



13.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND NEXT STEPS

The Rush Line Corridor Alternatives Analysis is the first of many steps in the FTA's New Starts project development process. The Project has culminated in the selection of two preferred alternatives: BRT on I-35E/I-35 to Hugo/Forest Lake/Columbus, and LRT on the Ramsey County RRA and Minnesota Commercial Railroad rights-of-way to White Bear Lake. The identification of these two alternatives as the preferred alternatives is based on the technical analysis described in Chapter 12 of this report, as well as feedback from the Study Team, Rush Line Corridor Task Force and the public. Further study of these two alternatives is one of the recommendations described in this chapter in order to ultimately identify a Locally Preferred Alternative to advance into Preliminary Engineering and the NEPA process.

This Chapter describes the steps that the Rush Line Task Force and its planning partners must undertake to continue its progress in the New Starts process. These next steps are divided into short, medium and long-term actions that are consistent with the overall, long-term vision for the Corridor. Developing an effective and robust transit system for the Corridor will take time and require strong support by the communities in the Corridor as well as the Twin Cities region. Following is the preliminary recommended approach to advancing this vision for the Rush Line Corridor, based on input obtained from the Study Team on May 7, 2009 and as presented to the public at the June 2009 open houses:

- Build a foundation of transit ridership with expanded bus options.
- Formulate the appropriate transit-oriented development (TOD) policies to encourage the types of land use and development desired for the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) that is eventually selected for the Rush Line Corridor.
- Develop dedicated sources of funding for transit operations and capital investments.
- Given the change in administration, track and support federal (New Starts) funding criteria that recognize a wider range of public transit benefits than those established in 2005.
- Develop public/private partnerships to promote Corridor needs and opportunities.
- Develop and implement corridor preservation policies and actions that are consistent across County boundaries, particularly for portions of the County RRA rights-of-way north of White Bear Lake.

- Preserve the Corridor for multimodal transportation improvements. Continue to accommodate and support interim non-motorized use of the County RRA rights-of-way in areas where implementation of transit improvements is in the long-term.

Figure 13-1 presents a summary of the recommendations of the Rush Line Corridor Alternatives Analysis.

13.1 Short-Term Actions

Short-term recommendations for the Corridor focus on commencing a study (Advanced Alternatives Analysis) to ultimately select one LPA, as well as enhancements to the Corridor to increase transit patronage.

- Support maintaining express bus service to downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul from park-and-ride facilities along I-35 Corridor.
- Support a pilot commuter coach service within the Corridor in order to build transit ridership and implement the recommendations of the Rush Line Commuter Bus Feasibility Study.
- Recommend BRT on I-35E/I-35 to Hugo/Forest Lake/Columbus and LRT on the Ramsey County RRA right-of-way to White Bear Lake as the two Preferred Alternatives for further study in an Advanced Alternatives Analysis.
- Conduct an Advanced Alternatives Analysis on the two alternatives recommended for further study to refine design, costs, ridership and environmental impacts and perform an initial assessment of user benefits as defined by current FTA New Starts guidelines.
 - The purpose of this advanced conceptual engineering is to facilitate the selection of only one LPA for the Rush Line Corridor.
 - Additionally, explore potential for a tiered approach in the environmental documentation given that two alternatives are recommended for further study in an Advanced Alternatives Analysis.
 - Locally, coordinate additional analysis with ongoing and future efforts within the Corridor, including the upcoming Southeast Anoka County Mode Choice Study.
- Establish and implement corridor preservation policies and guidelines for the entire length of the Rush Line Corridor along the County RRA rights-of-way.
 - Develop design guidelines for potential transportation modes to be accommodated within the County RRA rights-of-way, including freight railroad, light rail, and multi-use trails.
- Review Comprehensive Plans of local communities to determine if transit-oriented development (TOD) policies have been adopted by local governments to develop land use plans, policies, zoning regulations and development guidelines that support transit use and implementation.
- Review and revise private and public parking policies and guidelines of local communities to bolster transit use and to plan for future park-and-ride facilities.

- Monitor park-and-ride utilization at existing park-and-ride facilities along the Rush Line Corridor and expand facilities as appropriate (ultimately depending on one LPA, and whether it is on the I-35E/I-35 Corridor or Ramsey County RRA right-of-way).
- Develop Corridor branding and public/private partnerships.
- Continue to engage RLC communities north of Hugo/Forest Lake/Columbus given that both recommended LPAs entail service only up to White Bear Lake and Hugo/Forest Lake/Columbus.
- Ensure that design, construction and environmental clearance of the reconstruction of the Lafayette Bridge (TH 52) over the Mississippi River and Cayuga Bridge over Cayuga Street and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad in St. Paul include bridge piers and footings that will accommodate future implementation of rapid transit.
- Similarly, ensure that design, construction and environmental clearance of the restoration of the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul as a multimodal transportation facility will properly accommodate either LPA identified at this juncture of the AA process. This includes proper coordination with Metro Transit bus and light rail routing through downtown St. Paul; with appropriate freight railroad companies; and future high-speed rail service between St. Paul and Chicago, IL.
- Develop and implement Rush Line Corridor preservation policies, management, and actions that are consistent across County boundaries, particularly for portions of the County RRA rights-of-way north of White Bear Lake.

