



La Crosse Area Planning Committee

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Serving the La Crosse/La Crescent Urbanized Area

Tom Faella, Director Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner
La Crosse County Administrative Center
400 4th Street North ☎ Room 2300 ☎ La Crosse, WI 54601-3200
Telephone: 608.785.5977 or 608.785.6141 FAX: 608.793.6525

Minutes of LAPC Meeting, July 20, 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the La Crosse Area Planning Committee held on Wednesday, July 20, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. in room 3220 of the La Crosse County Administrative Center, 400 4th St N, La Crosse, WI.

Members Present: Roland Bogert, Town of Onalaska; Nancy Proctor, Village of Holmen; Timothy Candahl, Town of Shelby; Tara Johnson, La Crosse County; Joe Chilsen, City of Onalaska; Terry Schaller, Town of Campbell; Mike Weibel, alternate, Town of Medary. **Members Excused:** Tim Kabat, City of La Crosse. **Others Present:** Mike Giese, Charlie Handy, Carol Abrahamzon, Francis Schelfhout, Steve Flottmeyer, Susan Lundsten, Chris Hubbuch, Margaret Larson, Chuck Lee, Adam Binsfeld, Jackie Eastwood.

Call to Order: Tim Candahl called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

1) Approval of Minutes of the June 15, 2016 LAPC Meeting:

Nancy Proctor motioned to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2016 meeting; Mike Weibel seconded. All were in favor.

2) Public comment relative to agenda items, with 5 minute time limit per comment:

None.

3) Resolution 6-2016 Approving *The Blufflands*:

Charlie Handy passed out a memo from Jason Valerius outlining updates to the plan along with a spreadsheet of the funding scenario. Mr. Handy stated that there was a meeting of the steering committee last week where some concerns about the language in the document and the authority of the coalition were voiced. The coalition is meant to have a plan and to coordinate efforts so everyone is moving in the same direction. It's not meant to tell each parks department how it should be run. Charlie Handy then went on to explain the funding scheme. The idea is to take the estimated cost of \$60,000 per year for a half-time person and a little extra for grant matches and distribute the cost so that the City of La Crosse would pay one-third, La Crosse County would pay one-third, and everyone else would pay one-third. The annual funding formula that's included in the plan now hasn't been thoroughly vetted by the parks departments, but it's very close to the numbers Mr. Handy presented to the parks departments over a month ago.

In response to a question by Nancy Proctor regarding consideration of Mayor Kabat's letter, Mr. Handy responded that there were both public and private conversations between himself and the parks director from the City and Mayor Kabat. Mr. Handy then responded to a question by Mike Weibel asking that if after the plan is adopted the communities still have the option to participate or not, by stating that right now there are no MOUs. The next job of the steering committee is to start drafting MOUs for consideration by the municipalities.

*Tara Johnson motioned to approve Resolution 6-2016 Approving *The Blufflands*; Joe Chilsen seconded. All were in favor.*

4) Proposed Budget and Work Activities for 2017 Planning Work Program:

Jackie Eastwood referred to a handout of 2017 work program activities that include new and ongoing tasks and provided a brief description of each of the new activities. Joe Chilsen asked if the vulnerability assessment would include railroads or our ports to which Ms. Eastwood responded that LAPC staff will be using the FHWA framework as guidance for how to best accomplish that activity. Nancy Proctor asked about the SMRT bus expansion and how we would deal with service to different counties. Ms. Eastwood responded that Peter Fletcher and Charlie Handy are looking for support from the communities and from businesses. Charlie Handy added that the state only allows one contact organization and that the current SMRT bus service is administered by the City of Prairie du Chien. He anticipates the expanded service would have something similar where there would be one lead entity to administer

one of the two routes or both. Ms. Proctor went on to say that she knew of some veterans who were having trouble getting transportation and would be grateful for such a service. Jackie Eastwood added that the LAPC has a representative from the VA in Tomah on one of its committees and he is very much in favor of this service.

In comment regarding the program support task of facilitating a discussion of forming a Council of Governments, Tara Johnson encouraged LAPC staff to look beyond Rochester and to not look exclusively at a council of governments. Ms. Johnson would like us to research how other MPOs in Wisconsin are organized. Ms. Eastwood suggested that staff could invite someone from FHWA to speak to that. Tara Johnson then asked about vulnerable populations, the vulnerability assessment, and our relationship with emergency government and asked if this activity is our piece of the emergency response plan or if it's something we have to do uniquely or separately. Ms. Eastwood responded that we have to do this regardless. Anytime we look at a transportation project we have to assess what the impact is going to be on vulnerable populations. So if we're looking at emergency services, we're looking more at equal access to services than a negative impact of a project. Ms. Eastwood then used the example of the low-income mobile home park on the south side of La Crosse that has only one entrance and could be closed off by a train accident. Ms. Johnson asked if we communicate with County Emergency Services in doing that work. Ms. Eastwood responded that we have a rather good relationship with ES from working with them on other projects.

