



## Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

**Date:** January 18, 2005  
**To:** Honorable Scott Benson, Chair, Intergovernmental Relations Committee  
**Referral to:**  
**Subject:** Resolution supporting the Central Corridor in preparation for the federal TEA-21 reauthorization

**Recommendation:**

Approve the attached resolution language supporting the proposed Central Corridor.

**Previous Directives:**

- Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan – Movement Chapter

**Prepared by:** Donald Pflaum, Transportation Engineer, 612-673-2129

**Approved by:**

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Klara A. Fabry, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

**Presenters:** Donald Pflaum, Traffic and Parking Services

**Financial Impact** (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.  
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase – Capital Only

Action requires use of contingency or reserves

Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

**Background/History:**

The Central Corridor is the primary east-west transportation route in the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area. It is 11 miles long and crosses through the heart of the Twin Cities. This area includes business districts, distinct and diverse residential neighborhoods, institutions, and attractions that help define the Twin Cities as one of the most livable and economically successful urban areas in the United States. The Central Corridor contains the Minnesota Children's Museum, the State Capitol, Frogtown, the Minnesota State Fairgrounds, the University of Minnesota, the West Bank Theater District, and the downtown business and entertainment districts of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Interstate 94 and University Avenue are the twin transportation backbones of the Central Corridor. Both roads are becoming increasingly congested as more people live, work and shop in the neighborhoods within the corridor and more people commute through the corridor. By 2020, traffic planners estimate 200,000 vehicles will clog I-94 every day. University Avenue is a

rapidly redeveloping business and residential corridor that is drawing more people to new housing, distinct ethnic business districts, and some of the most promising redevelopment sites in Minneapolis or St. Paul. The continued redevelopment of the corridor and the entire metro area depends on mobility and access. Creating new roads or substantially more lanes for existing roads would seriously damage existing neighborhoods and limit economic growth. Allowing congestion to mount at its projected rate would have the same result. Transit will be a vital tool if we are to manage the growth of future congestion.

The Central Corridor has been the focus of an Environmental Impact Study since 2000. The study took an in-depth look at a broad range of options to improve transit and transportation between Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as ways to connect the corridor to the growing metropolitan transit system. The study produced a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is available for review at several Minneapolis and St. Paul public libraries. This statement provides a thorough description of current transportation conditions in the corridor and describes three transit options for the corridor; improvements to the current bus system, Bus Rapid Transit, and Light Rail Transit.

The Central Corridor Coordinating Committee is in the process of choosing a strategy for solving the transportation issues in the Central Corridor. If they choose Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail Transit, engineers will begin considering ways to build that transit option.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process identified several issues in the Central Corridor that must be resolved. Among the issues to be studied are:

- Station/stop sites
- Identification of utilities in the public right of way
- Minimizing the construction impacts
- Detailed cost/benefit analysis of transit options being considered

As the second phase engineering study moves forward, the Central Corridor will seek public ideas, comments and direction to ensure that the community continues to shape any transit improvements.

### **Federal Transit Funding:**

The Federal Transit Administration has outlined the following three project development phases in acquiring federal new starts funding:

#### Phase I – Alternatives Analysis

Local project sponsors are required to perform an alternatives analysis that evaluates the mode and alignment options in the community. This analysis informs local officials and community members on the benefits, costs and impacts of transportation options, so that the community can identify a preference. This phase is complete when local and regional decision makers select a locally preferred alternative, and it is adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) into its long-range transportation plan.

#### Phase II - Preliminary Engineering

During the preliminary engineering (PE) phase of project development, local project sponsors consider their design options to refine the locally preferred alternative and complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Preliminary engineering hones the estimates of project costs, benefits, and impacts. In addition, during the PE phase of development, local sponsors finalize management plans, demonstrate their technical capabilities to develop the project, and commit local funding sources.

### Phase III - Final Design

Final design is the last phase of project development, and includes the preparation of final construction plans, detailed specifications, construction cost estimates and bid documents

The Central is currently in the Preliminary Engineering phase and has been identified by the Metropolitan Council in the Transportation Policy Plan as a Tier 1 transit priority. Tier 1 transit project priorities include the Northstar, Northwest, Cedar Avenue, I-35, and Central Corridors. Tier 2 transit project priorities include the Red Rock, Rush Line, and Southwest Corridors.

