



COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MINNESOTA 55016

JANUARY 19, 2022

**SPECIAL MEETING - 6:00 P.M.
TRAINING ROOM**

- 1 CALL TO ORDER
- 2 ROLL CALL
- 3 AGENDA ITEM
 - A 2022 Legislative Agenda
- 4 ADJOURNMENT



City Council Action Request

3A

Meeting Date	1/19/2022	
Department	Administration	
Agenda Category	Agenda Item	
Title	2022 Legislative Agenda	
Staff		
Recommendation		
Budget Implication	N/A	
Attachments	Cottage Grove 2022 Legislative Agenda.tif	49.64MB



2022

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Legislative Priorities

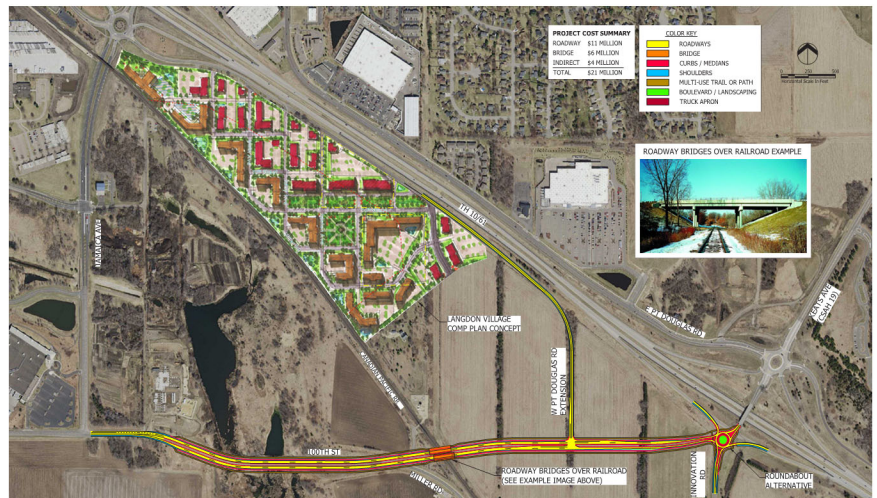
Priority: 100th Street extension funding

Legislative Direction

The City of Cottage Grove fully supports any efforts to fund the future 100th Street arterial roadway.

Relevant Information

- In 2019, Washington County began the Southwest Arterial Study to address the lack of arterial roadways critical to serve new development in the county's southwest area.
- The study provided a recommended route for the future arterial roadway and reviewed the impacts and benefits.
- Since completion of the study, there has been significant interest in the Cottage Grove Business Park including NorthPoint Development, which will include 3.4 million square feet of warehouse, manufacturing, distribution and office space on 252 acres. The development will create at least 1,870 full-time jobs.
- The Cottage Grove Business Park is currently only served by one feasible interchange; Highway 61 at Jamaica Avenue, which is fully built out with a two-lane, six-leg roundabout that receives a significant amount of traffic.
- Additional funding is needed to construct a direct extension of 100th Street to Highway 61. The project would also include construction of a bridge over the Canadian Pacific railroad track. High-level cost estimates for this project are in the range of \$20 million to complete.
- Completing this extension in the next five years will be critical to the ongoing success of these major development projects and relieving stress on the Jamaica Avenue interchange.



Legislative Priorities

Priority: 103rd Street bridge

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove fully supports any efforts to fund replacement of the BNSF Railroad bridge over 103rd Street.

Relevant Information

- Located in the southwest portion of Cottage Grove is the BNSF Railroad, which crosses over 103rd Street, a City Municipal State Aid Street. This railroad bridge is substandard for both the width and height, which has been an ongoing safety issue for vehicles on 103rd Street.
- The bridge is:
 - Situated at the bottom of a steep hill, which exceeds an 11% grade.
 - Posted at a clearance of 10'4", which is far below the desired height of 16'4".
 - Spaced too narrow at its abutments, requiring the roadway to weave under it with stops signs posted on both sides.
- While 103rd Street is currently a city roadway, Washington County has identified it as the route for a future county arterial roadway that will serve as access to a future regional park on Lower Grey Cloud Island in the Mississippi River.
- Even though this bridge carries the railroad, it is the local roadway authority's responsibility to fund any upgrades, which is a significant cost due to the need to fully replace the structure. Given the future regional need for this roadway, functional limitations of the current bridge and safety issues, beginning the planning efforts and seeking additional funding sources for replacement is critical.