Nancy Proctor motioned to adopt the proposed budget and work activities as discussed; Terry Schaller seconded. All were in favor.

5) Update on Potential TIGER /FAST Act Grant:

Charlie Handy gave a brief description of the TIGER and FAST Lane grants and stated that county staff have been working on the idea of applying for a TIGER grant for a couple of years and now there's an opportunity with an additional federal grant. The goal is to have an application for one or both of the grants ready by April of 2017, which means they need to get going now. The first meeting outside of staff occurred at the Town of Campbell board meeting at the end of June. To be competitive, the project must be multimodal, but both grants focus on freight. Mr. Handy then proceeded to describe the concept project, which includes a freight terminal at the airport, roadway and intersection improvements on Bainbridge St, roadway improvements in the industrial park, potential harbor improvements, and the CP swing bridge in Houston County. A good grant application will require some engineering work upfront. The risk is that the communities will be investing in engineering with no guarantee that the application will be approved. Mr. Handy is anticipating a \$100 million grant application. There is typically only one application funded this size per state and probably not in every state. Therein lies the risk. The project will have to score really well to get funded.

Terry Schaller thanked Mr. Handy for presenting to the Campbell Town Board and for putting so much work into it and went on to say that they are not crazy about the idea of a roundabout at Clinton St and Bainbridge St because it would displace all of the businesses in that area. If it's going to accommodate truck traffic, the roundabout will have to be very big. Campbell is not ready to make a financial commitment, but it's good to be able to take a good look at the idea. No one on the board has made a commitment one way or the other. Charlie Handy responded that he thinks this is starting to be the funding model for road projects. The more matching dollars you can get committed, the better chance to raise the project in the priority list.

Tara Johnson agreed that this is the future of funding of large infrastructure projects. What's exciting is the opportunity to impact and improve so many modes of transportation. It helps us understand how interconnected our modes of transportation are. We need to be considerate of what the Town is comfortable doing and is able to do, but it is also one of those regional opportunities. It has the potential to shift the dynamics of how we're able to handle freight. Joe Chilsen added that it's important that any transportation plan be multimodal because we have to be able to move all kinds of freight in and out of here, so it shouldn't be just about roads, or air, or rail, but all of them together and how they interact.

6) Update on Coulee Region Transportation Study:

Francis Schelfhout stated that the draft final report has been reviewed by WisDOT central office and the project team has incorporated changes. They forwarded the report to FHWA around the first of July for their review and DOT has committed to a 30-day review period for them and are expecting to get FHWA's comments back around the first of August. WisDOT will take some time to digest the comments and then formulate a response. After those changes are made, the final draft will be made available to the public and all other cooperating agencies for a 30-day public comment period. They are looking for a final report by mid-to-late September.

In response to a question by Tim Candahl regarding a WisDOT response to the LAPC resolution sent to DOT, Steve Flottmeyer said that he anticipates a response letter will be sent out next week to Tom Faella and the LAPC.

7) Update on Boundary Agreements Project:

Jackie Eastwood relayed a summary she received from Jason Valerius stating that the Shelby/La Crosse agreement is on track for public introduction this fall and adoption by the end of the year. Based on a July 18 meeting, the La Crescent (T)/La Crescent (C) agreement is on track for adoption this year. And, finally, the Onalaska/Medary group continues to work independently, with an agreement adoption anticipated this fall.

Nancy Proctor added that the Village of Holmen and the Town of Holland are getting closer to an agreement. They are seeing some real substance in the discussions. Tim Candahl stated that the final draft for the La Crosse/Shelby agreement is going before the La Crosse City Council next week. Public input will be sought in September and a final agreement adopted by April of 2017. They will have a 25-year agreement with a 5-year extension option. They are hoping to have a template for other communities to use.

Charlie Handy complimented the process saying it's some of the best work he's seen in his 25 years of public service. The people in the room discussing these agreements work hard to do what's best for their citizens.

Terry Schaller stated that the City of La Crosse broke their boundary agreement by annexing a piece of Campbell that the City purchased. The lawyers subsequently got involved. The City and Town have a good working relationship and they don't want to jeopardize that.

8) Update on Status of LAPC Advisory Committees:

Jackie Eastwood stated that the Transit Coordinating Council (TCC) and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) were combined into the Committee on Transit and Active Transportation. Prior to the Aging Unit being absorbed into the ADRC, the Aging Unit's Transportation Coordinating Committee and the LAPC's TCC operated jointly to approve the 5310 applications for specialized transit vehicles and the 85.21 applications for elderly and disabled transportation. The ADRC uses the Health Department committee structure to approve those now, so the County's TCC has been replaced. This provided an opportunity to consolidate the two LAPC committees and eliminate operating in individual silos because bike and pedestrian issues are transit issues.

9) Other business; Adjourn; Next meeting to be announced:

Tara Johnson suggested a future agenda item ought to be how to welcome non-members of the LAPC into the MPO.

Nancy Proctor motioned to adjourn at 5:40 p.m.; Nancy Proctor seconded. All were in favor.