



Meeting Minutes
July 29, 2010
Cottage Grove City Hall, Council Chambers
Cottage Grove, MN
2:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Myra Peterson, Washington County
Joe Harris, Dakota County
Jen Peterson, City of Cottage Grove
Cam Gordon, City of Minneapolis
John Hunziker, City of St Paul Park
Barb Hollenbeck, City of Hastings
Corbin Hopkins, City of Newport

Staff:

Ted Schoenecker, Washington County RRA
Josh Olson, Ramsey County RRA
Ken Bjornstad, Goodhue County

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Marc Mogan, Prairie Island Indian Community

Others Present:

Robert Vockrodt, MnDOT Metro District
Tom Dobbs, Hay Dobbs

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

Chair Peterson indicated that item number six on the agenda will be taken off the agenda for this meeting and put on for the next meeting. Our Ramsey County Commission Member requested to be present for that discussion and was not available today.

Agenda Item #1 Consent Items

- a. **Minutes of the May 27, 2010 Meeting**
- b. **Checks and Claims**

Commission Member Hunziker moved the approval of the Consent Items. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hopkins and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #2 League on MN Cities Liability Coverage Insurance-WCRRA

Mr. Schoenecker referred the commission members to the item in their agenda packets about the insurance coverage for The Red Rock Corridor Commission. The commission as a governing agency has had insurance coverage since its inception. In discussions with the Washington County's risk manager and being consistent with

years past, the risk manager has recommend that the corridor commission does not waive the monetary limits on municipal tort liability as established by Minnesota Statutes Number 466.04.

Commission Member Hopkins motioned to approve the insurance without waiving the monetary limits of liability. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Harris and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3 Distribution of Red Rock State Bond funds - WCRRA

Mr. Schoenecker indicated that the discussion on the State Bond Funds was reviewed previously at the May meeting and therefore, he will only briefly review this resolution item. The Red Rock Corridor Commission has had, at their availability, one million dollars in State Bond Funds and these funds can only be used for specific work tasks. Previously, the Red Rock Corridor Commission committed these bond funds to the Union Depot Project. Due to a change in recent circumstances these funds cannot be used for The Union Depot and; therefore, the Commission will need to reallocate these funds. He referenced the memo and attached resolution included in the agenda packets that identified a strategy and recommendation from staff for the utilization of these State bond funds. The resolution would identify \$600,000 of the State Bond Funds going toward the design and construction of the Hastings Park-and-Ride. \$400,000 of these funds will be used as a local match to the Railroad Capacity Study that is currently underway.

He briefly reviewed the allocation for the local match for the station area planning study as indicated in the agenda packets:

Ramsey County has one station provided in the plan so they will provide up to 25% of the total costs.

Washington County has two stations identified in the plan and will provide up to 50% of the local costs.

Dakota County has one station and will also provide up to 25% of local costs.

Approval of this reallocation of funds is contingent upon a similar approval of resolutions of the regional rail authorities of Washington County, Ramsey County and Dakota County.

Commission Member Hopkins questioned whether some of the \$600,000 going towards the Hastings Park-and-Ride could be applied to the Newport Park-and-Ride.

Commission Chair Peterson indicated that Hastings is ready to construct and these funds need to be utilized within this year. The Newport site is not ready for construction yet, so these bond dollars cannot be used there.

Commission Member Hunziker motioned to approve the resolution authorizing the distribution of Red Rock Corridor State Bond Funds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hollenbeck.

Roll call vote:

Commission Chair Peterson	Yes
Commission Member Harris	Yes

Commission Member Hollenbeck	Yes
Commission Member Hunziker	Yes
Commission Member Hopkins	Yes
Commission Member Peterson, Jen	Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #4 Resolutions of Support for Union Depot, Red Rock and Rush Line Federal Funding Requests - WCRRA

Mr. Schoenecker referred the commission members to review the separate attachments in reference to the three resolutions of support that are up for approval at this meeting.

