

**Meeting Minutes**

**July 28, 2016**

**Newport City Hall**

**4:30 p.m.**

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| **Commission Members** | **Agency** | **Present** |
| Marion Greene | Hennepin County RRA |  |
| Janice Rettman | Ramsey County RRA | X |
| Jim McDonough | Ramsey County RRA |  |
| Karla Bigham, Chair | Washington County RRA | X |
| Mike Slavik | Dakota County RRA | X |
| Jen Peterson, Vice Chair | City of Cottage Grove | X |
| Myron Bailey | City of Cottage Grove |  |
| John Kummer | Denmark Township |  |
| Mark Vaughn | City of Hastings | X |
| Cam Gordon | City of Minneapolis |  |
| Tracy Rahm | City of Newport | X |
| Jane Prince | City of St. Paul |  |
| Keith Franke | City of St. Paul Park | X |

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| **Ex-Officio Members** | **Agency** |  |
| Ron Allen | Goodhue County |  |
| Jess Greenwood | Goodhue County |  |
| Judy Mitchell | Canadian Pacific Railway |  |
| Marc Mogan | Prairie Island Indian Community |  |

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| **Staff** | **Agency** | **Present** |
| Jan Lucke | Washington County RRA |  |
| Lyssa Leitner | Washington County RRA | X |
| Hally Turner | Washington County RRA | X |
| Connor Schaefer | Washington County RRA | X |
| Sara Allen | Washington County RRA |  |
| Laura Kearns | Washington County |  |
| Kevin Roggenbuck | Ramsey County RRA | X |
| Matt Parent | Dakota County RRA | X |
| Joe Scala | Hennepin County | X |

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| **Others** | **Agency** |  |
| Brian Smalkoski | Kimley Horn | X |
| Carl Jensen | MnDOT | X |

**Agenda Item #1: Introduction**

Chair Bigham called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Introductions were made by commission members, staff, and others present.

**Agenda Item #2: Approval of Agenda**

Motion made by Councilmember Peterson to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rettman. All were in favor, **Approved**. Motion Carried.

**Agenda Item #3: Consent Items**

Motion was made by Commissioner Slavik to approve the check and claims, and the meeting minutes from March 24, 2016 and May 26, 2016 Commission Meetings. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Vaughn. All were in favor, **Approved.** Motion Carried.

**Agenda Item #4: Liability Coverage Insurance**

Hally Turner, Washington County, stated the liability coverage insurance premium is included in the annual budget. The commission may decide that the statutory tort liability limits not be waived, as the case in past years.

Commissioner Rettman stated that in the best interest of the tax payers the commission would be wise to not waive the statutory tort liability limit.

Motion made by Commissioner Rettman to not waive the statutory tort liability limit. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Peterson. All were in favor, **Approved**. Motion Carried.

**Agenda Item #5: Regional Solicitation Update**

Commissioner Bigham stated the Metropolitan Council has a regional solicitation process to fund transportation projects in the metropolitan area. Metro Transit worked with Washington County to submit a regional solicitation application for Route 363, a bi-directional all-day bus service for the Red Rock Corridor. The proposed route would mimic much of the bus rapid transit route identified in the Implementation Plan, but terminate in Cottage Grove. It would serve as a great step to build ridership in corridor.

Ms. Turner stated that the solicitation is funded federally but distributed through the Metropolitan Council. Metro Transit was the applicant because they would operate the bus service. Metro Transit worked with Washington County to incorporate the information and data from the Implementation Plan into the application.

Commissioner Bigham stated the Red Rock Corridor scores well in the diversity measure that helps determine the regional solicitation project funding. Washington County Board submitted a resolution of support.

Commissioner Rettman asked if the Red Rock Corridor Commission members should submit the letters of support for the regional solicitation application. Commissioner Bigham answered no that would not be needed.

Commissioner Slavic stated that scoring used to evaluate regional solicitation applications is skewed to favor core cities and not suburbs. He added that this year’s solicitation funding is hopefully more balanced. Commissioner Bigham stated that there were changes in the evaluation scoring this year. Commissioner Rettman stated that the east region of the metropolitan area need the attention it deserves.

**Agenda Item #6: Implementation Plan Update**

Lyssa Leitner, Washington County, gave a presentation on the Implementation Plan. She stated that the Project Team was seeking direction and comments from the Red Rock Corridor Commission on the recommendations identified in the Implementation Plan. Staff and Project Team has been reviewing and commenting on the Technical Memorandums. The plan is for the Commission to review the Implementation Plan document and release the document to the public at the September 22, 2016 Red Rock Commission Meeting. The public comment period would go to following meeting, October 22, 2016, when the Commission would hold a public hearing and adopt the Implementation Plan, if approved based on public comments.

Commissioner Bigham requested details on public outreach during public comment period. Ms. Leitner stated the project team will develop press releases and social media posts, newsletters, web advertising and are willing to provide additional specific outreach.

