Red Rock Corridor Commission
Thursday January 31, 2013
4:00 p.m.

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

	Action Requested
1. Election of Officers	Approval
2. Consent Items*	Approval
a. Minutes of the November 29, 2012 Meeting	
b. Checks and Claims	
3. Alternatives Analysis Update (AAU) Kick-off* - Stantec	Information
4. 2013 Communication Services* - WCRRA	
a. Website	Approval
b. Social Media	Information
5. Legislative Update* – RCRRA	Information
a. State	
b. Federal	
6. Other	Information
a. Next Scheduled Meeting – February 28, 2013	

** Enclosures*

For questions regarding this material, please contact Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority at (651) 430-4338.

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2012
Cottage Grove City Hall
4:00 p.m.

Commission Members	Agency	Present
Joe Harris, Chair	Dakota County RRA	X
Autumn Lehrke	Washington County RRA	X
Janice Rettman	Ramsey County RRA	X
Jan Callison	Hennepin County RRA	X
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
Kathy Higgins	Denmark Township	
Jim Keller	Denmark Township	X
Cam Gordon	City of Minneapolis	
Amy Brendmoen	City of St. Paul	
Jan Callison	Hennepin County	X

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	
Ron Allen	Goodhue County	
Bob Kastner	City of Red Wing	
Marc Mogan	Prairie Island Indian Community	X
Ken Bjornstad	Goodhue County	X

Staff	Agency	Present
Andy Gitzlaff	Washington County RRA	X
Josh Olson	Ramsey County RRA	X
Joe Morneau	Dakota County RRA	
Adele Hall	Hennepin County RRA	

Others	Agency
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County
Bob Tatreau	
Steve Ellenwood	
Ciara Schlichting	Stantec
Allen Hovyoy	St. Paul PWD
Josh Straka	Us Rep McCollum
Dave Nuckols	Commissioner Callison Aid

The meeting was video recorded and can be viewed online at:
http://swctc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4009

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

Agenda Item #1: Consent Items

a. **Minutes of the October 25, 2012 Meeting**
b. **Checks and Claims**

Motion made by Rettman to approve the October 25, 2012 meeting minutes with corrections and to approve checks and claims. Seconded by Lehrke. Roll call vote: Commissioners Gallagher, Peterson, Rettman, Lehrke, Harris, Hollenbeck, Keller, and Callison in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #2: AAU Consultant Selection Update - WCRRA

Lyssa Leitner updated the Commission on the AAU and the approval of the consultant selection. Leitner gave a PowerPoint presentation as outlined in the packet.

Rettman asked to clarify that Stantec will be able to go forward and not backward due to their strong understanding of previous corridor studies. Leitner said that they will take all those studies of which some of them they have worked on and compile a short report so everyone knows what has been done. Rettman clarified that the revisiting of these studies will help them make more sense of what was done years ago.

Motion made by Peterson to approve the selection of Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. as the consultant. Seconded by Lehrke. Roll call vote: Commissioners Gallagher, Peterson, Rettman, Lehrke, Harris, Hollenbeck, Keller, and Callison in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #3: 2013 Work Plan and Budget Approval – WCRRA

Gitzlaff went over changes that were to be made to the 2013 budget. The first change to be made was in the Work Plan section, under General Activities, the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission is added to the list of the groups/agencies that the Commission will continue to coordinate with. The second item changed was in the budget section under 2013 Operating expenditures; $10,000 was shifted from the communication services into contingency This will allow the Commission to evaluate what type of communication services need to be done as far as website and what is going to be done as part of the AAU. The third change was technical corrections within the budget.

Gitzlaff summed up the budget for next year. He stated that historically the budget has been $70,000, but the budget has been reduced to $40,000. The reasoning is that the budgeted amount for the AAU study from 2012 is going to be used in 2013. The budget funds should be sufficient to do the Commission's work for the upcoming year. As well as the $40,000 budget, $20,000 of the fund balance will be held in reserve for future needs and the rest will be brought over to offset member contributions shown on page 3 of 4.

Lehrke corrected the subtotal under Public Involvement should be $15,000 instead of $25,000. Rettman stated that she is pleased that this group will continue to work with

the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission and hopes that at some point in time Washington County will rejoin it.

