

Gateway Corridor Commission Meeting Summary
October 13, 2011
Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room

Agenda Item #3

Members	Agency	Present
Rafael Ortega	Ramsey County	X
Lisa Weik	Washington County	X
Kathy Lantry	St Paul	X
Will Rossbach	Maplewood	X
Paul Reinke	Oakdale	
Mary Giuliani Stephens	Woodbury	X
Dean Johnston	Lake Elmo	X
Randy Nelson	Afton	
Dan Kylo	West Lakeland	X
Brian Zeller	Lakeland	X
Victoria Reinhardt, Alternate	Ramsey County	
Gary Kriesel, Alternate	Washington County	
Paul Rebholz, Alternate	Woodbury	
Brett Emmons, Alternate	Lake Elmo	
Pat Snyder, Alternate	Afton	X
Dave Schultz, Alternate	West Lakeland	
Peg Larson, Alternate	Lakeland	

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	Present
Mike Amundson	Baytown Township	
Greg Watson	Woodbury Chamber of Commerce	
Richard McNamara	Oakdale Business and Professional Association	
Doug Stang	3M	
Tim Ramberg	St. Croix County	X
Zach Schwartz	St Paul Chamber of Commerce	X

Others	Agency
Mike Rogers	Ramsey County RRA
Ted Schoenecker	Washington County
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County
Allen Lovejoy	City of St. Paul
Rachel Horn	Congresswoman Michele Bachmann's Office
David Jessup	City of Woodbury
Stephanie Eiler	CH2M Hill
Pat Thompson	St. Croix County
Roger Rebholz	St. Croix County
Sally Eral	City of Landfall Village
Stephen Ebner	West Lakeland Township
Josh Straka	US Representative Betty McCollum's Office

The Gateway Corridor Commission convened at 3:35 p.m. by Chair Weik.

Agenda Item #1. Introductions

Introductions were made by those present.

Agenda Item #2. Approval of Agenda

No changes were made to the agenda. Motion made by Rossbach to approve agenda. Seconded by Giuliani Stephens. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3. Summary August 11, 2011 Meeting

No changes were made to the August 11, 2011 meeting summary. Motion made by Rossbach to approve August 11, 2011 meeting summary. Seconded by Johnston. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4. Consent Items

Item 4a. Checks and claims:

Motion made by Johnston to approve checks and claims. Seconded by Ortega. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #5. Gateway Corridor AA Update

Item 5a. Update on Study

Stephanie Eiler distributed and presented a PowerPoint presentation on the revisions to the Alternatives that were recommended by the PAC and TAC along East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue.

Lantry encouraged the Commission to drive the area. The residents on East 7th Street have alleys with single-car garages; so, if you remove all off-street parking, parking may be an issue. The idea that 34 residences and 8 businesses are going to be removed is a concern. If traffic were re-routed onto Kennard, it would be a major problem, and Ruth Street is not a viable alternative for White Bear Avenue. Lantry added that no one else will have disruption except in this area; the rest of the transit-way is going down the freeway.

Motion made by Rossbach to retain Alternatives 4 and 6, and conduct analysis that would seek to minimize land use impacts on East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue based on the assumptions agreed upon between St. Paul and Ramsey County staff. Seconded by Ortega. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Eiler presented the revisions to the Alternatives recommended by the TAC and PAC on proposed station location modifications. Zeller asked if these requested approvals are for the purpose of study. Eiler said yes; we will have specific information on the ridership at each station and clear picture of where the demand is. Weik asked if there could be a BRT line that had a scaled stop approach. Eiler said that is a valid operating strategy; it's not proposed at this point but it could be.

Motion made by Johnston to shift Johnson Parkway Station to Earl Street in Alternatives 3 (BRT) and 5 (LRT) along I-94; and add a new station to serve Metro State along Mounds Boulevard in Alternatives 3 (BRT) and 5 (LRT) along I-94. Seconded by Ortega. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Eiler said the consulting team will now dig into the technical work; ridership, capital costing, and

operating and maintenance costing on the build alternatives. Schoenecker said, because of where we are in this process, the contingencies are a big piece. The FTA requires they be included in your cost estimate mandated.

