

Rush Line Corridor Alternatives Analysis

The Rush Line Corridor Alternatives Analysis will identify and evaluate options to improve access and mobility in the study area. Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and its many planning partners are leading the study's efforts. The study is following guidelines established by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for conducting a Transit Alternatives Analysis (AA). Transportation options to be evaluated include a combination of roadway and transit improvements. Rail and rubber-tire technologies will be evaluated as part of the transit assessment.

The purpose for an Alternatives Analysis is:

- Deciding upon the project (mode and general alignment) that is likely to be built.
- Support the likely success of the project by:
 - Selecting an alternative whose scope and cost address the defined problem and whose costs are consistent with expected benefits.
 - Identifying a realistic financial plan.
 - Advancing the development of supportive land use and other policies.

The Alternatives Analysis is an important first step in the FTA's Project Development Process:

- The AA sets the context for making informed decisions.
- The AA answers questions that need answers:

Local Questions	FTA Questions
What do we want to do?	What's the problem and were all reasonable alternatives considered?
What are the benefits?	How solid is the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) decision?
How much does it cost?	Were the New Starts criteria developed correctly?
Where's the money going to come from?	How does the project rate?
How do we make it happen?	Should the FTA fund it?

The FTA Project Development Process follows the following activities:

- **Alternatives Analysis** – This step evaluates transportation options after developing a Purpose and Need Statement that identifies problems and issues.
- **Preliminary Engineering** – A more detailed analysis that includes estimated capital and operating cost of the transportation option(s).
- **Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)** – A more detailed evaluation of each transportation option and their impact on the surrounding environment.
- **Record of Decision** – Approves/rejects transportation option(s) based on the EIS as well as comments from public agencies, citizens and elected officials.

- *Final Design*
- *Construction*
- *Operation*

Public involvement will be a critical piece of this Alternatives Analysis. In the coming months, residents, community and business leaders will be interviewed in order to provide input on transportation and transit issues in the study area. The information obtained from these activities will be used to help develop the Goals and Objectives and the Purpose and Need Statement for the AA as well as give planners a better sense of the transportation system's strengths and weaknesses.

The outcome of the Rush Line Corridor Alternatives Analysis will be the establishment of a Locally Preferred Alternative following input by all stakeholders (public, policy makers, business owners, and government agencies) and that can be advanced forward into the FTA's Project Development Process through the support of the FTA.