Motion made by Gallagher to approve 2013 Work plan and Budget. Seconded by Peterson. Roll call vote: Commissioners Callison, Keller, Hollenbeck, Harris, Lehrke, Rettman, Peterson, and Gallagher in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4: Approve 2013 Meeting Schedule - WCRRA
Gitzlaff went over meeting schedule for 2013 as outlined in packet. Peterson asked if it can be assumed that the December 26th date will be a conflict or play it by ear. Gitzlaff stated that historically that meeting has been cancelled if the budget gets approved in November, but if it were moved a week earlier the option could be December 19. Harris asked the Board if they would like it moved up a week, but said traditionally they have only had a meeting in early December in order to finish the work plan. Peterson said to keep it on the schedule and shoot to get everything done ahead of time. Harris stated that the previous meeting time was 3:30, but due to conflicts was changed to 4:00. He stated that this would not be a conflict next year and that the time could change back to 3:30. It was preferred to keep it at 4:00.

Motion made by Peterson to approve the 2013 meeting schedule. Seconded by Keller. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4: Legislative Update - RCRRA

a. State

Olson gave an update to the Commission stating that he only has four words to say and they are elections and fiscal cliff. He stated that this seems to be the reoccurring conversation that is being had at both the state and federal level.

Olson referred to the packet which contains a summary of the Legislative Election. It gives a recap of what will be happening in the next legislative session of which there is a change in the leadership in both the House and Senate side of the State level, as well as some new legislative leaders within the Red Rock Corridor. Olson encouraged the Commission members to look over the election summary to see the new names that are showing up.

b. Federal

Olson said that at the federal level, everything has been dominated by the fiscal cliff conversation.

Agenda Item #5: Newport Transit Station Project Update – WCRRA
Lehrke updated the Commission on Washington County's 2010 purchase of the Knox Lumber site for a transit station. Lehrke discussed how this year was spent designing the transit station and that construction will begin next year with hopes to open service in the fall. She said that when the station opens, it will be initially served by metro transit route 364 with express service to St. Paul and as the ridership demand grows, they will reevaluate and hopefully add additional service to Minneapolis. Lehrke discussed the

design of the transit station as shown in the illustrations in the packet provided. The station is strategically located on the Knox Lumber site as to maximize the road frontage on 494 and 61 for developers. The transit station can also be used as a trail head for regional trail users and there is a large canopy that can be used for community events such as farmers markets. Lehrke talked about the HRA and how they are facilitating the development and their role is to buy individual parcels from private owners to bundle up and sell to one big developer because sometimes these projects can be time consuming and costly for developers to try to negotiate with individual private property owners. Gallagher stated that the Newport City council has approved this project and are behind it 100%.

Lehrke said it was recommended by a planning commission member to flip the design of the transit station. Previous plans had it facing the railroad tracks and when it was thought through since the initial service will be buses, it was thought that it might be a better idea to have it facing the buses, so people that are waiting for buses can actually see it. She stated that if and when the train ever happens, the plan was to build something close to the tracks anyways so it makes sense to have those facing the buses and working for the buses now and they will cross the bridge for the train stuff later.

Harris asked for clarification on the construction time. Lehrke stated that the design was finished this year and construction will be in 2013 and the plan is to open next fall for service.

Agenda Item #6: Other

Olson gave an update on the Union Depot. He announced that the Union Depot will open for transit service on Saturday, December 8th. This is the first time in over 40 years that the building is being used for transit service. It has been a 2 year project. There is a 9:30 am media event ribbon cutting ceremony and from 10 am to 4 pm, the building will be open for public events and other activities. This is a family friendly opportunity for folks to come and see the building. More information can be found at uniondepot.org or facebook.com/uniondepot. There was a handout with information in today's Pioneer Press.

a. Next Meeting – Thursday, December 27, 2012

Chair Harris let the Commission Members know that there is nothing pressing for the December 27 meeting, so it will be cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2013. Gitzlaff will confirm with an e-mail to all Board members.

Gitzlaff requested that alternates be appointed when changes in membership are made and that the updated information be sent to him. He also noted in looking ahead for next year that with the approval of the Stantec contract, there will be some meetings with more meat on them in the early part of 2013 when we start getting into more of the details of the AAU study.

Peterson requested that the packets be formatted with the outlines as links so she does not have to flip through the pages to get to the right page and be able to see what chapter she wants to go to.

The Commission thanked Joe Harris for his service. Harris stated that he enjoyed working on the Red Rock Corridor.

Motion made by Keller to adjourn. Seconded by Hollenbeck. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

DATE: January 24, 2013

TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission

FROM: Staff

RE: Checks and Claims

Attached is the

Hay Dobbs Website & Communication Services Invoice #5 (November)	$	294.10
Note: Percent of contract utilized = 64%		
TOTAL	**$**	**294.10**

Detailed invoices can be made available upon request.

