



Agenda

Gateway Corridor Commission

July 13 – 3:30 PM

Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room
8301 Valley Creek Road
Woodbury, MN 55125

<u>Item</u>	<u>Requested Action</u>
1. Introductions	Information
2. Consent Items	Approval
a. Summary of April 13, 2017, Meeting*	
b. Checks and Claims*	
3. Project Funding*	Information
4. Strategic Planning and Joint Powers Agreement*	Discussion
5. Eugene, OR BRT Trip Lessons Learned*	Discussion
6. Washington DC Commission Fly-In*	Approval
7. Project Updates*	
a. Pre-Project Development Activities	Information
b. BRTOD Project Update	Information
c. Communications Update	Information
8. Other	Information
a. Meeting Dates Summary*	
b. Social Media and Website Update*	
c. Media Articles*	
9. Adjourn	Approval

*Attachments



DATE: June 29, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Meeting Minutes

**Gateway Corridor Commission
 Draft April 13, 2017 Meeting Summary
 Woodbury City Hall, Birch Room**

Members	Agency	Present
Rafael Ortega	Ramsey County	X
Lisa Weik	Washington County	X
Mary Giuliani Stephens	Woodbury	
Dan Kyllo	West Lakeland Township	
Jane Prince	St Paul	
Randy Nelson	Afton	
Mike Pearson	Lake Elmo	
Paul Reinke	Oakdale	X
Bryan Smith	Maplewood	X
Tami Fahey	Lakeland	X
ALTERNATE MEMBERS		
Victoria Reinhardt, Alternate	Ramsey County	
Stan Karwoski	Washington County	X
Richard Bend, Alternate	Afton	X
Kristen Cici, Alternate	Oakdale	
Amy Scoggins, Alternate	Woodbury	
Dave Schultz, Alternate	West Lakeland	X
Richard Glasgow, Alternate	Lakeland	

Ex-Officio Members	Agency	Present
Mike Amundson	Baytown Township	
Paris Dunning	East Side Area Business Association	
Ed Shukle	Landfall Village	
Randy Kopesky	Lakeland Shores	
Bill Burns	Oakdale Area Chamber of Commerce	
Tim Ramberg	WI Gateway Coalition	
Doug Stang	3M	



Jason Lott	Woodbury Chamber of Commerce	
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Others	Agency
Jan Lucke	Washington County
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County
Sara Allen	Washington County
Andy Gitzlaff	Ramsey County
Tom Cook	Metropolitan State University
Brian McClung	MZA+Co
Lindsey Wollschlager	Richardson Richter & Associates
Charles Carlson	Metro Transit – METRO Gold Line
Victoria Nill	MnDOT
Sonja Piper	MnDOT
Linda Stanton	Woodbury Resident
John Bradford	City of Woodbury

The Gateway Corridor Commission convened at 3:30 p.m. by Chair Weik.

Agenda Item #1. Introductions

Introductions were made by those present.

Agenda Item #2. Consent Items

Item 2a. Summary of February 9, 2017, Meeting: Motion made by Commissioner Ortega to approve the February 9, 2017, meeting summary. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Fahey. All were in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried. Mayor Reinke and Mayor Bend abstained.

Item 2b. Checks and Claims: Motion made by Mayor Reinke to approve the checks and claims. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ortega. All in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Ms. Leitner shared that this reflects the final bill and close out for the Kimley Horn contract, with four dollars left over to be rolled back into the Gateway Corridor Commission fund balance.

Agenda Item #3. FTA Pilot Program TOD Grant Consultant Selection

Ms. Leitner reiterated packet information regarding the scope of the project, the consultant selection process, and thanked the five cities along the corridor for help in scope development and consultant review and selection. Four proposals were received and three were interviewed. Recommendation of Crandall Arambula as the selected consultant.

Chair Weik asked about the FTA timeline for the project. Ms. Leitner explained the FTA only requires consistent use of funds; but the cities have requested project timing coincide with their comprehensive planning processes.



Mayor Reinke requested clarification regarding the area planning is to take place. Ms. Leitner reaffirmed the project is not focused the station itself, but the area up to a half mile surrounding the stations. Proposers knew the project budget in advance, so proposals all came in on or just under the stated budget limit.

Motion made by Commissioner Ortega to approve the FTA Pilot Program TOD Grant Consultant Selection. The motion was seconded by Mayor Reinke. All in favor. **Approved.** Motion carried.

Agenda Item #4. Strategic Planning and Joint Powers Agreement

Ms. Leitner introduced Ms. Wollschlager from Richardson Richter & Associates (RRA) to discuss an element of the 2017 Commission work plan – strategic planning and an update to the joint powers agreement (JPA). This includes a look at the intent and purpose of the Commission – since the scope and project area have changed since the Commission’s inception – and the goals of the Commission moving forward. The discussion at this meeting the first of several strategic planning sessions with the Commission.

Ms. Wollschlager explained work performed so far by RRA, a firm that has an extensive background in JPA’s and strategic planning with intergovernmental boards. A summary of work already completed or in progress by RRA:

- Review of current/previous JPA and Commission members, stated purpose and powers, current work plan.
- Request for members to share goals and vision for the Commission, to inform future agreement.
- RRA to perform review of other regional JPAs and their transition to the Metropolitan Council.
- RRA to develop revisions to JPA, working with local legal departments to ensure agreement language is acceptable.

Any amendments to the JPA require unanimous adoption by city councils and county boards. The last amendment to the Commission JPA was in 2010. Ms. Wollschlager listed the stated four main purposes for the Commission in the current JPA, and briefly reviewed the current powers of the Commission.

Commission members reflected on Commission work they were proud of:

- Mayor Reinke shared he thought the LPA decision and collaboration and work to revise the alignment after the Lake Elmo decision were accomplishments. The Commission continued to work well with a common vision, even when there were changes in participants.
- Chair Weik stated pride in the Commission’s public engagement and communications work, the involvement of citizens over the life of the Commission. Increase in citizen awareness as proof of the effectiveness of Commission outreach and engagement. Noted the high quality of the consultants who have performed work on the project, and used the recent applicants to the BRTOD contract as an example. Proud the Commission is undaunted by initiating the state’s first dedicated lane BRT project, and the strong partnership between Washington and Ramsey counties. The Commission visit to Los Angeles, CA in 2014 to learn from other peer transit system, and learn from best practices. Efficiencies found in overlap with stations for Red Rock Corridor. The use of evidence-based findings to guide decision making to condense project from Minneapolis to Eau Claire to the current LPA. Proud project is on federal permitting dashboard for a number of years and has received competitive federal funds for



the TOD grant.

- Mayor Reinke noted appreciation the project listened and incorporated Oakdale resident concerns and feedback into decision making.
- Ms. Leitner stated the importance of early city involvement as Commission members – ensured a legally binding vote earlier in the process than previous projects in the west metro. Resulted in high levels of community buy-in from the beginning.
- Mr. Gitzlaff added the Commission’s success in securing funding from state and federal levels. The voice of the collective Commission body proved effective.
- Commissioner Ortega reiterated appreciation for the strength of partnership between Ramsey and Washington counties.

Elements Commission members would like to see continued into revised JPA:

- Commissioner Ortega expressed need for Commission to remain together to ensure the transition rolls out the way the Commission intended.

Goals for the future:

- Commissioner Karwoski noted importance to continue same high level of communication with members and community, residents with concerns. Crucial for next levels of detailed engineering to communicate and consider public input. Importance to remember this is a precedent setting process.
- Councilmember Smith agreed: need for high level of communication with the public. Important to address resident concerns in upcoming engineering details. Expressed importance in taking time to get precedent setting process right for dedicated lane BRT, especially since it is an example to the rest of the region. Prefers the Commission do this job well, cost effectively.
- Chair Weik emphasized continuing advocacy and open communication with legislators at the State Capitol.

Mayor Reinke asked what the Commission’s role will be in decision making when the project transitions to the next stage of development. Ms. Leitner explained that precedents for project in the west metro had Corridor Management Committees (similar to our previous Policy Advisory Committee), with members from agencies, cities, and counties. The cities will still have municipal approval. The Commission will have some decision-making power with nomination of representative to consultant hiring committee.

Mayor Bend noted that since the LPA route was no longer immediately adjacent to Afton/West Lakeland, and cities are outside half mile TOD area – cities welcome discussion about possibility of withdrawing from the JPA. Potential to revisit re-joining if route extension. Ms. Leitner noted that even though Landfall’s along the route, there were not part of the original JPA and should be considered in the revision. Mayor Reinke noted understanding for Afton and West Lakeland’s wishes to take a break from the Commission – but suggested the importance of their involvement in first/last mile planning, feeder and/or shuttle services. Mr. Schultz agreed it would make sense to re-enter conversation with first/last mile planning. Chair Weik detailed ownership, funding, and operation of the transit center in Forest Lake as helpful information for Afton and West Lakeland officials to consider for the future.



Commissioner Karwoski stated his hope the cities and counties will continue to work together to maximize the use of the transit investment.

Councilmember Smith noted the good example set by the Commission to have difficult conversations and show leadership in communities, Commission keeps together local level champions. This is a real strength of the group. Mayor Reinke added it was even more crucial to stay engaged as project advances to keep councils, stakeholders, public informed. Chair Weik noted importance to keep group together until doesn't make sense anymore, even after municipal approval, for purposes of continuing economic development decisions around stations after implementation. Goal of ever increasing engagement effort and engaging underserved communities.

Ms. Leitner stated St. Paul and Woodbury Commission members will be contacted for their input since they are not in attendance.

Agenda Item #5. Eugene, OR Peer Region BRT Trip

Ms. Leitner provided an overview of trip purpose and draft itinerary presented in the packet about a peer region visit to Eugene, OR at the end of May. The approved BRTOD project consultant, Crandall Arambula is based in Portland, OR and may be able to join the group to discuss work they have done along the EmX line in Eugene/Springfield.

Staff asked the Commission for guidance on how to expend leftover stipend funds, if there were to be any. The Commission was also asked for additional questions to send to Eugene in advance.

Chair Weik asked that an invitation be extended to East Metro Strong's Will Schroer. Councilmember Smith asked if invitations were extended to the Chambers of Commerce, or to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Ms. Leitner confirmed the Chambers were invited, but the CAC had concluded their meetings with the LPA decision – it would be up to the Commission on whether to offer an invitation with stipends. Mayor Bend suggested using the stipend to cover unexpected overruns, or put back into the overall budget. Ms. Lucke requested some stipends be held for legislative representatives. Mr. Gitzlaff stated there may be an eligibility question with rules surrounding the acceptance of stipends.

Chair Weik recalled the use of a GoPro camera on the previous trip to Los Angeles to record video to use as a public engagement and learning tool, and asked something similar be done during the trip to Eugene. Mayor Bend noted interest in how the EmX system monitors stations and collects data.

Councilmember Smith suggested a robust narrative process during the trip debrief, to help trip delegates gather and better communicate their findings to those at home.

Commissioner Karwoski noted importance for a Landfall representative to attend, and asked if anyone from the Oakdale Chamber was asked to attend. Ms. Leitner said she would follow up with Landfall staff, and had reached out to the Chamber but had not gotten a response. Councilmember Smith asked if there were any groups representing underserved populations (i.e. Hmong Chamber) that were contacted. Ms. Leitner responded that business groups that were a part of the Policy Advisory Committee, who had been official



partners.

Agenda Item #6. Project Updates

Item 6a. Pre-Project Development Activities:

Mr. Carlson provided an update on project development activities detailed in the Commission packet.

Evaluation panels for large professional service contracts are to be formed and led by the Metropolitan (Met) Council, and Mr. Carlson shared that two panels of five members apiece needed to be formed for the engineering and project management contracts. Panel members to include representatives from the Met Council, MnDOT, Ramsey and Washington Counties, and input from the Commission needed on the nomination of a municipal staff person from one of the Corridor cities for this role. Key responsibilities for the panel participants: review all received proposals, participate on board and advisory group comprised of representatives from all Corridor cities; but the panel representative would be a voting member in making selections as part of the panel. Representative required to complete non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements, subject to conflict-of-interest rules. Recommendation for same person to serve on both panels. Mr. Carlson clarified that although the municipal representative would be from one city; when serving on the panel they need to represent the interests of the entire Corridor.

Ms. Leitner shared that a formal request had not yet been made to staff. Councilmember Smith suggested city administrators and/or managers be reached out to for nomination of a staff member to serve on the panels. Ms. Leitner suggested emailing the previous Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members with the request. Chair Weik agreed it was logical to approach the TAC.

Ms. Leitner detailed information about the approved 2017 budget expenditure of pre-project development funds included in the Commission packet.

Item 6b. Communications Update:

Mr. McClung noted highlights of information included in the Commission packet. Communications team met with the Woodbury Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee, and City of Woodbury staff were available to answer questions. Upcoming meetings with East Side Area Business Association and the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce.

