



Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2023, 4:30 p.m.
St. Paul Park City Hall

Commission Members	Agency	Present
Karla Bigham	Washington County RRA	X
Rafael Ortega	Ramsey County RRA	X
Tony Khambata	City of Cottage Grove	
Jane Prince	City of St. Paul	
Sandi Dingle	City of St. Paul Park	X
Dave Pemble	City of Hastings	X
Marvin Taylor	City of Newport	X

Staff	Agency	Present
Andrea Rehm	Washington County RRA	X
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County RRA	X

Other Attendees	Agency	Present
Emma Lucken	Ramsey County	X
Will Schroeer	East Metro Strong	X

Agenda Item #1: Introduction

Acting Chair Sandi Dingle called the meeting to order. The Commission stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Acting Chair Dingle stated that quorum had not been met yet and so they would bypass action items to go to presentation until the necessary commissioners arrived.

Agenda Item #4: Presentation – Red Rock Revisioning Scope of Work

Leitner presented a brief overview of Red Rock Corridor history. She described how the intent for Red Rock changed from commuter rail to bus rapid transit over the years. She emphasized the corridor is important for more than commuting into Saint Paul, and that bi-directional all-day service is needed for connecting people to jobs within the corridor. She stated that the Commission gave staff direction at the October meeting to produce a draft scope of work for revisioning. She introduced Will Schroeer, Executive Director of East Metro Strong, and his role in the revisioning.

Schroeer described the revisioning scope of work as two major tasks. Task one is to work with stakeholders and experts to understand how travel needs have changed in the corridor and how they might continue to change. Task two is to develop a new vision for the Red Rock Corridor, including recommendations for kinds of transportation options to consider and suggested next steps.

Leitner added that per the Commission's feedback at the October meeting, the scope does not look at a prescribed mode, rather the intent is to look outside of the box to respond to changing trends, technology, etc. She emphasized that the scope offers flexibility. Leitner asked the commissioners for comments or changes on the draft scope.

Bigham stated that it has been six years since she was last on the Commission and that while many things have changed, what has not changed is inadequate funding from the legislature necessary to build ridership. Coming out of the last few years, there are still a lot of unknowns but it is good to get the work started. She noted several upcoming developments in the area and the density that it will bring to the region. She emphasized the importance for Washington County and other RRCC representatives to be at the table when transit conversations gain momentum again. She suggested the Commission send a letter to Met Council noting the group's interest and enthusiasm to be involved in transit discussions.

Dingle stated that ridership is an ongoing discussion at Met Council, and that technological and other changes have changed people's travel needs. She voiced her support for all-day service because it is available when people need it, rather than just at typical commute times. She noted an upcoming development in town and stated she was concerned how the new resident's travel needs would be met with no circular bus routes. She emphasized the importance of local routes, as well as first and last mile service as a topic of interest for Commission. She noted she wants Hastings to be meaningfully included in the Red Rock Corridor Commission's work as was originally intended.

Pemble stated that Hastings is a year or two out from experiencing an influx of new residents, particularly in senior living developments. He noted that regular basis bus service would serve that

population well. He emphasized the importance of the Commission's work as highways are getting congested and solutions are needed to alleviate it.

Taylor stated that in Newport some areas have been redeveloped and others have not, and that the varying levels have made transit challenging. He stated that the City is set to experience a wave of residential development, potentially reaching 5,000 residents by 2030. He stated that he would like to see Newport Transport Transit station utilized to its full potential. The City continues to develop in ways that are compatible with transit.

Ortega voiced concerns regarding regional relationships and the lack of local service routes. He noted the need to serve populations that cannot work from home and the importance of connectivity. He emphasized that transit is regional issue, and efforts should not be St Paul centric. He voiced his support for transit equity across the metro, with equal investment in the east and west. He agreed that the Commission needs to take a fresh approach.

Bigham stated seven years have passed since the Red Rock Corridor reanalysis and asked what the Commission's more modern goals should be.

