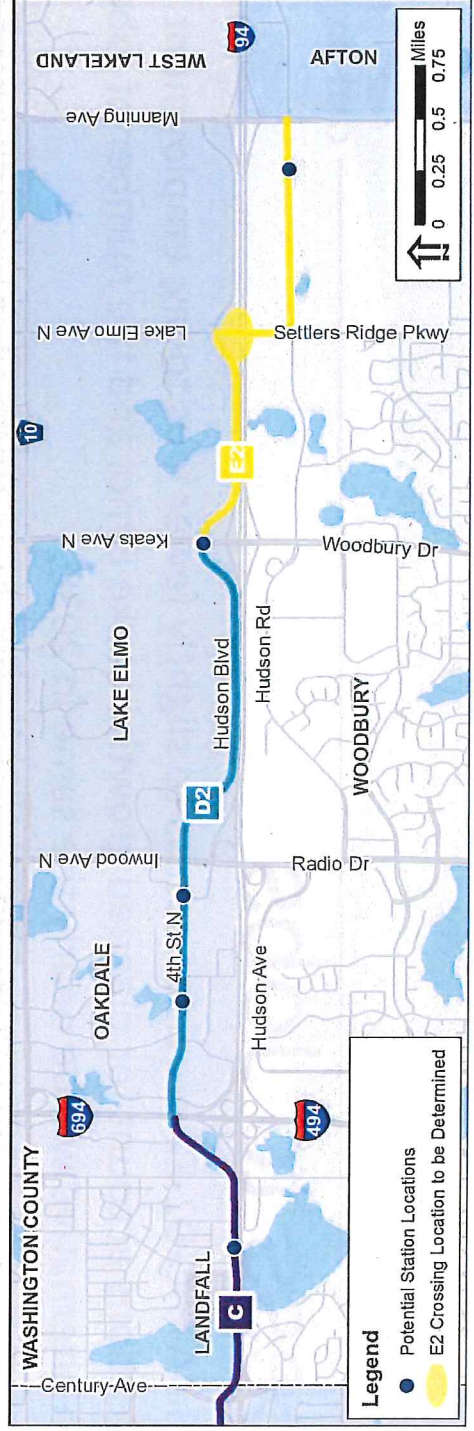
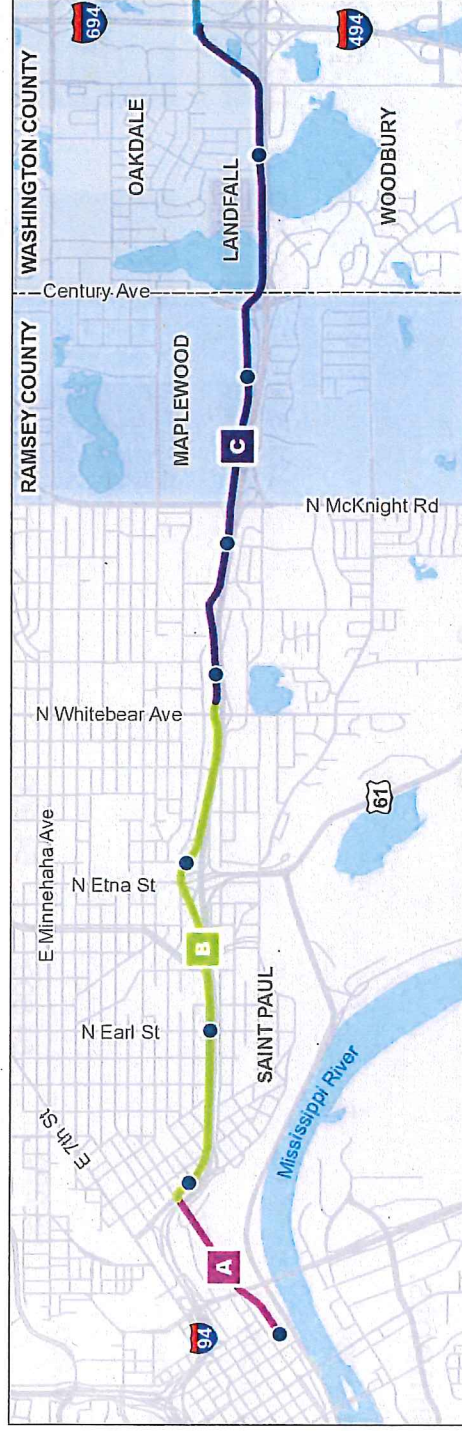
Source: Metropolitan Council



