



## Draft Meeting Minutes

October 31, 2013  
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	
Barb Hollenbeck	City of Hastings	X
Jen Peterson, Vice-Chair	City of Cottage Grove	X
Keith Franke	City of St. Paul Park	
Steve Gallagher	City of Newport	X
Jim Keller	Denmark Township	X
Cam Gordon	City of Minneapolis	
Amy Brendmoen	City of St. Paul	

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	
	City of Red Wing	
	Canadian Pacific	
Marc Mogan	Prairie Island Indian Community	
Jess Greenwood	Goodhue County	

Staff	Agency	Present
Andy Gitzlaff	Washington County RRA	X
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County RRA	X
Joe Morneau	Dakota County RRA	X
Josh Olson	Ramsey County RRA	X

Others	Agency
Katie White	Met Council
Jay Demma	STANTEC
Melissa Taphorn	Washington County HRA
Kevin Roggenbuck	RCRRA
Stuart Krahn	STANTEC
Lynne Bly	MnDOT

The meeting was video recorded and can be viewed online at:  
[http://swctc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=2&clip\\_id=4613](http://swctc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4613)

Chair Lehrke called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**Agenda Item #1: Introductions**

Introductions were made by those present.

**Agenda Item #2: Consent Items**

- a. Checks and Claims
- b. Minutes of the August 29, 2013 Meeting

Motion made by Slavik to approve the August 29, 2013 meeting minutes and checks and claims. Seconded by Peterson. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

**Agenda Item #3: Newport Transit Station Construction Announcement**

Chair Lehrke gave an update on the Newport Transit Station construction as presented in the packet. Rettman stated the Ramsey County Commissioners met with the legislators that were on the bonding tour earlier this week. One of the things being asked for was \$10 million regarding the Hoffman Yard and the east metro's capacity; this would help to improve freight rail and passenger rail all the way to Wisconsin.

**Agenda Item #4: MN High Speed Rail Update**

Kevin Roggenbuck, RCRRA, gave an update on the MN High Speed Rail Commission. The Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission met on September 5, 2013 and voted to send a formal request to the MnDOT Passenger Rail office to form a Technical Advisory Committee for the river route portion of the High Speed Rail Corridor. The purpose of forming a TAC is to have a group of technical people to advise and inform the Commission of the technical aspects of the Tier 1 EIS that is going on for the High Speed Rail service from Milwaukee to the Twin Cities. Roggenbuck stated the TAC will be represented by technical staff, planners, engineers, etc. from the cities, counties and other organizations in the river route area. Chair Bill Spitzer contacted MnDOT and they have solicited the 22 county, city and other agencies for their interest in joining the TAC which included Washington County and all of the Red Rock Corridor communities. The Commission will get an update from MnDOT on November 7 and discuss this further. Dan Krom, Director at Passenger Rail Office, will conference call into the MN High Speed Rail Commission to talk about forming a TAC.

Roggenbuck stated on September 5, the Commission also discussed having former Chair Jerry Miller as an ambassador or advocate at large for High Speed Rail in the river route area. Commissioner Bill Spitzer contacted Mr. Miller and he is interested in this position. At the November 7 meeting, the Commission will discuss his level of involvement and any logistical support that he might need in performing these duties. Roggenbuck stated the approval of the 2014 work plan and budget will also be included in the November 7 agenda. The budget will be largely the same as last year but will include additional funding for logistical support for Jerry Miller if the Commission decides to include him and involve him in the project. There will be discussion on the draft legislative proposals for MnDOT. The Commission will consider action on these proposals after the Passenger Rail forum has discussed them and approved them.

Roggenbuck stated the progress of two studies including the Twin Cities Tier 1 EIS and the second Amtrak train being added from Chicago to the Twin Cities will be the topic of a conference call with Dan Krom.

#### **Agenda Item #5: AAU Update**

##### **a) Public Outreach Efforts**

Leitner gave an update on the Alternative Analysis Update Public Outreach Efforts in a PowerPoint presentation.

##### **b) Evaluation of Alternative Results**

Jay Demma gave an update on the Alternative Analysis Update Evaluation of Alternative Results in a PowerPoint presentation.