Agenda Items

Housing and Economic Development

Cottage Grove continues to experience residential, commercial and industrial growth, creating a need for legislative action regarding:

- Business expansion
- Job growth
- Redevelopment
- Housing

Transportation

Due to rapid, yet measured growth, Cottage Grove is focusing on the following areas:

- Red Rock Corridor
- Lights on Highway 61
- Shoppes at Cottage View
- Street improvement districts
- Municipal state aid funding



Public Safety

Cottage Grove Public Safety remains committed to protecting Cottage Grove and its citizens and is focusing on:

- Mental health data sharing with law enforcement
- Mental Health Response Act
- Officer wellness
- Law enforcement training funding
- Funding for mutual aid reimbursement
- K12 threat assessments
- Permit to purchase fees
- Catalytic converter theft legislation

Agenda Items

Parks and Recreation

Cottage Grove is committed to giving its residents the best recreational opportunities in the state and is focusing on:

- Mississippi Dunes Park
- Future Highway 61 Trailway



Revenue and Taxation

Cottage Grove is committed to maximizing citizen engagement in the budgeting process. We are also committing to transparent and responsible stewardship of our citizens' tax dollars and is focusing on:

- Truth-in-taxation process
- Restrictions on local government budgets
- Sales tax on local government purchases
- Special assessments

Water Quality and Sustainability

Cottage Grove remains committed to delivering water that meets state guidelines and producing a long-term plan to enhance resource sustainability while meeting community needs and is focusing on:

- Impaired water
- Stormwater and wastewater
- Water conservation
- Groundwater and well monitoring

Administration

Cottage Grove is committed to excellence in the delivery of public services to community residents, businesses and owners of property. We are committed to transparent and cost-efficient communication and ensuring businesses operate safely and to the highest standards.

- Newspaper notification
- Licensure of massage therapists

Housing and Economic Development

Business Expansion

Priority

Support new and expanding businesses, infrastructure development and public-private partnerships.



Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports existing programs to help businesses thrive and expand.

Relevant Information

- Good examples of state-funded programs in this category include the Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF), Job Creation Fund (JCF) and the Angel Tax Credit.
- Programs using statewide funding should award funds equitably between the metro region and greater Minnesota through competitive funding as opposed to direct legislative appropriations.

Job Growth

Priority

To obtain funding through economic tools that facilitate job growth without relying solely on property taxes.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports a number of existing programs offered by the state, and furthermore, supports the study of allowing mixed-use buildings, that have both commercial and residential uses, included in a special service district (SSD).

Relevant Information:

- Examples of valuable state programs include green job development and related innovation and development. Other examples are minority business start-ups, small business financing tools including new markets tax credit program mirroring a federal initiative, and maintaining existing municipal authority to establish an SSD.



Housing and Economic Development

Redevelopment

Priority

Identify and begin implementation of redevelopment plans to reinvigorate a tax base that is not fulfilling its potential.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports the growth of current programs that help facilitate redevelopment and reinvestment in our residential, commercial and industrial sectors.



The City Supports

- The allowance of a maximum levy amount for the Livable Communities Act and increased general fund and state bond funds for DEED-administered programming.
- Financing, regulatory tools and increasing flexibility in the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and values funding for Transit Improvement Areas (TIAs).
- Programs to correct unstable soils and allow cities authority to redevelop land previously used as landfills.
- Initiatives helping cities/development authorities assemble small properties and ready them for business expansion and future development.
- Cottage Grove opposes any statutory language that would further constrain or reduce the effectiveness of TIF.
- The City asks lawmakers to revisit eminent domain laws to allow local governments to address redevelopment issues before conditions become financially impossible to address.

Priority

Extend the historic tax credit legislation.

Legislative Direction

The City supports further extension of the Minnesota State Historic Tax Credit as a successful economic development tool for revitalizing distressed, vacant, and underutilized historic properties throughout the State and potentially in Cottage Grove.

Relevant Information:

- The City of Cottage Grove has many historic properties in the community and supports Minnesota State Historic Tax Credit, which was set to sunset in 2021.
- Revitalize MN has lobbied for an eight-plus year extension but with COVID-19 and other challenges the State, granted a one-year extension.



Community Development Contact:
Christine Costello, Community Development Director
ccostello@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-2824

Housing and Economic Development

Housing

Priority

Cottage Grove is committed to diversifying its housing stock to ensure it is an inclusive City serving all demographical and socio-economic communities.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports state programs that allow municipalities to facilitate full-spectrum housing growth and rehabilitate older housing stock for residents in all stages of life.

The City Supports:

- The location of affordable housing in residential and mixed-use neighborhoods throughout the city. The City does not support passage of a mandatory inclusionary housing state law imposed on local governments that would require a certain percentage of units in all new housing developments to be affordable to households at specific income levels.
- The Metropolitan Council's affordability policy and allocation, as long as it recognizes the individual needs of each city and the need for significant financial assistance from the federal and state government, as well as the Metropolitan Council, to make progress toward creating additional affordable housing and preserving existing affordable housing.
- The Metropolitan Council, with input by local government representatives, examining the allocation of need methodology with respect to the relationship between the regional allocation and the local share of the need. The formula should also be routinely evaluated to determine if market conditions have changed or if underlying conditions should prompt readjustment
- Housing programs that assist housing development, preservation and maintenance of existing housing stock, including unsubsidized, naturally occurring affordable housing that is affordable to residents throughout the low-to-moderate income range.
- Preserving and increasing funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and the federal HOME program that are catalysts for creating and preserving affordable housing.
- Removing the Metropolitan Council's review and comment authority connected to housing revenue bonds. The City would like to see the Metropolitan Council work in partnership with local governments to ensure the range of housing needs for people at various life cycles and incomes can be met.



