



Agenda

Red Rock Corridor Commission Agenda 4:00 p.m. Thursday, December 18, 2014

Cottage Grove City Hall, Council Chambers
12800 Ravine Parkway South
Cottage Grove, MN 55016

	<u>Action Requested</u>
1. Introductions	Information
2. Consent Items*	Approval
a. Checks and Claims	
b. Minutes from the October 2014 Commission Meeting	
3. Draft 2015 Work Plan and Budget*	Approval
4. Metro Transit's Service Improvement Plan*, Jan Lucke, WCRRA	Information
5. East Metro Strong Overview*, Will Schroeer	Information
6. Implementation Plan Update*, Lyssa Leitner, WCRRA	Information
7. Communication Update*	
a. Statue of new website	Information
b. Website and Social Media	Information
8. Legislative Update* – Josh Olson, RCRRA	Information
9. Other	Information
a. Next meeting is January 22 2015 2015 meeting schedule will be discussed at the January 2015 meeting	
10. Adjourn	Approval

**Enclosures*



DATE: December 10, 2014
TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Checks and Claims

Included is the:

Johnson Group	
October Invoice	\$386.50
November Invoice	\$4,596.00
TOTAL	\$4,982.50

Detailed invoices can be made available upon request.

Action:
Approval



Meeting Minutes

October 23, 2014

Cottage Grove City Hall

4:00 p.m.

Commission Members	Agency	Present
Autumn Lehrke, Chair	Washington County RRA	X
Mike Slavik	Dakota County RRA	X
Janice Rettman	Ramsey County RRA	X
Linda Higgins	Hennepin County RRA	X
Barb Hollenbeck	City of Hastings	X
Jen Peterson, Vice-Chair	City of Cottage Grove	
Keith Franke	City of St. Paul Park	
Steve Gallagher	City of Newport	
Jim Keller	Denmark Township	
Cam Gordon	City of Minneapolis	
Amy Brendmoen	City of St. Paul	

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	
Marc Mogan	Prairie Island Indian Community	X
Jess Greenwood	Goodhue County	

Staff	Agency	Present
Jan Lucke	Washington County RRA	
Hally Turner	Washington County RRA	X
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County RRA	X
Jimmy Shoemaker	Ramsey County RRA	
Joe Morneau	Dakota County RRA	X
Josh Olson	Ramsey County RRA	

Others	Agency
Joseph Moore	Denmark Township Supervisor - Alternate
Dave Thiede	City of Cottage Grove – Alternate
Kevin Roggenbuck	Ramsey County RRA
Joseph Moore	Denmark Township
Laura Kearns	Washington County
William Reynolds	Kimley-Horn
Laila Bight	Former State Rep. & Cottage Grove City Council
Katie White	Metropolitan Council

Agenda Item #1: Introductions

Chair Lehrke called the meeting to order at 4:05PM. Introductions were made by commission members, staff and others present.

Agenda Item #2: Consent Items

a. Checks and Claims

b. Minutes from the August 28, 2014 Commission Meeting

Motion was made by Councilmember Hollenback for approval of both checks and claims and August 28th meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Moore. All in favor, Motion Carries.

Agenda Item #3: Implementation Plan Scope of Work

Hally Turner gave an over view of the information that was provided within the packet. Dave Theide asked if any of the research will overlap with studies that have already completed and what is the probability that the corridor will be constructed after this phase is completed? Lyssa Leitner responded that the Implementation Plan (IP) will build off of the studies that have already been done. The intent of this phase is to ensure that the corridor has a sound Implementation Plan, so it can be brought to the communities so they are aware of when and how transit will be implemented. Lehrke added that there are a series of studies that have been done and will be done to build on each other and make any necessary changes to improve the project as time goes on. Theide also asked if there is going to be anything done to integrate the Newport Station or Lower Afton? Lehrke said that there were studies and research done to make each stop most efficient. Too add an additional exit and entrance for Newport was not a realistic option. The cost of it was very high. Higgins has asked for task #3 to be reviewed more and possibly re-named. She would also like to see task #4; last bullet point on page 5 to have a definition. Leitner reassured that the RFP will be re-reviewed to make sure that everything is clear; necessary revisions are made prior to the RFP being sent out. Lehrke asked if the consultants will run any public engagement through the commission. Leitner said that it can be communicated to them that it is the request of the commission to have public engagement ideas brought to the commission prior to implementing them. We also want the consultant to think outside the box and bring some of their own ideas to the table as well. Rettman would like to see the revised information prior to posting the RFP. Leitner confirmed that all updates will be made and the RFP will be distributed to the Commission before it is posted. Motion was made by councilmember Rettman for approval. Seconded by chair Lehrke. All in favor, motion carries.

Agenda Item # 4: Intercity Passenger Rail Group Representation

Lyssa Leitner gave a brief overview of the representation.

Motion was made by councilmember Slavik to appoint councilmember Rettman to represent Red Rock Corridor. Councilmember Hollenback seconded. All in Favor, motion carries.

Agenda Item #5: Communication Update

Lyssa Leitner presented the new logo to the commission.

Councilmember Higgins called a motion for approval. Councilmember Hollenbeck seconded. All in favor, motion passes.

Website and Social Media Information

A new website is being developed. Staff will be able to make changes to the site themselves instead of requesting changes or updates from outside website technicians. This will save the Commission money. An update on the timeline for the new website will be on the agenda in December.

Agenda Item #6: Joint Powers Agreement

Lyssa Leitner gave a brief overview of the meeting that was conducted between staff at all four counties. The decision was made that Hennepin County will remain at the table as a financial partner. Further discussions will happen in 2015 as part of the Implementation Plan process.

