

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: May 12, 2014

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 28, 2014

Subject: Accept Highway Transitway Corridor Study Report

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: 2030 Transportation Policy Plan

Staff Prepared/Presented: Arlene McCarthy, Director 651-602-1754

Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director, Finance and Planning 651-602-1058

Cole Hiniker, Senior Planner 651-602-1748

Division/Department: Transportation / Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council accept the Highway Transitway Corridor Study Final Report dated May 2014.

Background

The Council completed the Transit Master Study in 2009 that analyzed the potential for Light Rail Transit or Dedicated Busway Transit in a number of potential transitway corridors around the region. This analysis indicated potential demand for transitway service in several highway corridors where there is express bus demand today. The Transit Master Study did not study these corridors for Highway BRT potential, which is an option that may be more cost-effective for the region in lower-demand corridors particularly when coordinated with planned highway improvements. For example, a number of these corridors are also being considered for MnPASS improvements that provide a significant transit advantage. The region also has developed experience in implementing transitway improvements in highway corridors through the METRO Orange Line (I-35W South) and METRO Red Line (Cedar Avenue).

The Highway Transitway Corridor Study builds off the previous work by studying the potential for Highway BRT in eight regional highway corridors. These corridors are identified as potential transitways in the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan and the list of eight corridors was developed in consultation with the counties and includes: I-94 West; Highway 65; I-35E North; Highway 36; I-35E South; Highway 169 South; Highway 212; and I-394.

Rationale

The eight corridors studied show demand for transit service but have not been studied for Highway BRT improvements. The results of this study provide a basic understanding of Highway BRT demand in transit corridors that have express bus service today. The corridors with the strongest potential will be important to consider for long-term investments that help the region achieve the goals of providing more transit access to jobs and activity centers, and growing regional transit ridership. The results will lead to more detailed study, potentially coordinated with highway studies, on the corridors with the strongest potential.

The results of this study will also be coordinated with other ongoing corridor studies led by others where Highway BRT is being explored including the Red Rock (Highway 61), Robert Street (Highway 52), and Gateway (I-94) corridors. These results will be added as an addendum when finalized.

Funding

There are no direct funding implications of this study for the Council but the results may lead to further planning studies or investments that are coordinated with MnDOT and stakeholders in corridors with the strongest potential.

Known Support / Opposition

The Highway Transitway Corridor Study was completed in coordination with MnDOT, county, city, and transit provider representation on a project management team and a technical working group. The study results have been well-received as informative to transit and highway planning in the study corridors and have created additional interest in using the study methodology in other corridors. There is no known opposition to the study results.