Ms. Leitner stated hosting an open house before the Commission’s next meeting an option. An additional option, if the commission would prefer, is to host a separate open house for public comment.

Commissioner Bigham asked the Commission their preferences for public outreach. The Commission discussed how to best utilize resources to conduct public outreach on a date and time convenient for the public.

The Commission came to a consensus that the Project Team should work the Commission members and stakeholders to schedule an open house to receive public input on the Implementation Plan. The open house may result in rescheduling the October 22, 2016 Commission meeting to a later time or separate date.

Ms. Leitner stated that after the comment period, the Project Team will look for resolution of support from the Commission members’ cities and counties. Staff is open to doing workshops with the respective governing bodies on the Implementation Plan to facilitate this process.

Ms. Leitner stated that there is no clear path for how phasing should happen along the Red Rock Corridor. Operating and maintenance costs are not in line with other regional transitway projects that have been funded. The length of the Red Rock Corridor adds more operating and maintenance costs because of the additional miles. Ms. Leitner stated the project is likely not competitive for federal sources; therefore there are no clear evaluation measures. Potential approaches moving forward include initiating a series of small investments to implement the project over time in order to creatively leverage funds from multiple sources or set station area investment and ridership targets based on regional standards.

Ms. Leitner stated that Passenger Per In-Service Hour (PPISH) was the option used to measure the performance of the Red Rock Corridor’s phasing options. PPISH is calculated by the daily boardings divided by daily service hours. The PPISH target for BRT service is greater than or equal to 25. The proposed Route 363’s target PPISH would be 10-20. Ms. Leitner stated that Route 363 is in the Metropolitan Council’s Service Improvement Plan and that Metro Transit will be applying for funding this route through the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Solicitation application process. Route 363’s route could mimic the proposed BRT route. BRT could be phased in when ridership meets a certain threshold. BRT service would bring increased frequency from 30 minutes to 15 minutes and longer service hours from 6:00am – 9:00pm to 5:00am – 12:00am. Ms. Leitner stated we need Route 363 to have approximately 1,200 daily riders in order to implement BRT service.

Commissioner Rettman stated that if a new employer moves to the area and the bus route helps their workforce commute, then that can change the ridership projections.

Commissioner Bigham stated that residential growth could also impact ridership projections. In 2020, the implementation of the proposed Route 363 could align with industrial expansions for major employers.

Mayor Franke stated that the Operating and maintenance data shows this project is unable to support itself. The project does not have an identified funding source and the ridership projections are not in line with other regional transitway projects that have been funded.

Lyssa Leitner, Washington County, gave a presentation on the Implementation Plan. She stated that staff is at the end of the Implementation Plan process and the goal now is stakeholder buy in. She stated the Commission’s preference is to get input to make the best decision moving forward.

Ms. Leitner reviewed the proposed transitway alignment. The Cottage Grove City Council supported city and project staff recommendations for a station location on the east side of Highway 61. As a result, further Implementation Plan analysis and the final report will include proposed station locations near 80th Street and Jamaica along East Pt. Douglas. Councilmember Peterson stated that Cottage Grove felt this was the best location because it can best serve the nearby housing areas.

Ms. Leitner stated that staff is looking for direction, not formal recommendations, for project phasing. She stated that there is no clear plan for how phasing should happen along the Red Rock Corridor. Operating and maintenance costs are not in line with other regional transitway projects that have been funded. The length of the Red Rock Corridor adds more operating and maintenance costs because of the additional miles. Ms. Leitner stated the project is likely not competitive for federal sources; therefore there are no clear evaluation measures. Potential approaches moving forward include initiating a series of small investments to implement the project over time in order to creatively leverage funds from multiple sources or set station area investment and ridership targets based on regional standards.

Mayor Franke asked for clarification on the 2040 forecasted ridership. Ms. Leitner said that 2040 forecasted ridership is based on 2015 costs.

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Councilmember Peterson asked if BRT service would be Monday – Friday or seven days a week. Ms. Leitner answered seven days a week for BRT service.

Ms. Leitner went through PPISH comparisons of Route 363, BRT Phase 1 (to Cottage Grove), BRT Phase 2 (add Gateway Stations), BRT Phase 3 (to Hastings), BRT Phase 4 (final Hastings stations), and the Red Line. Route 363 could be considered a well-performing route because it would likely meet the PPISH target. BRT Phase 2 is the best performing BRT phase and is closest to the PPISH target by year 2040. The current BRT Phase 2 2040 ridership projection is 1,800 boardings and the ridership projection needs to get to 2,400 boardings to meet the PPISH target.

Ms. Leitner then went through the ridership increase needed to reach the PPISH target. Mayor Franke asked about the thought process behind having a bus operate every 15 minutes instead of 30 minutes. Ms. Leitner stated that there is a minimum frequency standard for operating as a transitway service and that frequency of service attracts riders. Chair Bigham asked for clarification on the ridership increase needed to reach PPISH target for BRT Phase 2 by year 2040. Ms. Leitner stated that ridership must increase by 33% in order to reach PPISH target of 25.