Agenda Item #7. State and Federal Relations Update

Mr. McClung provided a summary of government relations activities at the state legislative level. Highlight – a March 29 hearing for the House Transportation Finance Committee, which Chair Weik, Mayor Stephens and Rep. Fenton and Ward testified. Mayor Stephens and Reinke met with Senate and House Bonding Committee Chair Sen. Senjem to emphasize Gold Line a locally driven project. In coming weeks, Commission members may be called upon to come to the capitol.

Commissioner Karwoski asked if a bonding bill would be passed this session. Mr. McClung said it was difficult to predict. A lot of talk at local and national levels about need for transportation spending.



Ms. Lucke shared a Federal update memo provided at the meeting, from the Washington County Federal Lobbyist. Three recommendations provided to the Commission, with potential federal legislative scenarios regarding transportation spending listed. Asked for Commission input on the items suggested in the memo: drafting letters to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and a delegation visit similar to one in 2015 to D.C. in early to mid-September at a critical juncture for the project.

Chair Weik suggested she and staff draft letters to be reviewed in advance, have ready for hand delivery by Mr. Burmeister.

Agenda Item #8. Other

Item 8a. Meeting Dates Summary:

Ms. Leitner noted not new info at this time. Next Commission meeting scheduled to be held May 11.

Item 8b. Social Media and Website Update:

This item was covered previously by Mr. McClung.

Item 8c. Media Articles:

A list of media articles included in the Committee packet.

Agenda Item #9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 PM



Agenda Item #2b

DATE: June 29, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Checks and Claims

Communications Contract (MZA + Co)

April, 2017	\$10,162.50
May, 2017	\$22,962.50

Contract Utilization = 29.7%

FTA BRTOD Contract (Crandall Arambula)

May, 2017	\$38,329.39
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Contract Utilization = 3.2%

Total	\$71,454.39
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Detailed invoices can be made available upon request.

Action Requested:

Approval



DATE: July 6, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Project Funding

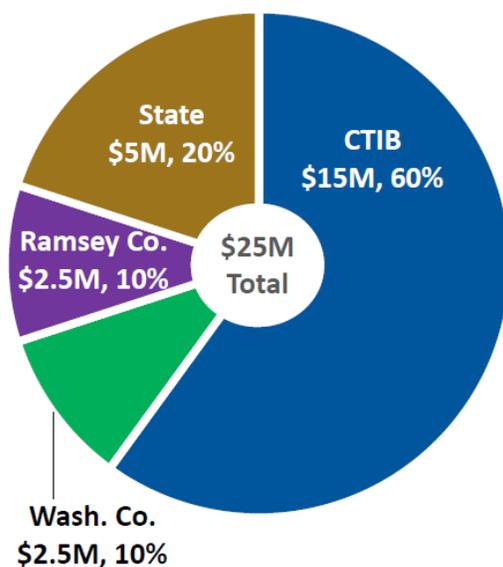
Background

Ramsey and Washington Counties have been members of the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) since 2009. CTIBs Phase I Program of Projects detailed funding structures and partnerships for a limited number of transitway projects including the Gold Line. The funding structure as outline was to include contributions from CTIB, State of Minnesota, the counties each project was in, and the federal government. In spring 2017, CTIB member counties voted to dissolve this association. Additionally, a 2017 request at the State Capitol to fund 20% (\$3 million) of Gold Line Project Development was unsuccessful. The State had previously committed \$2 million towards Project Development. The lack of funding from the State and the dissolution of CTIB requires a new funding structure for the Gold Line.

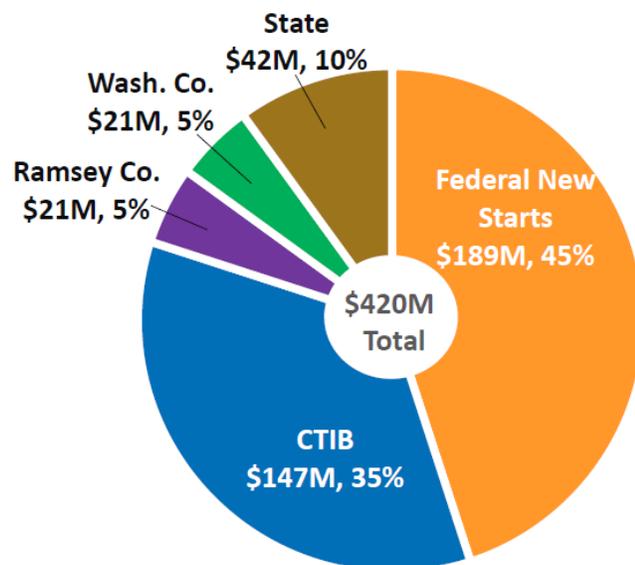
Previous Funding Assumptions

CTIB would have funded 60% of Gold Line Project Development costs and 35% of the overall project costs. The State would have funded 20% of Project Development and 10% of the overall project costs. Ramsey and Washington Counties would have each contributed 10% of Project Development and 5% of the overall project costs below is the previous funding structure for the Gold Line.

Project Development Phase



Overall Funding

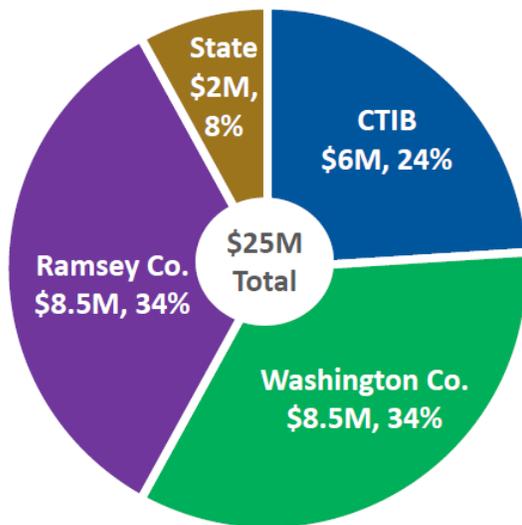




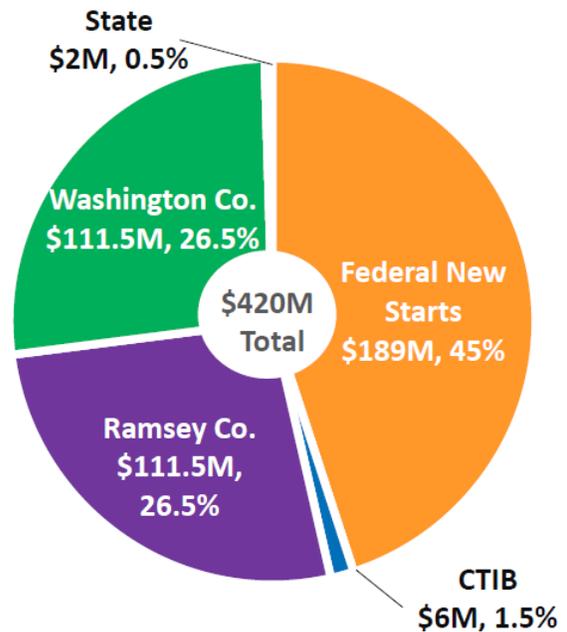
New Funding Assumptions

Washington and Ramsey Counties voted in June 2017 to dissolve CTIB and levy a sales tax to be used for transit and transportation purposes. As part of that action, each county agreed to backfill the missing \$3 million from the State for Project Development. CTIB previously committed \$6 million to the Gold Line for Project Development. The below charts outline the new funding structures with the assumptions that the counties will use the new sales tax to fund their increased commitments to the project. State funds could still be requested and could lower the overall share that each county contributes.

Project Development Phase



Overall Funding



Staff will provide additional details on the new funding assumptions for Gold Line Project Development and the overall cost of the project at the Commission meeting.