GATEWAY CORRIDOR

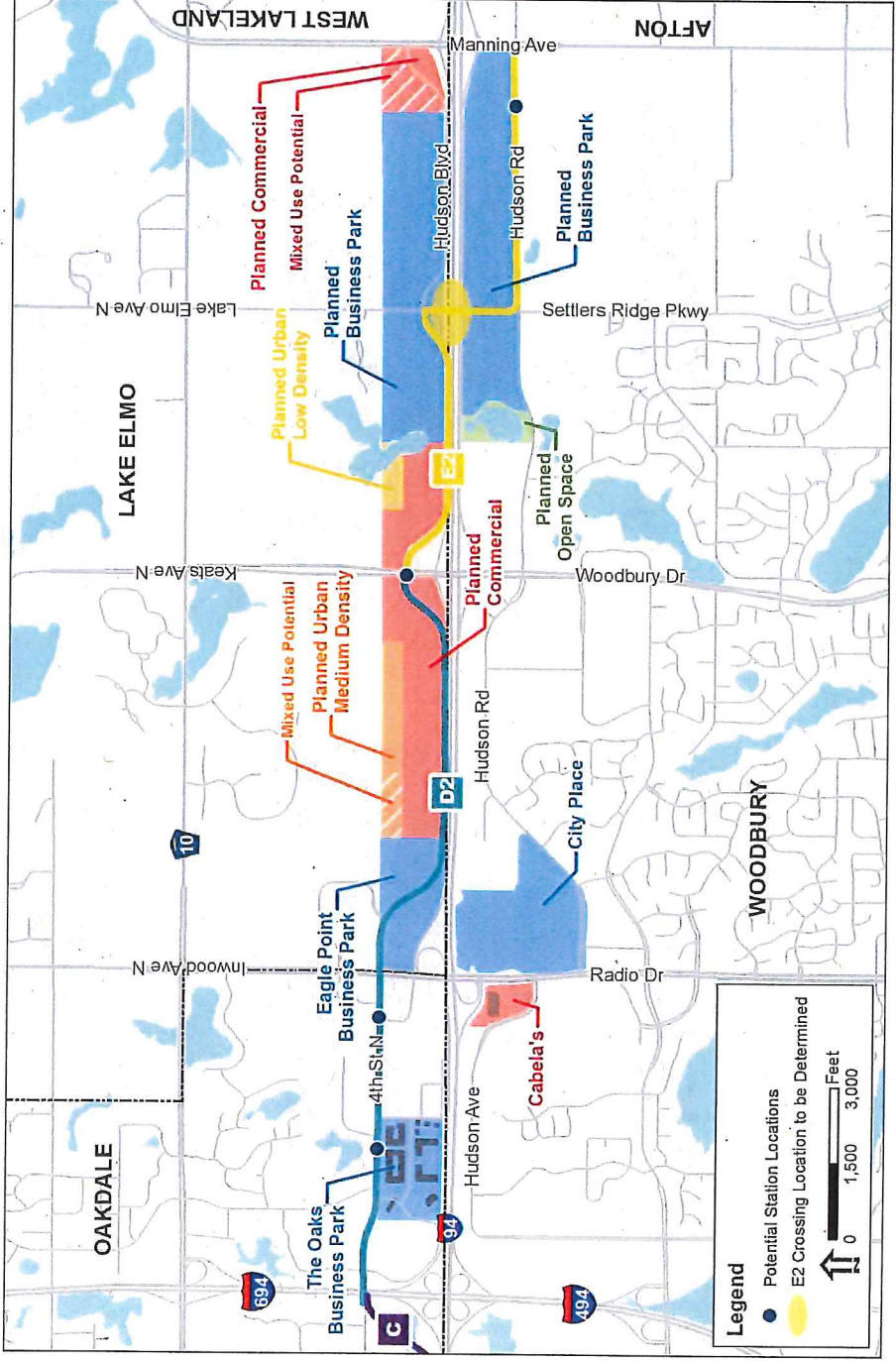
PAC Proposed LPA Recommendation

- BRT within a dedicated guideway (A-B-C-D2-E2)
- TAC and CAC also supported A-B-C-D2-E2 as the LPA