Agenda Item #7: Draft 2015 Budget Work plan and Budget

Lyssa directed Commission members to the document in their packet. She noted that this item is just to clarify any information and make revisions. The final draft will be presented at next meeting for approval.

Rettman would like to see non-governmental agencies listed in the work plan under the General Activities item. Slavik asked if staff was comfortable with reducing the fund balance by 50%. They are.

Agenda Item #8: Legislative Update

Kevin Roggenbuck directed the Commission to their meeting packet.

The State Legislature adjourned in May. They will re-convene on January 6th. There is very little activity on the states side. However they are holding some hearings, informational meetings and task force meetings.

Congress has been on recess since August and came back in September, they passed a continuing resolution for over \$1 trillion to keep the Federal Government open until December 11, 2014.

Agenda Item #9: Other Information

Leitner stressed the importance of attendance for the next meeting. There must be a quorum with all four funding partners in attendance in order to approve the budget. An email will be sent out to the Commission for dates for the next meeting. Another email will then be sent out with the date of the next meeting. Dates to consider are: December 4, 11, or 18.

The Newport transit station will open Monday December 1, 2014.

Agenda Item #10: Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by councilmember Higgins. Motion was seconded by councilmember Slavik. All in Favor, motion carries. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12PM by Chair Lehrke.



DATE: December 10, 2014
TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Draft 2015 Work Plan and Budget

Background

Attached is the draft 2015 work plan and budget. The key items in the work plan are also listed below:

- Oversee and guide the work of the Implementation Plan consultant in the preparation of the plan, public outreach and the advancement of a preferred alternative into the Metropolitan Council process.
- Offer guidance, monitor progress and prepare formal comments on studies that are being conducted or that could have an impact on the activities in the Red Rock Corridor.
- Build on the communication efforts from the AAU including ongoing use of social media and updating the website to coincide with the next steps in the Corridor implementation. A narrative discussing the communication consultant's 2015 activities is attached to this memo.
- Informing state and federal legislators of the need for a transitway improvement in the Red Rock Corridor.
- Continue to actively engage the business community, community advocacy groups, and the various other stakeholders in the corridor.

The proposed 2015 budget is \$90,000. It includes funding for corridor administration, the implementation plan, and public involvement activities such as events and ongoing communication services. Contributions would be split between the four counties based on the established formula. The total contribution amount has been offset by using half of the existing fund balance.

Staff will provide an overview of the draft work plan and budget at the meeting and will seek input and approval from the Commission.

Action

Approval of the 2015 work plan and budget



Red Rock Corridor 2015 Communications Activities

The following activities are planned for 2015 based on the recent rebranding of Red Rock Corridor and launch of new website (planned for late December). All efforts will coordinate with Commission's activities, including the Implementation Plan.

Newsletters and Community newsletters

Monthly content development, implementation and distribution of Red Rock Corridor newsletters. Content and message will focus on building the new brand of a multi-modal transit corridor and the Implementation Plan. Current list count is 283 email addresses. An increase of emails to the list will be accomplished through the efforts of the activities listed below.

Content from newsletters will be edited to fit the needs of community newsletters in order to reach people via online and print media.

Social Media Posting

Management, posting and sharing of content on social media platforms. Goal will be to post a minimum of 4 items per week related to Red Rock Corridor, transit news, events, local community and state issues, etc.

Collateral Materials

Design and development of an updated PowerPoint presentation and Fact Sheet. Both would be also created as templates for staff use. Objective will be to convey the image and messages of the new brand. Fact sheets will be updated monthly and also be used for social media, newsletter and website content.

Awareness Campaign

Strategy, planning, design and implementation of a Red Rock Corridor awareness campaign targeted to Red Rock Corridor residents and businesses. The campaign will focus on online mediums such as Facebook and Google. The goal of the campaign will be to increase awareness of the corridor and generate views to the new Red Rock Corridor website. Success of the campaign will be measured based on website visits and newsletter sign ups.

Community Outreach

Community outreach events will be held in 2015 such as a spring celebration coordinated with the Implementation Plan and the Newport Transit Station and/or tours of other regional transit systems and development. Details of the outreach efforts will be further defined as opportunities are identified by the Commission and staff.

Red Rock Corridor Commission

2015 Work Plan

1. **General Activities**

The Red Rock Corridor Commission (RRCC) will work with corridor municipalities, chambers of commerce's and other business groups, community members, the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), the Metropolitan Council (Met Council), Metro Transit, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission (MNHSRC) and the Railroads as needed to continue the advancement of the Red Rock Corridor. To accomplish this, the RRCC will do the following:

1. Offer guidance, monitor progress and prepare formal comments on studies that are being conducted or that could have an impact on the activities in the Red Rock Corridor.
2. Work with state and local agencies to identify regional priorities for all transportation modes in the corridor.

2. **Advocacy and Legislative Coordination**

The Commission will continue to develop policy positions and advocate for improved transit to serve the Corridor and the Twin Cities region.

Commission activities include:

1. Informing area legislators and legislative leadership of the need for a transitway improvement in the Red Rock Corridor.
2. Advocating for increased funding at the state and federal level to advance the development of the Red Rock Corridor.
3. Coordinating legislative initiatives with the CTIB and other transitway corridors.
4. Coordinating legislative initiatives with potentially impacted freight railroads.
5. Establishing positions on legislative initiatives that affect the Red Rock Corridor.
6. Strengthen partnerships with the business communities and partner communities.

