

**ACTION TRANSMITTAL**  
**No. 2012-30**

**DATE:** July 26, 2012; *Revised August 28, 2012*

**TO:** TAC

**FROM:** TAC Planning

**REQUESTED BY:** Hennepin County  
Metropolitan Council

**PREPARED BY:** Mary Karlsson, Metropolitan Council MTS (651-602-1819)  
Jonathan Ehrlich, Metropolitan Council MTS (651-602-1408)

**SUBJECT:** 2030 Transportation Policy Plan Amendment for Bottineau Transitway  
Locally Preferred Alternative and Arterial Transitway Corridor Study  
Results

**MOTION:** That the TAB recommend adoption of amendments to the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan to specify light rail transit (LRT) on the West Broadway in Brooklyn Park – Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corridor – Olson Memorial Highway alignment (Alternative B-C-D1) as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Bottineau Transitway and to reflect results of the recently completed Arterial Transitways Corridors Study

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:** The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority requested on June 26, 2012 that the Metropolitan Council (Council) amend its 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (Plan), adopted November 2010, to include the locally preferred alternative for the Bottineau Transitway. The adopted Plan currently does not specify a mode or alignment for the Bottineau Transitway.

The Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority recommended light rail transit on the West Broadway in Brooklyn Park – Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corridor – Olson Memorial Highway alignment (Alternative B-C-D1) as the locally preferred alternative. The attached amendments are proposed changes to text and maps in the Plan to reflect this recommendation.

The proposed amendments also reflect proposed changes resulting from the completion of the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study (ATCS) as well as the Bottineau Transitway studies. These changes include listing Lake Street and Hennepin Avenue along with Penn Avenue and Emerson-Fremont Avenues in north Minneapolis as potential Arterial BRT corridors and language to reflect that a number of the potential Arterial BRT corridors are also being studied for other modes such as streetcar.

The Metropolitan Council submitted the Air Quality Conformity Analysis and Documentation to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on July 5th. The MPCA response and concurrence to the proposed conformity determination is attached and will be made available to the public as part of the public hearing process.

Upon review and recommendation of the proposed amendments by the TAB and TAC and receiving concurrence from all affected local units of government, the Council will adopt the proposed amendments for the purpose of holding a public hearing and receiving public comment. If the proposed changes are subsequently adopted by the Council, an application will be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration requesting permission for the Bottineau Transitway to enter the Preliminary Engineering phase of the New Starts Program.

**RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY:** The Metropolitan Council and its Transportation Advisory Board is required, under both state and federal law, to develop a multi-modal regional transportation plan that identifies transportation system goals, needs, and investment priorities over a 20-year period. Federal law and regional policy requires the plan to explicitly include the Locally Preferred Alternative, which consists of mode and alignment, for all transit projects seeking and receiving federal and state funds. Amendment of the LPA into the plan must include completion of the air quality conformity analysis and provision for public review and comment, including opportunity to comment in writing, verbally, and in person at one or more public hearings. It is the responsibility of the TAB to recommend the LPA and the plan amendments to the Metropolitan Council for selection and adoption following public review, comment, and Council response to public comments.

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***TAC Planning Comments:*** *TAC Planning reviewed and recommended the TPP amendments with the request that the proposed action include attachments documenting the planned public participation process and a demonstration of fiscal constraint. These attachments are included with this action transmittal.*

***TAC Comments & TAB Response:*** *TAC tabled the amendment on August 1, 2012 and requested that the reasons for advancing the amendment be brought to the September 5, 2012 meeting. Golden Valley did not pass a resolution of support in June 2012 for the recommended Bottineau Transitway recommended locally preferred alternative (LRT B-C-D1). Metropolitan Council will not take up the amendment until all cities in which the Bottineau Transitway is located have passed resolutions of support for the locally preferred alternative. TAC questioned why it should act on the amendment without Golden Valley's resolution of support for the locally preferred alternative.*

*TAB Policy and the full TAB discussed TAC's comments at their August 15, 2012 meetings and directed the TAC to identify technical issues with the amendment, provide a recommendation on the technical aspects of the amendment, and advise the TAB on policy issues. Robert Lilligren, as TAB Liaison to the Metropolitan Council, will report to/from TAB/Met Council on discussions and progress toward obtaining Golden Valley's support for Bottineau Transitway.*

