



**DATE:** March 21, 2014

**RE:** Comments Received on Draft Final AAU Plan

Over the past twelve months, the Red Rock Corridor Commission has been updating the information in the 2007 Alternatives Analysis. In December 2013, the Commission released a draft Final Plan for public comment. The AAU was based on new technical analysis and more updated demographic and travel information and therefore replaces the conclusions in the Alternatives Analysis conducted in 2007. Ridership numbers were calculated based on the latest data including 2010 traffic counts, the Travel Behavior Inventory, On-Board Survey data, and the latest census. Capital and operating costs were developed using recent studies and operating transitways such as the East Metro Rail Capacity Study, Northstar Commuter Rail, and Red Line BRT.

Public involvement was also a large piece of the AAU. Input was sought from the project management team (PMT), which consists of technical staff from the cities and agencies, on the best ways to engage the various stakeholders. The public involvement throughout the AAU included the formation of a citizen's advisory committee (CAC), a series of public engagement forums (listening sessions, in person workshops, open houses), engagement at the existing park and rides, and online questionnaires. The goal of the engagement was to learn about the participants' familiarity with the project, their knowledge about the different transit options being considered, and their opinion on the relative importance of various transit service characteristics. Engagement was not intended to determine if people are for or against transit but rather to help identify the gaps in existing transit service and identify any unmet transportation needs that warrant further investigation.

### **Public Comment Period**

The public comment period for the Red Rock Corridor Alternatives Analysis Update Draft Final Plan was from December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014. During this period a press release was issued, multiple social media posts were generated, and two electronic newsletters were distributed. A public hearing was held during the last Commission meeting to collect additional comments. The transcript from the public hearing along with all comments received during the comment period is attached to this memo and will be posted at <http://redrockcorridor.org/transit-study>.

### **Comments Received**

Comments received ranged from supporting additional transit in the Corridor to not supporting any level of transit investment. A few commenters wanted to make sure the level of investment for BRT would ensure a reliable service. Others expressed concerns the study was over projecting the overall need in the Corridor.

Attached to this memo are all comments that were submitted, including the transcript from the public hearing.

## Red Rock AAU Comments Received via Email

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I live in Stillwater, I shouldn't have to subsidize your transit system in Cottage Grove with the 15% funding from CTIB. The other 85% of this line is going to be paid for by Minnesotans and the rest of the country who'll never hear of the RRC let alone use it.

These systems aren't like roads where goods and services are delivered. They are contract transportation like taxi and greyhound bus services.

If it's SUCH a great idea and in demand you should be able to charge a ticket price to at the VERY least cover your running costs (estimated at \$3.8 million) but no. It'll be a failed line just like the red line corridor in Apple Valley:

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/washington-county-watchdog/findings-at-the-red-line-corridor-what-it-means-for-washington-county/623803327670499>

please stop lying to the public with your bunk surveys and swayed interpretations. We don't want this! Pay for it yourself!

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You people are forcing this terrible unsustainable bus line us just like the park in ride you built. The survey's you provide are clearly anything but objective. You people should be ashamed of what you're trying to put on us.

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Costs for "bus rapid transit" appear to be lowballed. The comparison given is between a fleshed-out cost for rail with many details examined and priced, and an optimistic price estimate for BRT which has not been studied equally intensively, and where the details have not been examined and priced. This distorts the results.

BRT projects have routinely come in far over budget, and the same sort of "little bottlenecks" which caused the estimate for rail capital cost to go up will happen to the BRT project too. It is important to provide a larger "optimism bias" contingency on options which have been examined in less detail.

Operating costs also appear to be optimistic for BRT (which routinely runs slower than predicted due to traffic, and therefore needs more buses and operators than expected) and pessimistic for commuter rail.

The commuter rail vehicle assumptions should be reconsidered since it has been said by the FRA that the FRA rules on rail vehicles will be changing in the next few years to make it easier to use smaller, more efficient rail vehicles.

The ridership estimate \*also\* looks optimistic for BRT. I question whether the passenger "rail bias" included in the estimates is large enough. Although all-day service should give better ridership than peak-only ridership, it is well documented (particularly in Los Angeles with the Harbor Transitway) that BRT routes consistently underperform on ridership compared to similar rail routes.

With no operating BRT in Minnesota, one must predict results from other cities, should expect a "bus penalty" as bad as that found in Los Angeles.

Adjusting for the optimism bias present in the current BRT price estimates may not change the short-term preferred option, given the importance of all-day service, but will give more realistic numbers and a greater chance of coming in under budget. The numbers in the current Draft Alternatives Analysis Update for BRT seem too optimistic in several different ways.

Given the extremely slow pace of this project, I would also strongly recommend re-evaluating the alternatives again in a couple of years, when Minnesota will have an actual example of operating BRT and the rules governing commuter rail vehicles are expected to have changed. Now is a bad time to commit to an option.