3. **Public Involvement**

The Commission's public involvement activities will build on communication efforts from the alternatives analysis update study (AAU). The Commission's activities will include:

1. Continue role of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) formed as part of the Alternative Analysis Update (AAU) study to act as liaisons engaging local stakeholders, business members and citizens in the planning process enabling two-way communication between the project and the community. Membership should be as inclusive as possible.
2. Presentations to civic and community groups throughout the Corridor.

3. Distribution of newsletters and project updates at various public events including fairs and community festivals.
4. Media recognition of Commission meetings and events through print, radio, and public access television.
5. Coordination of updates to the project website to coincide with the multiple studies being undertaken.
6. Host a website and manage content and utilize social media.
7. Host events or tours to build awareness for the Red Rock Corridor to better inform project stakeholders and the general public

4. Management, Policy and Administrative Activities

Commission activities will include:

1. Prepare and adopt the annual Work Plan and Budget
2. Prepare the annual financial report
3. Review insurance needs and procure appropriate insurance
4. Provide Commission and staff administration
5. Manage Commission expenses
6. Manage the consultant selected for each of the various work tasks undertaken by the commission
7. Attend regional/national conferences to educate members on transit alternatives and their impact on the built environment.

5. Implementation Plan

In 2014 the Commission adopted the results of the Alternatives Analysis Update (AAU). As outlined in the final chapter of the AAU, there are broad and ongoing strategies that will be pursued by the Commission. Based on these strategies a scope of work has been prepared. The highlights of that scope of work are as follows:

- Innovative Public Engagement and Agency Coordination
- Ridership Forecast
- Service Plan Development
- Capital and Operating Costs
- Update Station Planning to Reflect BRT Investment
- Implementation and Financial Plan
- Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Process with the Metropolitan Council

The consultant will be responsible for developing an implementation plan accordingly.

The Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan contract will be administered by the Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA) on behalf of the Red Rock Corridor Commission.

2015 Draft Budget

2015 Expenditures

Capital Expenditure Source	Amount
CTIB Grant for Implementation Plan	\$ 360,000
RRCC Local Match	\$ 40,000
TOTAL	\$ 400,000

Operating Expenditure Category	Amount
Corridor Administration / General Activities ⁽¹⁾	
- Corridor Insurance	\$ 3,000
- Materials / Postage / Printing / Memberships	\$ 3,500
- Events / Tours / Advertising	\$ 3,500
- Travel to a National Transit Conference ⁽²⁾	\$ 0
- Travel to learn about another transit System ⁽²⁾	\$ 0
Subtotal	\$10,000
Advocacy and Legislative Coordination	
- Travel to Washington D.C. ⁽¹⁾	\$ 0
- Federal/State Advocacy	\$ 0
Subtotal	\$ 0
Public Involvement	
- Website Hosting / Content Management	\$ 5,000
- Communication Services	\$ 30,000
Subtotal	\$ 35,000
Contingency	\$ 5,000
TOTAL	\$ 50,000

Notes:

1. The county regional railroad authorities are conducting administrative functions, including mailings. Such items are eligible for reimbursement as approved by the Commission.
2. Out of state travel costs to transit conferences, to learn about another transit system, or advocacy trip to Washington D.C. will be the responsibility of each individual member unless the Commission's Financial Members unanimously approve the use of contingency funds to pay for travel.

2015 Expenditure Summary

Expenditure Type	Amount
Capital (Implementation Plan)	\$ 400,000
Operating	\$ 50,000
TOTAL	\$ 450,000

2015 Revenue Summary

Revenue Source	% Due	Funding Commitment	Fund Balance ⁽¹⁾	Total Revenue
Regional Railroad Authority				
- Ramsey County	37.5%	\$ 18,750	\$15,000	\$33,750
- Washington County	35%	\$ 17,500	\$14,000	\$31,500
- Hennepin County	17.5%	\$ 8,750	\$7,000	\$15,750
- Dakota County	10%	\$ 5,000	\$4,000	\$9,000
DUES		\$50,000	\$40,000⁽²⁾	\$90,000
CTIB Grant for Implementation Plan	-----	\$360,000	-----	\$360,000
REVENUE TOTAL		\$ 410,000		\$ 450,000

Notes:

1. \$40,000 of the Commission's projected \$80,000 2014 end of year fund balance will be used to offset the 2015 budget contribution and the remaining \$40,000 will be held in reserve.
2. This is only an estimate of expected end of year fund balance based on projected revenues and expenses. The fund balance total is subject to change based on actual revenues and expenses incurred.



DATE: December 10, 2014
TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Metro Transit Service Improvement Plan (SIP) Presentation

Background

Metro Transit is developing a 10-15 year service improvement plan for expanding the local and express route bus network. The plan addresses the types of improvements to make, how to prioritize those improvements, and the resources needed. Additional funding would be needed to implement all of the improvements identified.

A number of the service improvements considered in the plan would be within the Red Rock Corridor. At the Commission meeting, staff will present an overview of the plan development process, results and implication for the Red Rock Corridor planning as well as answer questions.

A draft plan has been released and can be downloaded on the Metro Transit website at the following location: <http://www.metrotransit.org/sip>.

Action

Information



Metro Transit Draft Service Improvement Plan
December 18, 2014

What is the Service Improvement Plan (SIP)?

- *Bus* service *expansion* plan
 - Builds on existing network
 - Identifies potential new routes, frequency and span
- Prioritized, specific list of improvements to expand local and express bus service between 2015-2030
- Implementation requires additional operating funds

Why create an SIP?

