

**Meeting Minutes**

**March 24, 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 |  |
| 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 |  |
| 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 |
| Katie White | Met Council |
| Betsy Leach | District 1 |
| Chelsey Armstrong | Kimley Horn |
| Carl Jensen | MN DOT |

**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 Commissioner Rettman to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Council member Peterson. All were in favor, **Approved**. Motion Carries.

**Agenda Item #3: Consent Items**

Motion was made by Councilmember Peterson to approve the check and claims and the meeting minutes from the January 26, 2016 Commission Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Slavik. All were in favor, **Approved.** Motion Carries.

**Agenda Item #4 Implementation Plan Update**

Ms. Leitner said staff and Kimley Horn is not looking for any recommendation today. They are looking for any questions anyone might have as well as feedback on the information that will be presented.

Mr. Smalkoski briefly went through the agenda, goals and work plan for today’s presentation. Alternative #2 is still being looked at as the final implementation route.

Ms. Armstrong went through each station area and gave brief updates on each of them. Starting with Lower Afton they are currently looking for an interim step in which two existing entrances and exits are consolidated into a single entrance and exit that point closer to Lower Afton Rd. This will decrease headlights shining into residents homes. An additional half bay of parking would be added to help with over flow parking. There is also an issue with safety for the pedestrian crossing, MnDOT has been looking into this and have assured the countdown timers are present and in working condition to allow for enough time for pedestrians to cross safely.

Commissioner Bigham and Council Member Rahm believe that it is a good idea for staff to look into a pedestrian bridge as traffic is very heavy on Highway 61.

Council Member Peterson asked what the current parking capacity is.

Ms. Leitner said it is just over 100.

Council Member Peterson asked how many additional parking spots will be added with the expansion of the parking lot.

Mr. Smalkoski said they were not sure on the exact number. He pointed out where the expansion would go and stated approximately an additional three spaces could be added to each row. The expansion would satisfy the current demand of additional parking spots needed.

Mayor Franke asked if there has been much done to try to divert people to the Newport station.

Commissioner Bigham said there have been fliers, signs, and rider alerts to inform people of the site in Newport.

Newport Station: The City, HRA and Washington County RRA have been working together for quite some time now on development around this stop. There has been a lot of interest shown for this specific area. Work has been done with the HRA to ensure that the developers coming in are laying the ground work for opportunities and are not segmenting the property in any way that would hinder future development.

St. Paul Park: The City currently owns two parcels at the intersection of St. Paul Park Rd. and Summit Ave. A local business owner currently has some property for sale located at intersection of Broadway Ave. and Summit Ave. Due to a railroad crossing they are currently trying to determine the most effective way to bring the corridor in to the downtown area of St. Paul Park along Broadway Ave. Kimley Horn is recommending to move forward with the station on Broadway Ave. just east of Summit Ave. This will also help to improve the pedestrian connections along Broadway Avenue and encourage development in that area.

Council Member Peterson asked what was in the area currently.

Mayor Franke stated what was currently in the area and pointed the buildings out on the power point.

Cottage Grove: There were never any decisions made about Alternative 2a and 2b on the original Cottage Grove alternatives. Kimley Horn has met and talked with staff, policy makers and decision makers within Cottage Grove to discuss the two alternatives, and the importance of operating on either the East or West side. In terms of service you will want to be on one side only. It is important to make sure stops are close to peoples destinations and to keep service as direct as possible. A major issue that was brought up was to stay off of Hadley Ave. as that is a residential area and they feel there would be great opposition for busses to be traveling on that street.

Commissioner Bigham said this issue has been now avoided as the City of Cottage Grove has stated to not make Hadley an option for the route.

Ms. Armstrong said as a result of Hadley not being an option and some new investment going in on the east side Highway 61 and 80th St. They are recommending that options be looked into on the east side of Highway 61 at 80th St.

80th St.: Ms. Armstrong said there currently is reinvestment going on in this area. Rainbow Foods and Home Depot used to occupy this space. HyVee will be opening in the former Rainbow Food site. The City is currently working on a sale for the former Home Depot site. With locating a station in proximity to these two businesses as well as other surrounding developments this provides a large opportunity for access to retail destinations as well as to jobs in the area. They still currently working with the City of Cottage Grove, however it is important to place the station at a controlled intersection for pedestrian crossing safety.

Jamaica Ave.: There is a potential to realign just north of Jamaica Ave. just near school district owned property as well as a former Metro Transit park and ride station. By realigning the station it will create a stopped location that would otherwise not be possible due to curvature in the road and improper site distance’s due to the curvature. They are currently collaborating with the school district and some property to the South to create and interim solution to finding a space for a park and ride. If there were to be a stop in the industrial area, it is not very well walkable and a shuttle would need to be provided.

Commissioner Bigham said there is going to be approximately 2000 added within the industrial area in the next several years. It is important to have some type of feeder route or shuttle there. It is the school district’s program center along with community education. Commissioner Bigham said she understands from staff discussions the school district plans to keep their community education program there.

Council Member Peterson stated there is also a senior center at that location.

Ms. Leitner said the school district is planning on keeping some of their programs there, but they are open to discussion. This is a large piece of property and the parking lot is much underutilized. Long term this could be a development site with some shared uses. The future plan would be to move Metro Transits current park and ride parking lot over to this space to share a joint space with existing buildings.

Langdon Village: Kimley Horn has been talking with the City of Cottage Grove about connecting the frontage road to CSAH 19 south of this area.