Schroerer responded that the revisioning process will lift up all of the commissioners' concerns and that stakeholder engagement will likely reflect similar concerns. He noted that the refreshed vision could suggest more local connections but the scope of work does not include making the specific plans.

Leitner reiterated that the intent of the revisioning is to get away from linear thinking. She stated that so much is happening off of Highway 61 that fixed route transit will not get people everywhere they want or need to go. She offered examples of options that have gained momentum in recent years (micro transit, car share, etc).

Ortega stated the Commission needs to prioritize connecting people to jobs. He questioned whether some of the new trends in transit would be able to resolve the immense volume of the problem. He reiterated that seniors, children, and poor people cannot get where they need to go, and the Commission must work to fix these disconnects.

Leitner thanked the commissioners for their feedback and stated staff would take the feedback into contract discussions with East Metro Strong.

Agenda Item #1: Introduction (Continued)

Acting Chair Dingle returned to introductions. Quorum was met.

Agenda Item #4: Election of Officers

Dingle nominated Bigham as Chair. Ortega seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Taylor nominated Dingle as Vice Chair. Ortega seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3: Approval of Agenda

Pemble moved approval of the agenda. Dingle seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #5: Approval of October 2022 Minutes

Ortega made a motion to approve the minutes. Dingle seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #6: Recognition of Outgoing Members

Chair Bigham introduced two resolutions to recognize outgoing members of the Red Rock Corridor Commission. The outgoing members from the previous year were Commissioner Johnson (Washington County) and Councilmember Vaughan (City of Hastings).

Pemble made a motion to approve **Resolutions 2023-01 and 2023-02** recognizing outgoing members. Dingle seconded.

Vice Chair Dingle noted her appreciation for their time and leadership on the Commission.

All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #7: RRCC Insurance Renewal

Leitner stated that the Commission renews its insurance annually. In 2019, the Commission approved a change whereby staff could automatically renew insurance provided rates did not increase above 10%. The 2023 rate increased minimally and is not an action item.

Leitner stated that the Commission is asked to act on a statutory tort liability waiver annually. The Commission has previously chosen NOT to waive such limits. In consultation with risk managers, staff recommends the Commission would again choose to NOT waive such limits. Additionally, as suggested by county risk managers, staff recommends the Commission approve the automatic renewal of the decision NOT to waive the statutory tort liability limits without the need for new board action.

Dingle moved to NOT waive the statutory tort liability limits *and* approve the automatic renewal of decision NOT to waive the statutory tort liability limits without the need for new board action unless the policy changes in nature. Ortega seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motions carried.

Agenda Item #8: Signature of Joint Powers Agreement

Leitner stated that in routine housekeeping, staff were unable to find a signed copy of the current Joint Powers Agreement. She noted that meeting minutes confirm that the agreement and updated bylaws were approved. Washington County attorney guidance was to bring a resolution before the Commission to resign the agreement, which will be effective back to the original date of signature.

Dingle made a motion to approve **Resolution 2023-03** for the resignation of the Joint Powers Agreement. Taylor seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #9: 2023 Work Plan and Budget

Leitner presented the 2023 Work Plan and Budget. She noted the higher expenditure is attributed to the revisioning work and that 2023 expenditures will be entirely paid for by the existing fund balance.

Ortega made a motion to approve the 2023 Work Plan and Budget. Pemble seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #10: Communications Update

Rehm introduced herself as the new Red Rock Corridor Project Manager and presented a communications update by reviewing the information in the packet.

No questions or comments on this item.

Agenda Item #11: Other

Ortega announced that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 'approved' Gold Line, more specifically that the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) is in its last phase (Congressional Review).

Chair Bigham thanked Ortega and Leitner for their leadership on the Gold Line. She stated the project is a big success for the east metro.

No other updates.

Agenda Item #11: Adjourn

Pemble made a motion to adjourn. Dingle seconded. All were in favor. **Approved.** Meeting was adjourned.