- Establish a framework of when and how to expand the bus network
 - Buses are the backbone of our transit system
 - Similar plans exist for transitways
 - Demonstrate bus service needs and the need for additional transit funding
- Inform the 2015 legislative program, Regional SIP, and other transit funding opportunities

3

What Is Included?

- New bus routes
- Improved service levels on existing bus routes
- Arterial BRT (except A Line)
- Bus services connecting to rail and Highway BRT stations
- Routing and scheduling improvements
- Operating costs only
- Projects in Metro Transit service area

What Is Not Included?

- Reduction or elimination of service to existing destinations
- Transitways
- Improvements to passenger amenities
- Fare changes
- Capital investments
- Projects in suburban provider service areas
- Metro Mobility or Transit Link

4

Early Outreach and Engagement

- Winter 2013-2014
 - Agency and community organization workshops
 - Public survey with 4,000 responses (paper and online)
 - Included input from under-represented groups
- Three types of information
 - **Origin-destination** information and **specific suggestions** for improvements
 - Current **transit usage/behavior** and what would encourage people to use transit more often
 - **Goals and priorities** for what the transit system should accomplish – how should we address trade-offs?

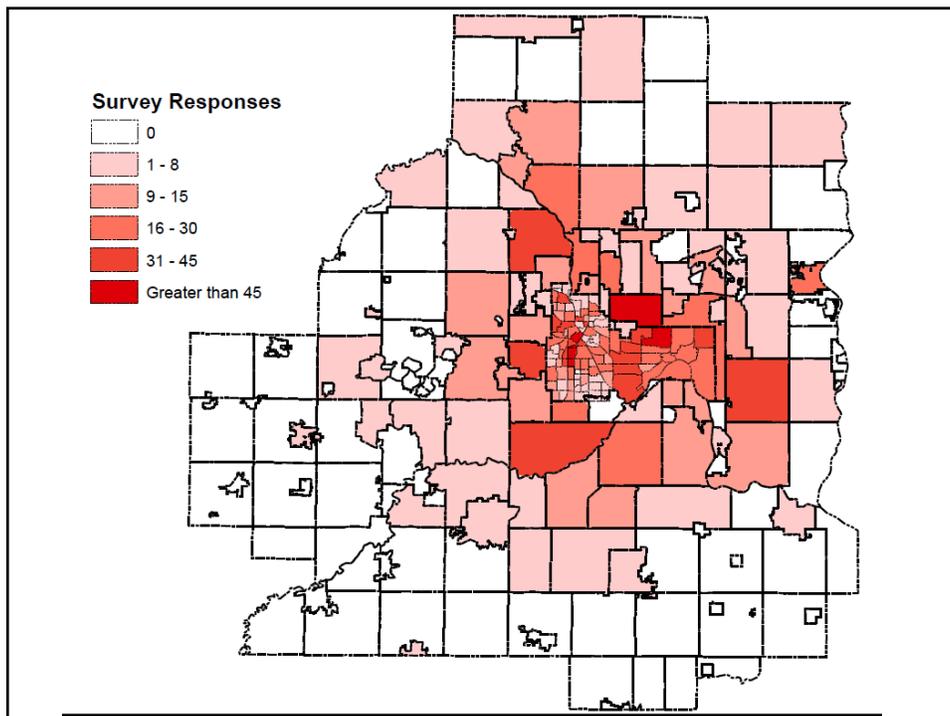
Guiding Principles

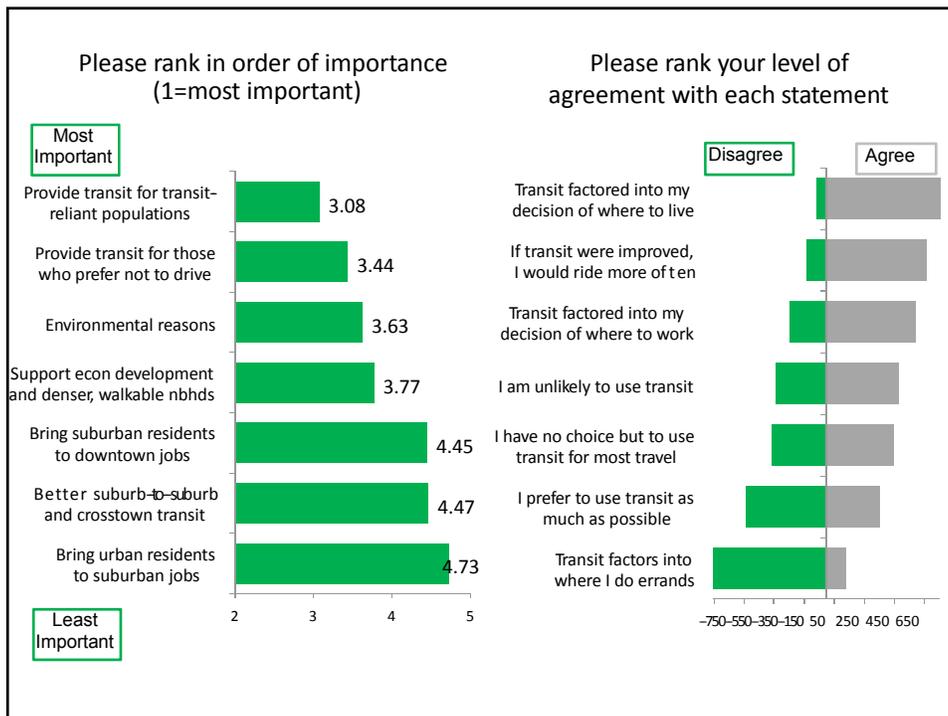
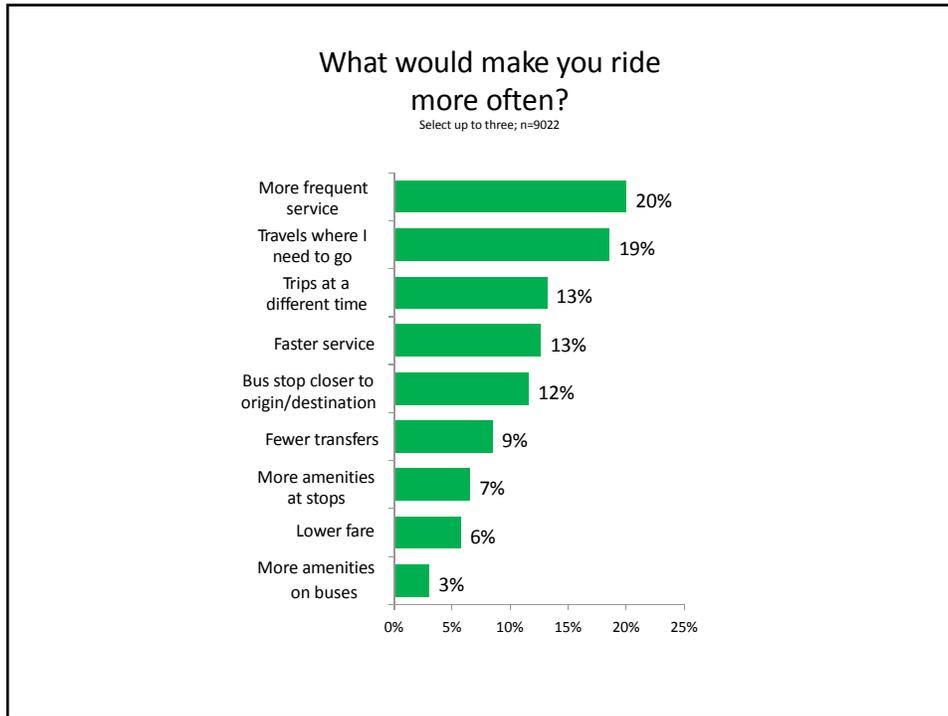
- Maximize ridership growth
- Emphasize high productivity/low-subsidy projects
- Provide faster travel time
- Enhance connectivity of transit system
- Support transit-friendly land use and design
- Expand service for off-peak and non-work trip purposes
- Improve transit equitably

Project Identification Methodology

- Survey
- Customer relations requests
- Staff ideas
- Feedback from Thrive MSP, 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, other recent projects

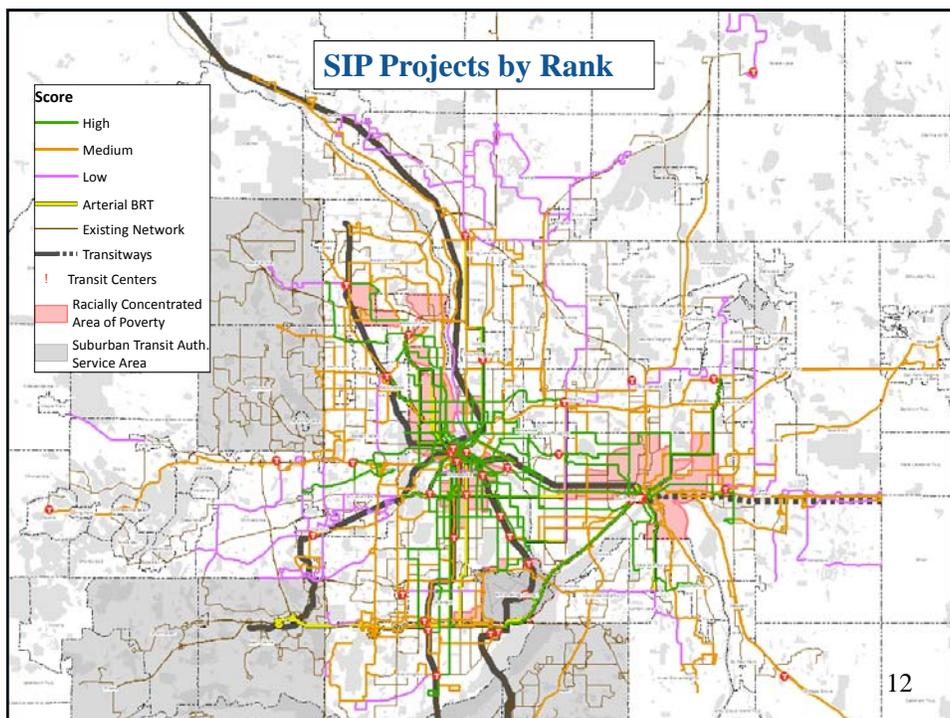
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SIP Evaluation Criteria

- **Productivity** criteria demonstrate the ridership potential of service improvements using land use and density factors (50% weight)
- **Social equity** criteria evaluate how well improvements serve people most reliant on transit (25% weight)
- **System connectivity** criteria establish how well projects improve connections and service throughout the Metro Transit service area (25% weight)