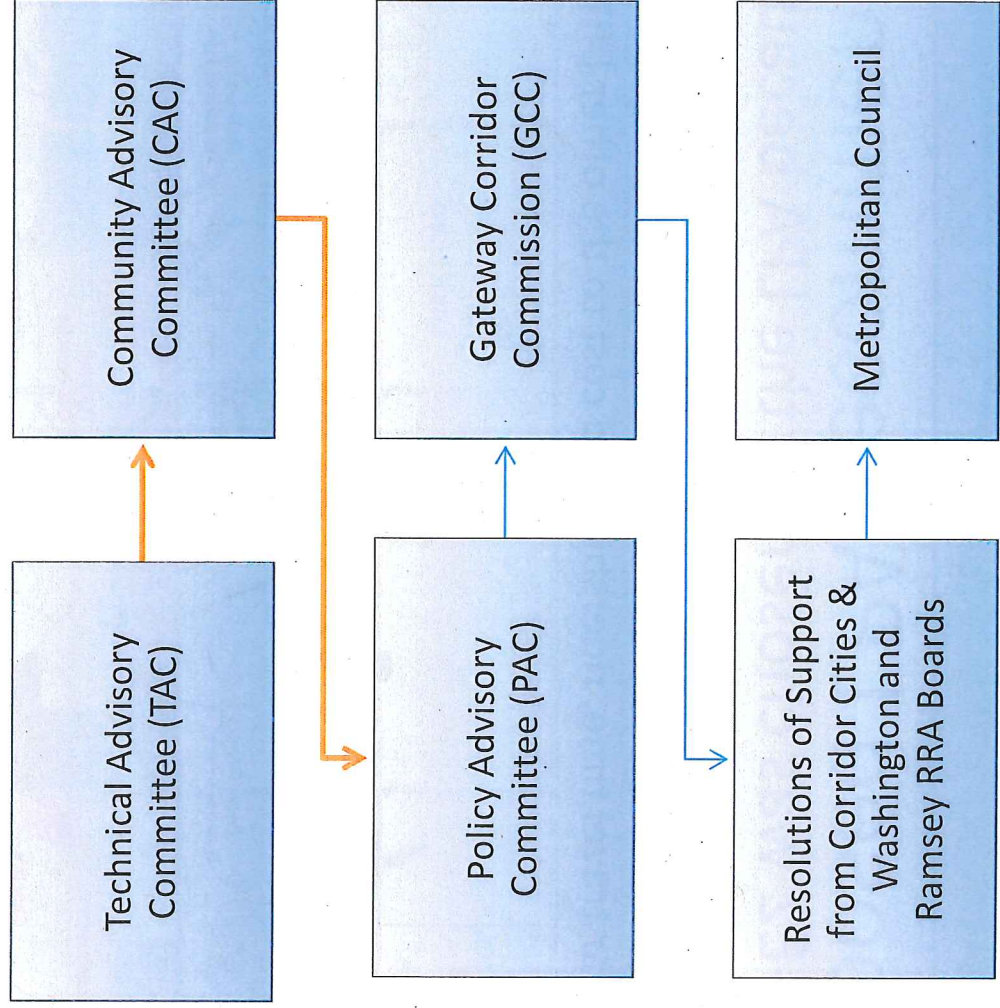


PAC Proposed LPA Recommendation

- A-B-C-D2-E2 was chosen as the LPA because:
 - Of its proximity to areas of potential transit-oriented growth and job access,
 - It minimizes impacts to congested roadways and traffic, and
 - Has a similar travel time, ridership, and cost to the other BRT alternatives



LPA Decision Making Process



Next Steps in the LPA process

- PAC/GCC Public Hearing on Proposed LPA – August 7
- PAC Meeting (LPA recommendation to WCRRA) – September 11
- City resolutions of support –September
- RCRRA/ WCRRA actions – by October 7
- Met Council review of public input on draft TPP - October

Additional Opportunities to Learn More and Provide Input

- Invite Gateway team members to meet with your organization or community group
- Contact project staff directly at GatewayCorridor@co.washington.mn.us or 651-430-4300
- Sign up for email newsletter
- Visit www.TheGatewayCorridor.com
 - Videos, project updates, analysis reports, meeting summaries
- Visit/Like www.facebook.com/GatewayCorridor
- Comment directly to policy makers at PAC meetings



City Resolutions of Support for the LPA

- In order for the Gateway Corridor LPA to be included in the final version of the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, a resolution of support for the LPA must be obtained from each city and county through which the line passes.
- The project has prepared resolution language for all cities' use to be modified as needed.
- The resolution of support is also an opportunity for each city to formally recognize issues of importance to the city as they relate to the Gateway Corridor.
- It is important that the resolution does not make city support for the Gateway Corridor LPA conditional upon any given project decision.

Thank you!

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