Transportation

Red Rock Corridor

Priority

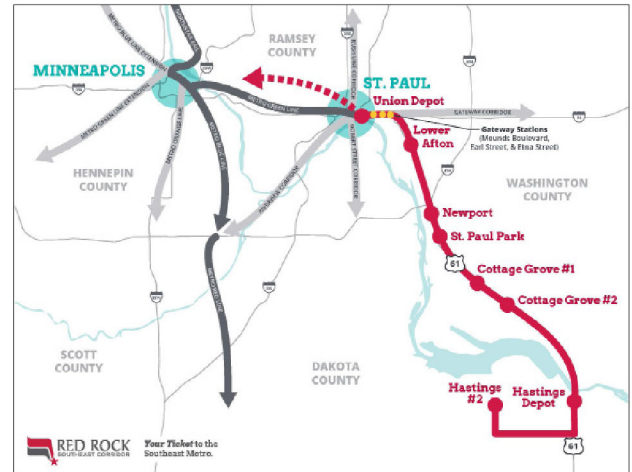
Businesses want the ability to attract talent from the surrounding community through transportation into the City of Cottage Grove.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports implementation of the Red Rock Corridor Bus Rapid Transit.

Relevant Information

- The Metropolitan Council projects the southeast metro will grow by at least 100,000 people over the next 20 years while 94% of the jobs will stay in Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- Cottage Grove businesses have indicated in multiple Business Retention and Expansion interviews that they are having a harder time attracting talent without a reliable transportation network into the city.
- The Red Rock Corridor is a 20-mile stretch serving the southeast Metro, which is part of the National Highway and National Scenic Byway systems.
- Communities along the corridor have conducted a thorough investigation of transit needs and produced a phased approach with a near-term need for new local bus service and a long-term plan for bus rapid transit (including high-frequency service, robust stations, and enhanced parking facilities).



Lights on Highway 61

Priority

Funding for streetlights on Highway 61.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove fully supports any efforts to fund highway lighting and increased safety on an increasingly busy stretch of highway serving one of the fastest growing areas of the state.

Relevant Information

- The only interchange lighting that exists is at 80th Street South, Jamaica Avenue South and CSAH 19 (Innovation Road South).
- There is no lighting from CSAH 19 to TH 95 and there are several unrestricted local access intersections present.



Transportation Contact:
Ryan Burfeind, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer
rburfeind@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-2899

Transportation

Street Improvement Districts

Priority

Addressing the limited funding mechanisms for maintaining aging streets.

Legislative Direction #1

Cottage Grove supports the authority of local units of government to establish street improvement districts, allowing cities in developed and developing areas to fund reconstruction and maintenance efforts.

Legislative Direction #2

Cottage Grove also supports changes to special assessment laws to make assessing state-owned property a more predictable process regarding the payment of assessments.

Relevant Information

- Funding sources for local transportation projects are limited to the use of Municipal State Aid (MSA), property taxes and special assessments.
- The street improvement district is designed to allow cities to create a district(s) where fees will be raised on all properties in the district and must be spent within specific boundaries.
- The City supports the modification of state laws to clarify the definition of “benefits received” as it relates to special assessments.



Municipal State Aid Funding

Priority

Cottage Grove, like many growing communities, struggles to fund major roadway projects, creating costly delays and decreased motorist safety.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove requests the Municipal State Aid (MSA) formula and funding levels be reviewed as the current system is not sufficient to keep up with growing demands for maintenance, coupled with expanding MSA roadway systems in growing communities.

Relevant Information

- MSA offers an advance to fund larger projects that creates delays for future MSA projects for several years. Thus, rehabilitation projects (like mill and overlay) cannot occur, reducing the useful life of a road and accelerating the cost of reconstruction projects.
- The City anticipates reduced funding due to the pandemic, which will further challenge the City’s ability to maintain our aging infrastructure.