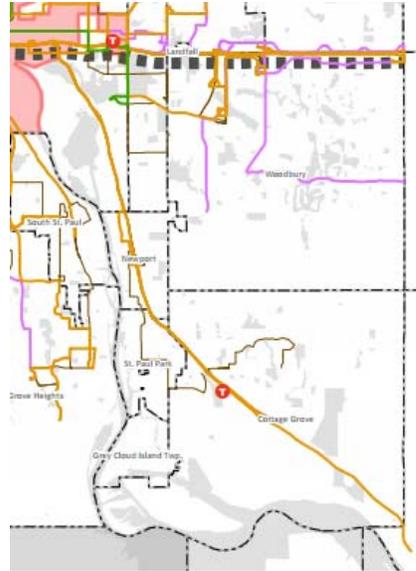
Relevant Red Rock Corridor Improvements

363

- New route
- 30 minute weekday midday and early evening service
- Cottage Grove, Newport, and Lower Afton park and rides, to downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis

367

- New route
- 30 minute weekday peak period express service
- Hastings to downtown Minneapolis via Newport park and ride



SIP Development Timeline

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| • Initial stakeholder outreach | Nov - Dec 2013 |
| • Phase I public input | Dec - Feb 2014 |
| • Review and process input | Feb - Apr 2014 |
| • Develop draft SIP | May - Oct 2014 |
| • Review draft SIP | Nov 2014 |
| – Public comment period | |
| – Title VI service equity review | |
| • Refine and finalize SIP | Early 2015 |

Questions?

Jan Lucke

Jan.Lucke@co.washington.mn.us

SIP@metrotransit.org



DATE: December 10, 2014
TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: East Metro Strong Overview

Background

East Metro Strong is a public-private partnership working to catalyze job growth & economic development opportunities around enhanced transportation/transit. Will Schroerer, Executive Director for East Metro Strong, will be at the Commission meeting to provide an overview of the organization and its plans to engage the East Metro communities along the Red Rock Corridor in upcoming visioning work.

Action

Information



DATE: December 10, 2014
TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Red Rock Corridor Implementation Plan Scope and Timeline

Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA) on behalf of the Red Rock Corridor Commission (Commission) seeks consultant services for an Implementation Plan for the Red Rock Corridor. The anticipated cost of the Implementation Plan is \$400,000 and will take 12 to 15 months to complete. The RFP was released on October 30, 2014 and proposals were due on December 3, 2014. The following is an outline of the proposals received, review team, and timeline for the Implementation Plan.

Proposals Received

We received three proposals from the following teams:

- Kimley Horn with sub-consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff
- SRF Consulting Group with sub-consultants HNTB, Connetics Transportation Group, and Leland Consulting Group
- Perkins and Will with sub-consultants Nelson Nygaard, Bolten and Menk, and Community Design Group

Proposal Review Process

Staff from Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington, and Dakota Counties, Cities of Hastings and Cottage Grove, Metropolitan Council, and Metro Transit will review the proposals. The proposals will be rated on the following factors as reflected in the RFP:

- Expressed understanding of project objectives and technical competence of the proposal, work plan, and project approach.
- The experience, resources, and qualifications of the proposal team and individuals to be assigned to the project as key personnel
- The availability of personnel and other resources to perform the work within the specified project schedule.
- Proposed public involvement approach and Project Manager and design team experience in conducting successful stakeholder engagement for similar projects.
- The responder's background and experience with similar work, including ability and experience in handling projects of similar nature.

Based on the proposal ratings, staff will determine which firms will be interviewed.

Timeline

The following outlines the schedule for the selection of a consultant and award of the contract:

<u>October-January:</u>	RFP released, review proposals
<u>January, 2015 RRCC Mtg:</u>	Approve consultant selection
<u>February 2015:</u>	Award contract, begin work on Implementation Plan

Action

Information



DATE: December 10, 2014
TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Communication Update

Item 7a

Updated Website

Staff has reviewed the content and layout of the updated Red Rock Corridor website. It is anticipated that the website will be live by January 2015. Updates will continue to be made to the website as new information is available during the Implementation Plan process.

Item 7b

Website

A total of 672 people visited the Red Rock website in August and 449 in September.

Facebook

The Facebook page is now up to 189 likes. There have been no instances where comments needed to be removed from the Facebook page in accordance with the Commission's Facebook use policy.

Action:

Information



DATE: December 10, 2014
TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Legislative Update

8a State Update

The legislative session begins on Tuesday, January 6, 2015.

Budget Surplus

Minnesota announces \$1.037 billion budget surplus. The Office of Management and Budget (MMB) released the state's November budget forecast, which projects Minnesota's state budget to have a \$1.037 billion surplus for the next biennium. A new state law calls for \$183 million of that amount be put into state budget reserves.

Governor Mark Dayton will use this number when crafting his administration's proposed two-year state budget. The governor is required to submit his two-year budget proposal to the legislature by January 27. The next budget forecast will be released in early March, and those numbers will be taken into account when setting the final budget to be negotiated at the legislature and signed by the governor during the 2015 legislative session.

House Committee Chairs Announced

Republicans recently won majority control of the Minnesota House of Representatives and will replace all former DFL committee chairs with Republican committee chairs. More than half of the new chairmen represent communities in Greater Minnesota.