Action Requested: Approval

DATE: January 24, 2013

TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission

FROM: Staff

RE: Red Rock Corridor Alternatives Analysis Update

Work began on the Alternatives Analysis Update (AAU) in early January. There are three phases of work that will take place:

1. Reviewing previous work and reassessing the vision and goals for the Corridor
2. Alternatives development, analysis and evaluation
3. Implementation Plan

The consultant team has started to gather all previous work that has been completed on the Corridor as well as new census and regional ridership data. Defining the problem statement, goals and objectives for the project is also part of phase one. Multiple public events will be held to gain feedback from stakeholders on what the vision for the Corridor is. A workshop with the Commission is proposed for the February meeting that will gather input on what the Commission's goals and objectives are for the corridor.

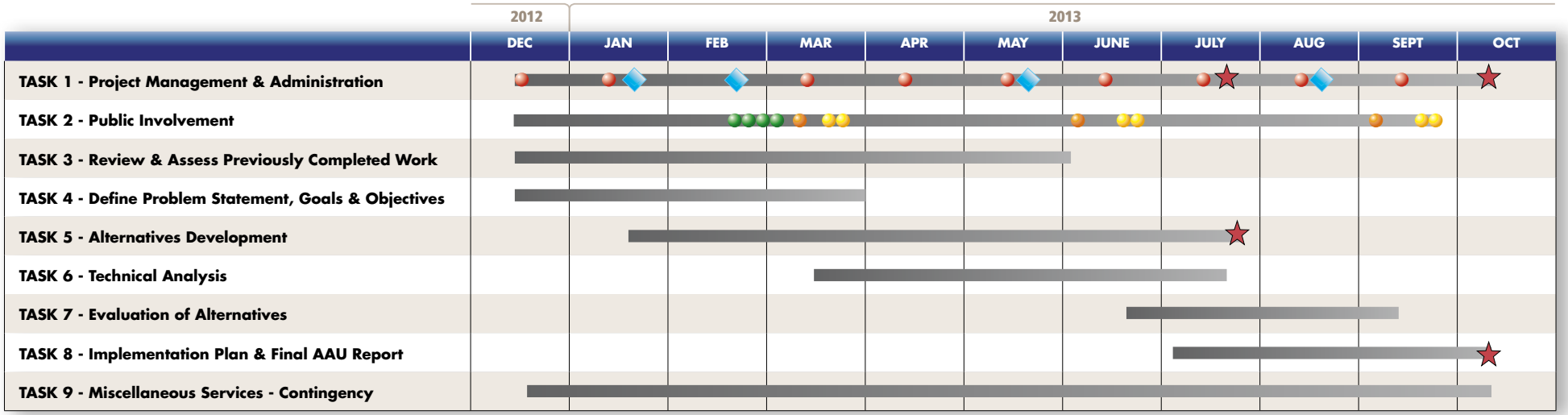
Project Management Team
A Project Management Team (PMT) has been formed that will meet monthly to help guide the technical aspects of the AAU. The PMT is made up of staff from the counties, cities and agencies along the Corridor.

Community Advisory Committee
A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will be formed as part of the stakeholder engagement for the AAU. A CAC was created as part of the original Station Area Planning project and those members are being contacted in order to see if they want a role in the AAU. The CACs main objective will be to provide input at project milestones and help staff improve outreach efforts and ensure that all project materials are easily understandable by the public. Approximately three CAC meetings will be held over the duration of this project.

Staff recommends that the CAC be made up of community and business representatives from each city along the Corridor and would like recommendations on who to contact from Commission members. Staff could also put out a call for volunteers to serve on the CAC in the next Red Rock enewsletter. The CAC should be made up of people who have a good pulse on the community and business environments in the Corridor. Staff also recommends that the Commission appoint one member to be a liaison to the CAC. This will allow CAC members to have a direct line of communication to the Commission.

Schedule
A schedule of the AAU is attached to this memo.

Approval
Appoint one Commission member to the CAC.



- FTA Review Submitted
- Red Rock Corridor Commission Meeting
- Project Management Team Meetings
- Workshop/Open House
- Listening Sessions/ Focus Groups
- Citizen Advisory Committee Meetings

