

The Gateway Corridor Commission initiated a "Transit Alternatives Analysis" (AA) study in Fall 2010, looking at the I-94 corridor from downtown Minneapolis to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The AA is the first step in determining the best transit mode (light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit or express bus) and route alternative for transit service in the corridor. The study will include forecast ridership, station stop locations, and estimated cost to build, operate and maintain. The study will help address issues of congestion, potential economic development/revitalization, and social and environmental impacts. A Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) will be identified at the end of the study.

Proposed Station Locations Identified for Further Study

Over the past few months, the Gateway Corridor Project Team has met with each city in the Gateway Corridor to identify proposed station locations for each of the eight alternatives. Proposed locations for transit stations and park/ride lots were identified based on the following criteria:

- Proximity to proposed route, connecting transit routes and major cross streets
- Existing and proposed land uses
- Existing and proposed population and employment densities
- Potential for transit-oriented development
- Availability of a suitable land parcel for a transit station or park/ride lot
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections



I-35W BRT Station at 46th Street

Two general types of stations are proposed. A walk-up station is a station that will not have a park/ride lot and will be served by feeder bus, drop-off, walk and bike. A park/ride station will be served by these modes but will also have a large parking lot or structure for park/ride patrons. Regional guidelines recommend that transit stations are spaced an average of 1 mile apart for LRT or BRT routes and 2 miles apart for commuter rail.



Northstar Commuter Rail Station at Target Field

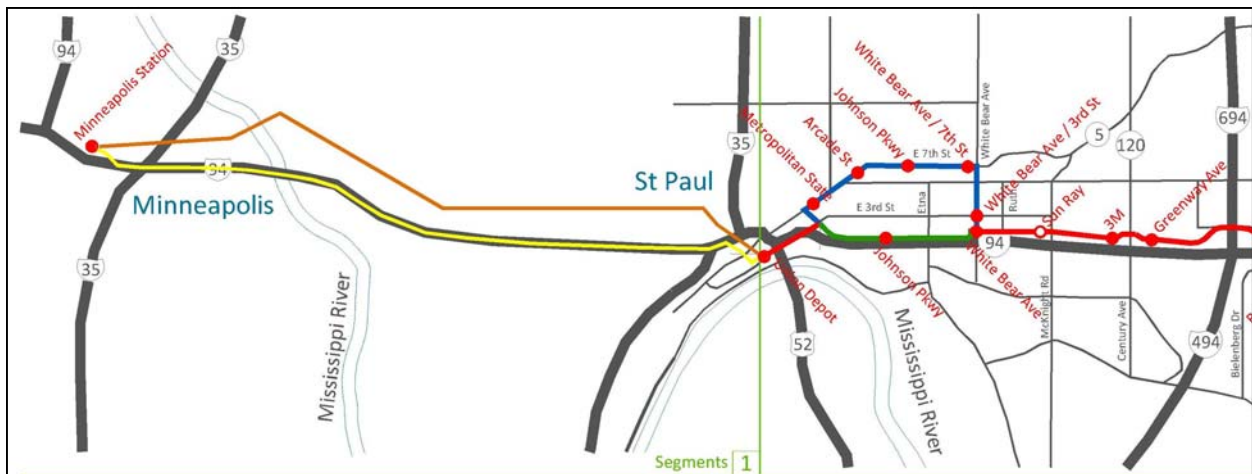


Hiawatha LRT Station at Franklin Avenue

Route Alternatives and Proposed Station Locations

Eight alternatives are being evaluated in the Gateway Alternatives Analysis. All include transit service between downtown Minneapolis, MN and Hudson, WI. **Alternative 1: No Build** includes express buses operating in managed lanes on I-94 between Minneapolis and St. Paul and express buses operating on I-94 shoulders between St. Paul and Manning Avenue. **Alternative 2: Transportation System Management (TSM)** includes the service improvements in the No Build alternative as well as express buses operating on I-94 shoulders between St. Paul and Hudson. The TSM alternative also includes spot improvements for express buses and park/ride lots between Hudson and Eau Claire, WI. The other "Build" alternatives are illustrated below. Service improvements in the TSM alternative are also included in the BRT, LRT and BRT Managed Lane alternatives.