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**ROUTING**

<b>TO</b>	<b>ACTION REQUESTED</b>	<b>DATE COMPLETED</b>
TAC Planning Committee	Review & Recommend	July 12, 2012
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	Tabled August 1, 2012
TAB Policy Committee	Review & Recommend	
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Recommend	
Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee	Review & Recommend	
Metropolitan Council	Review & Adopt	

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 2030 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN

### Amendment 1

**Chapter 1: Overview, The Regional Transportation Strategy, The Transit Contribution, Page 5, Third Paragraph, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

Nine other potential transitway corridors are under consideration in this plan. According to the Council's Transit Master Study, two of them show good potential for light rail or a dedicated busway- Southwest, between Eden Prairie and Minneapolis, and Bottineau Boulevard, connecting the northwest suburbs with downtown Minneapolis. Light rail LRT was selected as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Southwest Corridor by Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority in early 2010 and amended into the Transportation Policy Plan by the Council in May, 2010. Bottineau Boulevard is under study as is the Rush Line corridor the proposed link between Forest Lake and St. Paul. Hennepin County also selected light rail as the LPA for the Bottineau Transitway in June 2012 and the Council amended it into the Transportation Policy Plan in December 2012. The Rush Line corridor, the proposed link between Forest Lake and St. Paul, is currently under study. An alternatives analysis for Red Rock was completed, and bus improvements are currently being planned. An alternatives analysis ~~will begin~~ began for the Gateway corridor (I-94 east) in fall 2010.

### Amendment 2

**Chapter 7: Transit, Progress Since 2004 Policy Plan, Transitway Development, Page 113, Second Bullet, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

The region made substantial progress in developing transitways in the past several years: ...

- ~~The Bottineau Transitway, linking downtown Minneapolis to communities in northwestern Hennepin County, began an alternatives analysis and environmental documentation.~~ The Bottineau Transitway completed alternatives analysis and selected LRT on the West Broadway in Brooklyn Park – Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corridor – Olson Memorial Highway alignment (Alternative B-C-D1) as the Locally Preferred Alternative in December 2012, progressed in environmental documentation with the DEIS scheduled for public review in 2013, advanced station area land use planning, and began preparations for a request for permission from the FTA to enter the Preliminary Engineering design phase. The corridor connects Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Robbinsdale, Golden Valley, and Minneapolis.

### Amendment 3

**Chapter 7: Transit, 2030 Transit Plan, Develop a Network of Bus and Rail Transitways, Corridors Under Study or Development, Page 137, Third Bullet, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

Previous plans and studies inform the transitway recommendations described in this section. Corridors currently in some stage of study or development include: ...

- Bottineau Transitway – ~~Alternatives analysis and environmental documentation is in progress.~~ LRT on the West Broadway in Brooklyn Park – Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corridor – Olson Memorial Highway alignment (Alternative B-C-D1) was selected in December 2012 as the Locally Preferred Alternative. The LPA selection completes the New Starts Alternatives Analysis transportation planning process. Consistent with federal guidance to integrate the NEPA process with the transportation planning process, the

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) study process will continue with the DEIS scheduled to be complete in early 2013.

#### **Amendment 4**

**Chapter 7, *Transit, 2030 Transit Plan, Develop a Network of Bus and Rail Transitways, Transitway Recommendations, Light Rail and Dedicated Busways, Light Rail Transit and Dedicated Busway Recommendations*, Page 140, Fourth Paragraph, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

The Council's 2030 Transit Master Study showed two other corridors with high potential for light rail or a dedicated busway. The Southwest Transitway extends between Eden Prairie and Minneapolis, including the cities of Minnetonka, Hopkins, and Saint Louis Park. The Bottineau Transitway extends from Brooklyn Park to Minneapolis, and includes the cities of Crystal, Robbinsdale, and Golden Valley. An alternatives analysis has been completed for both corridors this corridor and a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) is anticipated in 2010. A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) was published for Southwest in Summer 2012. A DEIS is scheduled for publication for Bottineau in 2013. LRT on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (Alternative 3A) was selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative for Southwest and LRT on the West Broadway in Brooklyn Park – Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corridor – Olson Memorial Highway alignment (Alternative B-C-D1) was selected as the LPA for Bottineau.. ~~Bottineau Corridor extends from Minneapolis to potential destinations in Maple Grove or Brooklyn Park. Alternatives analysis and environmental work is on going for this corridor and both LRT and BRT alternatives continue to be studied.~~