Red Rock Corridor
Alternatives Analysis Update

Red Rock Corridor Commission
January 31, 2013

What we will cover

- Project Background
- Scope of Work
- Schedule

Project Background

In 2007 Red Rock Alternative Analysis (AA) completed

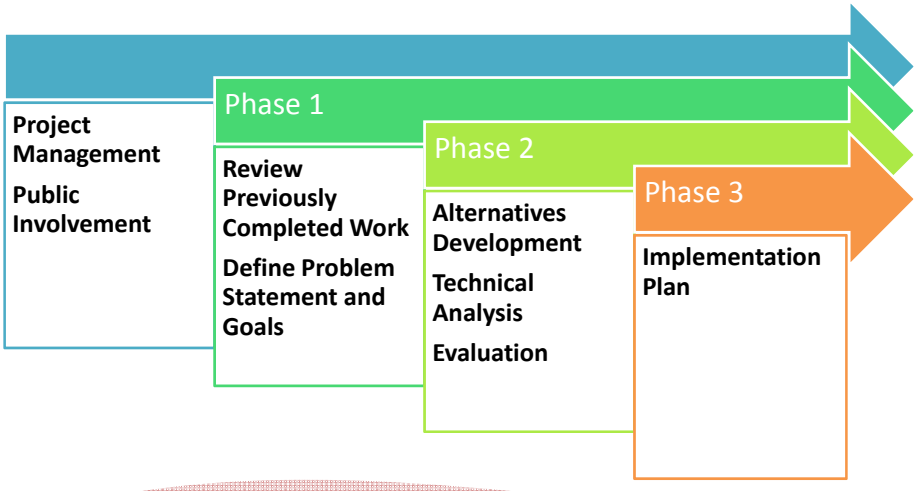
- In past 5 years, significant changes have occurred in corridor that warrant a reevaluation of AA results

Reevaluate

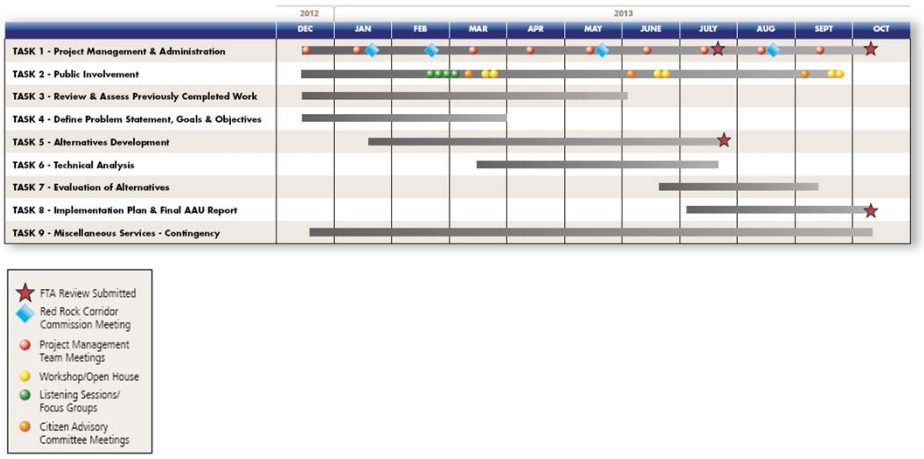
- Northstar Commuter Rail running for 2 years
- Cedar Ave BRT 2012 Opening, Central Corridor 2014 Opening
- MAP-21, FTA Changes
- New Census Information and Updated Ridership Model
- Updated Capital Cost Estimates from East Metro Rail Capacity Study

All previous work will be taken into consideration

AAU Scope of Work



Project Schedule



Project Management Team (PMT)

Representatives from:

Goodhue County
Dakota County
Ramsey County
Hennepin County
Cottage Grove
St. Paul
Hastings
Newport
Red Wing
Prairie Island
St. Paul Park
Metro Transit
Met Council
Mn/DOT
Wash. Co HRA

Meet monthly to guide technical analysis

Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Six Open Houses / Public Workshops

- Three sets of 2 workshops each
- Interactive





Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Listening Sessions

Ten to fifteen participants – four sessions in Feb/March

- Deeper, detailed conversations
- They take place within the regularly occurring meetings of host organizations, minimizing need for extra meetings



Stakeholder Involvement Plan

- Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
  - Group to help guide outreach for the AAU
  - Community and business members from all communities
  - Liaison from Red Rock Corridor Commission to be on CAC
  - Meet three times

The Next Three Months

- Red Rock Corridor Workshop – February
- Host listening sessions around vision/goals
- Hold first CAC meeting – February
- Hold first open house/workshop
- Review previous work
- Finalize goals/vision based on Commission and Community feedback

Questions?

Lyssa Leitner
Planner, Public Works
651-430-4314
Lyssa.Leitner@co.washington.mn.us

Ciara Schlichting
Stantec Project Manager
Ciara.Schlichting@stantec.com

DATE: January 24, 2013

TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission

FROM: Staff

RE: Commission Website Hosting and Communication Services

The Commissions 2013 budget includes $15,000 for website hosting of www.redrockcorridor.com , content management and communication services.

For the second half of 2012, the Red Rock Corridor Commission contracted with Hay Dobbs to provide website hosting through a subcontract with Appevision and provided supplemental communication services for the Commission.

