



## County gets CTIB funds for priority transit projects

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The Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) awarded \$149.9 million in grants to transit projects throughout the region Wednesday morning.

For Washington County, this means some key transit projects can continue moving forward, said Ted Schoenecker, the county's transportation planning manager.

CTIB awarded \$2.1 million to the Gateway Corridor project for continued development of a draft environmental impact statement. The county has been working on an alternatives analysis for the Gateway Corridor, which runs about 20 miles from the Union Depot downtown St. Paul to the St. Croix River.

The CTIB funds and a partnership with Ramsey County moves the county to the next phase of the project.

"If we didn't have those (CTIB) funds and partnership, then we would finish our alternatives analysis and we wouldn't have a game plan for the next step," Schoenecker said. "This allows us to continue on instead of finishing our current study and then having a gap."

Schoenecker said the alternatives analysis was like starting at the top level and looking at several alternatives for the corridor. The environmental impact statement is a mid-level project that will look at one or two alternatives and provide more information about the impact of each alternative.

"It provides more information, but doesn't get too specific," Schoenecker said.

The county has more transit projects ready to move ahead. CTIB also awarded the county \$630,000 for the Rush Line Corridor project to purchase one-half-mile of railroad along U.S. Highway 61 in Hugo. This is consistent with previous county board actions in preserving rail corridors that are being abandoned and then using them for transit, Schoenecker said.

While CTIB awarded funds to two major county projects, the county requested that CTIB defer \$2.3 million in guaranteed grant funds for some of the county's priority projects to 2013, which include the Red Rock Corridor, Rush Line Corridor and Minnesota 36 Corridor.

"We asked them to defer it because we don't want to put (funds) toward a project that isn't ready," Schoenecker said. "We may not be ready for next year, but we're anticipating in 2013," Schoenecker added about the Red Rock Corridor, Rush Line Corridor and Minnesota 36 Corridor projects.

In addition to those awarded in the County, 2011 capital grants awarded by CTIB include:\_\_\_

\* \$97.9 million to the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project for supporting right-of-way-acquisition, light rail vehicle design and fabrication, fare box collection system design and construction. This is the fourth grant received by the project, fulfilling the board's commitment to fund 30 percent of the total capital costs of the project.

\* \$13.6 million to the Southwest LRT Project for portions of the preliminary engineering and final environmental impact statement phases.

\* \$8.79 million to the Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) for construction of bus shoulder lanes and completing Stage I of the project. This is the third grant received by the project, fulfilling the board's commitment to fund 30 percent of the total capital costs for bus shoulder lanes.

\* \$2 million to the Northstar Commuter Rail Ramsey Station for construction of the Ramsey Station, which is scheduled to open for service the end of 2012.