



Meeting Minutes

October 26th, 2016

Newport City Hall

6:30 p.m.

| 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 | X |
| Keith Franke | City of St. Paul Park | X |

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

| Staff | Agency | Present |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Jan Lucke | Washington County RRA | |
| Lyssa Leitner | Washington County RRA | X |
| Hally Turner | Washington County RRA | |
| Emily Jorgensen | Washington County RRA | X |
| Kevin Roggenbuck | Ramsey County RRA | X |
| Matt Parent | Dakota County RRA | X |
| Joe Scala | Hennepin County | X |

| Others | Agency | |
|-----------------|----------------------|---|
| Brian Smalkoski | Kimley Horn | X |
| Katie White | Metropolitan Council | |

Agenda Item #1: Introduction

Chair Bigham called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 Councilmember Vaughn. 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 the September 22, 2016 commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Franke. All were in favor, **Approved**. Motion Carried.

Agenda Item #4: Implementation Plan Update/Public Hearing

Lyssa Leitner, Washington County staff, started with an overview of the progress made with the draft Implementation Plan since the September 22, 2016 commission meeting. Ms. Leitner stated that the draft Implementation Plan was released for public comment after the September 22, 2016 meeting reflecting the changes that were requested by the commission.

The open house and public hearing for the draft Implementation Plan were publicized in a variety of ways. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Business Community Advisory Committee (BCAC) for the Red Rock Corridor were made aware of the Implementation Plan release, the open house and the public hearing. Fliers advertising the draft Implementation Plan, the open house and public hearing were posted in libraries, government offices and coffee shops throughout the Red Rock Corridor. Social media, press releases and e-newsletters were used to notify the public about the public comment opportunity as well as the open house and

public hearing. The public was able to make their comments online or at the open house and public hearing in writing or in-person.

The comments received to date online were included in the meeting packet. One additional comment had been made after the packets were printed and was distributed to each commission member. Ms. Leitner stated that one hand written comment was submitted during the open house from a St. Paul stakeholder. This comment was supportive of the project in general and called for improvements at the Lower Afton station. This comment would be scanned and distributed to the commission. During the comment period there were four comments received online. However, due to an online glitch the content of the comments was lost. Staff emailed those who submitted online comments, notifying them of the glitch and asked them to respond with their comment. One person responded with their comment via email. The content of the remaining three comments was not recovered.

Commissioner Rettman asked to clarify that the newly received written comment would be provided to the commission. Ms. Leitner confirmed that the comment would be scanned and sent to the commission. There wasn't time to do so prior to the public hearing since the comment was received during the open house. Ms. Leitner reiterated that there was nothing in the written comment that called for a change to the draft Implementation Plan.

Ms. Leitner began the presentation on the draft Implementation Plan. The Red Rock Corridor project is intended to be a part of the regional transit system. It would connect the corridor to St. Paul at Union Depot where there are many different connections to the region as well as the Minneapolis—St. Paul airport. Early on, this project was focused on investigating the potential for commuter rail service in the corridor. Now, it has become clear that the public is looking for all day service, and as a result the focus of the project has shifted to bus rapid transit (BRT). The purpose of the implementation plan is to outline detailed technical elements, station area plans, schedule and costs of staged investments, partner responsibilities through 2040 and stakeholder buy-in, detailed resolutions, and generate momentum. The goals of this project were adopted by the Red Rock Corridor Commission in 2013. The goals focused on mobility needs and forecasts, cost effectiveness, increased opportunities for community and economic development and improved quality of natural and built environment. The decision making about the routes and other details have been grounded in these goals. Engagement and talking with the public has been a huge part of the project. Open houses, park-and-ride outreach, community event outreach, city meetings, a Red Line tour and online engagement were used as engagement for this project. Frequent service, all-day service and park-and-ride options emerged as key themes from public outreach.

From the technical analysis, aforementioned goals and public outreach the route that was established. The route begins at Union Depot in St. Paul, sharing the guideway with the Gateway BRT for 3 stations before heading down Highway 61 in mixed traffic with operation on the shoulders possible. The route then stops at Lower Afton, and then getting off of Highway 61 near Newport and heading on local streets to connect to Newport and St. Paul Park. The route then crosses over Highway 61 to connect with the east side of Highway 61 at 80th Street and then Jamaica in Cottage Grove. Then the route jumps back on Highway 61 to connect to Hastings. There would be a stop at Hastings Depot with the potential for two additional stations in Hastings. All Red Rock BRT stations would have near level boarding with dual door entry and customers would pay for their fare before they boarded. These changes to the boarding process helps to increase the efficiency of BRT.

Ms. Leitner stated that the takeaway of the draft Implementation Plan is that BRT is the best option for the corridor but the operating and maintenance costs of the project are not in line with other regional transit systems, primarily due to the length of the project. This problem creates an unclear funding path for capital costs making an evaluation process impossible. The best performing BRT phase by the year 2040 would be from St. Paul to Cottage Grove. The forecasted ridership in this phase still misses the regional ridership target by 33%. The best way to approach the plan is to utilize and increase regular route transit in the corridor as a way to monitor for the best time to implement BRT.