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In response to public comments on the Red Rock Corridor AAU I am very concerned. The BRT was listed as a very low capital investment option, but to create worthwhile transit BRT cannot be viewed simply as a cheap solution. Thus, I hereby request that any BRT improvement be made in accordance with the ITDP's Scorecard for BRT systems. Also, please ensure that there are no off-line stations. The Red Line should have shown the lack of promise this idea has, with the StarTribune reporting that a main improvement to the line will be a new median bus station, to avoid having the offline station at Cedar Grove.

For further reference please read this blog post <http://www.streets.mn/2014/01/14/red-line-brt-ratings-and-critiques/> (and possibly the full paper attached)

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It appears that the Red Rock Corridor Commission has mastered the art of deception.

Based on information from other metro transit projects, the costs and the ridership numbers are woefully underestimated.

Research show that the biggest influence on ridership is population density. Nationally, ridership is less than 1% of all commuters at densities below 10,000 people per square mile. The population density in the Red Rock Corridor is approx 3600 at best.

Even if this gets approved, a \$2.00 ticket will not make this entity self-supporting and will remain an indefinite burden on taxpayers in addition to maintaining existing roads.

Bad idea in a still stagnate economy.

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Stop spending money on useless, over priced, and non necessary projects.

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Dear Commission members,

We want to comment on the transit concept, as well as the particular options presented in the Study.

We were concerned when we read in the South Washington County Bulletin about the public comments made at your January 23rd meeting. The comments described by the paper were mainly against the idea of public transit. We want to offer two votes strongly in favor of public transit.

We reside in Newport and lived through the recent major reconstruction of Hwy 61. It was necessary, but certainly not pleasant. The transit needs of the projected population growth in the Metro area over the next few decades cannot be met simply by adding lanes to existing highways. That would result in higher and higher highway maintenance costs and less available taxable land in the county. Washington County can't afford that option.

In addition, we strongly support more energy efficient ways of moving masses of people. Our society can't afford the economic and environmental costs of nearly total reliance on automotive transportation.

Car-based transportation disadvantages lower-income citizens and older, non-driving citizens. Finally, the percentage of people in post-baby boom generations who don't own cars is rising. To attract the brightest workers of those generations, municipalities need to offer transit options.

We initially favored heavy rail for the Red Rock Corridor, but after reviewing the Study, now see the advantages of bus rapid transit - lower cost, greater flexibility, and less reliance on the preferences of the Railroad.

Thank you for hearing our concerns.

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I read the article in the Hastings Star Gazette regarding the Red Rock Corridor public hearing and would like to voice my opinion in favor of public mass transportation for the southeast metro area.

I currently commute every day on highway 61 from Hastings to 3M Center. I find this commute to be remarkably easy and efficient, on excellent roads, with very rare traffic issues. From a personal comfort point of view and tax payer value this route is outstanding. Yet the overwhelming majority of vehicles on the road are single occupancy cars, many of us going to the same places at about the same time. I firmly believe a mass transit option would bring benefit not only to the individuals like me who would enjoy a light rail or bus option but to the greater community in the form of reduced traffic loads, reduced road maintenance, and most importantly reduced carbon dioxide emissions. The criticism that money spent on mass transit does not benefit the majority of tax payers does not ring true to me. Projects like this are critical if we have any concern about future transportation and energy use. Small changes in communities like ours over the long term will be greatly appreciated in years to come by us and our children.

An analysis I heard years ago; If you consider what you are moving when you get in a car - yourself and maybe some cargo - call it 300 lbs. And the weight of a car, say 3,000 lbs, then only 10% of what you are moving is what is really important. Combine that with the typical efficiency of an automobile, around 20% and you find that only about 2% (10% x 20%) of the chemical energy in the fuel is being used to move what is important. The rest is wasted. We could develop heroic technology to improve the efficiency of automobiles, or, we could put another person in the car and double the person-miles per gallon. The logical extension of this analysis leads to mass transit. Count me on the side in favor.

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On December 16th the Red Rock Corridor Commission released that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was the best transit choice for the 30 mile corridor from Hastings to St. Paul in their December Alternative Analysis Update.

<http://www.redrockrail.org/pdf/AAU%20Draft%20Final%20Report.pdf>

However in this report they now have the cost of the BRT project at just \$45 million and they quote the 2007 Alternative Analysis report (AA). One problem, the AA report prices the BRT alternative at \$75 million for just the shoulder upgrades, not \$45 million, on page 9. That's in 2007 dollars multiply that by 3.5% a year to get 2014 dollars. That'd be \$95 million dollars in 2014 dollars.

<http://www.redrockrail.org/pdf/Red%20Rock%20Corridor%20Alternative%20Analysis%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Now a half a dozen local media sources are un-intentionally reporting a false low cost estimate to build the Red Rock Corridor!

This sounds eerily similar to back in 2012 when the project manager Andy Gitzlaff told [finance-commerce.com](http://finance-commerce.com) the now \$6.2 million dollar transit station was only going to cost \$2.5 million. An outrageous underestimation.

