



Working to protect the Mississippi River  
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.

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November 16, 2017

Riverview Corridor PAC  
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[info@riverviewcorridor.com](mailto:info@riverviewcorridor.com)

RE: FMR comments on the Riverview Corridor Draft Locally Preferred Alternative

Riverview Corridor PAC:

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a local non-profit community-based organization that works to protect and enhance the natural and cultural assets of the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities. For 25 years, we have worked closely with the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA) to fulfill our mission. We have nearly 3,000 active members, and more than 3,500 volunteers who care deeply about the river's unique resources. FMR has been an active and ongoing participant in planning for the future of the Twin Cities Mississippi Riverfront. We have been closely following the Riverview Corridor planning process to date.

We are writing today to share our comments on the Riverview Corridor Draft Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

### **River Crossing**

We would like to commend the Riverview Corridor Planning team for proposing a LPA that crosses the Mississippi River at an already existing bridge. This decision creates the smallest impact on habitat, public parkland and scenic beauty in the Mississippi River's only gorge. It is also consistent with the National Park Services' MNRRA Comprehensive Management Plan.

As this draft LPA is finalized and the implementation plan is completed, we will be encouraging the modern streetcar to be placed on the existing Highway 5 Bridge. If this is not possible, we will work to ensure that the guidance regarding river crossings found in the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Rules and National Park Services' Comprehensive Management (below) is followed.

*"If it becomes necessary to increase river crossing capacity, the order of preference will be first to expand the capacity of an existing bridge, second to add a parallel structure,*

*and third to establish a new corridor. Development of a new crossing corridor will occur only when no feasible and prudent alternative (including consideration for a greater reliance on interpositional transportation) exists and only if the crossing is included in approved regional transportation plans. This includes the Major River Crossing Study prepared by the Metropolitan Council.” –MNRRA Comprehensive Management Plan, Site Development Policy 11.*

### **Alignment**

FMR supports the improvement of public transportation amenities as well as the proposed alignment. The proposed alignment is projected to serve the most people and the most people who are transit-dependent. This is good for the environment as it will remove car trips along the Mississippi River corridor and make the region a better place to live and visit for all people. It will also increase public access to the Mississippi River through our exceptional river-adjacent public parks and trails system.

That said, we have serious concerns about the transit route between the Highway 5 Bridge and the Blue Line connection. One of the route models displayed at the November 9 Public Hearing showed the tracks running along the top of the bluff between Historic Fort Snelling and the Mississippi River, a space that we estimate to be as little as 50 feet wide in some places. We agree with the National Park Service that the Riverview Corridor must not go between Historic Fort Snelling and the Mississippi River. Doing so would significantly disturb and change the character of the Mississippi River Gorge impacting the Bdote Minisota (a sacred American Indian place), Historic Fort Snelling, area park users experience and corridor-dependent wildlife. Additionally, the new Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Rules prohibit this route, located in both the shore and bluff impact zones, unless no other feasible alternatives exist. We believe there are other feasible alternatives and strongly encourage the PAC to ensure the final LPA does not include a route between the Historic Fort Snelling buildings and the Mississippi River.

### **Stops**

We support the proposed stops as they will increase access to our city, regional and state parks and trails along the Mississippi River – all of which are part of our local National Park, the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. These parks and trails include: Sam Morgan Regional Trail (Otto, Montreal & Davern Stops), High Bridge Dog Park (Randolph Stop), Crosby Farm Regional Park and Hidden Falls Regional Park (Davern Stop), Historic Fort Snelling State Park and Minnesota Valley State Trail (Historic Fort Snelling Stop). Access to these parks and trails is incredibly important to ensure all community members and visitors can enjoy the beautiful, public green spaces and our internationally significant Mississippi Riverfront which make our state and capitol city such a vibrant place to live, work and visit.

While the Riverview Corridor planning process moves forward, we encourage all impacted governmental units to simultaneously conduct comprehensive multimodal transit planning around the proposed stops and routes. We are especially interested

in improving bike and pedestrian amenities between the proposed route and the riverfront.

**Mode**

We would also like to commend the planning team for proposing a mode of transportation that not only serves the community and increases transit use, but can be powered with green energy.

Thank you for considering our comments. We look forward to continuing to work closely with Ramsey County and all agencies involved in planning the Riverview Transit Corridor to ensure that the Mighty Mississippi is enhanced by this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Whitney L. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W" and a long, sweeping underline.

Whitney L. Clark  
Executive Director