Ms. Leitner then described the financial plan recommendations. The first recommendation is to seek multiple sources to fund the project. The second is to invest in small improvements throughout the corridor to implement the project over time. The third recommendation is to consider local opportunities to help fund small investments. The fourth recommendation is to reevaluate funding sources and competitiveness as project needs arise.

Ms. Leitner then described the two phases of the draft Implementation Plan, Phase I and Phase II. Phase I is the near-term phase from 2016 to 2020. Year 2020 was selected because of how the timeline corresponds to the comprehensive plan updates for the cities and counties. Phase I has four recommendations. The first recommendation is to work with Metro Transit to maintain and increase local and express bus service. 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 most of the day between Saint Paul and Cottage Grove via the proposed Route 363. The fourth recommendation is to work with Metro Transit and the City of Hastings to determine when express bus service from Hastings, via the proposed Route 367, or local service within Hastings is a viable option. Overall, Phase I recommendations work to build density and ridership within the corridor.

Ms. Leitner then moved on to Phase II. Phase II is the long-term phase from 2020 to 2040. Phase II has six recommendations. The first recommendation is to implement the corridor city and county comprehensive plans with a focus on development within and around station areas. The second recommendation is to update forecasted ridership based on comprehensive plan updates. If the proposed Route 363 is implemented, the third recommendation is to monitor Route 363 ridership and work with Metro Transit to identify service improvements to reach 1,200 passengers per day. The fourth recommendation is to work with Metro Transit to maintain and/or increase express bus service between the Red Rock Corridor cities and downtown Minneapolis. The fifth recommendation is to replace the Route 363 with interim BRT service when the route 363 reaches 25 passengers per in-service hour. The sixth recommendation is to continue to invest in station area development. Overall, the phasing plan highlights that the corridor is not yet ready for BRT implementation but the phased approach identifies strategies for the cities and counties to use in order for the corridor to reach the BRT-ready benchmarks.

Ms. Leitner stated that the draft Implementation Plan also recommends three ongoing strategies. The first ongoing strategy is to advocate for integrated multimodal investments that support mobility throughout the Red Rock Corridor. The second ongoing strategy is to advocate for funding mobility improvements along the corridor, including advocating for sustainable funding from federal, regional and local sources. The third ongoing strategy recommendation is to continue to monitor the transit needs and performance of the corridor in order to best determine the timing for implementation of additional transit service, alternative modes and capital improvements.

Chair Bigham then stopped the presentation and asked if the commission had any questions. Mayor Franke asked about the 2040 phase where the bus alignment would span from St Paul to Cottage Grove. He asked if that alignment would skip Newport and St. Paul Park. Chair Bigham answered that that alignment includes Newport and St. Paul Park. Ms. Leitner stated that all of the stops in the project would be included except the stops in Hastings. Chair Bigham asked that if this document gets adopted then that should be clarified in the resolutions of support.

Chair Bigham then pointed out that the proposed Route 367 from Hastings would also include a stop in Newport. Chair Bigham stated that service with a stop in Newport going to Minneapolis would make the route very successful.

Councilmember Prince stated that the work on Gateway Corridor would need to precede the Red Rock BRT since the plan utilizes Gateway stops in the Dayton's Bluff area. Councilmember Prince asked if Gateway would need to precede the proposed Route 363 as well. Ms. Leitner stated that the proposed Route 363 would not be stopping in the Dayton's Bluff area unless the Gateway infrastructure was already there. Chair Bigham stated that if the Regional Solicitation grant was awarded to the proposed Route 363 and the Gateway Corridor was constructed in the early 2020's then the commission would go back to the Metropolitan Council to apply to adjust that route to utilize the Gateway stations in Dayton's Bluff and the stakeholders would be included in that process. Chair Bigham stated that using the Dayton's Bluff area stations is a part of the plan with the proposed Route 363 as it would help the ridership of the corridor reach regional levels. Ms. Leitner stated that environmental work needs to be done anywhere where there will be construction or changes.

Ms. Leitner then presented the approval process for the draft Implementation Plan. The plan was released in September 2016 with a public comment period of more than 30 days. If the commission approves the draft Implementation Plan and the resolution of support for the commission then staff will begin drafting a resolution of support template for the counties and cities in the corridor. The intent is to make sure that the communities are aware of project progress. Newport, Cottage Grove, Washington County and Dakota County have requested staff to present the plan as an information item.

Commissioner Slavik asked when the resolutions of the support should be completed. Ms. Leitner stated that there is no official due date, although sooner is better but staff is willing to work with city staff. Commissioner Slavik asked about levels of support and what would happen if a community within the corridor did not submit a resolution of support. Ms. Leitner stated that that is more of a policy question. Ms. Leitner also stated that that has happened in the Gateway Corridor and the Gateway Commission then rerouted the project, no longer stopping in that community. Ms. Leitner stated if that were to happen in the Red Rock Corridor then it would be an issue that would need to be brought back to the commission.