<http://finance-commerce.com/2012/07/ready-to-roll-in-red-rock-corridor/>

Come to find out, the \$45 million dollar quote is leaving out MAJOR expenses. Such as:  
-\$6.2 million for the New Port transit station (cost left out) (p.10)

- \$6.3 million to build a bus only connection from 61 to the Newport Transit Station (p.37)

- Apx \$6 million to build a Transit Station in Hastings (cost left out). (p. 10)

- Apx \$4 million (at least) to build a bus maintenance shop (estimate off Red Line's shop)

- And millions of dollars in unmentioned ramp upgrades and shoulder expansions.

<http://www.redrockrail.org/pdf/Draft%20Capital%20Cost%20Memo%20October%2021,%202013.pdf>

Furthermore, even the \$75 million cost estimate for the 30 mile BRT corridor is grossly underestimated. The just 11 mile Red Line Corridor in Apple Valley cost \$112 million! The Red Rock Corridor is planning to be 3x as long.

<http://metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Future-Projects/Metro-Red-Line-facts.aspx>

One can further question how they assume the 8 mile of bus only shoulder lane and ramp expansion on TH61 to Hastings is only going to cost \$1 million dollars. It should cost tens of millions like the other metro BRT shoulder and ramp expansions for that distance. Add up all the known missing costs from this Red Rock Corridor AAU (\$22.5 million) along with the \$20 million in additional cost due to inflation (using their own 3.5% a year assumption) and a total of \$42.5 million dollars needs to be added to the \$45 million they predicted (not including the 8 mile stretch to Hastings). For a grand total cost of \$87.5 million at the very least (using lowest estimates). The \$87.5 does not include the TENS OF MILLIONS in cost to do the 30 miles of shoulder and ramp upgrades. Mysteriously that's left out of the AAU. Again, it must be questioned why a BRT transit line 11 miles long in Apple Valley cost \$112 million (finished in 2013) while a 30 mile BRT transit line in South Washington County is only \$45 million (their estimate).

Lastly, the ridership numbers they are using to justify construction of this line are arbitrary predictions on ridership in the year 2030! BRT riders are predicted to be 2,420 weekly riders. Current ridership on the Apple Valley Red Line BRT corridor (which services a larger population than Red Rock will) only sees 850 (835 rounded up) riders per week. (p.26)

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/govrel/reports/2013/2013GuidewayStatusReport.pdf>

850 riders a week on the Red Line (rounded up from actual 835) sounds like a lot; however on a 90,000 car a week road this \$112 million dollar BRT line in Apple Valley is hardly successful.

See the full article:

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/washington-county-watchdog/findings-at-the-red-line-corridor-what-it-means-for-washington-county/623803327670499>

This comes on the heels of public survey manipulation to get favorable results:

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/washington-county-watchdog/red-rock-corridor-planners-deceive-the-public-to-secure-funding/647435341973964>

After being caught, their response to being forced to reveal the hidden data was to manipulate the opposition comments:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=663728283678003&set=a.521641121220054.131432.521632771220889&type=1&theater>

The local media have made it clear they aren't going to write about report after report of these skewed numbers. Please share these articles and facts the media is not going to report. The average citizen is unfortunately unaware.

Get honest with the tax payers!

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Red Rock Corridor should be considered in the context of it's role as the south-east leg of a metropolitan transit system. This system is a double hub system centered in Saint Paul and Minneapolis, connected by the current University Corridor LRT and future commuter and high speed rail links.

Planning should not devolve into a one hub system centered in Minneapolis. The State and metropolitan area will have the greatest benefit from a balanced two hub system built on a sharing of resources. Currently, there is the LRT line that connects the two hubs. Out of the Minneapolis hub there is a SE LRT line, a North commuter rail line and a SW LRT line that is in the works. Saint Paul currently has no commuter rail or LRT lines. It is a hub with no spokes. \$200 million dollars has been invested in the Union Depot to create a multi modal transit hub. It should serve as a multi modal hub and not just a glorified bus station. Using buses whether they be rapid or slow for the spokes of the Saint Paul hub is not a prudent or acceptable alternative. If all of the metropolitan area is going to participate in growth of housing opportunities, job opportunities, recreational opportunities, improved tax base, energy savings and pollution reduction, we all need to have equal participation in a high quality transit system.

Red Rock Corridor was planned for commuter rail to Red Wing with future hopes of extending south along the Mississippi River. That was shortened to Hastings. Now the planning is for buses. Transit system choices have significant impacts on the long term potential of this portion of the metropolitan area. If the State and Metropolitan governments support a multi modal transit system that includes commuter rail and LRT then they should ensure that those systems

are equally distributed throughout the region.

The 2014 session of the Minnesota Legislature should fund a study to divert freight rail traffic around the metropolitan area. Think of it as similar to how the 494-694 loop serves to reduce traffic through the center of the metropolitan area. A number of national and regional issues point to the value of assessing the potential alternatives to the current situation. Five percent of our nation's rail freight travels through the current corridor and is growing. As a nation and region it serves us well to ship freight on rail which provides the greatest fuel efficiencies and lowest levels of pollution of any year around freight system in the state. The existing rail corridors were chosen in the 1800's and we should consider what is best for our transportation system in 2014.