In 2013, the Alternatives Analysis Update (AAU) study will also be underway which includes a significant amount of communication and public outreach activities. Therefore, the need for supplemental communication services is not as great this year. It will still be critically important to make sure the website is running and up to date with new information. There is also a need to create a new page on the website for the AAU study to be the main source for project information. Staff has requested that Appevision, the current website provider put together a proposal to continue to host and manage the website for a 12 month period.

Appevision has proposed to complete the website hosting for 12 months and up to 3 hours of maintenance service per month for $3,000 (same price as 2012) and distribute up to 12 e-newsletters for $2,500. Appevision has also proposed 2 options for website page updates for consideration by the Commission

- Option 1: AAU Page Creation - $2,500
- Option 2: Website Framework Reconstruction (includes AAU page creation) - $10,000

The website framework reconstruction has been another issue identified. The original website architecture has become dated making updates more difficult. If the webpage was converted to a newer design it would be easier to update. This would allow staff to do some of the updates in house instead of going through the website provider. Although this is an identified need it is not something that needs to be done this year.

Staff recommends that the Commission contract with Appevision for the website hosting, enewsletter distribution and AAU page creation (Option 1). The website reconstruction could be considered for 2014 when the Commission may want to look at updating the overall design and look of the webpage.

Action
Authorize WCRRA to enter into a contract on behalf of the Gateway Corridor Commission with Appevision for website hosting, enews distribution and AAU page creation not to exceed an amount of $8,000.

DATE: January 24, 2013

TO: Red Rock Corridor Commission

FROM: Staff

RE: Social Media

At past Commission meetings Commission members have suggested that Red Rock Corridor consider creating a Facebook page to better communicate with the public. The value of a Facebook page lies in its ability to communicate in a different way and about different items. Unlike a website, a Facebook page actively sends information out to those that "Like" the page. It does not require those people to come to the page to seek information. It also would allow the Commission to highlight/promote other related activities/events/media stories that are going on in the corridor.

With the start of the Alternatives Analysis Update (AAU) study now would be a good time to consider starting a facebook page. Creation of a Facebook page at this time allows the Commission to proactively include information about the Facebook page in all of its presentations and materials that it produces prior to public events. Also as more details from the AAU become public, it is anticipated that there will be media coverage and stories about the corridor and its activities. The Facebook page will allow the Commission to take advantage of that coverage.

If the Commission wishes to start a Facebook page, Washington County staff are willing to commit the staff resources to create the page, upload content and monitor comments. Washington County successfully managed the Facebook page for the Gateway Corridor Commission

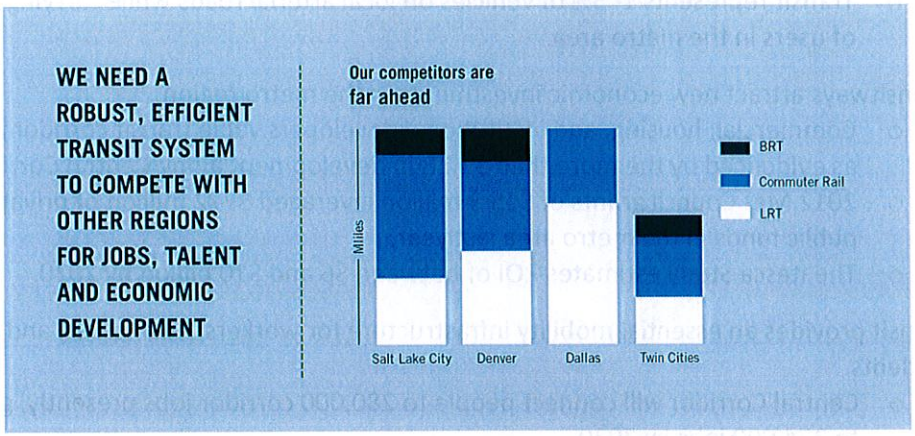
If the Commissions would like to develop a Facebook page a Facebook User and Disclaimer Policy should also be created before the page goes live. Facebook, as a social media communications tool, can be used in multiple ways. It is important to determine the types of content, its frequency and level of interaction with the public when creating a Facebook page that captures the attention of Facebook users. Staff could prepare a draft Facebook User and Disclaimer Policy for review and approval at the next meeting.

Action
Information

A 21st Century Transit System

A Transit System to Support Economic Growth

The Governor understands that to achieve our shared economic vision for a world-class economy, we must prioritize investments in our metro area transit system. A recent study by the Itasca Project, made up of Minnesota's business leaders, concluded in the Twin Cities metro region the return on transit investments will be between $6 and 10 billion if we accelerate our transit system improvements now. The Governor's budget includes a commitment to a multi-model transit system that will give Minnesota a competitive edge for growing business and jobs, drawing new talent, and serving the transit needs of a growing and aging population.