Alternatives 3-6 BRT & LRT

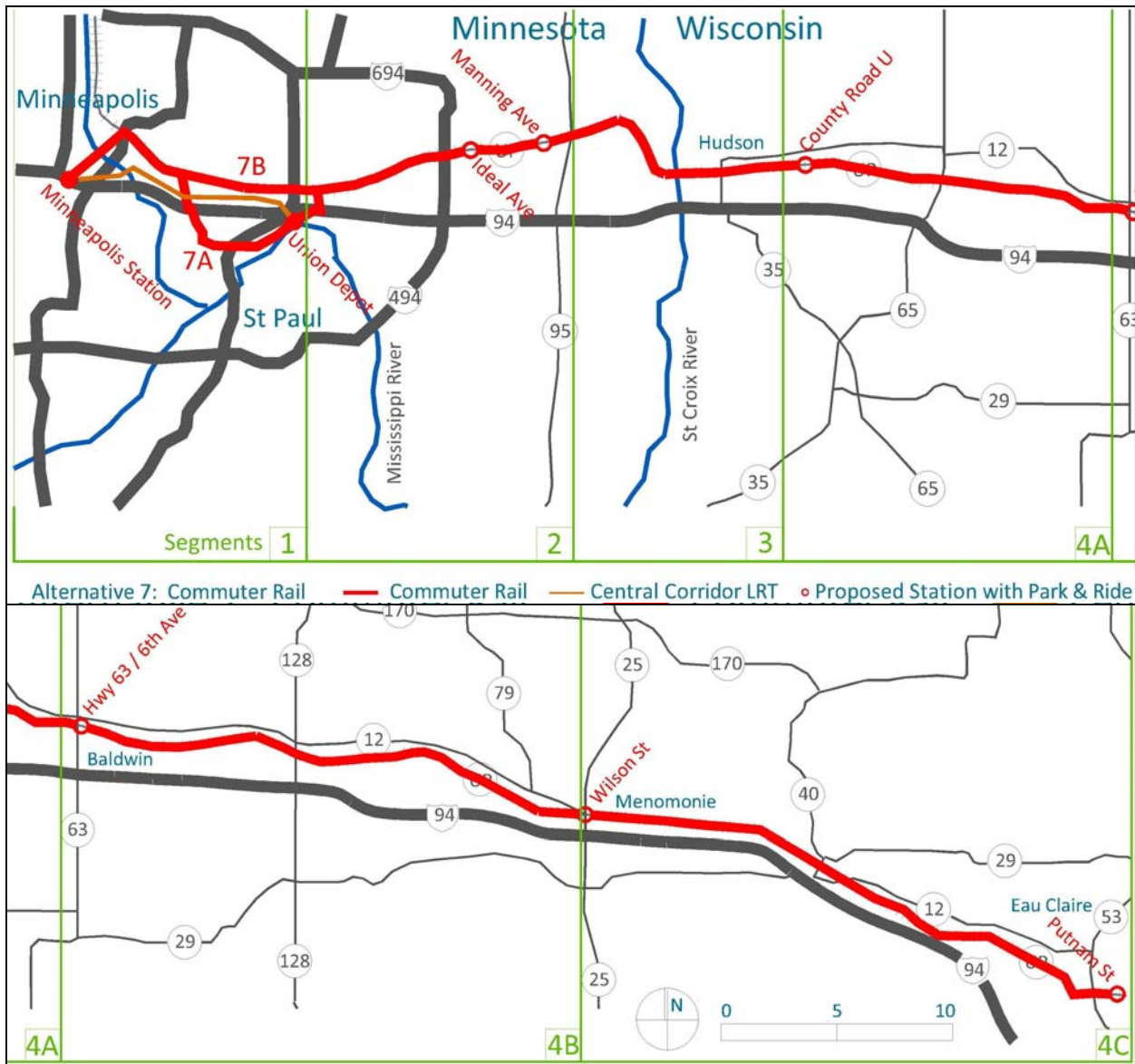


Alternatives 3-6: Alternative 3-BRT, Alternative 4-BRT, Alternative 5-LRT, Alternative 6-LRT

— Alternatives 3, 4, 5 & 6
 — Alternatives 3 & 5
 — Alternatives 4 & 6
 — Central Corridor LRT
○ Proposed Station with Park & Ride
 ● Proposed Station with Walk-Up



Alternative 7: Commuter Rail



Alternative 8: BRT Managed Lane



The new “BRT Managed Lane” alternative (center running lanes on I-94 between downtown Minneapolis and Hudson) is very similar to the Mn/PASS lanes that currently exist on I-35W south of downtown Minneapolis and I-394 west of downtown Minneapolis. These lanes are restricted during peak periods to buses, high occupancy vehicles (carpools and vanpools), and single occupant vehicles that pay to use the lanes. Pricing varies depending on the level of congestion. The lanes are electronically controlled. Stations and other special facilities may be provided for buses.

Mn/PASS managed lane on I-35W

Evaluation of Alternatives

Transitway projects requesting Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funds must follow the FTA's evaluation criteria. These criteria are:

- Mobility improvements (20%)
- Transit-supportive land use (20%)
- Economic development effects (20%)
- Operating efficiencies (10%)
- Cost-effectiveness (20%)
- Environmental benefits (10%)

The Gateway Corridor goals and objectives mirror the FTA criteria.

Improve Mobility—Improvements to mobility will be measured by transit ridership (including reverse commuters), transit travel time compared to the auto, user benefits and transit service improvements, service to people who depend on transit, and improvements for bicycle and pedestrian access.

Support Economic Development—Consistency with local, regional, state and interstate economic development goals will be important along with the extent of transit support-

ive plans and policies and population/employment within 1/2 mile of stations.

Provide Cost-Effective, Economically Viable Transit Option— This will be measured by capital and operating costs, FTA's Cost-Effectiveness Index (CEI), and service productivity measures.

Protect Natural Environmental Features—Evaluation measures will be tied to sustainability, minimizing environmental impacts, and avoiding or minimizing alterations to environmentally sensitive areas.

Preserve/Protect Quality of Life— Alternatives should be consistent with community plans; noise, vibration and traffic impacts should be minimized; and the transit rider experience should be improved.

Improve Safety—Safety will be evaluated on the potential to reduce crashes, the number of at-grade crossings, and the extent of crossing protection provided.

Next Steps

The next phase in the AA process will focus on the detailed evaluation and comparison of alternatives. This work will include 2030 transit ridership forecasts, capital and operating cost estimates, conceptual design of the alternative routes, and an early assessment of potential environmental, economic and social impacts.

The results of the detailed evaluation and comparison of alternatives will be presented to the public for comment during a third series of public meetings in early 2012. A recommendation on a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is anticipated by the Spring of 2012.

Additional Opportunities for Input

The Gateway Corridor Alternatives Project Team can present more information about the Alternatives Analysis project. Contact us at gatewaycorridor@co.washington.mn.us or 651-430-4300 if your neighborhood association, educational institution, community organization or business group is interested in learning more.

For more information about the Gateway Corridor or to provide additional comments, go to the project website at www.thegatewaycorridor.com.



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