

# Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis

## Purpose and Need Summary – April 2013 Update

The Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA) will evaluate the benefits, costs, and impacts of implementing a transitway in south Minneapolis. A critical part of every AA process is the development of the purpose and need for a project. A purpose and need statement identifies transportation problems as the basis for identifying and evaluating alternatives. It is a key factor in determining the range of alternatives to be considered during the AA.

### Core Elements of the Purpose and Need

- **Purpose** – Clear and succinct statement of the fundamental reasons the project is being proposed
- **Needs** – Existing transportation problems in the corridor that the project is intended to address
- **Goals/objectives** – Broader vision and desired outcomes for the project
- **Evaluation criteria** – Help compare and contrast alternatives based on a set of identified criteria

### Project Study Area

The Midtown Corridor study area is located entirely within the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. It is a multimodal transportation corridor that includes transit, other motor-vehicle traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians. The two alignments are:

- A former streetcar corridor and current high-frequency bus corridor, **Lake Street** is the primary east-west commercial corridor in south Minneapolis with a mix of retail and residential uses.
- One of the unique features of the **Midtown Greenway** is that it is grade-separated below the street grid. A portion of its right-of-way has been transformed into a bicycle and pedestrian facility and is now one of the region's most active bicycle corridors.

### What is the purpose of the Midtown Corridor transitway project?

The purpose of the Midtown Corridor Transitway Project is to provide transit service that meets current and future travel needs, attracts new riders, connects users with job centers and key destinations, and supports sustainable growth and development.

### Why is a transitway needed in the Midtown Corridor?

The Midtown Corridor is an important part of the regional multimodal transportation network; however there are several unmet transportation needs that constrain the area's potential development. Several factors contribute to a need for a transitway investment in the Midtown Corridor. These include:

- Unmet transportation needs in the corridor, particularly with transit
  - A lack of fast and convenient transit service in the region's second busiest east-west commercial corridor
  - Poor access to job centers and key destinations that together form one of the region's largest employment clusters
  - Transit facilities lack amenities commensurate with demand



- A diverse population with a variety of transportation demands
  - Access to range of destinations throughout the entire day, including evenings and weekends
  - A high proportion of residents who rely on transit as their primary means of transportation
- Growth and development in the corridor
  - Existing transportation capacity is inadequate to meet forecast population and employment growth
  - Need to increase intensity of residential and commercial development along the Midtown Corridor

### **What are the goals that will be accomplished by a transitway in the Midtown Corridor?**

1. Increase transit use among the growing number of corridor residents, employees, and visitors
  - Provide transit service that is fast, frequent, reliable and equitable for all users
  - Provide transitway stations that have a high level of passenger amenities and are easily accessible to riders with limited-mobility
  - Provide service that is identifiable and easy for visitors and new users to understand
  - Provide a transit investment that meets today's needs and has ability to expand for future growth
  - Increase the percentage of people using transit as their transportation choice in the corridor
2. Improve corridor equity with better mobility and access to jobs and activities
  - Enhance physical and visual connections with the three transitways - the Blue, Green and Orange lines – and two transit centers in the study area
  - Provide fast and convenient transfers with transitways and the local bus network
  - Locate transit stations to effectively serve transit customers while maintaining the desired speed of service
  - Improve access to local and regional destinations, activity centers and business nodes
  - Provide a transitway investment that considers the needs of residents who rely on transit and contributes to reduced reliance on auto travel
3. Catalyze and support housing and economic development along the corridor
  - Support a mix of housing choices, including affordable housing
  - Provide transit improvements to help realize city and regional development plans
  - Attract investment along the length of the corridor, concentrated at key nodes
  - Support both small businesses and regional employers by providing better transit options for their customers and employees
  - Minimize construction impacts to businesses, residents and other corridor users
4. Develop a cost-effective transitway that is well-positioned for implementation
  - Develop a transitway operating plan that is well-coordinated with existing service in the corridor



- Advance transitway alternatives that are financially feasible and minimize new operating resource requirements
  - Provide a transitway with broad support from the community, businesses and policymakers
5. Build upon the vibrancy and diversity of the corridor by supporting healthy, active communities and the environment
- Ensure safe and direct connections between transit and other multimodal transportation choices such as walking and biking
  - Maintain parkland, trails and green space in the corridor
  - Promote air quality benefits and minimize noise and vibration impacts
  - Recognize impacts to cultural and historic resources
  - Balance impacts to existing traffic operations and curbside uses
  - Enhance safety through increased visibility and activity in the corridor

**How will the transitway alternatives be evaluated?**

The establishment of goals and objectives articulates the desired benefits of a transit improvement in the Midtown Corridor, and establishes a foundation of evaluation measures including quantitative and qualitative criteria to be used in comparing the performance of alternatives. Evaluation criteria tie back to the goals and objectives; however, not all objectives have evaluation measures associated with them.

Goal	Evaluation Measures
1. Increase transit use among the growing number of corridor residents, employees, and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total ridership</li> </ul>
2. Improve mobility and access to jobs and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ridership change on connecting transit</li> <li>• Travel time</li> <li>• Frequency</li> <li>• Number of transit-reliant riders</li> </ul>
3. Catalyze and support housing and economic development along the corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency with land use plans</li> <li>• Forecasted change in population and employment</li> <li>• Access to affordable housing</li> </ul>
4. Develop a cost-effective transitway that is well-positioned for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital and operating costs</li> <li>• Cost per trip</li> <li>• Passengers per in-service hour</li> <li>• Subsidy per passenger</li> </ul>
5. Build upon the vibrancy and diversity of the corridor by supporting healthy, active communities and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental impacts including: historic and cultural resources; parklands; noise and vibration; air quality</li> <li>• Right of way impacts</li> <li>• Traffic impacts</li> <li>• Multi-modal compatibility</li> </ul>