

Regarding the DEIS RFP Criteria

The bullet points included in your letter along with specific approaches are included below:

- *The scope of work should include assessment of economic development opportunities as they relate to TOD potential along the corridor. The TOD economic forecasts should also consider and address likely changes in zoning due to the investment of LRT.*

Response: Transitway development typically includes two major overlapping processes including New Starts transitway project development activities and Land Use Planning Activities. Although your comment addresses mostly information which will be addressed by the land use planning effort (i.e.; TOD potential and zoning changes), the next stage of transitway development (the DEIS) will also address economic development and land use with respect to FTA New Starts project justification criteria.² It is anticipated that, overtime, the transitway project under the New Starts process will be informed by these land use planning efforts.

Through efforts of the Bottineau Partnership, Hennepin County was recently granted \$20,000 in McKnight Foundation funding to create a land use planning framework to include identification of the best process for future land use planning based on community needs and to help promote the strongest competitive position for the

Bottineau Corridor in the federal transit funding process. It is anticipated that this and additional future land use planning work may inform the DEIS.

As part of the RFP, the consultant teams will be asked to include economic development expertise as part of their team to address economic and TOD potential.

- *LRT connects people with jobs. The scope of work in the DEIS should include analysis of commute and reverse commute potential. This scope of work should include forecasts and benefits (direct and indirect) of connecting people with new employment opportunities.*

Response: As identified in the alternatives analysis study, the existing deficiencies and challenges relative to job access and the northbound (“reverse commute”) will continue to be an important issue taken forward into the DEIS. It is important to recognize, with respect to the current New Starts project justification ratings, the issue of connecting people with new employment opportunities is very prescribed within the ridership forecasting model framework in terms of user benefits and transit dependent user benefits. However, the RFP will identify the need to assess these issues; especially in terms of the integration of Livability Principles into the DEIS process.

² Federal Transit Administration (2010). *Annual Report on New Starts Project Justification Annual Report on Funding Recommendations, Fiscal Year 2011, New Starts, Small Starts, and Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program, Report of the Secretary of Transportation to the United States Congress, Appendix B*. Retrieved August 12, 2010 from http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/NewStarts_Appendix_B_Jan_2010.pdf

³ Fan, Yingling (2010), Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. *Impact of Light Rail Implementation on Labor Market Accessibility: A Transportation Equity Perspective*. Retrieved on August 12, 2010 from <http://nexus.umn.edu/Papers/Transit-Labor-Accessibility.pdf>

- *The Input-Output analysis should consider the benefits post-construction of new employment opportunities created through providing transit access to low-income and/or unemployed individuals.*

Response: Specific to your “input-output” comment, as we are sure you can appreciate, transit access is one of many components that affect employment and there is uncertainty of how/whether this issue will be addressed in future FTA project justification rating criteria. However, we do understand this as a key issue. The DEIS process will be open to relevant information regarding the issue of employment access, but it is currently uncertain how/whether this issue can be addressed in terms of analysis methodologies. As NTN members have mentioned in the past, the recent U of M research³ is a relevant data source for continued dialogue on this issue.

- *As part of the DEIS, the chosen consultant should hold community engagement processes and use other community advised processes to uncover and determine other impacts to be addressed as part of the DEIS.*

Response: Each consultant will be asked to propose a stakeholder engagement plan designed to the needs of the Bottineau Corridor stakeholders.

- *Negative gentrification impacts—real and perceived shall be studied*

Response: Gentrification effects will be included as part of the RFP work plan.

- *Safety impacts—real and perceived shall be studied*

Response: Safety effects will be included as part of the RFP work plan.

Regarding Bottineau DEIS Consultant Criteria

The consultant skills and experience criteria identified in your letter are all reasonable and desirable. As described earlier, these criteria will be identified in proper context with the objectives of the DEIS. The RFP will account for these criteria with the following clarification:

The reference for understanding and experience with Environmental Justice Principles will be in accordance with current guidance from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)/ Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)⁴ in accordance with Federal Executive Order 12898 of 1994.

Regarding the Consultant Selection Committee Criteria

While we agree the selection committee should be comprised of a broad range of knowledge and expertise, we are obligated to pursue a process in accordance with Minnesota Statutes.⁵ Hennepin County will request the representation of responsible government agencies on the consultant selection committee. Each of these responsible agencies will be requested to designate appropriate staff representation.

This committee will be limited to professionals who represent agencies with responsibility for public infrastructure and economic development in the corridor and with the education, experience and skills to assess the consultant competency and approach for the Bottineau DEIS based on the broad range of stakeholder needs, broad range of community characteristics, technical needs, and regulatory requirements pertaining to the process.

⁴USDOT/FHWA, *Environmental Justice Home Page* (last modified 2010, June 16). Retrieved on August 12, 2010 from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ej2.htm>

⁵ Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes (2009). *Minnesota Statutes 13.591 Business Data*. Retrieved August 12, 2010 from <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=13.591>