Action Requested Information



METRO Gold Line BRT – Gateway Corridor Commission Update

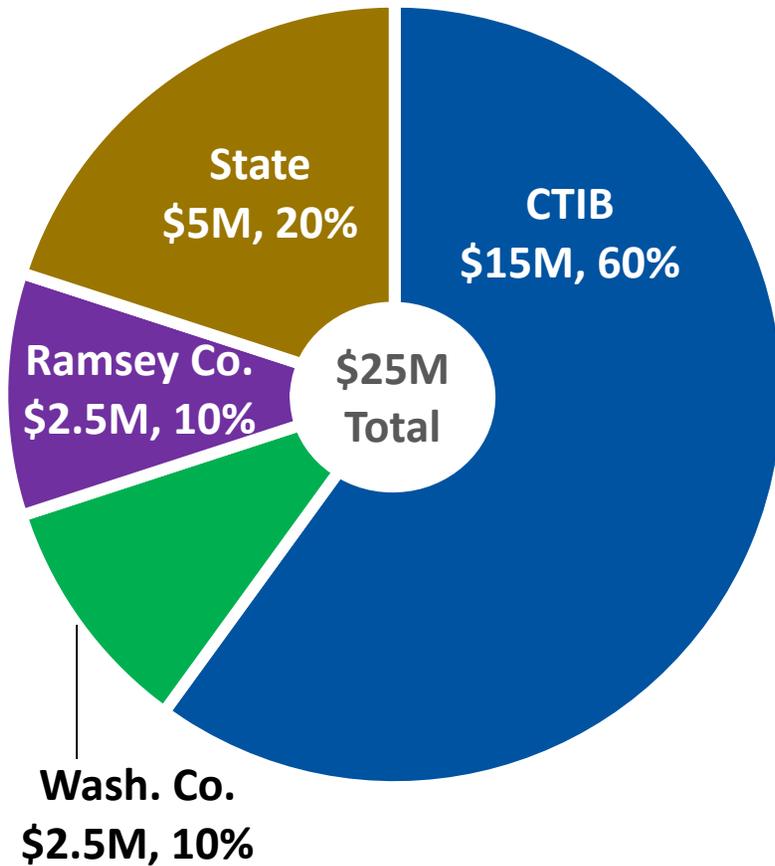
July 13, 2017



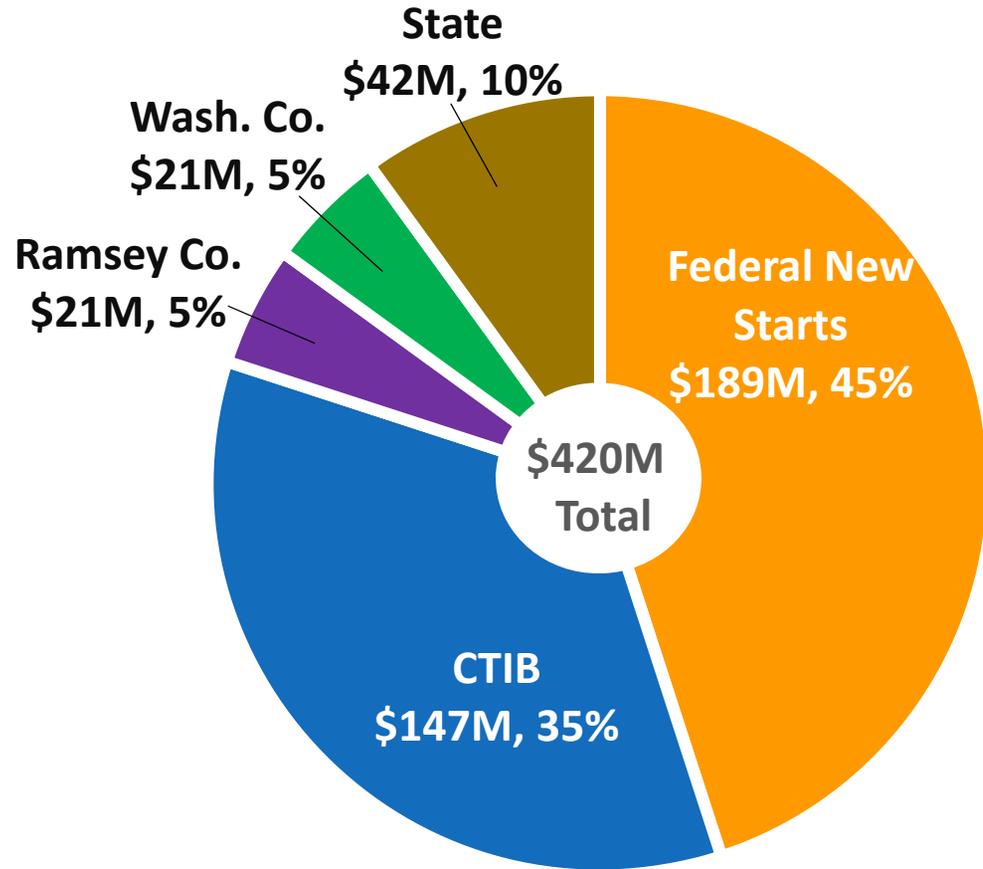
Previous Project Funding Commitments



Project Development Phase



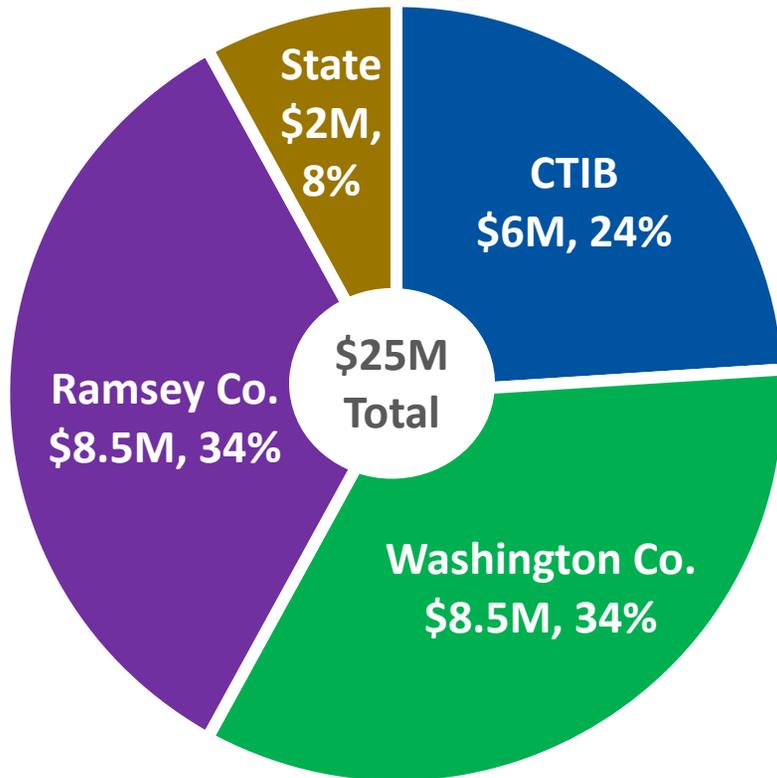
Overall Funding



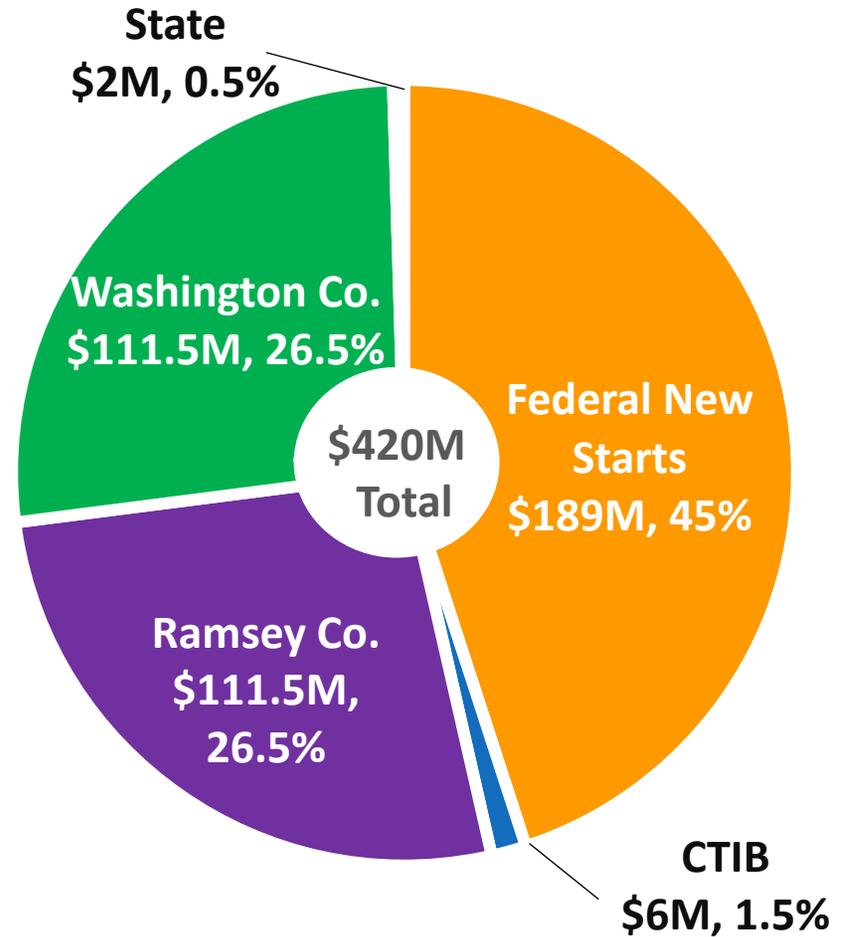
Project Funding Commitments

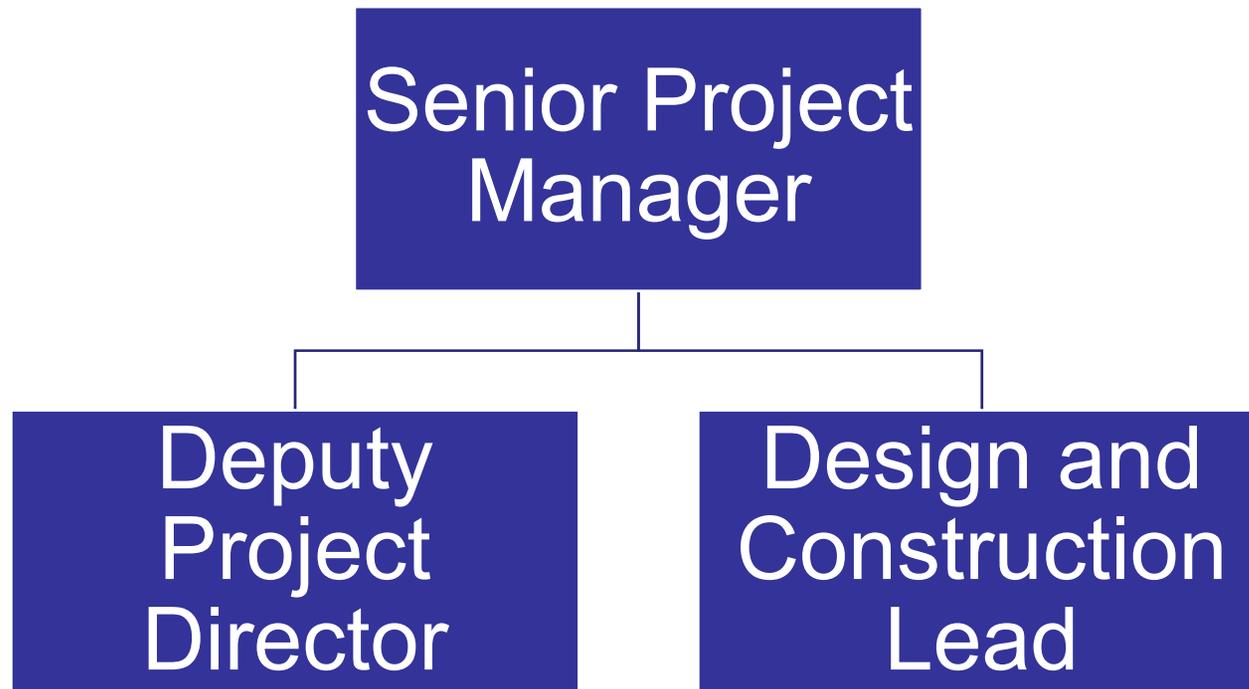


Project Development Phase



Overall Funding





- Project Office Leadership will be staff from Metro Transit, MnDOT, and County
- Supporting staff will be consultants and staff from Metro Transit, MnDOT, and County

2017 Timeline



Activity	June					December
Counties Act on CTIB Dissolution	→					
County/Met Council Agreements		→				
Project Development Application				→		
Engineering Procurement		→				→
Project Management Procurement		→				
Project Office Build-Out				→		→

- Project Management
- Public Involvement and Communication Support
- Preliminary and Final Engineering
- Design Support During Construction

Project Management Procurement



- Project Reporting to FTA, CTIB, and Counties
- Quality Assurance and Control
- Scheduling
- Cost Estimating
- Risk Management
- Financial Management
- Interagency and Third Party Agreements (Development and Compliance)
- Administrative Support
- Safety and Security Management and Certification Plans
- Value Engineering and Constructability Reviews
- Project Management Plans
- Travel Demand Forecasting
- Permitting
- Completion of Environmental Clearance



Agenda Item #4

DATE: July 6, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Strategic Planning and Joint Powers Agreement

At the April Gateway Corridor Commission meeting, Lindsey Wollschlager (RRA) facilitated a strategic planning session on the Commission's goals for existing and future activities. This discussion focused on the Commission's current role as the Gold Line project sponsor and lead advocate, with an eye towards the transition that will occur when the Metropolitan Council becomes the project sponsor and the Gold Line enters the federal New Starts Project Development phase of work.

Since April, there have been significant changes to the Gold Line financial plan as a result of the 2017 Legislative Session, the voluntary dissolution of the Counties Transit Improvement Board, and subsequent actions by Washington and Ramsey Counties to replace funding from the State and CTIB. Together, Washington and Ramsey Counties will now be the primary funding sources for the Gold Line BRT project (see Agenda Item #3).

At the July 13 Commission meeting, Ms. Wollschlager will facilitate a discussion on the Commission's future role in light of the increased funding being provided to the project by the two Counties. The discussion will consider the Commission's involvement with technical, advocacy, and financial oversight activities. This discussion will inform the approach taken to developing potential revisions to the Joint Powers Agreement.

Action Requested Discussion on the Commission's involvement with technical, advocacy, and financial oversight activities to inform the revision of the Joint Powers Agreement.

Strategic Planning Discussion:
Gateway Corridor Commission and
Gold Line Project Partner Roles

July 13, 2017
Woodbury City Hall



Discussion Overview

- Summary of April 13 Commission discussion
- Review recent changes to regional transit funding
- Discussion of Gold Line project partner roles
 - Advocacy
 - Technical
 - Financial

Summary of April 13 Commission Discussion

1. Achievements to date –

- Collaborative approach to reach consensus on Gold Line LPA
- Effective citizen engagement
- Commitment to evidence-based decision-making

2. Future goals –

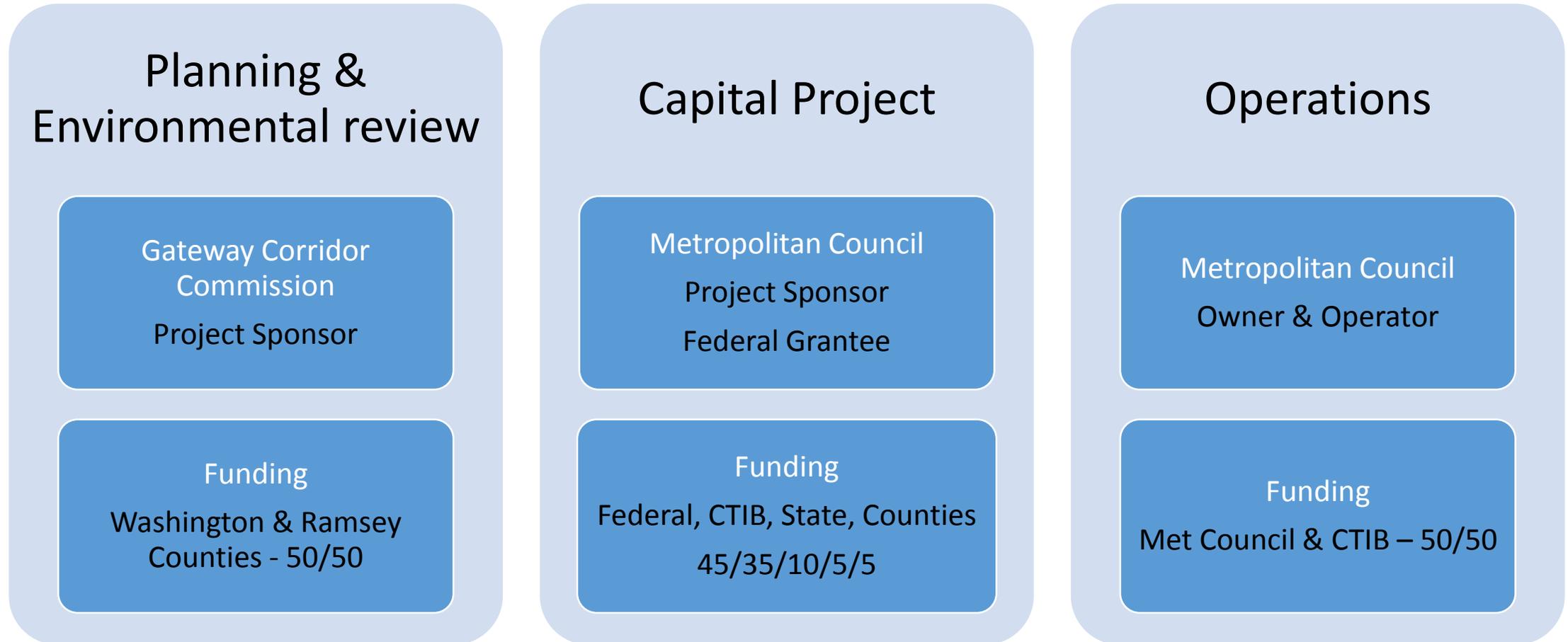
- Ongoing public engagement to inform project decisions
- Continued advocacy to build legislative support and regional partnerships
- Maintain technical excellence