The first request is for the support of a Tiger II grant for the Union Depot multi modal transit hub in downtown St Paul, by the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority. This grant will fulfill a funding need to aid in the completion of this project. This is not a request for any cost participation for the Red Rock Corridor; it is only a resolution of support from the commission.

Commission Member Hollenbeck motioned to approve the Red Rock Corridor Commission Resolution 2010-05. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hunziker.

Roll Call Vote:

Commission Chair Peterson	Yes
Commission Member Harris	Yes
Commission Member Hollenbeck	Yes
Commission Member Hunziker	Yes
Commission Member Hopkins	Yes
Commission Member Peterson, Jen	Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schoenecker continued to review the next resolution up for approval. This resolution 2010-06 is a resolution of support for a Tiger II Planning Grant for the advanced alternatives analysis work for a planning grant for the Rush Line Corridor and the Red Rock Corridor by the Washington County Regional Railroad Authority. Both the Rush Line and Red Rock are in similar stages of development. The Washington County Regional Rail Authority has submitted a pre-application for funding with final application due at the end of August. The maximum request amount is 3 Million dollars, and as with any federal funds, it requires a 20% local match of support. This is noted in the resolution that this commission will work to identify the local match needs necessary, if this grant is received.

Commission Chair Peterson motioned to approve the Red Rock Corridor Resolution 2010-06. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hopkins.

Roll Call Vote:

Commission Chair Peterson	Yes
Commission Member Harris	Yes
Commission Member Hollenbeck	Yes
Commission Member Hunziker	Yes
Commission Member Hopkins	Yes
Commission Member Peterson, Jen	Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Schoenecker referred to the last resolution to approve resolution 2010-07. Similar to the Tiger II planning application, this is a Livability Grant with the same 20% required local match of support.

Commission Member Hunziker motioned to approve the Red Rock Corridor Commission Resolution 2010-07. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hollenbeck.

Roll Call Vote:

Commission Member Peterson	Yes
Commission Member Harris	Yes
Commission Member Hollenbeck	Yes
Commission Member Hunziker	Yes
Commission Member Hopkins	Yes
Commission Member Peterson, Jen	Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #5 Station Planning Study Update – Hay Dobbs

Commission Chair Peterson advised the Red Rock Corridor Commission, that the State of Minnesota High Speed Rail Plan has received national recognition. This was based on the process that they went through involving various, citizens, business leaders as well as local units of government.

Tom Dobbs presented an update of the station area planning process. He indicated that their schedule is an eighteen month process and they are about halfway through that process. So far in the process there has been a variety of events, press conferences, focus groups, and visioning sessions aimed at public awareness and involvement. Last week there was a tour of the transit orientated facilities in the area. They are continuing to update various planning officials, city councils and also attending city festivals. Additionally, within each community in the corridor, there will be open houses to engage the public and allow for feedback and key input.

He continued to update the commission members on the findings completed so far.

Lower Afton:

He referenced some questions they are considering in the development potential: what is the long-term and near-term development potential of the station area, as well as

what is the profile of the likely candidates to use the station. Mr. Dobbs indicated that they are not looking at development of any sort at this station. With its location being a pristine, natural river basin location, it would not bode well to develop any large retail service or office use development of any kind. There may be an opportunity for a small coffee shop or newsstand to supplement the parking area. He indicated that, in the near-term there would be surface parking. The long term proposal is for a structured parking facility that would be north of Lower Afton Road. This has been well received by local officials and residents. If this plan should happen, the short-term Park-and-Ride would be phased out at the completion of the parking structure and be turned back into green space or storm water management system. This plan may include above ground or underground crossing of Highway 61 to handle the traffic and pedestrian interface. This is still under review. He additionally reviewed the second alternative that would keep the facility to the south of the Lower Afton Road. This site has limits on the area to build a structure. There are storm water management trees to the north and The Metropolitan Council Lift Station and burial mounds to the south. He indicated that they are waiting on feedback in the next rounds of visioning sessions to determine the best location for the parking structure.