The new committee chairs are as follows:

- Aging & Long-Term Care Policy: Rep. Joe Schomacker (R-Luverne)
- Agriculture Finance: Rep. Rod Hamilton (R- Mountain Lake)
- Agriculture Policy: Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck)
- Capital Investment: Rep. Paul Torkelson (R- Hanska)
- Civil Law & Data Practices: Rep. Peggy Scott (R-Andover)
- Commerce & Regulatory Reform: Rep. Joe Hoppe (R- Chaska)
- Education Finance: Rep. Jenifer Loon (R- Eden Prairie)
- Education Innovation Policy: Rep. Sondra Erickson (R- Princeton)
- Environment & Natural Resources Policy & Finance: Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings)
- Government Operations & Elections Policy: Rep. Tim Sanders (R- Blaine)
- Greater Minnesota Economic & Workforce Development Policy: Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont)
- HHS Finance: Rep. Matt Dean (R-Dellwood)
- HHS Reform: Rep. Tara Mack (R- Apple Valley)

- Higher Education Policy & Finance: Rep. Bud Nornes (R- Fergus Falls)
- Job Growth & Energy Affordability Policy & Finance: Rep. Pat Garofalo (R- Farmington)
- Legacy Funding Finance: Rep. Dean Urdahl (R- Grove City)
- Mining & Outdoor Recreation Policy: Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R- Cedar)
- Property Tax & Local Government Finance Division (Taxes): Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R- Mazeppa)
- Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy & Finance: Rep. Tony Cornish (R- Vernon Center)
- Rules & Legislative Administration: Rep. Joyce Peppin (R- Rogers)
- State Government Finance: Rep. Sarah Anderson (R- Plymouth)
- Taxes: Rep. Greg Davids (R- Preston)
- Transportation Policy & Finance: Rep. Tim Kelly (R- Red Wing)
- Veterans Affairs Division (SGF): Rep. Dettmer (R- Forest Lake)
- Ways & Means: Rep. Jim Knoblach (R- St. Cloud)
- Ethics: Rep. Sondra Erickson (R- Princeton)

8b Federal Update

Please see the attached federal update prepared by Lockridge Grindal Nauen (LGN).

Weekly Update for Week of December 1st

Lawmakers used their Thanksgiving recess to continue negotiations on the fiscal year 2015 budget and tax extenders. Those negotiations continued through this week as Congress attempts to reach a deal prior to the expiration of the Continuing Resolution (CR) which is currently funding the federal government and is set to expire on December 11, 2014. The House has a tentative adjournment date of December 11th while the Senate is currently scheduling votes on a day-to-day basis. Both the House and Senate have been busy since returning from the Thanksgiving recess. The House passed a tax extender bill and a defense authorization bill. Meanwhile the Senate has been busy with nominee confirmation votes.

In this Update:

["Cromnibus" Negotiations Continue](#)

[House Passes Tax Extenders](#)

[Defense Authorization](#)

[Key Upcoming Dates](#)

[Special News, Notes, and Events](#)

[Minnesota Delegation Notes](#)

[Additional Media](#)

"Cromnibus" Negotiations Continue

House and Senate appropriators have been negotiating a Cromnibus - a combination of a CR and Omnibus Bill to fund the federal government. Reports indicate that Congressional Members of both parties are reserving judgment of the Cromnibus idea until they see the final spending package, which is expected to approach \$1 trillion. While negotiations on some sections of the budget are nearly complete, others areas have significant divides that will require more work to bridge the gap. Areas that still have the largest gaps include the Interior-Environment and Labor-Health and Human Services-Education portions of the bill. Currently, House Leadership's goal is to complete negotiations today, December 5th, draft language over the weekend, and have the bill on the House floor ready for votes on Monday, December 8th.

The CR aspect of the Cromnibus is a likely short-term funding compromise for Homeland Security. This comes in response to President Obama's recent Executive Actions on immigration. The Homeland Security CR will likely seek to prevent funding of the President's initiatives. The length to the short-term funding measure is still unclear.

Action on Tax Extenders Bill

On Wednesday, December 3, the House passed a Tax Extender Bill that retroactively extends 50 expired tax breaks. The \$41.6 billion package includes extensions for individual, business, and environmental/energy efficiency tax breaks in addition to correcting some technical problems in the IRS code. The bill is now heading to the Senate floor and is expected to be taken up next week. When the Senate takes up the bill, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) is not expected to allow any amendments to the measure due to time considerations and concern that an amendment will prevent the House from concurring thus requiring a new deal to be brokered. In particular there is the possibility of some Members of Senate attempting to include a repeal of the medical device tax imposed by the Affordable Care Act.

Defense Authorization

On Thursday, December 3, the House approved the annual defense authorization bill, H.R. 3979, with a vote of 300-119. The annual authorization does not contain funding but rather it authorizes the spending of money on defense, including authorizing \$63.7 billion in war-related funding, and \$5.1 billion requested by the President to be allocated to the fight against the Islamic State. The bill also sets out policies for weapon acquisition and sexual assault in the military among other things.

Furthermore, the bill passed by the House includes partial fiscal year 2015 funding (\$70 million) for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program (PILT). This program provides payments to local communities that are prevented from levying taxes on land owned by the federal government. PILT still needs \$330 million before it is fully funded.

KEY UPCOMING DATES

December 11, 2014

The stop-gap funding solution passed by Congress this week will expire.

January 6, 2015

New Members of Congress are Sworn In and 114th Congress is formally brought into session.

March 15, 2015

While Congress passed legislation to raise the debt ceiling, action must be taken again prior to March 15, 2015 or the nation once again runs the risk of defaulting on its loans.

May 31, 2015

Current surface transportation law Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) extension expires.

SPECIAL NEWS, NOTES AND EVENTS

New Member Swearing-In Ceremony Hosted by the Minnesota State Society

*Tuesday, January 6th, 11:00 AM-2:00 PM EST
Gold Room Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 50515*

MINNESOTA DELEGATION NOTES:

Senator Amy Klobuchar, (D-MN), and Representative John Kline (R-MN-02) announced that their bipartisan efforts regarding the National Guard and Reserve's ability to assist victims of sexual assault passed the House in the National Defense Authorization Act. Read more [here](#).