Hastings Depot: Kimley Horn had been talking with the City of Hastings to possibly move the trail that currently goes through the middle of the parking lot. They then learned this trail has moved several times already. Kimley Horn will look into other alternatives for the alignment. An arts space development is going in on the North side of 2nd St.. There is also a large river view redevelopment happening as well. South of the site the City currently owns a couple of sites that are being used for storage. They feel these sites could be beneficial to this station. They are continuing to work with Hastings staff to make sure the recommendations that are made support additional development in this area moving forward.

Hastings #2 & #3: These are two additional stations that are being looked at to serve more residential area of Hastings as well as the Dakota County Service Center. Both of these stations have performed very well in the ridership model. Kimley horn is having continued conservations with Hastings staff to insure that these two stations are sited in the proper areas.

Ms. Leitner said staff needs to know if these stations are generally in the right spaces so they are able to determine how much capital costs to include for each one. The land use piece will not be included in the final implementation plan as each City will need to review each site through their individual comp plans.

Mr. Smalkoski said when looking at phasing they want to look at ridership that will gradually build over time, is able to respond to development trends as this is being funded incrementally using multiple sources.

Mr. Smalkoski said Phase 1a and 1b are not necessarily tied to Red Rock Corridor BRT services but they do see it as good local service to help build ridership in the corridor and could be an early step to implementation.

Mr. Smalkoski said Phase 1a, based on a policy discussion, is an express bus service to Minneapolis with potential stops at Hastings Depot, Newport Transit Station and Downtown Minneapolis.

Mr. Smalkoski said Phase 1b would be an all-day local service. This would include express and off-peak service. This has already been included in Metro Transit’s services improvement plan from Cottage Grove to the North. Kimley Horn is asking if the corridor should consider different stops or routes for the off peak service.

Mr. Smalkoski said they have created some framework for bus rapid transit (BRT) implementation to help drive decision making. They have assessed incremental costs and benefits of each station, compared the corridor and individual stations to regional standards to determine the appropriate time for implementation. This will provide input to the phasing process and guidance for station-specific ridership goals and trends as to when they should be implemented.

Ms. Leitner said all of the ridership information is for the year 2040. Currently there are no associated years as to when specific phase would happen.

Mr. Smalkoski briefly covered the predictions of the daily boarding’s by station for the year 2040. The regional guidance for a corridor of this size says before a station should be implemented the ridership should meet 100 boarding’s per day. They included all 3 Gateway Corridor’s stations together is due to the main capital costs to provide the connections within the Gateway Corridor. All three stations would be implemented at once or not at all.

Commissioner Bigham asked if the Gateway Corridor stations were not included within the Red Rock stations that there would be a loss of 310 boards between those three stations. How would it be determined if there was a straight ride to the depot how many riders would there be?

Mr. Smalkoski said they did look into that option and there was a significant reduction in ridership making the straight ride to the depot.

Mr. Smalkoski said it is important to note the corridor operations and maintenance comparisons reflect 2015 costs but the forecasting is based off of 2040. They are currently looking at $11.00 per boarding for Red Rock. Once the figures are matched with 2040 forecasting they are predicting the boarding fee will be greater than Red Line’s current boarding fee of $14.00.

Commissioner Bigham said if there was anything changed within the corridor, for example a route, these figures would be looked at and the fee could possibly be reduced.

Ms. Leitner said the main thing that will drive the ridership and fees will be the development.

Commissioner Slavik asked how much have the different stops been analyzed for development and how much is the assumption of development.

Mr. Smalkoski said they are using the 2040 model which includes growth in each area along with the traffic analysis data.

Mr. Smalkoski said they looked at how cost effective is it to add a station in a particular area. They are looking at costs to divert from Highway 61 comparing to the number of boarding’s at that specific station. This was done only to the up to the Cottage Grove station, the specific reason being because of the distance between Cottage Grove and Hastings, they have to be able to accurately account for that and it adds on a lot time and mileage to the busses to make that trip. The cost is approximately $3.25 per mile per bus in one direction for wear and tear on the vehicle. This is based on the eight miles between the Jamaica Ave. Station and the Hastings Depot.

Mr. Smalkoski said another measure they researched was the Transit Market Index. This is on a regional scale to help determine population density, intersection density, employment density and automobile availably.

Ms. Leitner went through the station comparisons that showed daily boarding’s, operating and maintenance costs per boards, annualized capital cost per boarding and the Transit Market Index.

Mr. Smalkoski said there are several different funds/options from Federal, State, Regional, Local and funds to help finance this project. Mr. Smalkoski presented the different options and/or requirements for each area. Red Line and A Line were shown for a comparison.

Mr. Smalkoski said the next steps are to finalize the implementation phases.

**Agenda Item #5: Communications Update**

Ms. Leitner said articles are included in the packet for the commission to read at their leisure. Staff put together a short video to provide a high-level overview of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route.

**Agenda Item #6: Other**

**Item 6a.** Commissioner Bigham suggested keeping the April meeting at the same time and location for now.

**Item 6b.** Commissioner Bigham had nothing to report. Commission Slavik said they are working through the by-laws for high speed rail and found that with adding a new member the by-lays and the joint powers agreement were not matching. A sub committee was formed to make sure they are aligned. Commissioner Rettman said Amtrak announced although the nationwide ridership is down it is up 5% in our region.

**Agenda Item #7 Adjourn**

Motion made by Commissioner Slavik to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mayor Frank. All were in favor**,** Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.