#### **Amendment 5**

**Chapter 7: *Transit, 2030 Transit Plan, Develop a Network of Bus and Rail Transitways, Transitway Recommendations, Bus Rapid Transit*, Page 142, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

##### **1. Arterial Bus Rapid Transit**

The *2030 Transit Master Study* and other studies screened high ridership arterial transit corridors for their potential for light rail or dedicated busways. These studies showed that substantial ridership growth could be achieved through faster and higher frequency service. These corridors are all in highly developed areas with very limited right-of-way available, meaning that light rail or dedicated busways are most likely not feasible. These areas also have existing high density and mixed-use development characteristics that foster strong existing and potential transit ridership. Furthermore, local communities have focused growth on these corridors through infill and redevelopment opportunities.

Bus Rapid Transit service on arterial streets ~~could provide limited stop service and will use technology and facility improvements to provide a faster, more reliable trip with fewer stops in these corridors and use branding to differentiate the service from regular bus routes.~~

Candidate corridors are shown in Figure 7-39. The Council completed This plan recommends a comprehensive study of eleven corridors for this service in early 2012. While the study found differing performance and readiness among these corridors, strong existing ridership, planned growth and the cost effective nature of arterial transitway improvements make investments in any of the study corridors by 2030 appropriate.

In addition, during the consideration and selection of the Bottineau Transitway Locally Preferred Alternative, potential arterial bus rapid transit improvements were identified along Penn Avenue and [an extension of the Chicago Avenue](#) corridor along Emerson-Fremont Avenues in north Minneapolis. These corridors share many characteristics with the top performing corridors in the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study, including high ridership, and slow average speeds and therefore have been added to the list of potential arterial BRT corridors.

This plan ~~and~~ assumes six arterial bus rapid transitways will be implemented between 2008 and 2020 and three additional by 2030. The ~~proposed~~ potential corridors include:

Central Avenue	Nicollet Avenue	Robert Street
Snelling Avenue/Ford Pkwy	West 7th Street	Chicago/ <a href="#">Emerson-Fremont Ave</a>
West Broadway	East 7th Street	American Boulevard
<u>Lake Street</u>	<u>Hennepin Avenue</u>	<u>Penn Avenue</u>

~~[Emerson-Fremont Avenues](#)~~

In addition, the Arterial Transitway Corridor Study will include an analysis of the Lake Street Corridor and the Hennepin Avenue corridor between West Lake Street and downtown Minneapolis. Some of the corridors ~~have been~~ are being studied and may be recommended for modes in addition to bus rapid transit, including potential streetcar. The results of these studies will be incorporated into the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study and considered in selecting appropriate modes, alignments, and prioritization of corridor investments. Alternatives Analyses are currently underway for the Nicollet Avenue and Central Avenue corridors, the Lake Street/Midtown corridor and the Robert Street corridor [and proposed on the West Broadway corridor in Minneapolis and Robbinsdale](#). These detailed corridor analyses ~~following the Study~~ will determine if other bus or rail improvements, such as streetcar are viable in the near or long term. In some corridors, arterial BRT implementation could be complementary to, or a precursor to, future rail improvements including streetcar.

#### **Amendment 6**

**Chapter 7: Transit, 2030 Transit Plan, Develop a Network of Bus and Rail Transitways, Transitway Recommendations, Page 143 replace Figure 7-39 Potential 2030 Arterial BRT Routes with new figure (attached).**

#### **Amendment 7**

**Chapter 7: Transit, 2030 Transit Plan, Develop a Network of Bus and Rail Transitways, Transitway Recommendations,, Page 147 replace Figure 7-42 Proposed 2030 Express Service Corridors with new figure (attached).**

#### **Amendment 8**

**Chapter 7: Transit, 2030 Transit Plan, Develop a Network of Bus and Rail Transitways, Transitway Recommendations, Page 148 replace Figure 7-43 2030 Transitway System with new figure (attached).**