The Red Rock Corridor is just one of the reasons why it is timely for the State to study a rail bypass. Part of the Red Rock consideration of using buses is the challenge of accommodating the current level of freight rail in the same corridor with commuter rail. The SW LRT is facing a problem accommodating freight rail along with LRT and recreational uses. Park, trail, and neighborhood development plans are impacted. Saint Paul and Shoreview have been in the news about impacts of freight rail noise on surrounding neighborhoods. Catastrophic oil tanker fires in North Dakota, and Canada point to the benefit of reducing shipments through densely populated areas. The North Star line and Amtrack have suffered significant delays that would benefit from a reduction of freight conflicts. Freight rail loses time and money while trains are delayed because of the bottleneck. A freight rail bypass could assist in opening a corridor for future high speed rail. Freight rail growth, passenger rail growth, LRT growth and trail opportunities all could benefit from an alternative that reduces the routing of freight through the heart of the cities.

The Red Rock Corridor should consider a station at Hwy 61 and I-94. With the potential of LRT in the Gateway Corridor a station could provide a valuable interconnection of these two transit lines. This location also has the potential for transit oriented development that Lower Afton lacks. There are more residents in close proximity of this station. The cost of constructing a station including parking, could benefit from joint use by two transit lines. The construction of the Newport station and a joint Gateway/Red Rock station could allow the removal of the old facility at Lower Afton and provide better overall service and transit oriented redevelopment.

With the shift to buses on Red Rock there should be LRT instead of buses in the Gateway Corridor. In the SE area bounded by I-94, Hwy 61 and the Saint Croix River, we would have had the option of commuter rail and LRT. With buses proposed for Red Rock the area should have LRT on Gateway so we are not left with a bus only option.

We are fortunate to have a National Park in the heart of our community. The National Park Service in conjunction with local government units has done an admirable job of developing an alternative transportation plan. The Red Rock Corridor plan should embrace the goal of helping provide alternatives for users to access the National Park that runs parallel to the Red Rock Corridor.

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RED ROCK CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

PUBLIC HEARING

Cottage Grove City Hall  
12800 Ravine Parkway South  
Cottage Grove, Minnesota

January 23, 2014  
4:25 p.m.

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COMMISSION MEMBERS

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Jen Peterson, Cottage Grove

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Public Hearing 1/23/14

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIR LEHRKE: At this time, we will begin  
3 taking public comments regarding the recommendation of  
4 the draft final plan that recommends bus rapid transit  
5 versus commuter rail.

6 I will call each speaker in the order at  
7 which the request was received. In an effort to  
8 accommodate all requests to speak, we ask that each  
9 speaker keep their comments to five minutes. Those who  
10 wish to provide comments beyond the five minutes may  
11 submit them in writing on the forms provided. As I call  
12 your name, please step to the podium, state your name,  
13 address, and the organization you represent, if any,  
14 before making your comments.

15 The first comment card I have here is from  
16 Linda Stanton. Linda, would you please approach the  
17 podium, state your name and address for the record; and  
18 again, five minutes, please.

19 MS. LINDA STANTON: Thank you. My name is  
20 Linda Stanton. I live at 2511 Wimbledon Place in  
21 Woodbury. I am also a member of the Citizen Advisory  
22 Committee for the Gateway Corridor.

23 The more I learn about these transit  
24 projects, the more I become frustrated about the millions  
25 and billions of dollars being studied, being spent to

1 study the proposed transit system. It duplicates already  
2 existing express bus and regular route buses. Not only  
3 that, but CTIB, the County Transit Improvement Board, is  
4 asking for another quarter cent sales tax increase on top  
5 of the already quarter cent tax that's being collected.

6 What we need are lanes and roads for cars,  
7 buses, and trucks. Metro Transit bus service is the  
8 least expensive option, and could be expanded in areas  
9 where there is a true need. But to plan to purchase  
10 brand new buses that are basically light rail on rubber  
11 wheels and require a fixed, raised platform to operate  
12 and board is just another way of bankrupting the State  
13 and overwhelming already overtaxed residents. Nobody  
14 likes traffic congestion, but that could be solved by  
15 adding more lanes and expanding alternative routes.  
16 Metro Transit service could be expanded.

17 Please put a stop to these crazy plans that  
18 do not meet the needs of the majority of county  
19 residents. I have a petition. If anybody would like to  
20 sign it, I'll be here after the meeting. Thank you.

21 CHAIR LEHRKE: Thank you for your comments.

22 The next comment card I have is from Bob  
23 Tatreau. Bob, this is coming out of your five minutes.

24 MR. BOB TATREAU: My coat was so heavy, I  
25 had to take it off. Weighs as much as most buses do.

1 Well, my name -- can everyone hear me okay? My name is  
2 Bob Tatreau. I'm a resident actually in Woodbury, but I  
3 am in Washington County, which I think we're still in,  
4 and so I'm interested in what happens here. I'm at  
5 1707 Thornhill in Woodbury.