Mr. Dobbs continued to present the precedents that were presented at the visioning sessions, to give the commission members a perspective of the completed proposed area. He indicated that the Lower Afton Station would have the look, feel and character of a place connected into nature; a more naturalized setting rather than an urban setting. The parking facility would be nested into the hillside to take advantage of the river valley setting. The parking structure itself would be a low profile, two-level deck.

Newport:

Mr. Dobbs indicated that the Newport Station Area has the opportunity for major transformation. It is in a key location within the 494 Corridor and can draw from a consumer base both east and west. There are also a lot of barriers with this site. Changing the market's perception of it as an existing industrial site is a major hurdle. Additionally, there is an existing rail spur coming through used for the nearby cold storage facility, as well as a number of key issues that need to be overcome in regard to development issues. The indications are that some of the better uses for the space could be a hotel or office use as well as long-term commercial and surrounding residential.

He explained that as they propose certain ideas for the site, the goal is how they can phase this in over time. This involves a near-term solution called Near Term- 2020, and a long-term solution called Long-Term-2040. These are windows of time that allow for the planning of infrastructure in terms of investments, land acquisitions and development of parcels; as well as, the train platform and transit amenities to transition from commuter bus service into commuter rail service. In the near-term there is very little investment that needs to be made. He proceeded to provide the precedent, an overview with the scale of the proposed buildings and projected surface parking locations. He discussed the issue with the existing rail spur that typically the railways will not allow pedestrian crossing. One strategy would focus on elevating the pedestrian crossing to connect the area to the north to the area to the south over the rail spur. In the Long Term-2040, that area over the rail spur will be developed into an elevated platform, including a parking structure to connect the two spaces. This will create a

crossroad of activity and development; however still preserving the original pieces developed in the Near-Term Plan. The area created becomes the town square of Newport or a civic or community space. This area includes a large lawn on the transit plaza.

Cottage Grove:

Mr. Dobbs indicated that they are still considering two sites in Cottage Grove. They will eventually narrow the decision down to one location when the time is necessary.

Hamlet Park:

Hamlet Park is the site of the existing Park-and-Ride. The main issue with this location is the access. The location is highly visible from the highway, but you can't get to it easily. This is a problem for potential retailers and limits the types of uses. Short-term development is leaning towards low-density flexible office-warehouses and the cities current comp plan has this location marked as office -showroom.

Mr. Dobbs continued to explain the Near-Term 2020 plan indicates this location is the path of least resistance. There does remain an issue of vertical circulation as the track sits 10 -15 feet below the grade of the existing Park-and-Ride. This would mean a stairway, elevator or ramp would need to be installed to reach the platform. An additional disadvantage is that the tracks are hidden out of sight, so the casual user doesn't see any transit activity from Highway 61. The current footprint does suffice for surface parking and over time would add structured parking to supplement and to keep the visibility from Highway 61. Additionally, the office showroom space would be fully developed over the long-term.

Langdon Village:

Mr. Dobbs indicated that Langdon Village is really a blank slate, for the most part. It could be planned to take some of the existing uses like the old school facility and Cottage Grove Town Hall that could be moved and made a focal point within some green space. Overall it has good access off the Jamaica roundabout. Additionally, there are plans to extend County Road 19. This site has more size and depth to the parcel itself to allow for the opportunity for the critical mass of residential, office and mixed-use space.

Strategically in the short-term, the transit plaza will sit south of the public works building and adjacent to the tracks in phase one of the development. The buildings that are currently there will stay the same until the development pressure pushes it to make a change.

In the long-term, there is the opportunity to create a small village on the overall available site. On the fringes of the site there could be auto-oriented uses like grocery and theater locations. The transit core is the focal point flanked by development on both sides that includes dynamic ground floor retail and upper floors of residential and office space. This development is building off the grid system that has been there for decades. Precedent photos indicate phases of how the development would look close to the transit station and how it evolves as you move out from the station proper and it flows into the existing surroundings.

Hastings:

Development potential is unique; as it is an existing downtown with much of the infrastructure existing and people are familiar with the location. It has historic character which is a unique asset which must be respected. Strategic infusion of the right scale of development which is a natural extension of the existing grid system is critical.