Zeller asked if the Commission is aware that the Tourism Center in Wisconsin near Carmichael Road may be coming up for sale, and that there may be a need or use for that parcel. Schoenecker said the site is owned by the WI/DOT and the rest area has been deemed as right-of-way that they don't need. The City of Hudson has that area zoned as public use, and for the purposes of this study, we are moving forward with the assumption that it'll still be there.

Item 5b. Outreach Activities

Schoenecker referred to the ongoing list of outreach activities included in the packet. Weik said the Woodbury Community Foundation presentation was very well attended. Giuliani Stephens said they are the business forum group of local business leaders as well as other executives who live in Woodbury. Weik said the Oakdale Business and Professional Association presentation will be broadcast on Channel 6 metro-wide. The presentations are having good turnouts with good questions and a lot of support. Weik suggested Commission members contact Schoenecker or Leitner if they know of any interested groups for presentations.

Agenda Item #6. Preliminary 2012 Work Plan and Budget

Item 6a. 2011 State Bond Funds Schoenecker gave an overview of the State Bonding Bill as outlined in the packet. The Washington County Board has sent a letter to the Metropolitan Council requesting that the bond funds go to the Newport Park-and-Ride and have submitted an application to CTIB for those types of funds. One reason for that action is that bond money can definitely be used for construction and engineering. By moving the bond money to Newport, we are using that money specifically for a construction project. Reallocating money from CTIB to Gateway is putting money towards the development of a transitway.

Schoenecker presented the work plan as detailed in the packet stating it is almost identical to 2011. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is the big item added in 2012.

Zeller asked how do we spend \$3 million dollars on the DEIS . We're a small community and residents are asking how come we are spending so much money on a study. Schoenecker said he could bring more information to the next meeting to detail the costs of the DEIS. The big thing is the level of detail for the DEIS; once we get into the specifics, we will be bringing in very technical professional people.

Giuliani Stephens asked, assuming the AA is completed in the spring, what is the time frame for the DEIS study to be completed. Schoenecker said 18 to 24 months after hiring the consultant. When the completion of the AA occurs, it should be a short turnaround time from the end of AA to the start of DEIS. Giuliani Stephens asked, if approved, would the CTIB money be dedicated funding to Gateway or is that something the State Legislature could decide to tap into. Schoenecker said the risk will be there either way. They could turn around and take the State Bond money, but it's much more guaranteed once it gets into a grant agreement. Indication now is that we don't feel it's a great risk. Ortega said he feels there is zero risk with the CTIB money. It is a commitment that was made to Washington County. Rossbach asked why the AA money isn't shown in the budget. Weik said it was paid from 2011 and prior budgets, and is not an expenditure in 2012. Schoenecker said this budget is a snapshot of what's

going to occur in 2012. The AA is still ongoing, and we have the revenue set aside to pay for it. Weik commented that in the Commission's update to citizens, they should highlight in the good news column that these revenues necessary to complete the federally required studies have been coming from sales tax revenues, not real estate taxes. In general, CTIB grants are not to be used for studies, but Washington County was able to negotiate in order to catch up and get our studies done.

Agenda Item #7 Communications

Item 7a. Google Analytics Update – July/August

Schoenecker distributed a sheet showing the number of visitors to the web site each month with spikes in the periods when communication is high. We are seeing a consistently higher number of people checking the web site. Weik asked why the big drop between Open House #1 and Open House #2. Schoenecker said it is because we, as an organization, aren't continuing to put information in front of people; they get excited around the open houses and visits drop when we don't have public activities.

Item 7b. Talking Points

Weik said these are the types of things we need to give a 30-second elevator speech. Schoenecker said it gives the Commission members some quick short items to discuss when they're out and about. The six points in the packet give quick facts about this corridor, other transit corridors, and the process being taken to help educate on transit types.

Ramberg said they had their area representatives and legislators at the Wisconsin Gateway meeting. The connotation was rail; it was beneficial for them to hear that it is methodical and there are more options. We're in a better position to get more attention from Madison knowing that this is data driven.