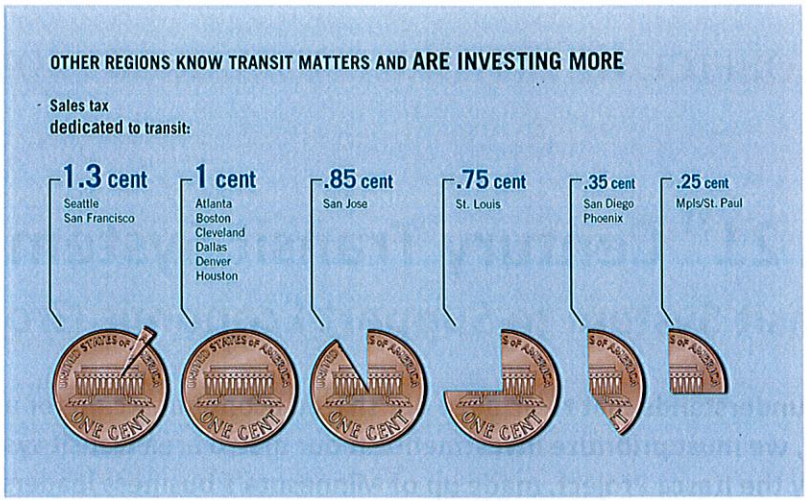


» The Governor recommends a quarter cent local sales tax increase in the seven county metro area to accelerate the build out of metro area transit services and pay for operations of existing services. This funding is necessary to address growing transit demands and maintain a competitive economic region. The additional funding will:

- Eliminate current transit operating structural deficits;
- Fully fund Southwest LRT capital and operating costs;
- Expand and improve bus services across the metro region; and
- Fund as many as 21 new bus and rail transitways over the next 20 years. (Modes may include arterial BRT, highway BRT, streetcar and up to three LRT lines.)

» The Benefits of Investing in Transit

- Regional sales taxes dedicated to transit are successful in many of the our peer regions, including Seattle, San Francisco, Atlanta, Boston, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Houston, San Jose, San Diego, and Phoenix.



- Transit relieves congestion for all Minnesota highway and road users.
    - In Minnesota, transit riders are more than 1/3 of peak hour users of major freeways.
    - If transit riders drove cars instead, we would need to add as much as 1.5 additional lanes on highly traveled routes.
    - Transit represents 1- 5% of vehicles on local arterial roads while carrying 20-35% of users in the metro area.

- Transitways attract new economic investments in the metro region.
    - Commercial, housing, and institutional developers value transit corridor access, as evidenced by the more than $1.2B in development along Central Corridor.
    - 2012 Met Council grants of $15.3 million leveraged $272 million of private and public funds in the metro area last year.
    - The Itasca Study estimates ROI of between $6 and $10 billion by 2030.

- Transit provides an essential mobility infrastructure for workers, businesses, and students.
    - Central Corridor will connect people to 280,000 corridor jobs presently, growing to 374,000 jobs by 2030.
    - Southwest Corridor will connect people to 210,000 corridor jobs presently, growing to 270,000 jobs by 2030.

- Transit development projects create jobs for all Minnesotans.
    - The Central Corridor project has already provided 4,455 construction jobs for Minnesotans.
    - The Southwest Corridor project is expected to directly support 3,650 construction and engineering jobs.

- Transit expansion enjoys widespread support from citizens, local communities, and businesses.
    - A January 2013 poll conducted by local Chambers of Commerce found that "eight out of ten (79%) agreed with the statement that Minnesota 'would benefit from having an expanded and improved public transit system, such as rail and buses'."
    - The same poll found that 65% of poll respondents statewide support an increase in the metro area sales tax to fund transit.



Weekly Update Week of January 21st

On Monday, January 21st, hundreds of thousands of people gathered on the National Mall to celebrate the re-inauguration of President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden. President Obama was joined by Members of Congress on the inauguration platform and later marched in the Inauguration Parade that included a performance by the Fergus Falls High School marching band from Minnesota.

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Minnesota Delegation Notes

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President Obama gives Inaugural Address

On Monday, President Barack Obama was re-inaugurated as part of the country's 57th Presidential Inauguration that included a prayer service, swearing in and parade.

In President Obama's inaugural speech, he challenged Congress to overcome the gridlock and take action on climate change, gay rights and immigration. Citing the country's founding principles, President Obama urged the country to overcome the partisan divide. As Congress prepares to avoid a government shutdown in March, the President made a push for a bold agenda and suggested he would continue to put up a fight and maintain a

more hard-nosed approach in his negotiations with Congress.

