**

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 22, 2016**

**Newport City Hall**

**4:30 p.m.**

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| **Commission Members** | **Agency** | **Present** |
| Marion Greene | Hennepin County RRA | X |
| 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 |
| Emily Jorgensen | Washington County RRA | X |
| Kevin Roggenbuck | Ramsey County RRA | X |
| Matt Parent | Dakota County RRA | X |
| Joe Scala | Hennepin County |  |

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| **Others** | **Agency** |  |
| William Reynolds | Kimley Horn | X |
| Katie White | Metropolitan Council | 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 July 28, 2016 Commission Meetings. The motion was seconded by Mayor Franke. All were in favor, **Approved.** Motion Carried.

Commissioner Bigham recognized Washington County Planner Lyssa Leitner for her award as Top 40 Under 40 in Mass Transit magazine.

**Agenda Item #4: Implementation Plan Update**

Hally Turner, Washington County, described the previous outreach meeting for the project and the upcoming meetings. Ms. Turner noted that if other cities would like a Red Rock update at their council meetings they should contact her.

Ms. Turner summarized the draft Implementation Plan document, a 15 month process, which contains details on service planning, travel demand forecasting, alternatives evaluation, cost estimation, financial plan and station area plans for the Red Rock Corridor. Ms. Turner noted that all of this information was previously presented to the Commission and that this would be a higher level summary of the draft plan document. The Implementation Plan is available for public comment until October 26th.

Ms. Turner highlighted that the Red Rock Corridor Commission meeting in October has been changed to Wednesday, October 26th at 5:30pm for an open house and then a public hearing at 6:30pm.

Commissioner Bigham asked to make sure that the meeting information is readily available for the commission members to send out to the public.

Ms. Turner noted that she had brought flyers for the commission members to take with them to give to the public. Additionally, a press release, newsletter update, and social media messages had been drafted and were ready for release to notify the Technical Advisory Committee and the public that the implementation plan was available for comment.

Ms. Turner began her presentation, showing that today’s presentation will cover project schedule, final report overview, recommendations, and next steps. The goal of the Implementation Plan was to outline detailed technical elements, station area plans, schedule and costs of staged investments, partner responsibilities through 2040, and stakeholder buy-in through resolutions of support. The Implementation Plan was a 15 month study to complete the technical analysis, project documentation, and approval processes.

Mr. Reynolds, Kimley-Horn, began to present a high level summary of the final report for the implementation plan. Mr. Reynolds thanked the commission for the opportunity and their flexibility throughout the process. The final report consists of seven chapters; executive summary, project background, stakeholder engagement, preferred alternative, financial plan, phasing plan, recommendations and next steps. Mr. Reynolds noted that the technical appendix and all of the other appendices are available, which include more details on the analysis completed. The implementation plan itself is meant to be a digestible summary of the plan.

Mr. Reynolds started with the project background, highlighting how the studies in this corridor have changed from the Alternatives Analysis in 2007, which focused on peak hour commuter service to the Alternatives Analysis Update (AAU) in 2014. The AAU focused on all-day, bi-directional service in the corridor using bus rapid transit (BRT). The project goals that emerged from the 2014 AAU focus on mobility, cost, development, and environment.

Mr. Reynolds described the stakeholder engagement processes that were used during this process. Engagement was used to introduce the project to the public and get an understanding of what residents were looking for as well as engagement around specific station areas. In-person engagement was conducted at open houses, park-and-rides, community vents, targeted city meetings, and a tour of the red line. Engagement produced a few key themes showing the public was interested or had concerns about the frequency of service, all-day service and park-and-ride options. Online engagement was also used via the project website and social media.

The fourth chapter of the plan is the Preferred Alternative. Mr. Reynolds stated that this is a dense chapter. The first decision that was made was to designate two alternative routes for consideration for the Implementation Plan. Alternative 1 was the route that was produced by the AAU with 45 minute travel time and 6 stations. Alternative 2 was a route with 12 stations providing more direct access to communities. Alternative 2 is considered the “full build” alternative and was deemed the “Preferred Alternative” through the initial analysis for the Implementation Plan. Alternative 2 shares stations with the Gateway BRT and provides service from Union Depot all the way down to Hastings. With the preferred alternative came phasing priorities. The first priority is to build today’s transit service and ridership in the corridor with the Routes 367 (express bus service from Hastings to Minneapolis via Newport Transit Station) and Route 363 (local bus service between Cottage Grove and downtown Saint Paul. Mr. Reynolds showed a matrix exploring interim BRT options with a variety of station options throughout the corridor with 2040 Passengers Per In Service Hour (PPISH)—a measure used in the region to understand expected performance. The evaluation showed that the current options do not present strong performance to implement a complete bus rapid transit line in the near term. Ridership would need to increase about 33% to meet the regional standard for bus rapid transit ridership.