Mr. Dobbs indicated that through discussions with CP, it was determined that they would prefer we use the west side of the existing rail system. Currently they use the east side for freight. This is a good location to build on; to allow for commuter rail and the freight system operating together. At this time it is proposed to keep the existing station house on the east side, although it won't be used as the depot. It is a little small in size and currently used by CP as office operations. A new depot is proposed on the west side of the tracks that will be in a better location and larger in size.

He continued to describe that downtown Hastings began as a working river front area with the back side being industrial. These buildings purposely didn't have much architecture. But since then, they have reclaimed the riverfront as a park which would present a perfect area for low profile two or three-story residential units on the northern edge near the river. Most importantly in terms of strategy is to locate the Park-and-Ride on the north side of 2nd street to get users out of their cars and onto the sidewalks to walk toward the transit station. The proposed plan would nest the ramp into the hillside. This is quite an advantage, since there are height limitations in the riverfront area and we can hide two levels of parking tucked in behind the buildings. To the south, it is proposed to keep the existing development, although this will hide the proposed platform. Another option would be to pull the buildings back a bit and allow for some developed green space. It is anticipated to have small green spaces on a smaller scale to create a civic plaza. The platform itself would have smaller development to introduce a fun, seasonal, active atmosphere as opposed to taller development. The ramp itself would be more architecturally appealing to make the ramp feel like it is part of the downtown.

Mr. Dobbs indicated that there will be some upcoming public meetings at all four communities during the mid-to-end of August.

Hastings	August 17 th , 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Newport	August 18 th , 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Cottage Grove	August 19 th , 7:00 – 8:30 pm
St Paul	August 25 th , 7:00 – 8:30 pm

The next major steps of the project will be from September to November. That will be when the concepts are refined and enhanced. Additionally, meetings with the railroads will take place and they have been reviewing the plans and giving us their feedback as to whether there are any flaws in the proposals or suggestions for changes. This will aid in developing the specific rail components. He also indicated that they will be developing cost estimates. Lastly, Mr. Dobbs indicated that towards early November there will be public meetings or open houses that will specifically show what is intended at each station. The public will be able to see what the station areas will be and the design team

will be able to get useful feedback. This process helps everyone in making better overall decision in how the project advances.

Questions:

Commission Member Jen Peterson noted that at the Red Rock planning meeting in Cottage Grove some residents expressed concern that they were not notified of the upcoming changes. She questioned how they are making sure they notify all people affected. Mr. Dobbs indicated that they send notices to parcels within $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius, as well as posting it on the website and newsletter notifications. This was data received from the city. If they were beyond the $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius they were not invited specifically. He noted that the upcoming meetings are now focused at the broader community beyond that specific radius.

Commission Chair Peterson wanted to make note of how impressed she is with the work done on the station area planning by the Hay Dobbs Team.

Commission Member Hopkins referenced the successful tour of the areas' transit stations. The transit areas were very user friendly, architecturally pleasing and very well designed. Commission Chair Peterson agreed and also referenced the growing need for the support of bicyclists that utilizes the transit system.

Agenda Item #6 Draft Travel and Attendance Policy - WCRRA

This item will be taken off the agenda until Ramsey County can be in attendance.

Agenda Item #7 Legislative Update - WCRRA

a. State

Ted Schoenecker indicated that there is nothing to report at the State level.

b. Federal

Ted Schoenecker informed the Commission Members that the House and Senate sub committee's are currently going through the appropriations bill which includes the transportation appropriations bill. It is anticipated that this process would become complete in the next several months.

Agenda Item #8 Other

a. Transportation Alliance D.C. Fly-in Recap –

Commission Member Peterson will report on this item at the next meeting.

b. Transportation and Infrastructure Summit Event –

Refer to the flyer attached in the packets for more information on this upcoming event on August 9 - August 13

There being no further business, Commission Member Peterson made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Member Hopkins and passed unanimously.

The Commission adjourned at 3:00 p.m.