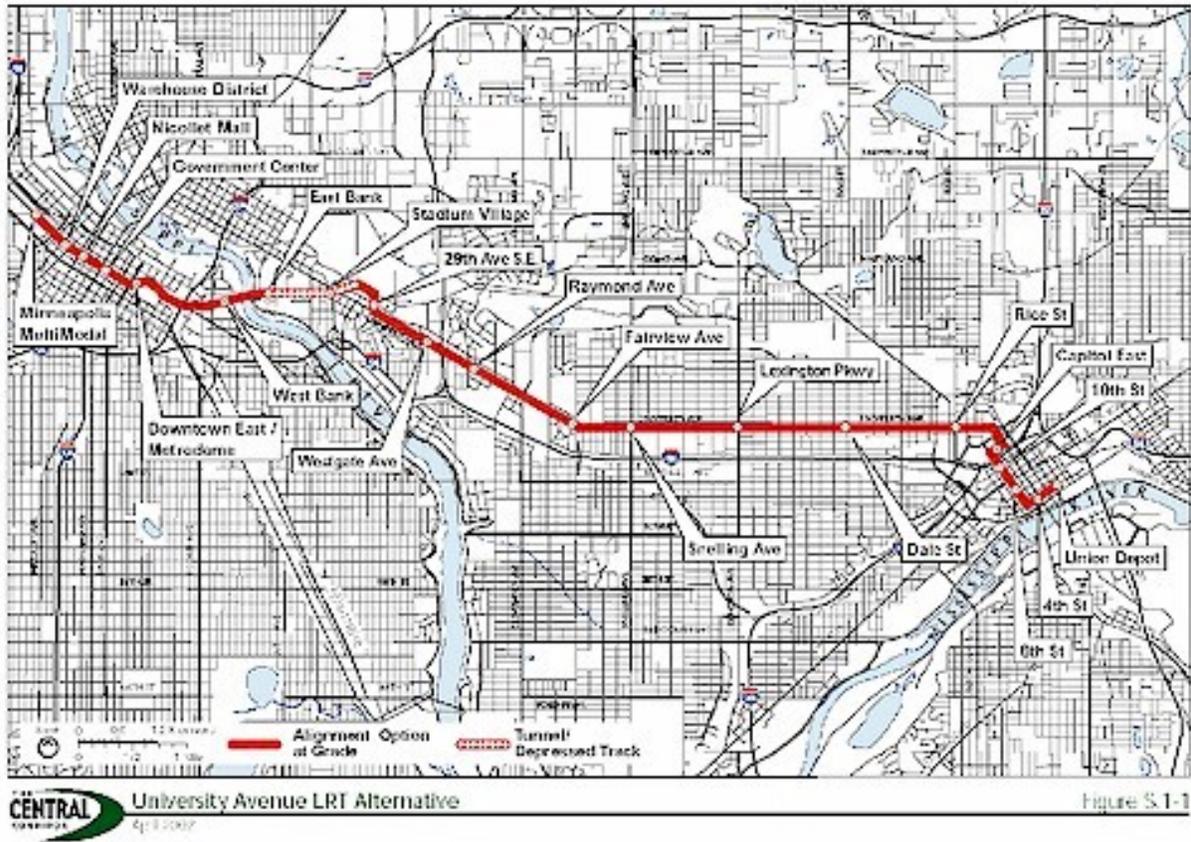
As part of the TEA-21 federal transportation bill reauthorization, the Central Corridor will be submitting a request to be authorized as a transitway corridor through construction. While it isn't impossible to receive federal funds if the project is not authorized, being authorized through construction provides the corridor with an advantageous position when funds for preliminary engineering, final design, and construction are requested.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the attached resolution supporting the Central Corridor be included as part of the TEA-21 reauthorization.

Attachment A: Map of Central Corridor

C: Gene Ranieri, Director Intergovernmental Relations  
Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

# Attachment A – Map of Central Corridor



**Resolution  
of the  
City of Minneapolis**

By Zerby

**Supporting the Central Corridor Transitway Improvements.**

Whereas, the Central Corridor is an 11-mile transportation corridor from Downtown Minneapolis to Downtown St. Paul; and

Whereas, this corridor has regional, statewide, and national significance as a transportation route for automobile, truck, and rail travel; and

Whereas, congestion rates in the Twin Cities region are amongst the fastest growing in the country; and

Whereas, congestion negatively impacts commerce, economic development and public safety; and

Whereas, this corridor will serve the highest population and employment nodes in the State of Minnesota including Downtown Minneapolis, Downtown St. Paul, the University of Minnesota, and the University Avenue Corridor; and

Whereas, Ramsey, and Hennepin Counties along with Corridor municipalities have formed the Central Corridor Coordinating Committee to address the transportation needs in the corridor; and

Whereas, the Central Corridor is outlined as a Tier 1 priority corridor in the Metropolitan Council Transportation Policy Plan; and

Whereas, the Central Corridor is working with Metro Transit and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to implement both a 'transit and highways' solution for the Corridor; and

Whereas, this work involves completing an Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Preliminary Engineering, Final Environment Impact Statement, Final Design and Construction of a transitway option for the corridor;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS:

That the Central Corridor be authorized as Federal Transit Administration New Start through construction during reauthorization of TEA-21.