Ms. Leitner stated that PPISH projections can be increased by increasing ridership through land use decisions and decreasing service hours through phasing. She stated that based on the data, we need Route 363 to have approximately 1,200 daily riders in order to implement BRT service.

Ms. Leitner summarized the following discussion items from the Technical Advisory Committee to the Commission: PPISH seems to be the logical benchmark for phasing, Route 363 is a good baseline for when to implement the first stage of BRT, there is no set directions on phases, and since land use drives a large part of increasing the PPISH, stakeholders need to assess station area land use.

Councilmember Rahm asked how the model being used applies to the corridor communities’ situations. Ms. Leitner answered saying that transitways need density. She also stated that staff is working with city staff from the corridor communities to update language around station areas to plan density. Councilmember Rahm commented that we should be talking to each community about how they can find solutions for each community’s situation and how city current transit plans fit into the overall corridor planning.

Chair Bigham commented that there has been discussion with Hastings and the Metropolitan Council about entering into the transit district. It takes time to build awareness and density. We should continue to have conservations about how we can move forward. Ms. Leitner added that we need to look at how we can provide right-size solutions for the corridor. The Route 363 can provide a good foundation on which to build further transit service in the corridor.

Mayor Franke asked how to mitigate operation and maintenance costs. Ms. Leitner answered stating that distance has a large impact, but express buses that cover a large distance can still be funded even with high operation and maintenance costs. Mayor Franke asked if we could adjust hours of operation for transitway service. Ms. Leitner answered saying that there are standards set by the Metropolitan Council for hours of operation in order to be a transitway. Consistent and reliable hours of operation are important for ridership.

Commissioner Slavik commented saying we are in a system striving to be a transitway and we may not be there yet in 2040. So we should talk about how can we meet expectations and needs with a different solution besides full BRT build out.

Chair Bigham commented saying there is not just one solution. Washington County residents said that transit service was a priority in a recent survey. A variety of service options would be well received in our communities.

Commissioner Slavik commented on the limitations of the County Transit Improvement Board structure. He is concerned about the cost and not achieving better transit service.

Councilmember Peterson asked what amount of trips that were taken in Red Rock Corridor communities on Transit Link. Ms. Leitner said that number is available and can be provided later.

Ms. Leitner stated next steps will be to drafting up language for the recommendations from the Implementation Plan.

Chair Bigham commented that this has always been a phase-in project, and we should keep long-term vision in mind.

Ms. Leitner provided a station area update on Lower Afton. Concerns regarding the current park and ride lot include capacity, safety, lighting, and security issues. The feedback from the neighborhood has been that the station should not be changed or it should be completely moved and redone. Councilmember Prince concurred with this statement. Ms. Leitner stated a number of options including installing a pedestrian bridge, improving the signals, relocating the park and ride, changing the bus operations, and building “J” turns (like U-turns but would be for buses only) were discussed at the May 16, 2016 Red Rock Corridor TAC meeting. No formal recommendation was given.

Chair Bigham stated that Saint Paul will advise staff to work towards solutions.

Ms. Leitner provided a station area update on Newport Transit Station. The Washington County Board and Metro Transit approved the station for a park and ride for the Minnesota State Fair. In addition, the City of Newport is working with Washington County Housing Redevelopment Authority on a multifamily project.

Ms. Leitner provided a station area update on Jamaica Avenue station area. Staff met with high school and early education staff that currently use the parking lot. Staff will continue to work with Red Rock Corridor staff to find address the parking situation for a potential station.

Councilmember Peterson asked if the bus size has increased for the buses that service the Newport Transit Station. Ms. Leitner answered she does not know. Councilmember Peterson also asked about the number of boarding at the Newport Transit Station.

Lobbyist John Kaul provided an update on the 2016 legislative session. He encouraged the Commission to contact their representatives to support holding a special session for a transportation bill only if it includes transit funding for both the east and west metro area.

Chair Bigham suggested that the Commission send a letter that encouraging support for holding a special session for a transportation bill if it includes transit funding to Governor Dayton, Senate Majority Leader, House Speaker, Conferees of the Bonding and Transportation Committees, and Metropolitan Council Chair.

Ms. Leitner presented on plans for summer engagement in 2016. The Commission does not have a direct “ask” from stakeholders at this time. Staff recommended that summer engagement efforts be put into setting up a tour about the A Line BRT route opening June 2016. The tour could take the place of a future Commission meeting. Chair Bigham stated staff should proceed with recommendation to plan a tour of the A Line.

**Agenda Item #7 Communications Update**

Ms. Leitner stated that the communication update details can be found in the Commission’s packet.

**Agenda Item #8 Other**

**Item a:** No Commissioner Reports

**Item b:** Next meeting will be held August 25, 2016, until otherwise noted.

**Agenda Item #9 Adjorn**

Motion made by Councilmember Peterson to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Slavik. **All in favor,** Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.