3. Membership considerations –

- Parties to JPA: Counties and Cities within Gold Line alignment
- Ex-officio: Other cities and project partners

Recent changes to transit funding

Pre-2017 Gold Line Project Roles, by phase of work



Commission Roles during Planning & Environmental Review

Gateway Corridor Commission Project Sponsor

Advocacy & Engagement

Technical

Financial

Communications & Government
Relations contracts

Policy Advisory Committee

Funding from Washington &
Ramsey Counties

Technical contracts
Community & Technical Advisory
Committees

Pre-2017 Capital Project Partner Roles

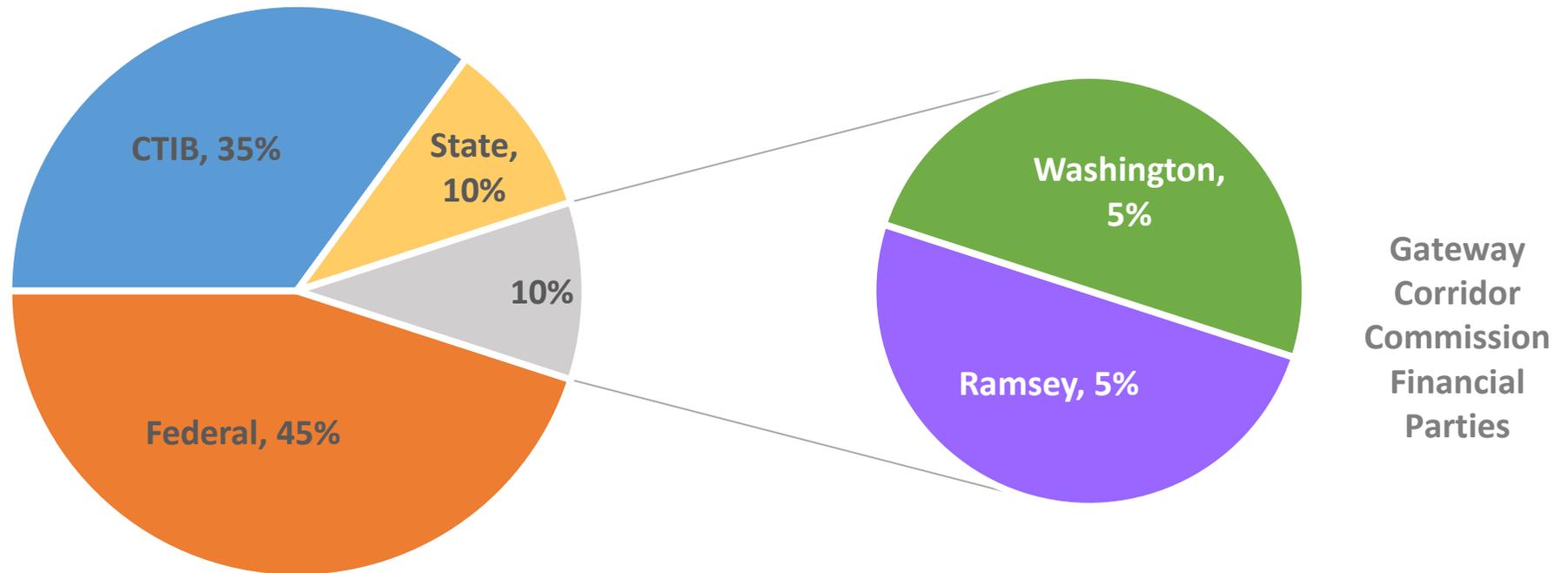


CTIB's Funding and Financial Oversight Roles

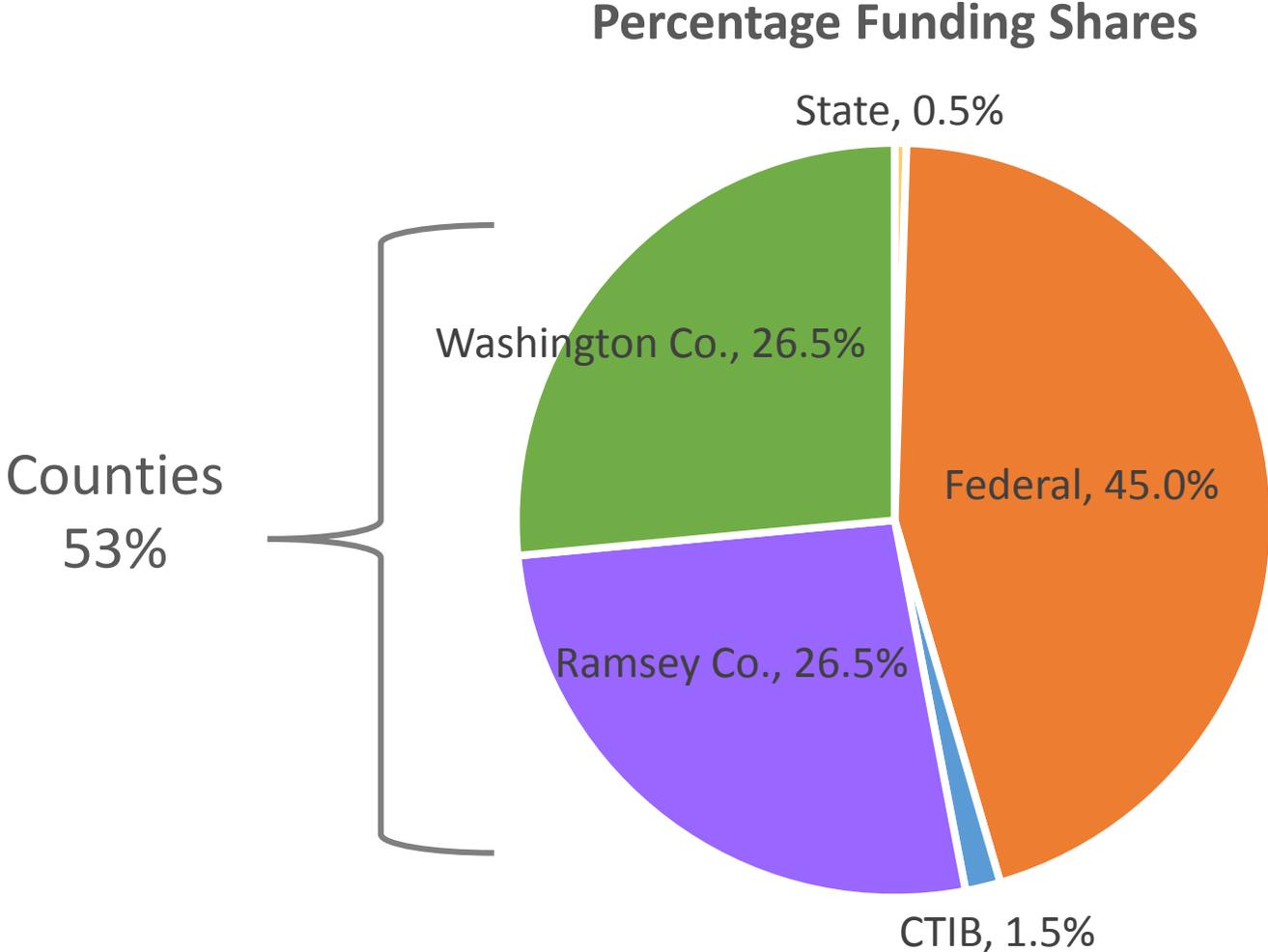
1. Annual grant solicitation
2. Develop financial policies
3. Provide funding commitments – PD, Engineering, and Full
 - Not-to-exceed dollar amount
 - Specific percentage share
4. Independent technical analysis and risk assessments
5. Set terms and conditions for use of grant funds
6. Board approval of at-risk expenditures prior to federal funding
7. Monthly financial oversight meetings