Commissioner Bigham asked if the target of 33% more ridership was meant to qualify for a complete bus rapid transit implementation plan. Mr. Reynolds clarified that yes that the corridor would need to reach 2400 boardings to trigger the full implementation of BRT.

Ms. Turner, Washington County, then began the presentation on the Financial Plan Recommendations chapter of the Implementation Plan. The first recommendation is to seek multiple sources for Red Rock prioritized investment. The Red Line Bus Rapid Transit used about 37 different funding sources. The second recommendation is to phase the improvements by investing in a series of small improvements over time. The third recommendation is to consider local opportunities help fund small investments.

Commissioner Bigham stated that federal funding would be hard for Red Rock to qualify for given the smaller size of the project.

Ms. Turner agreed and stated that the size of Red Rock creates a challenge to be creative and find local funding to support the project and state funding is not sustainable at this time.

Commissioner Bigham stated that Red Rock is a unique situation. Gateway and Red Line are large enough to qualify for federal funding. However, Red Rock will still get done.

Ms. Turner stated the last recommendation is to continue performance evaluation and reevaluate funding sources and competitiveness as the project needs arise.

Ms. Turner then began the overview of Chapter 6, the Phasing Plan. The first phase is the near term phase from 2016 to 2020. The first recommendation of Phase I is to work with Metro Transit to increase local and express service to build local ridership. The second recommendation is to work with corridor cities and counties to update comprehensive plans with increased population and employment densities within the station areas. The third recommendation is to work with Metro Transit to implement 30-minute service throughout the day via Route 363 between Cottage Grove and Saint Paul. There is currently an application out for this service as a part of the Metropolitan Council’s Regional Solicitation. If funded, there would be a 3-year demonstration project starting in 2020. The status of the application will be made known at the end of 2016 or beginning of 2017. The last recommendation is to work with Metro Transit and the City of Hastings to determine when express bus service from Hastings or local service within Hastings is a viable option. Hastings is currently working with DARTS to explore transit options within the city.

Commissioner Bigham stated that she would like to see additional references to Route 367 added into the plan, particularly to the long-term strategies, for public comment. The Route 367 would go from Hastings to Newport to Minneapolis. The public often asks why there isn’t a route from Newport to Minneapolis. Commissioner Bigham wants residents to know that this is on the radar of the project. This is something that Commissioner Bigham and Commissioner Slavik have been working on for the past two years in the legislature and with the Metropolitan Council to implement but the transportation bills have yet to be passed.

Commissioner Slavik stated that his only comment was that calling the service “the Route 367” is better than calling it “the Hastings Service” as Hastings has committed to transit.

Commissioner Bigham concurred. The Route 367 should be included, showing that the route will span from Hastings to Newport to Minneapolis so the public with identify what Route 367 is. That is key.

Commissioner Rettman asked a point of clarification that the Routes 363 and 367 will both be included in the Phase 1 part of the phasing plan.

Commissioner Bigham stated that both should be included and public input is needed on both. If the goal is to increase ridership then people will be more supportive if they understand what is being done in the near term. Newport is very excited about their park-and-ride and ridership has increased. If there was a route to Minneapolis then the ridership would likely increase. If the public knows we are working on it additional service, it will give piece of mind.

Commissioner Rettman asked if the addition of the Route 367 could be made before the Implementation Plan is added to the website.

Commissioner Bigham stated that yes, the additional references to Route 367 will be added immediately. The feedback from the Commission will be added to the document and they will be a part of the open house. The addition of the Route 367 route would likely not go through the Regional Solicitation but instead would be a project for a different source of funding.

Ms. Turner then started presenting Phase II, the long-term plan from 2020 to 2040. The first recommendation is to implement the corridor city and county plans that were developed as a part of Phase I. The second recommendation is to update the forecasted ridership based on the comprehensive plan updates. The third recommendation is that if the Route 363 is implemented then ridership needs to be monitored. Monitoring and working with Metro Transit to identify potential service improvements to grow ridership to reach 1,200 passengers per day. The fourth recommendation is to replace the Route 363 with an interim BRT service when the corridor reaches the 25 PPISH.

Commissioner Rettman asked the Route 367 also be added as a part of Phase II.