Senator Al Franken, (D-MN), pressed Lyft car service about data privacy policies to ensure that consumers' sensitive geolocation information is protected. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Tim Walz, (D-MN-01), bill to name Mankato Vets facilities after a late Minnesota war hero is heading to President Obama's desk to become law. Read more [here](#).

Congressman John Kline, (R-MN-02), supported bipartisan legislation that will provide disabled individuals and their families assistance to save money in their own account to maintain health and independence. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Erik Paulsen, (R-MN-03), was appointed to the House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee. Read more [here](#).

Congresswoman Betty McCollum, (D-MN-04), voiced her support for President Obama's Executive Order on immigration. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Keith Ellison, (D-MN-05), and the Progressive Caucus support the striking fast food workers. Read more [here](#).

Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, (R-MN-06), thanked her constituents for the opportunity to service them for eight years in Congress. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Collin Peterson, (D-MN-07), visited the Capitol Christmas Tree that was cut down from the Chippewa National Forest in Cass Lake and decorated with handcrafted ornaments from children across Minnesota. Read more [here](#).

Congressman Rick Nolan, (D-MN-08), praises MnDOT's efforts to proceed with faster, cost-effective Highway 53 route. Read more [here](#).

ADDITIONAL MEDIA

Fate of EPA Riders Unclear as Cromnibus Nears the Endgame

By Geof Koss, CQ Roll Call

Both chambers are eyeing a Dec. 11 finish for the 113th Congress and the so-called cromnibus appropriations measure remains the last major piece of unfinished business.

Fate of EPA Riders. Key lawmakers said Thursday that House and Senate negotiators aim to wrap up the measure by this evening, but it may be a few days more before the fate of the EPA riders and other disputed policy provisions is clear. We'll keep you posted on whether members can resolve those sticking points.

Spending aside, the endgame for Congress's energy business appears to be coming into view:

- on efficiency, the House and Senate appear on track to agree to a modest package of energy-saving provisions;
- on taxes, CQ Roll Call's Katy O'Donnell reports the Senate will vote next week on the House-passed tax extenders bill, without amendments, kicking the debate over the production tax credit into the hands of a GOP-led Congress.

Energy Nominees Inch Along. The Senate yesterday voted 53-40 to end debate on the nomination of Jeffrey M. Baran to an extended term on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Senators also invoked cloture on the nomination of Ellen Dudley Williams to be director of DOE's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, or ARPA-E, in a 57-34 vote.

Confirmation votes for the pair are expected Monday. Earlier Thursday, senators confirmed two Energy Department nominees. Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski said she hoped to see the remaining DOE nominees win confirmation before the end of the year, saying Energy Secretary Ernest J. Moniz "deserves to have his team in place."

Defense Bill Moves to Senate. The House yesterday easily passed the defense authorization

agreement despite grumbling from both parties over the massive public lands package that hitched a ride. CQ's House Action Reports offers this handy summary of the disputed lands title.

Rockefeller Reflects. Lauren Gardner reports that retiring Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., gave a farewell address Thursday that was absent any sharp rebukes to the coal industry's fight against carbon pollution limits, as he did in a 2012 floor speech. But Rockefeller highlighted his work to increase protections for the myriad coal miners in his adopted home state. He recalled that a visit with a few Republican senators to the West Virginia site of a January 2006 coal mine explosion led to bipartisan legislation to bolster safety standards for mine workers.

"We must not be focused on episodic, 'gotcha' issues," said Rockefeller, who called on colleagues to separate policy-making from campaigning. "When shareholders and the free market cannot, or will not, solve our problems, it is government's responsibility to step in," he added. "Every time."

FERC Protest Preview for Honorable. As we noted yesterday, Senate confirmation of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission nominee Colette Honorable appears more of a question of when rather than if.

But the presence of a handful of protesters was a reminder of the controversy that surrounds FERC. The anti-fracking activists, who identified themselves as affiliated with Beyond Extreme Energy, the group that shut down the street outside of FERC headquarters during a week of protests last month, presented a list of demands to Honorable related to fears over fracking. The group briefly disrupted the start of the hearing with chants of "FERC doesn't work," but quickly took their seats at the request of Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who chaired the hearing for Mary L. Landrieu, D-La.

Whitfield Eyes DOE Loan Programs. Rep. Edward Whitfield, R-Ky., is reviving concern over the Energy Department's loan programs.

Whitfield, who chairs the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power, is hosting a members-only Congressional Research Service briefing on "the history, dollar amounts and number of loan and grant programs currently being utilized" by DOE, according to a news release.

The advisory points to a Fox News report about the Ivanpah solar facility in California, whose developers are seeking a tax break in addition to the \$1.6 billion loan guarantee it received.

Whitfield, an ardent critic of the administration's energy agenda, has long been skeptical of DOE's loan programs, which infamously financed Solyndra before its bankruptcy.

However, DOE's loans also support nuclear and advanced fossil fuel projects, including carbon capture storage and utilization technologies that are key to the continued use of coal, which dominates Whitfield's home state.

A spokesman said Whitfield's review extends beyond renewable projects. "He is looking at all of the portfolios and is very concerned about multi-billion dollar corporations seeking federal grants to payoff loans," he said in an email.

U.S. Science Envoys Named: The State Department on Thursday announced that former NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco and former ARPA-E Director Arun Majumdar will serve as U.S. Science Envoys starting in January. Both will be involved in climate change.

Action
Information