Pre-2017 Financial Plan for Capital Project

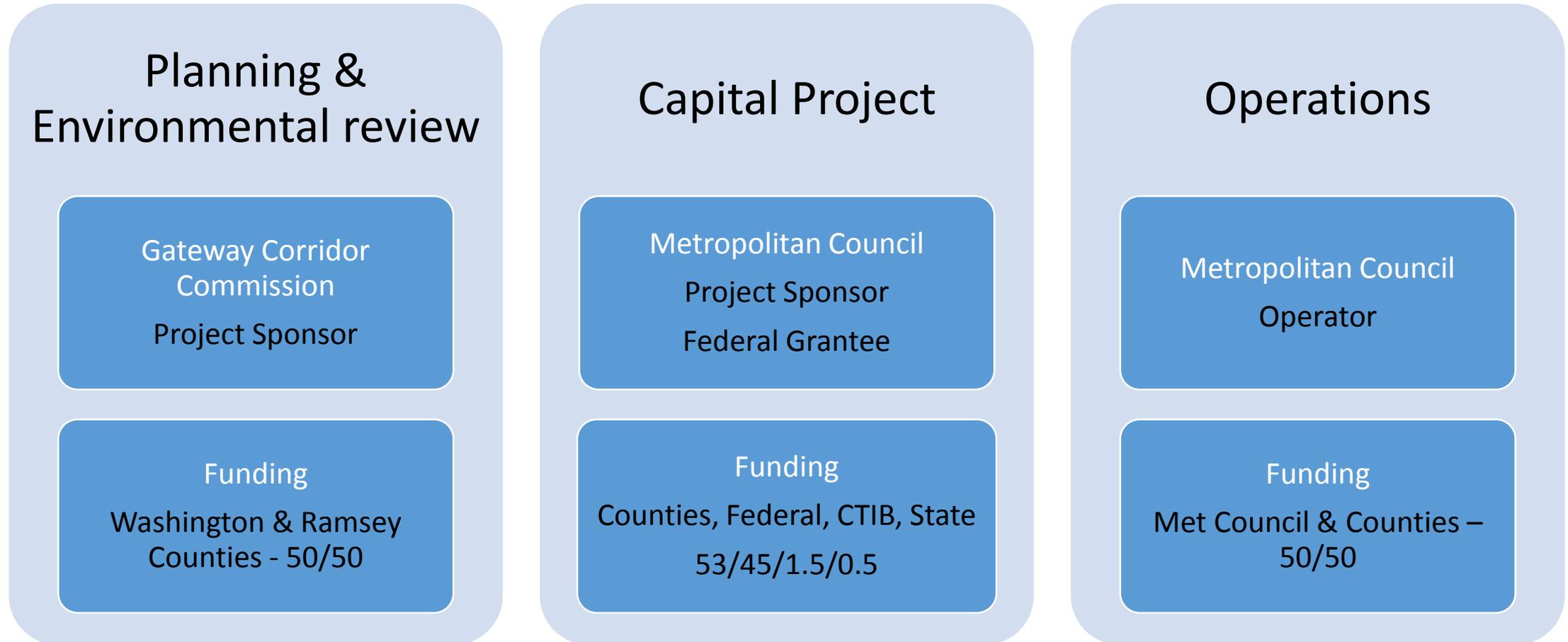
Percentage Funding Shares



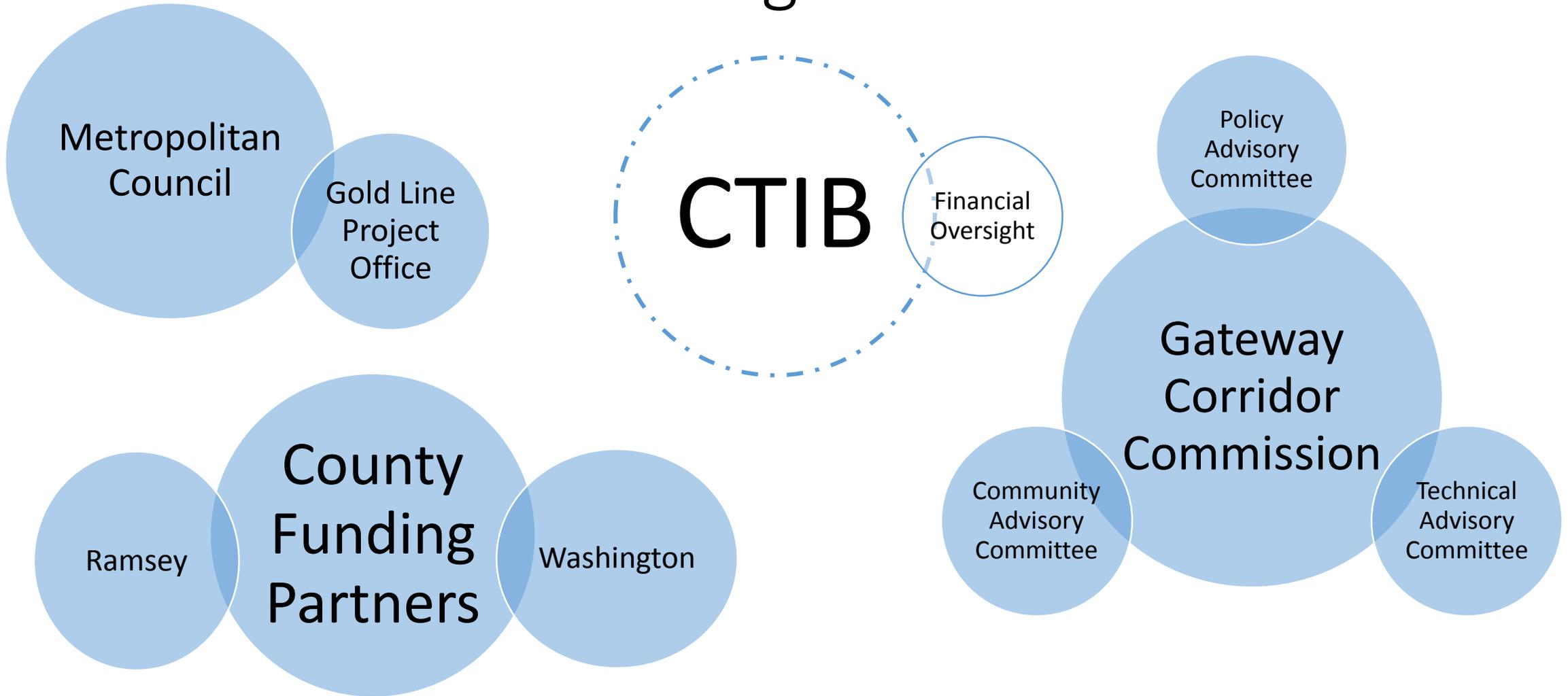
Post-2017 Financial Plan for Capital Project



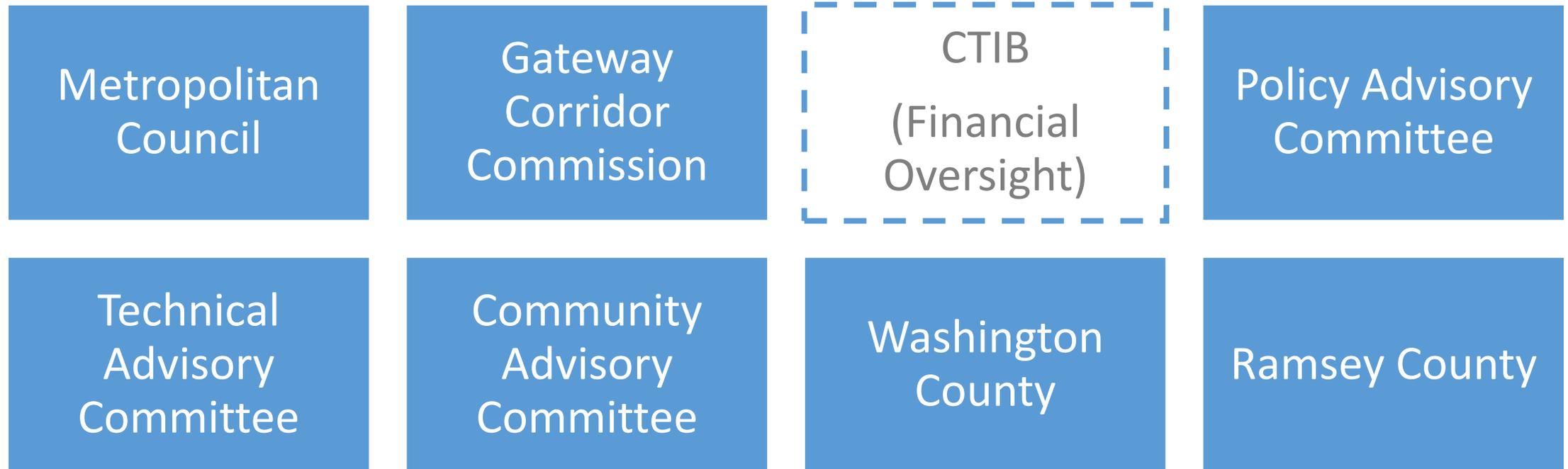
Post-2017 Gold Line Project Roles, by phase of work



Post- 2017, how do all the Project partners work together?



Post-2017, how do all the Project partners work together?



Discussion

Discussion Question

With CTIB dissolution and its larger financial role discussed today, does that change any of your previous input about the Commission's purpose as a joint powers board?

Additional Questions?

Next Steps



DATE: June 29, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Eugene, OR BRT Trip Lessons Learned

Background

The Commission’s 2017 budget and work plan identified visiting a peer region as a priority, in large part because of upcoming station area planning activities and project advancement into project development and engineering phases. The trip’s purpose was to experience another BRT system operating in a dedicated guideway – and learn lessons from another system’s engineering, construction, and station area planning processes. Eugene, Oregon’s successful Emerald Express (EmX) system was selected because its BRT operates in a dedicated lane and the region is of a similar density and context as the Gateway Corridor.

A summary of the trip attendees, stipends used, and overall key takeaways is described below. A video summarizing trip highlights has been produced by MZA + Co and will be presented to the Commission meeting.

Trip Attendees

Name	Affiliation	Stipend
Lisa Weik	Washington County Commissioner	Yes
Stan Karwoski	Washington County Commissioner	Yes
Nora Slawik	City of Maplewood Mayor	Yes
Bryan Smith	City of Maplewood Councilmember	Yes
Darren Tobolt	Aide to Ramsey County Commissioner Reinhardt	Yes
Reuben Collins	City of Saint Paul – Staff	Yes
Mike Klobucar	City of Saint Paul – Staff	Yes
Paul Reinke	City of Oakdale Mayor	Yes
Bob Streetar	City of Oakdale – Staff	Yes
John Bradford	City of Woodbury – Staff	Yes
Gina Gore	City of Woodbury – Staff	Yes
Tom Cook	Metropolitan State University	Yes
Gina Kazmerski	Woodbury Area Chamber	Yes
Darren Schwankl	3M – Facilities Group	Yes
Charles Carlson	Metro Transit – Senior BRT Manager	Yes
Brian Funk	Metro Transit – Senior Operations Manager	Yes
Victoria Nill	MnDOT – Director of Metro District’s Transit Section	Yes



Name	Affiliation	Stipend
Andy Gitzlaff	Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Staff	Yes
Don Theisen	Washington County Public Works Director	No
Jan Lucke	Washington County Transit and Planning Manager	No
Lyssa Leitner	Washington County Regional Railroad Authority Staff	No
Sara Allen	Washington County Regional Railroad Authority Staff	Yes
Brian McClung	GCC Communications Consultant – MZA + Co	No
Andy Burmeister	Lockridge Gindal Nauen – Washington Co Fed. Lobbyist	No
Lee Nichols	WSB – BRTOD Study Consultant	No
Breanne Rothstein	WSB – BRTOD Study Consultant	No
Jason Graf	Crandall Arambula – BRTOD Study Consultant	No
Don Arambula	Crandall Arambula – BRTOD Study Consultant	No

Stipend Reimbursements

At the April 2017 Commission meeting, staff was given guidance to return any unused stipends into the Commission’s fund balance. In the 2017 budget, the Commission allotted \$20,000 for peer region visit stipends, in amounts not to exceed \$750.00 per attendee. Nineteen trip attendees submitted stipend requests, although not all requested the maximum amount. A total of **\$13,470.06** in stipend reimbursement has been requested, leaving \$6,529.94 to be added back into the Commission’s fund balance.

Key Takeaways

In Eugene, the Gateway Corridor Commission delegation was provided background information by Lane Transit District (LTD) staff, took a tour of EmX lines (both existing and under construction), toured station areas, and participated in a panel discussion with EmX transit agency, operations, and city staff, and regional elected officials. Delegation members were actively engaged throughout the trip, and there were opportunities for questions and discussion. Some of the key takeaways:

- Clean & consistent station design
- Real time information & signage
- Features similar to LRT, including level boarding and pre-paid fares, but with lower capital costs
- Clean buses with wide interiors
- Well-planned connections with large employer campuses
- A unique route with good end points

Commission members who attended the trip will be asked to provide more information about what they learned while in Eugene.

Action Requested: Discussion of lessons learned.



Agenda Item #6

DATE: July 6, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Gateway DC Fly-In Options

Background

The Commission's 2017 Work Plan and Budget identifies going to Washington DC to meet with our congressional delegation as a priority for this year. The purpose of the trip is to increase awareness of the project, share recent milestones, and show local support for the project. Depending on the date selected for the trip, the Gold Line Project Development (PD) application will be under review by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The attached memo from Lockridge Grindal Nauen (LGN) provides more details.

Itinerary

The trip would be for two days/one night. Attendees arrive the night before and have an initial strategy meeting upon arrival. Hill meetings would take place on the second day and attendees could fly back that evening.

Contingent

The County's lobbyist, LGN, recommends that a board group of stakeholders (city, county, and state level elected and appointed officials, chamber and business representatives, labor, and other local and regional partners) attend. The Commission should discuss partners that should be invited to join the trip at the Commission meeting. LGN noted that the priority should be cities and counties directly adjacent to the project.

Trip Dates

Based on County Board meetings, City Council meetings, and the U.S. Senate and House of Representative schedules, the first week in September and October are being proposed. LGN recommends that participants arrive by mid-afternoon and depart the evening of the second day. The following dates are recommended with a slight preference to the September dates and to a Wednesday and Thursday as opposed to a Tuesday and Wednesday.

- September 5-6 or 6-7
- October 3-4 or 4-5

Budget

The Commission should also discuss the reimbursement policy for this trip. The approved 2017 work plan and budget includes \$12,000 for travel expenses related to the trip. If needed, contingency funds could be used to cover additional costs. Estimated costs per person would be approximately \$750 to \$1,000 per person depending on which dates are chosen and when travel arrangements are made. In the past, the Commission has offered a stipend to members and partners to cover a portion of the travel costs (airfare, hotel, and food). The Commission should discuss whether stipends should be offered, the amount of the stipend, and who should be eligible for the stipend. In 2015 when the Commission



traveled to D.C., a \$500 stipend was offered and 13 people accepted the stipend. A \$750 stipend was offered for the Eugene, OR trip which was two nights and three days.

Action Requested Determine trip attendees, stipend amount, and trip dates.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FR: Dennis McGrann // Andy Burmeister // Lianne Endo
DT: July 1, 2017
RE: Federal Update and Action Recommendations

The following has been prepared to provide the Gateway Corridor Commission with recommendations related to a potential visit to Washington D.C. to meet with the Minnesota Congressional Delegation.

In an effort to ensure that we are well-prepared for possible visits on Capitol Hill, the following memorandum briefly highlights recommended timing for a visit, potential meeting agendas, and recommended “asks” for the Congressional Delegation.

We greatly look forward to your potential visits and believe that the gathering of influential East Metro leaders in various sectors would help ensure that your message is heard and fully understood.

PURPOSE OF FLY-IN:

Throughout the last several years the Commission has reached and surpassed significant milestones as it pertains to the development of the Gateway Corridor. There are a number of additional upcoming milestones including the project development application submission to the Department of Transportation. It would be extremely beneficial to work to continue to engage Washington, D.C. stakeholders to encourage the quick review of this application.

Given the size and scope of this project and the significant current and future federal involvement that will be needed to complete it, it is important to keep the your federal Congressional Delegation aware of your progress, challenges, and successes so that when the time comes for major funding decisions to be made, they will be fully aware of the project and able to confidently put their support behind it. Having public officials, chamber representatives, business representatives, labor representatives, and other local stakeholders, will underscore the local support and importance of this project.

RECOMMENDED MEETING DATES:

In general, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are in session on Tuesdays through Thursdays. Keeping this schedule in mind, the “fly-in” and “fly-out” habits of Members of Congress, special events going on in Washington, the timing of the Project Development application, as well as the Congressional calendar, we recommend the following dates for the Commission to consider visits to Washington D.C with a slight preference to September 5-7.

- September 5-6 or 6-7
- October 3-4 or 4-5

*LGN Recommends that Fly-In Representatives arrive in Washington by the early to mid-afternoon and depart the evening of the meeting day.

GENERAL MEETING SCHEDULE:

Below is the expected schedule for that we would pursue on behalf of the Gateway Corridor Commission visit to Washington, DC. Please note – requests are typically made 3-4 weeks out. As meetings get confirmed we would update the Commission on the arrangements.