Agenda Item #8. Bus Tour

Schoenecker referred to the options and costs on tour possibilities and costs presented in the packet. Weik said she would be interested in a formal narrated tour, but we would need enough people attending to cover the costs. Giuliani Stephens said the Google Fly-through is adequate since most are familiar with the area; however, she wouldn't mind seeing how these systems operate. Rossbach said, at this point, we don't know what the form of transit will be; therefore, if we do a tour it should be of our own transit way, and the shorter, the better. Rossbach said he also likes the fly-through idea. Weik said if we do a van tour, it could take us through some of these alignments so we could actually see them. It also might be a good idea to wait six months until after the AA study is done. Giuliani Stephens agreed with waiting until the AA is done.

Schoenecker said staff will create a Google fly-through presentation. The advantage of the bus tour is having everyone together seeing and hearing the same thing at the same time, and it's also easier to coordinate speakers. Zeller suggested doing the Google fly-through now and revisit a physical tour in the spring. Rossbach said it does seem like a good idea to go into St. Paul, but might be better after the AA is completed. Lantry said she is ok with a map and a self-guided tour since most of the transit-way is on Interstate 94. Zeller said it would be helpful to be with some staff; he will have questions that won't get answered on a self guided tour. Weik and Rossbach agreed; it would be advantageous to have the group together to share thoughts.

Agenda Item #9. Legislative Update

Item 9a. State

Rogers said nothing is in session right now. The big thing for the corridor to pay attention to is that next year is a bonding year, and there may be an opportunity for some additional bonding. Weik said we're looking for \$1 million for engineering.

Schoenecker said the Metropolitan Governance Committee has met; this is a group of Senate and House representatives and they will be looking at the Metropolitan Council, its operations, funding, and responsibilities. Weik said she is on a task force group of County Commissioners and County Administrators that are looking at the Office of the Legislators Auditor's (OLA) report, and the OLA did recommend reconfiguring the Met Council. The OLA recommended option two, which is having a mix of County Commissioners and Appointed individuals on the Met Council, all serving staggered terms. The task force group is discussing only having elected officials as a pool of individuals for the Governor to draw from for appointing. Giuliani Stephens said the Metro Cities also has a task force studying the Met Council. In the past ten years, there have been nine studies with no action taken and she encourages the Legislature to appoint a task force with all the stakeholders so the end result can effectuate a change. Zeller asked what the process would be to implement a change. Giuliani Stephens said it would likely be a piece of legislation from the authority of the task force to be signed by the Governor. Weik said it would be more viable to a seated Governor if it were implemented at the start of a new Congress term.

Item 9b. Federal

Rogers said there have been a couple resolutions passed to keep government funded and running. On the transportation reauthorization, the House side has been given the right to seek additional revenue above and beyond the gas tax to fund transportation at the existing level. In the appropriations bills for transportation for 2012, the Federal Railroad Administration is funded at \$1.3 billion; \$7 billion below what the President requested, but \$36 million above last year's funding. The Federal Transit Administration was funded at \$1.8 billion; \$2 billion below what the President requested, but \$170 million increase over last year's funding. TIGER funding is funded at \$550 million; that program has funded many different projects that don't necessarily fit the traditional transit mode. The jobs legislation is being pushed and odds are it won't pass the Senate as a whole package, but pieces of it are likely to pass. Another interesting thing is the suggestion by the Senate Budget Committee and the Deficit Committee to have bi-annual budgeting. It also sounds like both the House and Senate are looking at passing smaller bills rather than one omnibus bill.

Weik commented that Ramsey County is the only entity in Minnesota to receive a TIGER Grant. Ortega said they received \$35 million for Union Depot.

Agenda Item #10. Other

Item 10a. Strategic Meeting Dates Summary

Weik said, due to State law, Washington County will be changing their public hearing on the proposed 2012 budget to the evening of Thursday December 8; however, the Gateway meeting that afternoon should not interfere. Schoenecker said we could plan to have a lighter agenda on that date.

Item 10b. Media Articles

Schoenecker referred to the media information provided in the packet. He also distributed copies of the updated Joint Powers Agreement to the Commission members.

Weik said she will be attending a National Conference on Rail-Volution. Ortega said he recently attended the APCA conference in New Orleans. He was able to spend time with former Governor Tommy Thompson from Wisconsin who led a roundtable to talk about transit. Transit is very much on his agenda, and transit politics in Wisconsin should be exciting this year.

Agenda Item #11. Adjourn

Johnston moved to adjourn. Seconded by Rossbach. **Approved.** Motion carried. Weik called the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.