6 Well, I've got a couple things I want to  
7 say. First of all, I want to make a comment on what  
8 appeared in the Watchdog on November 11th. This is an  
9 article by a gentleman named Matt Behning. I'm going to  
10 kind of encapsulate it and kind of move it along here.  
11 It's very interesting, because what happened here was  
12 this gentleman was trying to obtain data on surveys taken  
13 for the Red Rock Corridor, and he had great difficulty in  
14 doing it. He was given information and it wasn't  
15 complete, and finally he had to resort to the mechanism,  
16 I guess, that always works--legal intervention. He did  
17 so, and that very same day, he received from the  
18 assistants of the county attorney, Mr. Hodsdon, he  
19 received this raw data that he had requested, and it was  
20 in great conflict with what had been reported before.

21 And the contention in this article is that,  
22 and I'll read the name of it--and if you want copies, I  
23 have copies of it--the Red Rock Corridor planners  
24 deceived the public to secure funding. So that's the  
25 essence of that. And it's interesting, because if you

1 look at what was done here, this -- well, okay, so what  
2 is it when it occurs, I ask the audience here, and  
3 Commissioners, esteemed Commissioners, an intentional  
4 perversion of truth for the purpose of inducing another  
5 in reliance upon it to part with some valuable thing  
6 belonging to him, or to surrender a legal right. And  
7 what is it? Well, it is, according to Black's Law  
8 Dictionary, Fifth Edition, it's fraud. So that's the  
9 definition of fraud.

10 I think we have to look at this, you know,  
11 take this and look at it seriously, as Commissioners, as  
12 planners, as everyone, and citizens. I mean, you know, I  
13 love this county dearly, and the last thing I would want  
14 to think is that we're being defrauded money just to  
15 build the dream of what I consider to be some  
16 megalomaniacs in Minneapolis. If you ever notice how the  
17 transit lines, it's like a spider, they all converge  
18 towards Minneapolis. And I don't know what that means,  
19 but that's the way it goes. So that's all I have to say  
20 on that. I'd be happy to give you all copies of this  
21 article. This is what I'm working from here.

22 The next thing I want to say is that there  
23 is no cost benefit to building any of this stuff. In  
24 fact, planner Lyssa Leitner told me, after considerable  
25 questioning, that, well, what is it? It's undetermined.

1 I said what does that mean? She said, well, it's how you  
2 feel. If you like the light rail or you want to do it,  
3 that's valuable to you, but otherwise, no, it isn't.

4 And so this to me, I mean, would you invest  
5 in the stock market if it was undetermined, the returns,  
6 your hard-earned money? Well, this is what's happening  
7 here. This is because, you know, some people think that  
8 we should have it, when in fact it's we are nowhere near  
9 dense enough here. The actual Minnesota density is like  
10 66.6, and some people think that's a significant number,  
11 66.6. That's the actual density of people per square  
12 mile in Minnesota. Well, obviously it's greater in  
13 Minneapolis and St. Paul, but nowhere near the 13, 14  
14 thousand, or even more density, that is required to have  
15 the transit's operation make a profit, as they do in, you  
16 know, New York, for instance. They make like a penny on  
17 every ride.

18 So I think that we don't have the density  
19 here, and we just don't have the -- you know, the people  
20 here, I don't think they want it. As far as  
21 transportation, only like four percent for light transit,  
22 according to the survey in the St. Paul paper, and I  
23 think that applies, you know, to a good portion of the  
24 metro area. So I don't think we can ignore these, I  
25 don't think we can laugh them off. So that's important

1 to be considered.

2 The other thing I want to mention is the  
3 congestion; and again, at one of the early meetings,  
4 Lyssa Leitner, I was talking to her. I said, well, does  
5 this relieve congestion? She said no, it doesn't relieve  
6 congestion. And I was, you know, wow, what are we doing  
7 this for? Well, it will kind of rearrange it, I guess.

8 So, you know, I have great concern. This is  
9 taxpayer money. And the other, the greatest concern is  
10 supposing we build this thing and we decide, you know  
11 what, we don't want it, we're going to get rid of it.  
12 Well, you better be ready to pay back the Feds every last  
13 penny that you've got going, because they can do that,  
14 it's written into all the contracts, so.

15 Anyhow, I want you all to think seriously  
16 about this and, you know, do what you can to -- you know,  
17 I love, myself, buses, I really do love buses, and I  
18 think buses are it. And you know what, this is the  
19 modern age. The rail age was back in the 1800s, and, you  
20 know, it was good then, but now it doesn't service.  
21 Heavy rail going down a dedicated line, what if the jobs  
22 really--either we don't know--I mean, what if the jobs  
23 are someplace else? It could be useless. And the idea  
24 that we can build all these, you know, condos along the  
25 way, the labor shed and the community shed, being next to

1 one another, you're forcing people then to do things. I  
2 don't think Minnesotans or Americans want to do that.