## Amendment 9

**Chapter 7: Transit, 2030 Transit Plan, Develop a Network of Bus and Rail Transitways, Transitway Recommendations, Summary of Transitway Recommendations,, Page 149-150, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

### *Complete, In Construction, Final Design or Preliminary Engineerings*

Eight ~~Seven~~ transitway corridors, Hiawatha LRT, I-35W BRT, Cedar Avenue BRT, I-394 Managed Lane, Northstar Commuter Rail, and Central LRT are complete, in construction, final design or preliminary engineering ~~while with Southwest is anticipated to enter~~ entering preliminary engineering in ~~2010-2012~~ and Bottineau anticipated to apply for entry into preliminary engineering in 2013.

### *Develop as LRT/Busway/BRT/Commuter Rail*

Seven ~~Eight~~ corridors, ~~Bottineau~~, I-35W North, Central Ave/TH65/BNSF, Rush Line, TH36/NE, Gateway, Midtown and Red Rock corridors should continue in development and are recommended as potential transitways by 2030.

Planning and development studies, conducted and funded in cooperation with county regional railroad authorities and Mn/DOT, will determine the specific alignment, mode and schedule for each corridor. Corridor Status:

- ~~Bottineau Boulevard: Alternatives analysis and environmental documentation underway.~~
- Rush Line: Initiated commuter bus demonstration service in 2010 with alternatives analysis underway.
- Gateway: Alternatives analysis underway.
- I-35W N, Central Ave/TH65/BNSF, and TH36/NE: Preferred mode and alignment to be determined through alternatives analyses over the next three years.
- Midtown: Preferred mode and alignment to be determined through further study.
- Red Rock: Alternatives analysis prepared recommending a phased approach with commuter rail implemented if high speed rail is developed in the corridor.

As corridors move toward implementation, the revenue estimates in this plan would allow for the following transitways to be implemented:

- Three corridors could be built as LRT or dedicated busways, one to be completed by 2020, one possibly begun before 2020 and completed soon after, and a third possibly completed by 2030. Both the Southwest and Bottineau corridors have selected LRT as the preferred mode and potentially represent two of the three corridors;
- **Four BRT corridors could be built on highway alignments, two by 2020 and two additional BRT corridors on highway alignment by 2030;** and
- One additional commuter rail corridor could be built by 2030.

However it should be noted that based on current data, no commuter rail line other than the Northstar corridor appears to generate enough ridership to justify this kind of large capital investment. This assumption was validated in 2010 by comparing actual Northstar ridership data to commuter rail ridership projections previously prepared for that corridor to evaluate the accuracy of the ridership model. However, progress in potential high speed or intercity passenger rail connections to Chicago and Duluth could significantly reduce the capital cost of the Red Rock and Bethel-Cambridge commuter rail lines and improve their cost/effectiveness. Because other commuter rail corridors may become viable in the future, this plan assumes implementation of a second commuter rail line in its cost estimates between 2020 and 2030.

*Develop as Arterial BRT Corridors*

Nine corridors are recommended as potential Arterial BRT facilities by 2030. In some of those corridors, arterial BRT implementation could be complementary to, or a precursor to future rail improvements including streetcar. This plan's cost estimates assume that six corridors are to be implemented by 2020 and three additional corridors by 2030. Three additional corridors may be implemented after 2030. Potential corridors include:

- |                                |                        |                                     |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Central Avenue                 | Nicollet Avenue        | Robert Street                       |
| Snelling Avenue/Ford Pkwy      | West 7th Street        | Chicago/ <u>Emerson Fremont Ave</u> |
| West Broadway                  | East 7th Street        | American Boulevard                  |
| <u>Lake Street</u>             | <u>Hennepin Avenue</u> | <u>Penn Avenue</u>                  |
| <u>Emerson-Fremont Avenues</u> |                        |                                     |

*Express Bus Corridors with Transit Advantages*

Various corridors

*Intermodal Hubs*

The implementation of a network of transitways converging on the two downtowns will require the development of intermodal facilities where passengers can make connections between lines. This plan identifies the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul and the Target Field Station/Interchange near downtown Minneapolis as those two intermodal hubs.