Day 1:

- Afternoon/Evening Arrival
- Special Events as Applicable

Day 2:

- Pre-Meeting Strategy Session
- Office of Senator Amy Klobuchar
- Office of Senator Al Franken
- Office of Congresswoman Betty McCollum
- Office of Congressman Jason Lewis
- Office of Congressman Tom Emmer
- Possible meetings with Offices of Congressman Rick Nolan, Congressman Keith Ellison
- Post-Meeting Strategy Session
- Evening Departure

LODGING AND FLIGHTS:

We are working with Gateway Corridor Commission staff to identify lodging and flight options that will be able to accommodate the group and also the budget needs set out by the Commission. As viable options become available that we are made aware of, we will alert staff.

BASIC ASKS:

The following “asks” have been prepared in advance for consideration. These asks will change, expand, and be finalized during a pre-meeting strategy session prior to the meetings in Washington.

- **“ASK” FOR DELEGATION:** “We have (or will soon be submitting) our PD Application for the Gateway Corridor. It is our hope that the Delegation can encourage the Department to put the resources required to quickly and efficiently review the application”
- **“ASK” FOR DELEGATION:** Please continue to support the Capital Investment Grant program which is the mechanism by which the federal government financially supports the development of transit projects.

DRAFT PRE-MEETING STRATEGY SESSION AGENDA:

Pre-Meeting Strategy Session Agenda
Gateway Corridor Commission
TBD

AGENDA

- I. **Welcome** – Dennis McGrann // Andy Burmeister
- II. **Introductions** - GCC
- III. **Overview of Federal and Legislative Status** – LGN
- IV. **Overview of Federal Transit Programs** – LGN
- V. **Review of Schedule and Overview of Meetings** - LGN
- VI. **Recommended Agenda for Hill and Agency Meetings** – LGN
 - i. **Thank you!**
 - ii. **Overview of Broad Base of Coalition (business, government, labor)**
 - iii. **Introductions**
 - iv. **Project Status Update**
 - v. **Transit Benefits**
 - vi. **Economic Benefits**
 - vii. **Safety Considerations**
 - viii. **Goals**
 - ix. **“The Asks”**
 - x. **Conclusion // Thank you**
- VII. **Discussion of “The Ask(s)” and Desired Outcomes** – GCC // LGN
- VIII. **Discussion of Desired Agenda and Determination of Speaking Order** – GCC // LGN
- IX. **Meeting Conclusion**

CONCLUSION:

We will continue to monitor federal transportation and transit policy legislation. Additionally, we will continue to provide up-to-date analysis throughout the process. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time with questions, comments, or concerns.

Dennis McGrann
Dmmcgrann@locklaw.com
Phone: (202) 544-9841
Cell: (202) 669-4591

Andy Burmeister
Arburmeister@locklaw.com
Phone: (202) 544-9844
Cell: (202) 713-0895



Agenda Item #7a

DATE: July 6, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Pre-Project Development Activities

Update on Project Activities

Over the past two months, staff from Metro Transit, MnDOT, and Ramsey and Washington Counties have been working on multiple items to prepare for Project Development. Staff from Metro Transit will be at the Commission meeting to provide further details but work has advanced in the following areas:

- Drafting scopes of work for the engineering services, project management consultant, and environmental services work
- Drafting the letter to FTA to enter Project Development
- Funding and Cooperative Agreements
- Funding commitments
- Section 106 Coordination
- Metro Transit project website
- Schedule refinement
- Project Office Location
- Staffing

Near-Term Schedule Update

One of the main focuses of the project team has been to refine a day-by-day schedule between now and when FTA accepts the Gold Line into Project Development (PD). PD can only be two years which means the schedule for releasing RFPs, submitting the PD letter, and approvals of funding agreements need to be orchestrated in order to take advantage of the full two years and to only spend funds during PD so funds can count as match to federal dollars. The day-by-day schedule is being updated in real-time as the Metropolitan Council Procurement Unit finalizes the schedule to release the RFPs. The detailed schedule for the remainder of 2017 will be provided at the Commission meeting.

Procurement Process

There are two procurement processes underway to begin Project Development. Both of these procurements, and subsequent contracts, are envisioned to last through construction of the project. The first is the Engineering Services Contract (ESC) and the second is the Project Management and Environmental Services Contract (PMC). Below are summaries of items that are included in each procurement.

- Engineering Services Contract (ESC):
 - Project Management
 - Public Involvement and Communication Support
 - Preliminary and Final Engineering
 - Design Support During Construction



- Project Management and Environmental Services Contract (PMC):
 - Project Reporting to FTA, CTIB, and Counties
 - Quality Assurance and Control
 - Scheduling
 - Cost Estimating
 - Risk Management
 - Financial Management
 - Interagency and Third Party Agreements (Development and Compliance)
 - Administrative Support
 - Safety and Security Management and Certification Plans
 - Value Engineering and Constructability Reviews
 - Project Management Plans
 - Travel Demand Forecasting
 - Permitting
 - Completion of Environmental Clearance

Per Metropolitan Council policy, an evaluation panel (EP) of at least five members is required for contracts over \$10 million. Members must be officially named by the Council's Regional Administrator or a designee. For these two procurements, the EP will consist of agency staff from the Metropolitan Council and/or Metro Transit, MnDOT, Washington County, and Ramsey County, as well as a municipal staff designee representing the Gateway Corridor Commission. At the last Commission meeting, members directed staff to reach out to the cities for them to self-select to be on the EP. EP members will review the proposals, interview consultant teams, and vote on consultant selection. Once the RFPs are posted, no project partners should have contact with any consultant who is intending to submit a proposal for one or both RFPs.

A schedule for the procurement process including evaluating the proposals and the contracting process will be provided at the Commission meeting.

Action Information



Agenda Item #7b

DATE: June 29, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: METRO Gold Line BRTOD Plans

Key Work Activities/Progress from end of April to late June 2017

▪ Meetings

- *Project Scoping Discussion w/ Technical Team (TT)* – Video conference with WCRRA and the cities on April 12, 2017 to discuss clarification and adjustments of work plan elements and preparation for an upcoming scoping conference call with the cities.
- *Project Management Team (PMT)* – PMT video conference on May 3, 2017, to review itinerary and agenda for the project Kick-Off Meetings on May 8-10.
- *Project Kick-Off Meetings* – The cities and key stakeholders (3M & Ramsey County) met with the consultant team in St Paul (WSB office) to discuss project scope, city specific previous/ongoing plans relevant to the project and issues/opportunities at each station—May 8-10
- *Woodbury Stakeholder Meeting* – Video and in person conference on May 19 with the consultant team, City of Woodbury, WCRRA and Doran Properties to discuss BRT Station and TOD development opportunities within the Woodbury Theater station area.
- *Project Management Team (PMT)* – PMT meeting on May 24 to debrief Kick-off Meetings, review consultant station area assessment and discuss upcoming Tour of BRT facilities in Eugene, Oregon
- *Technical Team Meeting #1 (TT)*- TT video conference and in-person meeting at WSB office with the cities, WCRRA, and consultant team to a review summary of Kick-Off meeting, consultant station and corridor assessment, overarching project goals and next steps
- *Project Management Team (PMT)* –PMT video conference on June22, 2017, to review itinerary and agenda for the upcoming Technical Team Meeting #2 scheduled for June 26-27 in St Paul.
- *Technical Team Meeting #1 (TT)*- Individual meetings in St Paul with WCRRA/consultant team and each city and Ramsey County on June 26-27 to review/confirm project objectives; confirm corridor assessments and issues for further refinement; corridor assessments and analysis needs, identify level of community engagement and project messaging, and next steps



▪ Other Project Activities

- *Emerald Express Tour-Eugene, Oregon* – Gateway Corridor Commission tour of the Eugene BRT system and development. On June 2, Crandall Arambula toured with the BRT system with the Gateway Commission and provided details on station area planning in Glenwood, Springfield and the PeaceHealth Medical Center.
- Identified necessary BRTOD Plan materials and coordinated schedule with Oakdale for upcoming City Council meetings in August

Upcoming Activities

- Coordinate with cities on final schedule for monthly Technical Team meetings
- Review draft community engagement schedule and key milestones with consultant team July 6.
- July 14 Video Conference with Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA) to discuss BRTOD Plans project and coordinated effort with the County's work plan and vision for economic development.
- Provide additional materials for WCRRA regarding side vs center running BRT for Woodbury-Bielenberg Road segment.
- Prepare draft community engagement schedule and initial engagement actives for each station
- Prepare outline of Transit Academy Manual and training sessions
- Prepare draft Stakeholder Involvement Plan

Action Requested: Information.



Agenda Item #7c

DATE: July 6, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Brian McClung, MZA+Co
RE: Gateway Corridor Communications and Government Relations Update

Since the most recent Gateway Corridor Commission meeting the legislature concluded their work for the 2017 session.

Government Relations – MZA+Co, along with our partners at Cook Girard Associates, represented the Gateway Corridor Commission in our efforts to receive \$3 million in state funding for the Gateway Gold Line BRT planning process. We were disappointed the legislature did not include Gold Line BRT in the final 2017 bonding bill.

There are a number of reasons the funding was not included in the final bonding bill, which we will outline below. However it is very important to focus on the broad bi-partisan support for the project that was demonstrated throughout the session. This is critical for future efforts to move the project forward.

The strong community support was demonstrated Woodbury Mayor Mary Stephens and Oakdale Mayor Paul Reinke and 3M lobbyist Doug Stang, who attended meetings throughout the session with key legislators and staff. These meetings with leadership, committee chairs and staff helped create a better understanding of the Gateway Gold Line BRT project and its importance to the East Metro viability for jobs and quality of life.

Mayor Stephens and Commissioner Weik also provided testimony to the House Transportation Finance Committee that was helpful for those legislators to gain appreciation for the project. Also, Commissioner Weik and Commissioner Karla Bigham made numerous calls and visits to key legislators and the Administration on behalf of the project. The support of the Mayors, Washington County Commissioners and the business community made a difference in gaining support that kept the project under serious consideration until the very end.

The four area legislators who were authors of the funding bills – Sen. Karin Housley, Sen. Susan Kent, Rep. Kelly Fenton and Rep. JoAnn Ward – remained strong supporters and worked throughout the session on the bonding request. They regularly met with leadership, committee chairs and minority

leads as well as the Governor's office to promote Gold Line BRT and were also critical to the support the project received.

There is no one single reason, but challenges were primarily in the House, that resulted in the project not being included in the final bonding bill. One major obstacle was the general opposition to transit funding from a group of House Republican caucus members. Included in that group were some Gold Line area legislators, most vocally Rep. Kathy Lohmer, who were very vocal opponents of all transit and specifically the Gold Line. Another issue was the CTIB dissolution and the funds that would go back to the counties, along with the additional taxing authority. Legislators were aware this could be a source of funding to keep the study moving forward, along with the \$2 million in state funds previously committed.

Going into the session, we knew this would be a heavy lift given the challenges. Looking forward, it will be important to strengthen the support in the community and among elected officials in the East Metro where transportation gridlock is not going away. The residents and employers' needs for transit options will only become magnified and the legislature will need to respond with the most cost-effective, efficient strategy of the Gateway Gold Line BRT.

Strategic Communications – For two weeks in May, we used Facebook and Twitter to share educational information about Gold Line BRT. Through these promoted ads we increased the number of people who viewed the Gold Line BRT Overview Video on YouTube, where we now have more than 750 views.

In total, we delivered more than 101,000 online impressions and had a click-through rate of 1.28%. We also had more than 29,000 views of our video through Twitter and Facebook. The click-through rate for our Facebook display ads was 4.34%, which is one of the higher click-through rates our online ad team has seen for an educational awareness campaign like this in 2017.

The complete report with additional data is included in the attached document.

Social Media – We continue to use Twitter and Facebook to share information. The @GoldLineBRT twitter account started on March 25. We are now at 178 followers.

Our Facebook page is at 908 likes. When we started our Facebook ads in early May we were at 706 likes, so we added more than 200 followers during that campaign. Our FB post in June about the 10 most congested highways in the East Metro (a Pioneer Press article) received 1,000 views, which is very strong for organic engagement.

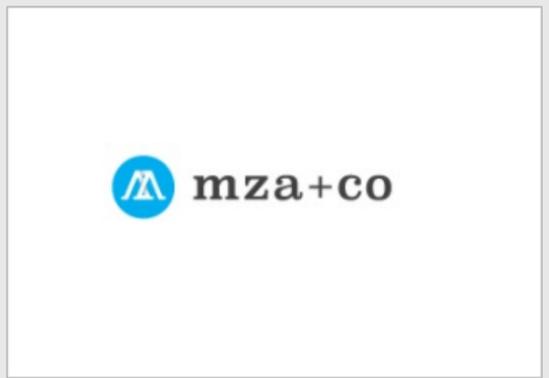
Action Requested: Information.