3 So I urge you all very carefully to consider  
4 this. I think we can, with smart buses and smart lanes  
5 and smart cars, and cars are going to be able to drive  
6 themselves pretty soon, I think we can get people around  
7 effectively. So thank you very much.

8 CHAIR LEHRKE: Thank you for your comments,  
9 Bob.

10 Our next speaker is Matt Behning. If you  
11 could please state your name and address for the record.

12 MR. MATT BEHNING: I'm Matt Behning. I'm  
13 from Stillwater, 3447 Maureen Lane. I, like Bob, I'm  
14 interested in this area, because I'm just as invested as  
15 a taxpayer and CTIB.

16 Over the last year, I've been watching the  
17 progress of all these transit corridors developed in the  
18 County, specifically with the concern about cost versus  
19 benefit. I'm not anti-bus either. So these projects and  
20 their reliance are primarily funded by taxpayers who will  
21 never hear, let alone use, these bus routes.

22 I investigate more on this Red Rock, but the  
23 Red Rock is most concerning. It started in September  
24 when I pressed to see the raw surveys results, like Bob  
25 mentioned. They use these studies to secure their



1 funding. They're reported in the AAU, the  
2 Alternatives Analysis Update, so it's pertinent here.  
3 Suspicion arose when I realized these reports in the  
4 survey were nothing like the corridor results I've seen  
5 in other corridor studies. Usually you see some negative  
6 comments and you'll see that projected in there, their  
7 self-reports. I didn't see any of that. And I have  
8 evidence to that on my -- I posted all this online.

9 After filing a Data Practices Act with the  
10 Assistant County Attorney, as Bob mentioned, I obtained  
11 the survey results. Come to find out over a third of the  
12 citizens to fill out these surveys filled out comments  
13 critical to cost, lack of ridership, inconvenience of  
14 use, and none more apparent than the results of the  
15 September 2013 survey. I brought this evidence to the  
16 findings, to the County Board members, the  
17 Red Rock Corridor planners, speaking of the conflict of  
18 interest having studies run, develop their own surveys,  
19 conduct them, interpret the results, and report those  
20 results to secure their funding, and no action was taken.

21 The RRC Commissioner posted the comments for  
22 the public for their September Citizens Advisory Council  
23 meeting on September 24th, and I saw that meeting, and  
24 the comments were distorted, and they bunched the  
25 comments down to no expense, minimal cost, things have to

1 change. They just took liberty to edit those comments  
2 down. You place them side by side with their original  
3 comments, and I honestly can't understand the correlation  
4 with how they got that interpretation.

5 This one-sided surveys with the manipulated  
6 results is just the beginning. You look back at the  
7 original 2007 AA study, Alternatives Analysis Study, it  
8 says the BRT option that they're choosing in December  
9 would only cost 75 million. That's only to cover the bus  
10 shoulder enhancement. It's in 8-3 of the 2007 report.  
11 And so a lot of costs are left out. If you look up the  
12 technical memorandum, No. 4, the capital cost evaluation,  
13 some of the things missing are 14.3 million for 20  
14 additional buses, it's on page 7; 11.1 million for  
15 Lower Afton Road BRT station upgrade; 6.5 million for the  
16 Cottage Grove station; 6.2 million for the Newport  
17 transit station; and the bus-only connection from 61 to  
18 the Newport station is going to be 6.3 million, it's on  
19 page 37; and to finish it up here, approximately  
20 6 million to build a transit station in Hastings; and  
21 4 million to build a bus maintenance shop; and lastly,  
22 the cost adjustments for inflation is estimated at  
23 20 million, this is their own 3.5 percent a year figure.  
24 That's a total of \$74 million missing from the  
25 \$75 million projection in 2007. Bring us up to today, we

1 have a \$45 million quote for this BRT line. This is just  
2 disappointing to hear these downplayed numbers, adjusting  
3 what's actually in the cost; and it's -- and if you look  
4 to the Red Line Corridor in Apple Valley, that line is  
5 only eleven miles long, and it cost \$112 million. The  
6 Red Rock Corridor is going to be 30 miles long and it's  
7 going to be \$35 million?

8 So these miscellaneous costs are also  
9 missing: Such as the \$35 million project to completely  
10 tear out and rebuild the overpass at the  
11 County Road 19/61 interchange, and this is not for  
12 anything but allowing bus/shoulder activity to get down  
13 to this Newport town that they're going to build around  
14 the center and have housing and everything. Another  
15 unmentioned cost is \$2 million for all these studies.

16 Lastly--thank you for agreeing with me--the  
17 ridership numbers they're using to justify the  
18 construction is based on 2030 projections of 2,400 riders  
19 a week, riders a day, on the Red Rock Corridor. US 61  
20 has 30,000 vehicles a day, according to MnDOT; and in  
21 2030, it's going to have 45,000 cars a day. For a road  
22 that current and future volume estimate is far too  
23 generous. Again, to the Red Line in Apple Valley,  
24 Cedar Avenue sees 90,000 cars a day. Their Red Line  
25 Corridor sees 835 riders a day. So, yes, that volume is

1 twice what the 2030 volume here in Cottage Grove is going  
2 to be, and they say 835 riders, but this actual  
3 real-world numbers --

4 CHAIR LEHRKE: Mr. Behning, I'm sorry, we're  
5 just running towards the end, actually, your five minutes  
6 is up, so if you could just wrap up your comments,  
7 please.