Democrats praised President Obama's speech and bold stance on issues that some would argue have been swept under the rug the last four years. Democrats in Congress believed this speech would move their Republican colleagues to respond and move in their direction on the debt ceiling debate, new revenue and spending cuts.

Republicans voiced frustration with President Obama's mischaracterization of their position on federal entitlement programs. Republican leaders in the Senate argued such a bold agenda is not a plan that can bring the country together and ignores the issues our country is facing.

President Obama noted the importance of acting now and how this is just one step in the whole scheme of issue the country is facing. In the midst of a debt ceiling and sequestration debates, the President called on Congress preserve entitlement programs including Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

President Obama's speech suggested he would continue to be aggressive in his tone and actions in his second term. On Tuesday, February 12th, we can accept to hear more details from the President in his State of the Union Address that will come just weeks before his final budget proposal.

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House Votes on Debt Ceiling

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After voting to delay sequestration cuts in January, the House voted this week to suspend the limit on the country's borrowing authority through May 18th. In taking action, the House eliminated the threat of a government default and buys time for lawmakers to address other critical budget deadlines. The bill passed the House with support from Democrats and Republicans on a 285-144 vote and now head's to the Senate where Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has said his chamber would pass the bill. While many leaders, including President Obama, were hesitant to support the legislation because they prefer a long term extension, they have decided to settle for a short term deal so they can address other looming deadlines - the automatic sequestration cuts and the expiration of the current stopgap spending law.

House leaders have commented that this legislation will allow the Treasury Department to pay debts already on the books and puts

the country on a plan to prevent a debt crisis. Members from both sides of the aisle voiced opposition to the temporary fix, describing the move as "playing with economic fire" and more "political games." After Congress addresses the across the board cuts set to hit on March 1st, they will now be forced to revisit the debt ceiling debate and find a long term solution.

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Workforce Investment Act

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Minnesota Congressman John Kline (R-MN2) is the current Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee that is set to revisit the overhaul of federal job training programs in the 113th Congress. Kline cites the work his Committee has done in previous sessions as a good starter for the work they can get done this year. Members from both sides of the aisle and President Obama have agreed the law needs an update. Overlap with the current 47 job training programs have forced lawmakers to find ways to cut, streamline and consolidate the programs. Democrats in the House Committee are expected to oppose the Republican bill, arguing consolidation shifts money away from veterans and the homeless.

Also on the top of Congressman Kline's Committee agenda is addressing the federal student loan interest rate. While lawmakers work to reauthorize the Higher Education Act set to expire at the end of 2013, Congressman Kline said he hoped to include an interest rate fix in the legislation. One of Kline's biggest concerns is finding a permanent solution to the interest rate problem and avoid more one-year, short-term patches that were used last year.

Filibuster Reform

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On Thursday, January 24th, Senate leaders came together to reach an agreement to modify the Senate filibuster rules as part of their attempt to speed up the legislative process on the floor. Some have argued it doesn't do enough but Members of the Senate believe it is a good measure to allow business to progress more quickly in a chamber that has developed a reputation for jamming up legislation.

The agreement does not take away the right to force a 60 vote supermajority vote on bills and nomination, but it does provide two new expedited options for getting legislation to the floor. By eliminating a waiting day after the cloture vote on the motion to proceed and eliminating debate after cloture is invoked, business in the Senate is expected to move quicker.

KEY UPCOMING DATES

January 21, 2013
President Obama and Vice President Biden are inaugurated at the 57th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C.

February 4, 2013
By statute, the President is required to submit his annual budget proposal to Congress by the first Monday in February

February 12, 2013
President Obama delivers the State of the State Address

Late February/Early March
The President is expected to submit his annual budget proposal to Congress. Delays in the budget process are a result of changes in budgeting numbers because of the fiscal cliff deal that was passed at the beginning of January.

March 1, 2013
Spending reductions mandated by the Budget Control Act, collectively known as sequestration, are scheduled to take effect. Postponement was decided in fiscal cliff deal which passed the House on January 1, 2013.

March 27, 2013
The current continuing appropriations law expires.

April 15, 2013
House and Senate are required to adopt a budget resolution for FY2014. If legislators fail to meet deadline, their pay will be put into escrow beginning April 16th.

May 19, 2013
Three-month suspension of the debt-ceiling expires, meaning the U.S. risks breaching the debt limit unless Congress acts again.

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SPECIAL NEWS, NOTES AND EVENTS

On Monday, January 21st, the Minnesota State Society hosted a reception at the Longworth Congressional Building to celebrate the re-inauguration of President Barack Obama. Over 100 people came through to visit with Minnesota friends and meet Members of the Minnesota Congressional Delegation. Senator Al Franken (D-MN), Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN1), Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN4), Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN5), Congressman Collin Peterson (D-MN7) and Congressman Rick Nolan (D-MN8) were in attendance. It was a great opportunity for Minnesotans visiting for the inauguration to meet with their Representatives.

