

ABSTRACT

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes modifications that have been made to the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project since the publication of the *Central Corridor Alternative Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (AA/DEIS) in April 2006, the adoption of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in June 2006, and the publication of the *Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (SDEIS) in June 2008. This FEIS is the latest step in providing a framework for local decision-making as the Central Corridor LRT project is advanced. Its purpose is to inform the public, resource agencies and local governments of changes proposed to the project since publication of the AA/DEIS in April 2006 and the refinements proposed and analyzed during preliminary engineering and presented in the SDEIS in June 2008.

The Central Corridor LRT Project is an approximately 11-mile LRT line that would serve the Minneapolis and St. Paul downtown areas, as well as the University of Minnesota (U of M) and the State Capitol complex. In Downtown Minneapolis, it will integrate with the successful Hiawatha LRT line, establishing a seamless regional transit system.

For the past 20 years, the Central Corridor has consistently been identified as a location where mobility and capacity should be improved. It has been the focus of several studies to determine the feasibility of various mass transit technologies and their potential alignments. Each of these studies identified the Central Corridor as the region's priority corridor for mass transit investment. Because the Central Corridor is the physical spine of the overall regional transportation network, its high transit ridership potential represents one of the region's best opportunities for a significant capital investment—an investment that can be leveraged to increase ridership and have a positive impact the region's transit system.

The SDEIS was circulated for public review and comment and public hearings were held on August 4, 7 and 9, 2008. Substantive comments received during the 45-day public comment period are summarized and responded to in Chapter 11 of this FEIS. Based on input received during the public comment period and analysis of potential community and environmental impacts, the Metropolitan Council adopted a revised Preferred Alternative on August 27, 2008.

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