13.2 Mid-Term Actions

Mid-term recommendations likely require additional sources of funding to significantly expand transit service to support the findings of the advanced concept design and/or environmental documentation, i.e. identification and implementation of one LPA.

- Develop regional sources to fund both transit capital and operating costs. Funding from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) will likely be insufficient to fund a comprehensive system of transitways in the Twin Cities area, as well as be used to guarantee bonds for capital programs.
- Continue implementation of corridor preservation policies, management, and actions that are consistent across County boundaries, particularly for portions of the County RRA rights-of-way north of White Bear Lake.
- If the LPA selected is LRT on the Ramsey County RRA right-of-way, identify and phase the required modifications to regional policies and capital and operating plans to integrate the LPA with the Metropolitan Council's TPP. This includes identifying the required modifications to the Maplewood Transit Center; study of future light rail vehicle maintenance facility; integration with Central Corridor LRT; accommodating non-motorized use of the right-of-way; etc.
- If the LPA selected is BRT on I-35E/I-35, identify and phase the required modifications to regional policies and capital and operating plans to integrate the LPA with the Metropolitan Council's TPP. This includes discussion/determination of governance, especially if the northern

terminus of the line is outside of the Regional Transit Capital Communities; system integration; vehicle storage and maintenance (e.g. the same as Cedar and I-35W BRT); etc.

- Continue to engage Rush Line Corridor communities north of Hugo/Forest Lake given that both recommended LPAs entail service only up to White Bear Lake and Hugo/Forest Lake.

13.3 Long-Term Actions

The **long-term** vision for the Rush Line Corridor includes transit service from downtown St. Paul to Hinckley with:

- Improved transportation options, mobility and accessibility to activity centers in downtown St. Paul.
- A sustainable transportation option for development in the northern communities of the Corridor.
- Opportunities to focus and enhance new development at designated station sites.
- Continue to support non-motorized use of the County RRA rights-of-way, especially in areas where implementation of transit is farther out in the horizon.
- Preserve rail corridors for future transit use.
- Upon implementation of passenger rail service in the corridor, identify opportunities to collaborate on developing commuter rail service.

Figure 13-1: Rush Line Corridor Implementation Program

Rush Line Corridor Implementation Program

Realizing the Vision

Build Transit Ridership

- Support bus service within the Corridor:
 - Demonstration service to St. Paul
 - Route 288 to Minneapolis
- Add and expand park-and-rides

Preserve the Corridor

- Develop preservation guidelines and policies with municipalities
- Coordinate with other projects on Corridor needs (i.e. Lafayette Bridge reconstruction and Union Depot)
- Support interim trail use of County Regional Railroad Authority (RRA) rights-of-way

Cultivate the Corridor

- Complete an Advanced Alternatives Analysis
- Engage communities north of Forest Lake/Hugo/Columbus
- Collaborate on the implementation of a comprehensive transitway system
- Develop branding
- Support increased transit funding
- Identify and implement public/private partnership opportunities

Build Transit Ridership

- Complete Short-Term projects
- Support making demonstration service permanent
- Add and expand park-and-rides
- Identify new project opportunities

Preserve the Corridor

- Develop/implement preservation guidelines and policies with municipalities
- Coordinate with other projects on Corridor needs (i.e. Lafayette Bridge reconstruction, Union Depot)
- Support interim trail use of County RRA rights-of-way

Cultivate the Corridor

- Integrate the results of the Advanced Alternatives Analysis into the Transportation Policy Plan and municipalities' comprehensive plans
- Identify station locations and complete station studies
- Initiate/complete environmental documentation and engineering for a single preferred alternative
- Monitor the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program
- Engage communities north of Forest Lake/Columbus
- Collaborate on the implementation of a comprehensive transitway system
- Support increased transit funding
- Identify and implement public/private partnership opportunities

Build Transit Ridership

- Complete Mid-Term projects
- Identify new project opportunities
 - Corridor Extension Study
- Add and expand park-and-rides
- Support bus service north of Forest Lake/Columbus

Preserve the Corridor

- Develop/implement preservation guidelines and policies with municipalities
- Coordinate with other projects on Corridor needs
- Support interim trail use of County RRA rights-of-way

Cultivate the Corridor

- Construct the Locally Preferred Alternative
- Identify opportunities to focus development at stations
- Monitor the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts Program
- Engage communities north of Forest Lake/Columbus
- Collaborate on the implementation of a comprehensive transitway system
- Support increased transit funding
- Identify and implement public/private partnership opportunities

Short-Term

Mid-Term

Long-Term

Open for Service

