



MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: September 16, 2014
REGULAR
ITEM #: 15
MOTION \$\$

AGENDA ITEM: Adoption of Resolution to Affirm the Local Preferred Alternative (LPA) For the Bus Rapid Transit Route of the Gateway Corridor

SUBMITTED BY: Dean Zuleger / Nick Johnson

THROUGH: Mayor Mike Pearson, Council Member Mike Reeves,

REVIEWED BY: Washington County Public Works, Lake Elmo EDA, Met Council

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of Item City Administrator
- Report/Presentation.....City Administrator
- Questions from Council to Staff Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion Mayor & City Council
- Discussion Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion Mayor Facilitates

POLICY RECCOMENDER: Mayor Mike Pearson & Council Member Mike Reeves, Members of the Policy Advisory Committee of the Gateway Commission

FISCAL IMPACT: Up to \$40,000 in planning support for Transportation Oriented Development from Washington County and \$30,000-\$50,000 in economic development analysis for the Bus Rapid Transit route along Hudson Boulevard.

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED: The City of Lake Elmo Council is asked to adopt Resolution No. 2014-71 recommending the evaluation of a bus rapid transit corridor that may be located in the right of way of Hudson Boulevard from Inwood Avenue to possibly as far as Manning Avenue. This alignment is known as the (A-B-C-D2 (Lake Elmo) – E2) cordior that runs from St. Paul to Lake Elmo / Woodbury.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY: For 5+ plus years the Gateway Commission has explored mass transit strategies meant to create better efficiencies in moving commuter back and forth from St. Paul to the east end of Washington County. For the most part, the study has concentrated on a

east-west transit line through the City of Woodbury (D1) with Lake Elmo resident access to the system being the Guardian Angels Church Park N Ride. Earlier this year, due to traffic management difficulties and ingress-egress conflicts, the Woodbury corridor was deferred to the Lake Elmo side of I-94 due to the green field nature of the community, less congestion, and a better opportunity to work with landowners on ingress-egress issues. So Lake Elmo went from an interested bystander in the Gateway process to a catalyst in the ability to extend the transit route past Oakdale. Earlier this year, the Gateway Commission chose bus rapid transit over light rail as the mode of transportation for costs savings, construction efficiency, and practicality.

In the process of reviewing the impact of bus rapid transit in Lake Elmo, the City conducted meetings with landowners, its economic development authority, County/Met Council/ state officials, and other communities as part of its due diligence. On September 9, 2104 the City conducted a workshop with members of the Washington County Board to determine items of concern or need to approve the local Preferred Alternative needed to advance the project to the next level. **Each City must adopt an LPA resolution prior to October 7, 2014 for the gateway project to be included in the Met Council's Transportation Project Plan. Adoption in to this plan will allow for the access of federal planning dollars to continue the analysis.**

In this due diligence, the City has come to the conclusion that (5) major items need to be addressed between the approval of the LPA resolution and the City's final approval – called municipal consent – that would be the final binding approval before transit route construction can take place. These items are:

1. That the County assumed jurisdictional control of Hudson Boulevard from Inwood Avenue to Manning Avenue which would could save Lake Elmo \$10 million to \$15 million over a 20 year period.
2. That Lake Elmo and the County agree to an access plan for Hudson Boulevard that would maintain current ingress-egress access for landowners to avoid business disruption.
3. The Gateway Commission consider an easterly station in the proximity of the NW corner of Manning Avenue and I-94 to support economic development.
4. That due to infrastructure constraints, an interchange is never built at the crossroads of I-94 and Lake Elmo Avenue.
5. That a safety and security plan be developed for the Gateway Corridor that insures Lake Elmo residents will not be adversely affect by the BRT.

These concerns were incorporated into the attached resolution and have been communicated to both the Gateway Commission and Washington County technical staff.

Failure to pass this LPA would force the Gateway Commission into a 180 day proving process for the need of the BRT with the Met Council and eliminate federal funding for future analysis.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (SWOT):

Strengths	Passage of the LPA will allow the City to access planning dollars and support PLUS an independent economic development study (funded by East Metro Strong) to help in the commercial development of Lake Elmo. The value of this service is \$70,000-\$90,000 of program revenue. Lake Elmo can still veto the process at municipal consent.
Weaknesses	Lake Elmo has not had the sufficient time to fully analyze the ramifications of Gateway and the E2 terminus without regard to a station on Manning Ave. could hamstring development efforts.
Opportunities	A complete economic development analysis would help in the recruitment of business and proper planning of the I94 corridor.
Threats	BRT could cause traffic congestion, increased density and other safety issues that could affect the community's character.

RECOMMENDATION: Based on the aforementioned, the staff recommends and appropriate guiding motion.

“Adoption of Resolution 2014-71 Transmitting the City of Lake Elmo’s support of the locally preferred alternative (LPA) to the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority, and the Metropolitan Council.”