8 MR. MATT BEHNING: Okay, so, yeah, sorry.  
9 So how does this one-to-five-percent improvement justify  
10 spending on such a massive scale?

11 As a taxpayer, I feel completely betrayed by  
12 the Corridor staff, refused to modify their dishonest  
13 studies and behavior, and the local County Board for  
14 refusing to stop this conflict of interest. I've been  
15 telling each one of them about this. We are being lied  
16 to ourselves and our children if we have to pay for this  
17 AA study, it's all aground to build this unsustainable  
18 project. Sorry about going over.

19 CHAIR LEHRKE: Thank you for your comments.  
20 Our next speaker is Jim Dorniden. Sorry. Please  
21 approach the podium and state your name and address for  
22 the record, and just a reminder of the five minutes.

23 MR. JIM DORNIDEN: I am Jim Dorniden. I  
24 live at 8420 Greene Avenue South, Cottage Grove.

25 I am against, especially against studying

1 the light rail, and bus rapid transit is just as feeble  
2 as the alternatives, from my opinion. I don't see the  
3 necessity for it. I look and I think what we've got  
4 here, we've got people who have this grand vision of what  
5 they want to happen some day and what they want the world  
6 to look like, but the reality is missing.

7 I've driven here 61 for probably 30 years  
8 now, that I've lived here, and they can always use  
9 better, more and more lanes, everywhere I've been. At  
10 least at some point of the day or of the year, weather  
11 like this, an accident or something like that is going to  
12 cause traffic problems here, which none of these mass  
13 transit projects seem to address any way to alleviate any  
14 problem like that.

15 Like I've heard here, I did see Matt's stuff  
16 online, and I do wonder why we're going to spend millions  
17 of dollars on something that's going to be a five-percent  
18 nick in some kind of a niche little project there. I ask  
19 myself who benefits and who pays. What I see is unions  
20 will benefit; people who were pushing this project will  
21 benefit; some cities might have some benefit, but they're  
22 going to have other problems.

23 I used to have a business not far from the  
24 light rail Central Corridor, and I've seen all those  
25 businesses go down the toilet, all over there, the places

1 where you could go eat, now that have left after two or  
2 three years of construction; and you don't take into the  
3 cost, into account the cost that happens to all those  
4 businesses on the way. Every place you start with these  
5 projects, they're losing business, they're never  
6 reimbursed; and I think an apology to them isn't really  
7 worth a whole lot if they lose their business.

8 Have you ever, have you tried to offer this  
9 type of an opportunity, I would say this is a business  
10 opportunity, everybody's thinking this is going to be so  
11 great, did you offer this business opportunity to a  
12 private company, see if -- how many people want to bid on  
13 this? If you've got no bidders, there is no need for it  
14 and there is not going to be a payback on it.

15 I'm not looking to go spend \$100 million on  
16 the initial project, and every year spend another  
17 10 million to keep it up, operating costs. It doesn't  
18 make sense.

19 I think if you want to do something like  
20 this, you should just take, go to Metropolitan Council  
21 and tell them we'd like to try another couple buses here,  
22 add a couple groups at a couple times, start little by  
23 little. You don't start and build a Met Stadium when  
24 you've got a little league team on the field. It doesn't  
25 make sense. Twenty-five years, yes, you'll need a

1 Met Stadium. In the meantime, you've got a stadium where  
2 little leaguers play. It doesn't make sense.

3 I don't think -- and like I say, who  
4 benefits and who pays? We're all going to be paying for  
5 it, and only maybe five or ten percent that benefit. I  
6 don't think that's -- you know, I wonder how many people  
7 here were pushing the project or how many people here,  
8 were here, who have investigated it. If there was a  
9 401(k) option, would you put your money into this,  
10 knowing it's going to lose money every year? It's going  
11 to cost you hundreds of million of dollars, and then as I  
12 say, you lose money, you pay, instead of get a return on  
13 its investment? I don't see it. I don't see it at all.  
14 I think, like I say, add a few express buses, if you need  
15 to, but. That's my total comments then.

16 CHAIR LEHRKE: Thank you for your comments,  
17 Jim.

18 Our next speaker is Beverly Moreland. Good  
19 afternoon.

20 MS. BEVERLY MORELAND: Hi.

21 CHAIR LEHRKE: I'm sure you know the drill  
22 by now, but go ahead, state your name and address for the  
23 record.

24 MS. BEVERLY MORELAND: Beverly Moreland,  
25 8679 Greystone, and I am very much against this and

1 I'm -- it seems like we've got a wish list of certain  
2 people in our community that want to push stuff down our  
3 throat whether we want it or not, and every single person  
4 in this community that I've talked to do not want this.  
5 They never have, and I don't think they ever will. They  
6 don't think they'll ever use it.