Chair Bigham stated that Washington County staff has presented to the Washington County Board and corridor cities without any real opposition. Commissioner Slavik stated while this is a good implementation plan but in light of recent events with CTIB and where they see the line ending, there may be attitude changes. Chair Bigham stated that CTIB wouldn't have involvement until the project becomes a BRT project, which is years down the road and that it would be something for the county boards to work on. Chair Bigham stated that she heard Commissioner Slavik's concerns and thanked him for bringing them up. Ms. Leitner stated that Washington County staff can work with Dakota County to draft resolution language that responds to the current reality.

Councilmember Rahm stated that due to the impending election it would be best for the City of Newport to receive the resolution of support template after the first of the year. Ms. Leitner stated that staff is aware of the election reality and will leave it up to each local community. Commissioner Rettman stated the commission needs to stick together, it has to be a conscious effort. The entire commission needs to support the project so that the entire corridor will benefit from this investment.

Ms. Leitner then described the process for the public hearing comment portions. Mr. Leon Mo from Cottage Grove was the only attendee who wished to make a public comment.

Mr. Mo of 8660 Grospoint Avenue South, Cottage Grove, Minnesota.

Mr. Mo stated that his impression and interpretation of the project was changed this evening courtesy of Ms. Leitner. Mr. Mo and his wife have lived in Cottage Grove for 45 years and can recall the days when there was reliable bus service in the city provided by MTC, it was a functional process and he was disappointed to see it leave. Mr. Mo was under the impression that the taxpayer was going to be on the hook for a complete BRT. Mr. Mo stated he was interested in hearing more about the proposed Route 363. Mr. Mo stated he was encouraged to hear that BRT would not be implemented unless certain benchmarks were reached. Mr. Mo stated that he understands that there is an issue with congestion in the corridor but the solutions need to be done in an intentional manner. Mr. Mo stated that the propose Route 363 will help these issues. Mr. Mo recalled the ridership projections for the Northstar Line and the federal loan funding that was needed for the project.

Chair Bigham thanked Mr. Mo and asked if anyone else would like to make a comment. Chair Bigham then stated that this is a project where everyone is learning together and it's a phased approach to building ridership in the corridor. Chair Bigham thanked the commission and Washington County staff for their time and work.

Chair Bigham then closed the public hearing portion of the meeting. Councilmember Peterson moved to approve the findings of the Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan and adopting the final report. Seconded by Councilmember Rahm.

Mayor Franke stated that he has some concerns with the project cost and stated the need to investigate the operation and maintenance costs of the project. Mayor Franke stated that there aren't very many options for funding possibilities for operation and maintenance costs and there is a need to hit the proposed benchmarks. Additionally, Mayor Franke stated that there are other transportation issues happening in the corridor that also need attention.

Chair Bigham thanked Mayor Franke for this thoughts and concerns. Chair Bigham stated that the operation and maintenance costs will be more accurate once the corridor is ready to consider implementing BRT and that won't happen until the corridor builds ridership. These costs will be reevaluated when an implementation date for BRT is expected sooner than the current timeline as the numbers will change over time.

Mayor Franke thanked Chair Bigham for her clarification of the benchmarks and the steps identified in the Implementation Plan that need to be taken in order for the corridor to reach BRT. Mayor Franke stated that there are many unknowns in the area as far as transit and partners are abandoning regional projects. Chair Bigham responded that there is a lot of inaccurate information around transit projects but the Implementation Plan clearly lays out the steps and benchmarks for this project. Chair Bigham thanked Mayor Franke for voicing his hesitations and concerns.

Commissioner Rettman stated that the public comment heard by the commission pointed out that this project is restoring service to the south east metro that has been taken away. This project serves as restorative justice for the area. The restoration of the service is a key aspect of the plan.

Ms. Leitner called roll to pass to motion to pass the resolution.

Bigham, aye.
Greene, absent.
Gordon, absent.
Franke, aye.
Kummer, absent.
Peterson, aye.
Prince, aye.
Rahm, aye.
Rettman, aye.
Slavik, aye.
Vaughn, aye.

All were in favor, **Approved**. Motion Carried.

Agenda Item #5: Communications Update

Ms. Leitner stated that the numbers associated with views for the Red Rock Corridor website and Facebook page are in the packet. The news articles covering the Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan are also included in the packet.

Agenda Item #6: Other

A. Commissioner Reports

Chair Bigham stated that the Washington County Board of Commissioners is supporting one grant application for the Red Rock Corridor to CTIB for the Washington County guaranteed funds. The application is for planning Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in Cottage Grove and St. Paul Park near the planned Red Rock stations. The application will go before GEARS and CTIB in December.

Chair Bigham also stated that she would like to get a letter support from the Red Rock Corridor Commission for the proposed Route 636 application in the Regional Rail Solicitation. Chair Bigham would like to bring the letter of support to the TAB. Chair Bigham asked if the commission had any questions or concerns about the letter of support.

B. November/December Meeting TBD

Ms. Leitner stated that the next planned meeting fell on Thanksgiving. Staff will be coordinating with the commission to find a new day and that meeting will be the last meeting of the calendar year. The upcoming meeting will look at the budget and work plan for 2017. The budget will be approved at the first meeting of 2017.

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