Dennis McGrann also hosted a "Sloppy Joe Social" at his home following the inauguration. Senator Al Franken (D-MN), Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN4) and Congressman Rick Nolan (D-MN8) stopped by to celebrate the inauguration with fellow Minnesotans and friends from Capitol Hill.

Minnesota State Society Annual Walleye Dinner
Wednesday, February 20th, 6 PM
Marriott Metro Center
Washington, D.C.
RSVP Emily Tranter 202/544-9896

Salute Minnesota Counties Reception
Saturday, March 2nd, 4:30-6:30PM
Home of Dennis McGrann
150 North Carolina Ave SE, Washington, DC

Celebrate Minnesota Cities Reception
Monday, March 11, 5-7 PM
Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

MINNESOTA DELEGATION NOTES

Senator Franken (D-MN) reintroduces bill to lower prescription drug costs for Minnesota's seniors. Read more here

Senator Franken and Legislators say better access will make communities safer by reducing rate of repeat offenders, improving law enforcement safety. Read more here.

Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN-01) has been named ranking member of the House AgricultureConservation, Energy, and Forestry Subcommittee. Read more here.

Congressman Erik Paulsen (R-MN-03) release a statement after voting in support of the "No Budget No Pay Act" Read the statement here.

Congressman Erik Paulsen released a statement after voting in support of the short term debt limit increase. Read more here.

Congressman Erik Paulsen applauds passage of pandemic and all-hazards preparedness reauthorization act. Read more here.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN04) joins Defense Appropriations subcommittee. Read more here.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum urges congress to pass violence against women act. Read more here.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum says GOP's temporary debt limit extension fails to provide certainty in the U.S. economy. Read more here.

ADDITIONAL MEDIA

Democrats Set Infrastructure Spending as a Top Priority
By Nathan Hurst, CQ Roll Call

House and Senate Democrats appear ready to put transportation and infrastructure issues on the 113th Congress' front burner.

The push follows President Barack Obama's inaugural remarks, which called on the country to "build the roads and networks and research labs that will bring new jobs and businesses to our shores."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said Tuesday that a bill to promote infrastructure investment would be among the 10 top-priority bills this year for his caucus. The Nevada Democrat said efforts to "mend our broken immigration system, strengthen our schools, and rebuild our roads and bridges" would be centerpieces of efforts by his caucus to create jobs.

The theme appears to be part of a coordinated campaign by the Democrats. Rep. Nick J. Rahall II of West Virginia, the ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, struck the same tone on Wednesday at the panel's organizing meeting.

"We are looking forward to rebuild America and put America back to work with good-paying jobs," Rahall said.

Democratic aides say the renewed push will be based, at least in part, on efforts during the 112th Congress to boost spending on rebuilding and expanding roads, bridges, transit, water, sewer and other infrastructure that were supported by the White House but received no Republican support in either chamber.

A bill that Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., introduced in the previous Congress serves as a model for the approach that Senate Democrats are planning.

The Klobuchar bill would have enacted White House proposals by authorizing the investment of $27 billion for roads and bridges, $9 billion for transit systems, $4 billion for high-speed rail, $2 billion for airport improvements and $1 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration's long-term NextGen air traffic control system upgrade.

The bill would have established a national infrastructure bank with a $10 billion investment, and it paid for the $60 billion package with a 0.7 percent surtax on annual income above $1 million.

Klobuchar's bill was co-sponsored by 23 Senate Democrats but fell short of gaining the 60 votes needed to advance in November 2011. Congress did enact a surface transportation authorization (PL 112-141) last year, but that legislation funded road and bridge programs at existing levels and did not boost funding for rail or airports.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Bill Shuster, R-Penn., said enacting new rail and water resources authorizations will be his priority this year. The current rail authorization (PL 110-432) is set to expire at the end of September, and more than five years have passed since the last water law (PL 110-114) was enacted.

Shuster also said he will meet Thursday with Senate Environment and Public Works Chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., to discuss ways to restructure the Highway Trust Fund. The fund needed a $20 billion infusion from the general fund in last year's authorization to remain solvent through fiscal 2014.

"We've got to figure out how to pay for this in a responsible way," Shuster said. "We need different funding sources, new funding sources."

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said at an aviation industry

luncheon that he had a productive meeting with Shuster on Tuesday to discuss the committee's agenda for the 113th Congress, including a new highway bill.

"I'm happy to report Bill Shuster is committed to working with us on a transportation bill," LaHood said.

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