Goldline BRT

MN Cities

03 May 2017 - 17 May 2017

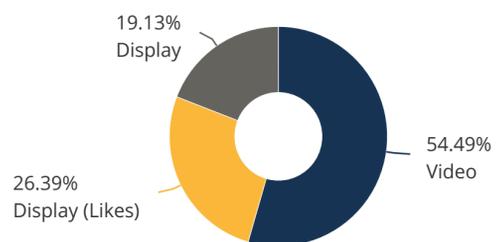


Overview

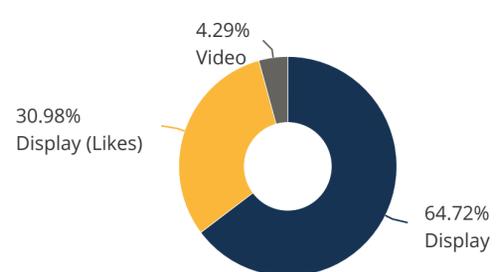
Media Type	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Video Views
Video	55,426	56	0.10 %	29,699
Display (Likes)	26,842	404	1.51 %	--
Display	19,458	844	4.34 %	--
Total	101,726	1,304	1.28 %	29,699

1 - 3 of 3 items

Impressions



Clicks



Display

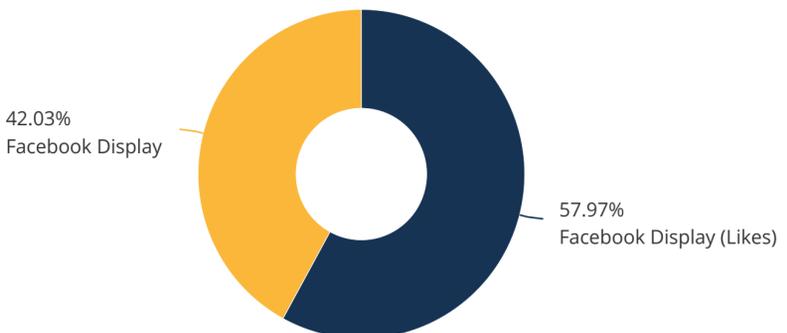
Display

Display Source	Target	Impressions	Clicks	CTR
▼ Facebook Display		19,458	844	4.34 %
	MN Cities - Campaign C	19,458	844	4.34 %
▼ Facebook Display (Likes)		26,842	404	1.51 %
	MN Cities - Campaign B	26,842	404	1.51 %
Total		46,300	1,248	2.70 %

1 - 4 of 4 items

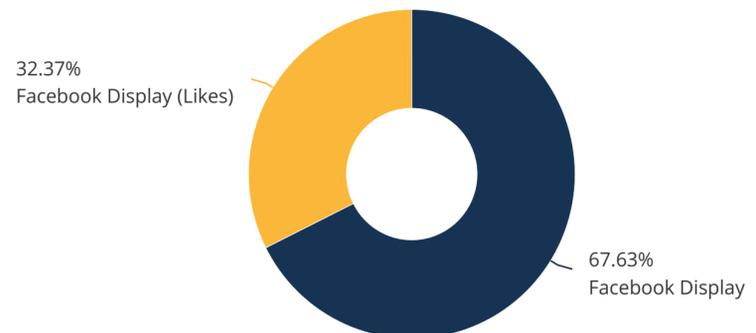
Display

Impressions



Display

Clicks



Video

Video

Video Source	Target	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Video Views
Facebook Video		17,997	56	0.31 %	15,656
	MN Cities	17,997	56	0.31 %	15,656
Twitter Video		37,429	--	0.00 %	14,043
	Untitled	37,429	--	0.00 %	14,043
Total		55,426	56	0.10 %	29,699

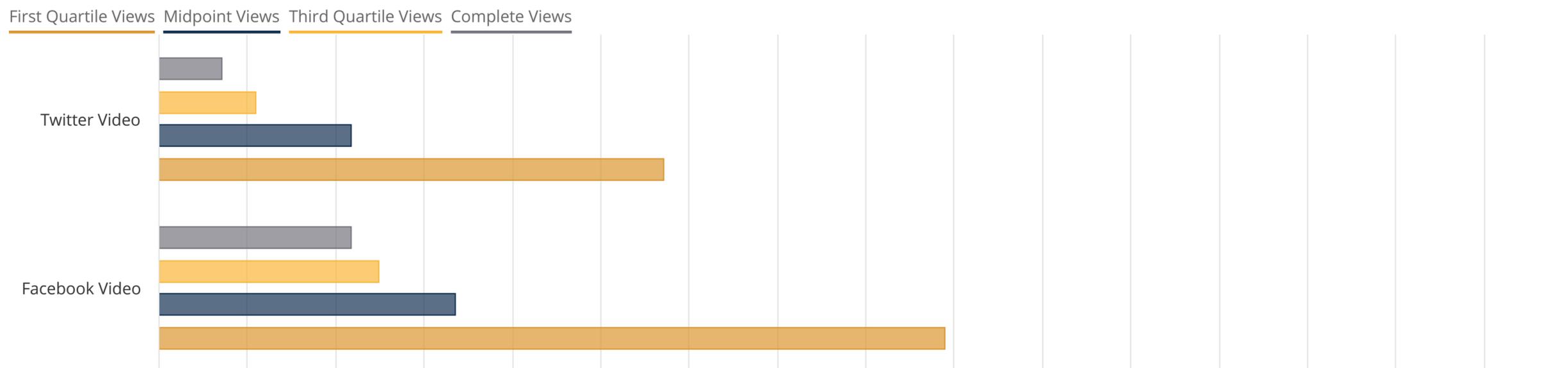
1 - 4 of 4 items

Video Completion

Video Source	Video Views	First Quartile Views	Midpoint Views	Third Quartile Views	Complete Views
Twitter Video	14,043	57.12 %	21.72 %	10.99 %	7.17 %
Facebook Video	15,656	88.91 %	33.51 %	24.81 %	21.73 %

1 - 2 of 2 items

Video Completion





Agenda Item #8

DATE: June 30, 2017
TO: Gateway Corridor Commission
FROM: Staff
RE: Other Items

Items 8a. Meeting Dates Summary

Included below is a summary of the upcoming Commission meetings. During the Pre-Project Development phase, public engagement meetings will be limited because there is not new information to share or input needed. Any public meetings that are scheduled will be included in the packet.

Month	Meeting	Date	Planned Start Time
August	Commission	August 10	3:30pm

Item 8b. Social Media and Website Update

Facebook

The Gateway Corridor Facebook page was launched on Monday, February 20, 2012. The page currently has 908 'Likes'. There have no instances during the reporting period where comments have been removed in line with the Commission's social media policy.

YouTube

The "views" of the Gateway Corridor videos ranges from 12-4,909 views.

Twitter

The Gateway Corridor Twitter account (@GoldLineBRT) was launched in March 2016. The account currently has 178 followers.

Item 8c. Media Articles

Attached are media articles about the Gateway Corridor since the last meeting in April.

Action Requested: Information.

OPINION > PIONEER PRESS EDITORIALS

Editorial: Keep buses running and our workforce mobile

By **PIONEER PRESS EDITORIAL BOARD** | Pioneer Press

PUBLISHED: April 30, 2017 at 12:44 am | UPDATED: May 1, 2017 at 9:18 am

What's ultimately at stake if state lawmakers make deep cuts to public transit in the metro area? Jobs.

Business groups are emphasizing that point, and it should resonate with transportation conference committee members as they consider measures that could downgrade the system.

We know that public transit — the bus, primarily — connects people to jobs and business enterprises to the workers they need, helping keep the region competitive versus other parts of the country. According to the Met Council, 80 percent of its transit trips are for day-after-day essentials: getting to work or school.

We're also told that the next generation of workers — those Minnesota must attract and keep as workforce shortages develop — want the flexibility transit affords.

But in House and Senate bills, there's potential for here-and-now, personal impact on Minnesotans, as well. Metropolitan Council Chair Adam Duinick says that House provisions would force cuts to bus service of up to 40 percent.

At that rate, every one of Metro Transit's 151 routes would be affected, with either reduced frequency of service or elimination altogether, he told the editorial board.

Bentley Graves of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce notes the focus in the House bill, in particular, on the "workhorse of the system" — regular-route buses.

That's puzzling coming from the Republican-controlled Capitol, from legislators who have told us over the years that they favor the flexibility and efficiency of regular bus service over other more expensive transit investments, such as light rail.

Among its points in the debate, the organization representing the CEOs of the state's largest businesses emphasizes that transit must be part of any comprehensive transportation bill. "It's important for recruiting talent. It's important for jobs," Charlie Weaver, executive director of the Minnesota Business Partnership, told us.

The Business Partnership also wants to see counties treated the same "when it comes to their ability to levy for transit improvements" and legislation that will "do no harm to existing transit funding."

Of downtown workers in St. Paul and Minneapolis, 40 percent use transit.

"Imagine the congestion if significant transit cuts take away their options," says a statement from the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce and the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The chambers also have launched an advocacy website — StopTransitCuts.com — to encourage riders and others to contact lawmakers and make their point: "If you use transit, your service will get significantly worse," the site warns. "If you drive, more people will be in front of you at the stoplight. Either way, you'll get to work later."

The arguments are part of the long-running transportation debate in a state where the issue may be more partisan than elsewhere, Duninck told us. Partisan or not, debate about the best ways to spend public money is always necessary. It forces better number-crunching and brings tradeoffs to light. Transit investments are large and ongoing, and debate about the value we receive from spending public money on public transit — as with roads and schools and everything else — is crucial.

There's clearly lots of bargaining ahead. Rep. Paul Torkelson, House Transportation Finance Committee chair, who leads the conference committee, told us that the proposal represents "our initial position" and that House and Senate members will be "working on finding common ground."

Torkelson, a Republican from Hanska in south central Minnesota, said he understands "how important transit is to the metropolitan community." He also expressed concern about "some of the claims the Met Council is making regarding their funding shortage" and said he is working with the council to resolve them.

Other factors add still more complexity to the decision-making. Included are consideration of a fare increase (the last was in 2008) and complications involving the potential dissolution of the Counties Transit Improvement Board, which has helped fund and advance mass transit in the metro area.

There's also concern about policy provisions lawmakers included in their work. Among them, the House bill "pre-empts local control by preventing regional railroad authorities and cities or counties from spending any funds to study light-rail projects unless the Legislature specifically authorizes the project," Duinick noted in testimony. "This would force local government to stop any transitway planning in its tracks, making the Legislature the central transit planning agency."

The House version is punitive in many respects, Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega told us, and it would have hurt transit planning, especially in the east metro area, where projects include the Gold Line, Riverview and others.

We would not have rail service, let alone a robust bus system, if it weren't "for counties advocating for transit, going back to the '90s," said Ortega, who chairs the Regional Railroad Authority.

The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce is concerned the measure would "essentially prevent the metro area from continuing to build out the transit system," Graves told us. "We know from our members that transit is important in getting their employees to work and customers to their door."

Still, members of both parties in both houses at the Capitol "say that everyone recognizes the importance of transit," Graves said, "So we're hopeful that this is something that is going to be worked out."

The transportation bill appears to be “on its own path,” Duininck observes, separate from other controversial measures, “and that’s a good thing.”

Agreed. And as they weigh the arguments, the idea of workforce mobility should guide the conferees.

Tags: PP Editorials



Pioneer Press Editorial Board



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OPINION > PIONEER PRESS EDITORIALS

Editorial: Keep the east metro Gold Line project on pace

By [PIONEER PRESS EDITORIAL BOARD](#) | Pioneer Press

April 27, 2017 at 12:02 am

An essential east metro project is at a tipping point.

That's the assessment of Woodbury Mayor Mary Giuliani Stephens as she and other advocates make the case — a substantive one — for \$3 million in state bonding that will keep Gold Line development on pace, avoiding delays and added costs.

State lawmakers should join Gov. Mark Dayton in making sure their bonding priorities include development funds for the line running east from downtown St. Paul along the Gateway Corridor.

The governor made the commitment at a meeting last year in Woodbury, acknowledging concern about east-west metro balance and calling the project a way to begin to address it. Gold Line development does that, and more:

It's not your typical transit project: The line — aimed at being ready for riders in 2024 — has support on both sides of the aisle from lawmakers who understand the value of its flexibility and how that reduces cost overall, Giuliani Stephens told the editorial board.

The Gold Line is significant as Minnesota's first bus rapid-transit line to operate in its own lane, a dedicated "guideway" that would be used exclusively by buses and emergency vehicles.

Oakdale Mayor Paul Reinke, who also brings perspective as a real estate developer, told us the project combines the advantages of “fixed” transit assets — fostering economic development around station stops — with the efficiency of bus transit that results in lower project costs. The Gold Line’s overall funding total is \$420 million, reported to be less than half what would have been required for light rail in the corridor.