Commissioner Bigham agreed that the Route 367 should be referenced as part of Phase II as it shows a commitment to the corridor.

Ms. Turner noted that Commissioner Gordon from Minneapolis, who was not in attendance, had submitted a comment via email. Commissioner Gordon would like to see intentional references to the connection to Minneapolis in the long term investments.

Commissioner Bigham stated that the Route 367 which would end in Minneapolis shows a commitment to this corridor.

Ms. Turner stated that the last recommendation of Phase II is to continue to invest in station area development. Intentional station area development will help to boost ridership going forward.

Ms. Turner then began Chapter 7 on Recommendations and Next Steps. There are multiple recommended on-going strategies to support transit. The first recommendation is to advocate for multimodal investments. Multimodal investments help build ridership. The second recommendation is to advocate for funding for mobility improvements along the corridor. The third recommendation is to continue to monitor the corridor for transit performance and needs to determine the timing for implementation.

Ms. Turner then stated that the approval process action tonight is to release the Implementation Plan draft with the recommended edits for the 35 day public comment period before the October 26th open house and public hearing. Pending the approval on October 26th then resolutions of support would be sought through the end of 2016.

Ms. Turner stated that the action requested is to release Draft Final Implementation Plan for public comment pending the Commission’s edits.

Commissioner Greene stated that she was excited to realize at the project is at this point in the process. Commissioner Greene stated that she was thrilled and wanted to acknowledge the staff.

Commissioner Bigham stated that she agreed. The regional approach to transit is exciting. This a good opportunity. The public will provide good comments. Commissioner Bigham then stated she had a question about the detailed report. One expense item was listed as support facilities such as “yards.” Commissioner Bigham asked for clarification that the yards are for the storage of buses. If so, Commissioner Bigham asked if there is an opportunity to partner with the Gateway Corridor or some other opportunity to save on overhead for that cost.

Ms. Leitner, Washington County, clarified that the cost in the packet is a unit cost for a shared facility. This approach was also used in the Gateway Corridor Project.

Commissioner Bigham stated that the expense was on page 21 for Alternative 2B. Metropolitan Council is hoping for $7.2 million from the bonding process for a new garage. Commissioner Bigham stated that this category may still be a little fluid and could present an opportunity for Gateway or Red Rock if there is some flexibility.

Motion made by Commissioner Greene to release the Draft Implementation Plan per the Commission’s comments. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rahm. All were in favor, **Approved**. Motion Carried.

**Agenda Item #5: Communications Update**

Ms. Turner stated that the project website has had 2,000 views in the last month. More view are anticipated in the upcoming month with the release of draft implementation plan. The number of Facebook “likes” (332) are growing. Commissioner Bigham had an op-ed come out in August and can be found in the packets next month. For the release of the Implementation Plan there are plans for social media and flyers to promote the plan.

Commissioner Bigham asked that the Commission share the information on their own social media with their residents.

Commissioner Rettman asked for an amended copy of the draft Implementation Plan with the Route 367 added so that the plan could be given to the Ramsey County Board. Commissioner Rettman stated the need for consistency with communications.

Commissioner Slavik stated that there was social media post about the Newport Park-and-Ride for the state fair.

Commissioner Bigham stated that she had the information available for the commissioner reports portion of the meeting.

**Agenda Item #6: Other**

1. **Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Bigham reported that Newport Park-and-Ride had over 11,000 riders for state fair. The Cottage Grove had about 28,000. It was a great opportunity. CTIB has been in the news lately with Southwest. But there was a partnership between CTIB, Hennepin County, and Metro Transit to close the gap for Southwest.

Commissioner Greene stated that we need to think regionally and CTIB is very much a part of that.

Commissioner Bigham stated that Gateway will be going through a similar process. Additionally, American Public Transportation Association (APTA) named Metro Transit as the transit system of the year. There is an event this coming weekend to celebrate. Also, Metro Transit set the single record use for the transit system on September 1, 2016.

Commissioner Greene stated that Lyssa Leitner received her award for 40 under 40 from Mass Transit Magazine. Commissioner Bigham stated that we already acknowledged Ms. Leitner for the award.

Commissioner Bigham stated that if no other commissioner had reports then we will move on.

1. **Implementation Plan Open House/Next Meeting**

Commissioner Bigham stated that the next meeting is October 26, 2016, Newport City Hall 5:30 pm for the Open House, 6:30 pm for the Red Rock Corridor Commission Meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Slavik to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rettman. All were in favor, **Approved**. Motion Carried.