7 And I don't know if you guys are aware of  
8 it--well, you must be aware of it--but if you're getting  
9 subsidies or grants or funding or whatever from the  
10 government, that is taxpayer money, that is our money;  
11 and I'm tired of your little wish lists that you're just  
12 pushing on us for stuff that is not necessary, and I just  
13 think it's wrong.

14 Buses on rails or whatever, they can't go  
15 where the people are, they're on a straight line, so  
16 people are going to have to use their vehicle to get to  
17 that train or bus or whatever, and that's totally  
18 ridiculous. Make the roads wider. If we need another  
19 lane, make another lane, or whatever. But you don't need  
20 to spend millions and millions of dollars on something  
21 that this community does not need or want. Thank you.

22 CHAIR LEHRKE: Thank you for your comments,  
23 Beverly.

24 I don't have any more forms in front of me,  
25 but is there anyone else from the audience that would



1 like to come and give some time, their statement?

2 Please, yes. Approach the podium and state your name and  
3 address for the record.

4 MR. CLARENCE SOLEIM: My name is Clarence  
5 Soleim, 15425 - 110th Street in Hastings.

6 It was not my intention to come speak, but  
7 I'm overwhelmed by the number of people who are speaking  
8 against this. I wish you to know that I support it. I  
9 think public transportation is very important. We have a  
10 lot of things that we buy and pay for that we really feel  
11 might be stuffed down our throat, but I think public  
12 transportation is very important.

13 I happen to be very close to this project.  
14 Years ago, I was serving on the City of Hastings City  
15 Council, and on the HRA. I'm fully aware of the many,  
16 many thousands of dollars the City of Hastings invested  
17 in this project. The Anston Brothers property right next  
18 to the depot, the railroad depot in Hastings, was  
19 acquired so that we could have light rail transportation  
20 from Hastings to the Twin Cities. Later, we bought UBC,  
21 Birchen Oil. So a large parcel has been cleared to  
22 prepare for the eventuality of light rail, or now bus  
23 transportation.

24 But this is really important for a lot of  
25 things in our communities. One of them is the

1 availability of people who can't afford cars to get to  
2 maybe a job in the Cities; or vice versa, people in the  
3 Cities looking for work, to find work in Hastings. We  
4 have several manufacturing companies that employ people,  
5 and they're not really high wages, but they would be  
6 available to use public transportation for that.

7 We have a beautiful bike system in Hastings.  
8 A lot of people come to Hastings to recreate and use our  
9 bike trails, and it's right there at the railroad depot,  
10 or the bus depot, if you will.

11 Education: I have a grandson. Years ago, I  
12 said Jonas, when you graduate from high school, you might  
13 be able to take the light rail to the University of  
14 Minnesota. He is a senior this year and is planning to  
15 go to the University of Minnesota. Unless he gets into  
16 graduate school and goes for a doctorate in chemistry, I  
17 don't think that that rail or the bus will be moving,  
18 because we're talking about not 19 -- well, we were  
19 looking at light rail in 2016. We're now talking bus  
20 transportation 2030. So we're looking out there quite a  
21 few years.

22 My point is I think it has great advantages,  
23 not just for Hastings, but all along the way. If we  
24 hadn't spent so many millions of dollars upgrading the  
25 transportation on Highway 61 at Newport, and still had

1 the bottleneck that we had ten years ago, I think they  
2 would probably more support this project.

3 But in any event, I wanted to express my  
4 feeling that this is an important project, and I urge you  
5 to continue to move ahead on it, and judiciously watch  
6 the expenses, but this does serve the communities and has  
7 my support. Thank you.

8 CHAIR LEHRKE: Thank you for your comments.  
9 Is there anyone else from the audience that would like to  
10 speak today? Anyone else?

11 Well, we just want to thank everyone for  
12 participating in the public hearing today. As a  
13 reminder, the Commission will also be accepting written  
14 comments until February 14th and will review all comments  
15 at the next Commission meeting. So thank you for coming  
16 and being here today.

17  
18 (Public hearing concluded at 4:50 p.m.)

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Public Hearing 1/23/14

## REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

1  
2  
3 I, Janice L. Lund, do hereby certify that I  
4 recorded in stenotype the meeting in the foregoing matter  
5 on the 23rd day of January, 2014;

6  
7 That I was then and there a Notary Public in  
8 and for the County of Washington, State of Minnesota;

9  
10 I further certify that thereafter I  
11 transcribed into typewriting under my direction the  
12 foregoing transcript of said reported meeting, which  
13 transcript consists of the typewritten pages 1 through  
14 21;

15  
16 I further certify that said meeting  
17 transcript is true and correct to the best of my ability.

18  
19 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL THIS 31st day of  
20 January, 2014.

21  
22 \_\_\_\_\_  
23 Janice L. Lund  
24 Registered Professional Reporter  
25