It will support jobs, jobs, jobs: An analysis found that there are about 1.9 million square feet of retail, office and other existing development within walking distance of the proposed route along Bielenberg Drive in Woodbury and 2,000 jobs near an Oakdale station. For the entire corridor, projections call for about 26,000 additional jobs located in station areas by the year 2040.

Its locally approved route has evolved smartly: We supported a change that would take the line south of I-94 into busy Woodbury, rather than — as initially proposed — heading farther east toward Wisconsin.

The line will serve riders to and from Metropolitan State University and 3M, for example, as it makes its way from Union Depot and downtown stops through the East Side of St. Paul, Maplewood, Landfall and Oakdale, before turning south on Helmo Avenue and crossing over I-94 on a new bridge. It would continue south along Bielenberg Drive to an existing express bus park-and-ride, near the Woodbury Village shopping center.

The bridge represents another plus along this part of the I-94 corridor, which the Gateway Corridor Commission describes as one of the most congested stretches in the Twin Cities region. It’s expected to help relieve traffic congestion by taking an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 cars a day from the heavily traveled Inwood Avenue/Radio Drive area.

It will complement existing express-bus service: Express buses, typically carrying end-to-end riders on rigid early-morning and late-afternoon schedules, will continue to serve the area. Ridership will increase, advocates predict, with the Gold Line providing all-day service in both directions that also will accommodate those who might need to get home mid-day, in the event of a schedule change, for example, or to care for a sick child.

It's a modest "ask" in a field of big-ticket bonding requests: The \$3 million request this year, combined with \$2 million in state funding received in 2014, will fulfill the state's share of project development costs, which include completing environmental review and municipal consent processes and beginning preliminary design and engineering, according to the corridor commission. It also notes that because federal funding does not become available until construction, local funding partners pay a larger percentage of early project costs.

The Gold Line is poised, the commission says, to serve St. Paul and the east metro and connect employers to workers and workers to jobs. It's up to state lawmakers to assure it stays on track.



Pioneer Press Editorial Board



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OPINION > LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter: Gold Line won't solve congestion in St. Paul

By **LETTER WRITERS** | letters@pioneerpress.com |

June 15, 2017 at 12:30 am

EXPRESS-BUS SOLUTION

Why the Metro Gold Line is not the solution to traffic congestion in St. Paul:

Congestion is primarily during rush hour and thus the solution must address commuters during typical business hours. Express bus service has been and continues to be the successful, popular solution for commuters during congested rush hours, compared with the proposed exclusive-guideway bus rapid-transit. The express buses currently run only during rush hour, on the shoulder, and are safe. It doesn't require expensive capital infrastructure cost (like the guideway). Most of all, commuters are anxious to get to work as quickly as possible and the express bus does the job well.

Comparing express-bus travel time with estimated Gold Line EBRT, plus the Green Line, it's a good 30 minutes faster to go to Minneapolis on the express bus (and that does not account for wait time between BRT and LRT). Just check the schedule. The No. 353 bus gets to St. Paul in 21 minutes, then on to Minneapolis in another 21 minutes, but the Gold Line would take an estimated 26 minutes to get to St. Paul, wait for transfer and then add 46 minutes on the Green Line to Minneapolis: 72 minutes. That's not going to work for commuters.

Because of how slow the proposed transitway would be, compared with the express bus, wouldn't it make a lot more sense to expand the existing express bus to provide much faster midday and early evening hours to serve commuters or anyone riding as a "reverse commute"? The only infrastructure would be the \$9.1 million Park and Ride at Manning Avenue versus the \$420 million capital-build cost of the Gold Line. This might coax some drivers out of their cars knowing they can get home in a reasonable time during the day or if they must work late. Thus, congestion would be reduced.

Therefore, the Gold Line is not a solution to traffic congestion. Commuters will not ride it because it will be too slow.

Linda Stanton, Woodbury

The writer is chair of Citizens for Smart Transit.



Letter Writers

Send letters to the editor or Sainted/Tainted entries to letters@pioneerpress.com or to 10 River Park Plaza #700, St. Paul MN 55107.



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VIEW COMMENTS

Letters: No build is smart choice for Gateway corridor; Celebrating student achievement

By [Woodbury Newsroom](#) Today at 8:00 a.m.

As an educator, I feel a lot of pride when I see a student take hold of his or her diploma. It's not so much the piece of paper but the hard work and academic achievement it represents.

— *Brad Swanson, Woodbury*

No build is smart choice for Gateway corridor

It saves money, moves people efficiently and provides an adaptable alternative that residents and taxpayers love! Running a regular route bus along the line would save close to \$400 million and provide all-day service with more local stops. Express bus expansion to include midday and evening service would provide faster travel and the same benefits for commuters with no capital cost.

A side light is one of the best things about the route, the proposed Helmo/Bielenberg Bridge over Interstate 94, which Oakdale and Woodbury could still pursue. The bridge would have benefits for both communities in terms of business and traffic (cost \$17.5 million).

One big reason the bus rapid transit project is a waste of hard-earned taxpayer dollars is that its benefits have been oversold. What do I mean? It won't reduce traffic congestion by enticing people out of their cars. Why? It won't be fast enough.

If one compares the Express Bus Schedule to the proposed BRT + Green Line, it's clear that the Express Bus is a good 30 minutes faster than the estimated 26 minutes for the Gold Line plus 46 minutes to travel the Green Line. That would be at least 72 minutes to go from Woodbury to Minneapolis (it's only 42 minutes on the Express Bus). People won't ride it.

This is why expanding the Express Bus for midday and evening service and adding the regular bus on the route would actually be the solution to entice drivers from their cars knowing they can quickly get home midday or if staying late. It's the affordable alternative that would not impose unnecessary infrastructure on the community.

Linda Stanton

Woodbury

Stanton is chair of Citizens for Smart Transit

Transplant abuse awareness important

There are resolutions in the Minnesota House and Senate regarding an ongoing human rights issue in China. HF 2713 and SF 1666 are resolutions "Expressing concern over persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned, forced organ harvesting from nonconsenting prisoners of conscience, primarily from Falun Gong practitioners imprisoned for their spiritual beliefs, and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups in the People's Republic of China."

It's wonderful to see that Cottage Grove area state Reps. Keith Franke and Tony Jurgens, and also Sen. Dan Schoen have taken the initiative to co-sponsor these resolutions.

My husband and I and other members of our family are from China and we practice Falun Gong, which is a form of "self-cultivation" based on the three principles of truth, compassion and forbearance. Mind and body practices like Falun Gong have been popular for thousands of years in China. After its public introduction in 1992, the practice quickly grew in popularity, with government estimates placing the number of practitioners at over 70 million by early 1999. This large and growing population of Chinese citizens embracing a spiritual practice soon met with persecution by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Since its inception, the CCP has systematically eliminated what is traditional in China and has replaced it with communist party culture. On July 20, 1999, communist party head Jiang Zemin ordered a ban on Falun Gong and a brutal campaign was initiated.

This situation has been going on for 18 years now, but is largely unknown outside of China. Many of my friends and family living in Minnesota have faced persecution directly or indirectly. Efforts like those of the Minnesota Legislature are very meaningful to them and to those in China who live under persecution today.

OPINION > COLUMNISTS

Pellegrom, Ferguson: With CTIB Dissolved, let's take control of our transit destiny

By **JEFF PELLEGRAM AND CHRIS FERGUSON** |

July 6, 2017 at 12:55 am

Ramsey County completed a big step forward last month when the board voted to invest locally in transit. Along with the business community and the citizens of our county, Ramsey County is helping to assure that the East Metro is a full participant in the economic growth of our region.

This addresses a problem that has vexed our part of the region for years.

The deal reached to invest in transit within Ramsey County and Hennepin County will help to accelerate transit development in our urban core. With the dissolution of CTIB — the Counties Transit Improvement Board — and the ¼-cent increase in the county sales tax comes a commitment to fund and promote the development of the highest-priority transit developments in the East Metro: the Gold Line connecting Woodbury and the Rush Line connecting White Bear Lake to Union Depot in Saint Paul and the proposed Riverview corridor connecting them both to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, our gateway to the world.

We know that a robust transit system supports and encourages job growth along transit lines. We know that communities with strong transit systems are more vital and economically successful than communities without them. We know the investments in the Green Line light-rail transit have produced millions of dollars in private investment.

Unfortunately, we also know that transit investment and the benefits that come from it have been greater in the western portion of our metro area.

And, with the current gridlock at the Minnesota State Legislature on transit funding, we could not expect any change in the foreseeable future. For practical purposes, this local funding will also remove development of these lines from the toxic transit-funding debate at the state Legislature and put the urban counties in control of their transit destinies.

The new transit investment structure will allow Ramsey and Hennepin Counties to build out the core urban transit system in a way that knits our communities together by serving employees and allowing employers to foster job growth without creating additional traffic congestion.

For example, the Riverview Corridor now being planned to connect St. Paul to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and Bloomington will play a vital role in our city's future. Riverview will offer the same high quality connections to the neighborhoods and business centers along West Seventh Street, in Highland Park and in downtown St. Paul as the Blue Line does to downtown Minneapolis. The RiverCentre Convention Center, the Xcel Energy Center and restaurants and hotels in the corridor will be more accessible to convention attendees and business and leisure travelers.

We applaud the Ramsey County Board for doing what needs to be done to make sure that the East Metro will be able to enjoy the benefits of job growth and private investment that come from building reliable transit that connects people with the businesses that need their skills and talents.

Chris Ferguson is President and CEO, Bywater Business Solutions and chair of the Midway Chamber of Commerce. Jeff Pellegrom is Chief Financial Officer & Executive Vice President at Minnesota Wild and chair of the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce.



Jeff Pellegrom and Chris Ferguson



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VIEW COMMENTS

NEWS > GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Washington County OKs increased contribution to Gold Line transit

By **BOB SHAW** | bshaw@pioneerpress.com | Pioneer Press

June 21, 2017 at 6:00 am

The Gold Line bus proposal hit the accelerator Tuesday — as Washington County decided to boost its contribution.

A divided county board voted to keep the project moving ahead, after the Minnesota Legislature failed to support it.

“This will mean more jobs, more business, less commuting,” said board chair Lisa Weik. “I do not see a downside to this.”

The \$420 million Gold Line would connect Woodbury and St. Paul with a bus rapid-transit (BRT) service starting in 2024.

Washington County’s re-commitment follows a move by Ramsey County, which on June 13 voted to increase sales taxes for transportation. The two counties will now pay \$112 million each for the project.

The Gold Line would connect 11 stops along a nine-mile route, between Union Depot in downtown St. Paul and a park-and-ride lot near Valley Creek Road and Bielenberg Drive in Woodbury. Buses would arrive every seven minutes during peak times, and the line is intended to serve underdeveloped areas and stimulate growth.

Weik said that for new businesses, mass transportation is not optional — it is required.

“When you look at a map, there are no transportation corridors in the east metro,” said Weik. “You can just see that we are not as attractive a place to do business.”

Last year, the funding for the project was projected to include \$42 million from the state. But in May, the Legislature in its bonding bill did not even include a \$3 million down payment for the plan.

That refusal effectively halted the entire proposal, because other sources of funding depend on state contributions.

It rattled the planners. They now assume that the state will not be giving any of the expected \$42 million, except for a \$2 million contribution already made.

Counties are compensating.

Originally, Washington and Ramey counties were planning to pay 5 percent of the total cost — \$21 million each. The money was raised by a one-quarter-percent sales tax, which is 25 cents for a \$100 purchase.

The money was given to a five-county Counties Transit Improvement Board, which decided how to spend the money. That board is now in the process of disbanding.

Under the new plan, the counties — and not the Transit Board — will spend the money. For example, if the Gold Line were never built, Washington County could spend the money on roadways and bridges.

Two Washington County commissioners — Gary Kriesel and Fran Miron — voted against the increase.

They support the idea of the Gold Line but said the state should get on the bus. “A transportation system should be under the authority of the state,” Kriesel said.

If the state’s inaction crashes the entire project, roughly \$189 million of federal money will be spent elsewhere, he said.

But the majority favored the increase.

Commissioner Stan Karowski said the county should adapt to changing circumstances. “We have to work with the hand we are dealt,” he said.

Added Weik: “This is what the public says it wants.”

Tags: [Transportation](#) [Washington County](#)



Bob Shaw

Bob is a 40-year veteran (yes, he is grizzled) who edited one Pulitzer Prize winner and wrote two that were nominated. He has also worked in Des Moines, Colorado Springs and Palo Alto. He writes about the suburbs, the environment, housing, religion -- anything but politics. Secret pleasures: Kayaking on the Mississippi on the way to work, doughnuts brought in by someone else. Best office prank: Piling more papers onto Fred Melo’s already trash-covered desk.

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