Rettman stated she would like to make sure that none of the alternatives are dropped off the list as to not preclude anything in the future. Leitner stated there is a suggested alternative, but there is a phased implementation plan. It is also up to the Commission's direction. Leitner stated the final report will list all of the pieces of the evaluation including tech memos and the alternatives for the public to be able to comment on. The Commission would then look at the information to make a decision on the direction they would like to go.

Rettman asked if the ridership is based on the 2030 model with cost based on 2013. Demma stated yes the ridership is based on the 2030 model with a 2013 base with the typical inflation rate. Leitner stated the table projects out one time capital costs plus 25 years of operating. The costs for operation are inflated with the standard inflation rate of 3.15%. Rettman stated it is important to note the ridership is a 2030 ridership.

Gallagher asked if the cost projection includes replacement of the buses versus the train cars as the train cars most likely have a longer life expectancy. Demma stated yes it does and the buses would have to be replaced more frequently, but there is also a higher cost to the train vehicles themselves. Gallagher asked if the graph could show Commuter Rail that is all day service. Leitner stated the original way was having all day bus service supplement the Commuter Rail and in this region it is not a model to run Commuter Rail on tracks all day long. All day station to station bus service could be run and was modeled originally, but through conversations with the technical team and Metro Transit, it was decided to not show it that way because it is not the way Northstar functions. Leitner stated the Express Bus option models similarly the Commuter Rail but in a bus version and BRT adds on the all-day service; you can bump over the Commuter Rail dot to the right on the graph about 500-700 riders a day to get that number.

Rettman asked what the times are for the new service on the Express Bus. Demma stated they would be the typical morning and evening peak times. Approximately 5:30-9:00 in the morning and 3:30-7:00 in the evening. Rettman asked if it is for commuters only to go to work and leave work. Demma stated yes, no mid-day service. The

frequency of service is all under the mobility category and it has equal weight in each of the alternatives.

**c) Implementation Plan and Next Steps**

Leitner gave an update on the Alternative Analysis Update Implementation Plan and Next Steps in a PowerPoint presentation.

Rettman stated multimodal includes walking. Bikes can be talked about, but when it comes to ADA accessibility and walking, it becomes critical. Rettman stated if people are able to get to a job, it gives them trails to walk on during lunch as well as destinations for High Speed Rail to show off a community. Trails can also give people an opportunity for a health component where they are working or staying during that time. Rettman stated the statement that people want an opportunity to go places with transit and not always have to drive needs to be included as that has only increased since the last study. When bonding is received to further increase the East Metro Rail Capacity, Washington County will have the ability to expand the job base and with that comes housing needs. Rettman stated this needs to be clear that this is not just for today but also for the future.

Chair Lehrke asked if there is a choice to have a public comment period or public hearing. Leitner stated you can have either one or both and staff recommends having both. The comment period would be advertised through the social media sites and press releases with new graphics that are easier to read. Leitner stated the comment period would be closed two weeks prior to the Commission meeting and then they would be available to read prior to the meeting. Rettman asked to have it open longer than that even though their comments may not be read prior to the meeting; they at least have the opportunity to submit their comments.

Peterson asked for clarification on what further evaluation of a BRT option includes under the PMT recommendations stage 2. Leitner stated this means that more study is needed before something can be built. There are still levels of engineering and potential environmental work, depending on the level of capital costs. Leitner stated when the communities and the Commission are potentially ready to implement this, the numbers will be run again and there will be more fine detail to get to the point where building can begin. Fine tuning some details including the Cottage Grove station location, types of infrastructure and a pedestrian bridge will help fine tune the level of investment. The ridership numbers will then be closer to the date of implementation instead of the 2030 model. Peterson asked how Highway BRT is different than regular BRT. Leitner stated Highway BRT should have been used the entire time, there is not a difference in this instance.

Gitzlaff stated the reason why this is really stage 2 is many things are going on right now including the Highway BRT study by Met Council that is going to wrap up early next year as well as Thrive 2040, the Regional Comprehensive Plan being updated along with the Transportation Policy Plan. There is an opportunity to inform those processes over the next year.

Peterson asked if the bus stations will be in the middle of the highway as they are on Highway 35W. Leitner stated those are a type of Highway BRT and are built in more urban areas where the freeway is narrower as well as being built in conjunction with a managed lane. The Highway BRT being looked at here is much closer to the Red Line with running on the shoulders the entire way and diverting at stations where it is not possible to get direct access.

Peterson asked what if the cost listed for Commuter Rail is solely for this option or shared costs with Amtrak, freight or High Speed Rail. Leitner stated Commuter Rail is what would force the majority of improvements as it would shut down the freight system completely near the Union Depot for 2-3 hours in the morning and afternoon. The initial investment would be very heavy for this Corridor for Commuter Rail. Leitner stated there is a potential to share some of the costs in the future, but based on the current information from the study, there was not a comfort level for it to be split. Rettman stated all railroads have been working really well with Ramsey County by putting in money for upgrades. Olson stated what has been learned through the rail capacity study is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what things costs and implications of different rail improvements on the actual system itself. It is also all about the timing of improvements. There are improvements currently being made in this Corridor that will only stand to benefit any mobility option moving forward. Olson stated the Freight Railroads knows there is significant demand coming and their network needs improvements. Leitner stated they have consulted multiple times with the East Metro Rail Capacity and both High Speed Rail and Commuter Rail would necessitate a new set of tracks.

Slavik asked what the 2013 ridership numbers are. Gitzlaff stated roughly 900 with two-thirds being from Minneapolis; this includes the two Park & Rides.

Slavik asked if there were many positive comments for going beyond Hastings as there did not appear to be. There have been calls made to him and Councilmember Hollenbeck stating that the way the survey was worded as it appeared there was already service in the Hastings area. Slavik stated there seemed to be a demand for service south of the river.

Motion made by Hollenbeck to approve the results of the evaluation and direct staff to prepare a final report with a detailed implementation plan based on the PMT recommendation. Seconded by Peterson. **Ayes, Chair Lehrke, Hollenbeck, Slavik, Keller, Peterson and Rettman; Nays, Gallagher.** Motion carried.

#### **Agenda Item #6: Draft 2014 Work plan and Budget**

Gitzlaff discussed the draft 2014 work plan and budget as presented in the packet.

Chair Lehrke asked for clarification of the final end balance. Gitzlaff stated the final end fund balance will be \$30,000 with an additional \$70,000 within the budget for a total of \$100,000 available.

Rettman asked for clarification of note number one under Operating Budget Notes regarding the remaining amount held in reserve. Gitzlaff stated this should say \$30,000 remaining will be held in reserve.

#### **Agenda Item #7: Communications Update**

Gitzlaff discussed the Facebook and website communication update as presented in the packet. Another e-newsletter will be sent out in a week or two to announce the progress of the AAU study and the Newport Station Groundbreaking. Lehrke asked if there is enough likes on Facebook to be able to get a specific website address. Gitzlaff stated he will look into that.

#### **Agenda Item #8: Legislative Update**

##### **d) State**

Josh Olson discussed the State Legislative Update as presented in the packet. The Bonding Committees for the House and Senate have been visiting with the projects that have expressed funding. The Minnesota Transportation Alliance membership meeting is November 7 in St. Cloud with one of the breakout sessions discussing transit ways.

##### **e) Federal**

Olson discussed the Federal Legislative Update as presented in the packet. There has not been a whole lot of activity on the transportation front. Olson stated there is still continuing resolutions for the Federal budget which plays into the transportation budget. Map-21 is still in play and is the current reality in terms of transportation funding and rules and regulations.

#### **Agenda Item #9: Other**

##### **a) Next scheduled meeting is Thursday, December 12, 2013 at 4:00 p.m.**

Motion made by Rettman to combine the November and December Red Rock Corridor meetings and change to December 12, 2013. Seconded by Slavik. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

Rettman requested that any documents that the Commission will be asked to approve on December 12, 2013 be sent out farther in advance to give Commission Members a chance to thoroughly review ahead of time. Gitzlaff stated that this was a reasonable request.

#### **Agenda Item #10: Adjourn**

Motion made by Gallagher to adjourn. Seconded by Slavik. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.