Transportation

Shoppes at Cottage View

Priority

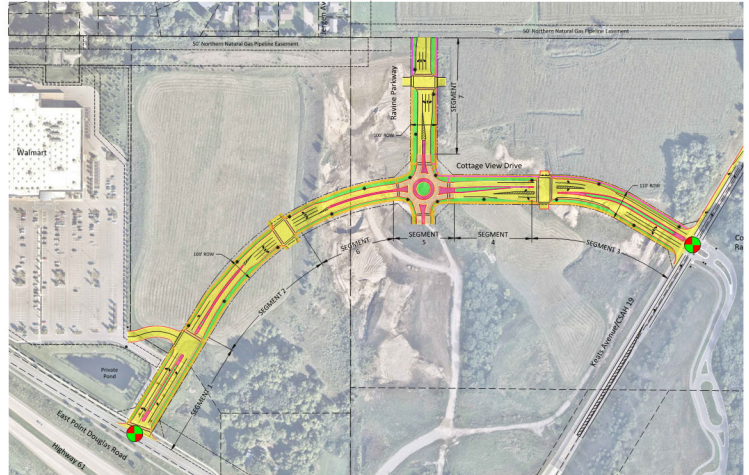
Funding for Shoppes at Cottage View infrastructure.

Legislative Direction

The City of Cottage Grove fully supports any efforts to fund the construction of public infrastructure to serve the Shoppes at Cottage View development.

Relevant Information

- The Shoppes at Cottage View is a 73-acre site located in the northwest corner of East Point Douglas Road and Keats Avenue (County Road 19) in Cottage Grove. The City envisions the project area as a gateway into the community from westbound Highway 61/10. The project will provide Cottage Grove many opportunities such as an improvement in the quality of life of residents by creating jobs, increasing the local tax base, providing a safe, efficient, and interconnected network of local and collector streets, providing pedestrian connections to regional and local recreational amenities, public utility extensions, as well as housing opportunities for individuals at all income levels.
- The Shoppes at Cottage View site has been vacant since the early 2000s and developing the site will bring many public benefits. The City has produced several planning documents for this area of the City. One of the major features to emerge from the planning process was Ravine Parkway, which provides a connecting link for the entire East Ravine community. A portion of Ravine Parkway would be constructed with this project and would provide direct and efficient access for the community to this commercial area.
- Public utilities would be extended throughout the site to serve the adjacent properties with City water and sanitary sewer service. The site is also adjacent to Washington County's Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and the project provides pedestrian and bicycle access improvements across County Road 19 to the regional park.
- The development of the Shoppes of Cottage View will place the 73-acre site back into productivity by being on the City's tax rolls, as well as providing opportunities for employment, housing, and recreation, thus strengthening the local economy, and providing the residents and visitors of Cottage Grove a quality of life where they can live, work and play.



Transportation Contact:
Ryan Burfeind, P.E., Public Works Director/City Engineer
rburfeind@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-2899

Public Safety



Mental Health Data Sharing with Law Enforcement

Priority

Allow law enforcement, who refer citizens to county mental health programs, to receive feedback regarding whether the referral is engaged in services or not.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove approves changes to Minnesota data statutes to make it easier for mental health

providers/mental health social workers to communicate with law enforcement regarding clients.

Relevant Information

- HIPAA and Minnesota data privacy are typically cited as the obstacle to receiving this information. Proposed legislation would make it easier for law enforcement to get this important feedback when referrals are made.

Mental Health Response Act

Priority

Fund multi-jurisdictional co-responder programs.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation to fund multi-jurisdictional co-responder programs or embedded social workers. Additionally, Cottage Grove supports making changes to current policy and practices to better share information amongst first responders, medical professionals and human services representatives.

Relevant Information

- The goal is to improve the response to, and outcomes of, mental health calls for service.



Public Safety

Officer Wellness

Priority

Understand and deal with the effects of common stressors facing our law enforcement professionals.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation that would provide law enforcement agencies with training for emotional resiliency and understanding of responder trauma. Additionally, Cottage Grove supports a requirement for public employers to provide treatment for those diagnosed with PTSD and ensure the person remains financially whole while receiving 32 weeks of treatment.

Relevant Information

- This would create support groups, mental health checks and therapy, suicide prevention, awareness and family support.

Law Enforcement Training Funding

Priority

Continue to fund training mandated by the Minnesota Police Officer Standards and Training Board (MN POST Board).

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports continuing the POST Board training reimbursement allocation to local agencies, which began in 2018.

Relevant Information

- The Peace Officer Training Fund is for mandated training in the areas of recognizing and valuing diversity and cultural differences, conflict management and mediation, crisis intervention and mental illness crises.



Public Safety Contact:
Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director/Police Chief
pkoerner@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-6003

Public Safety

Funding For Mutual Aid Reimbursement

Priority

Support funding mutual aid reimbursement requests.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports funding to provide mutual aid reimbursements. As civil unrest becomes more common, larger agencies in the metro are reaching out to Anoka, Dakota and Washington counties. Providing assistance costs agencies additional money for training, staffing and equipment.



Relevant Information

- Currently approved reimbursement was used for federal Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), Minnesota DNR and Minnesota State Patrol. No funds were allocated for local jurisdictions requested for mutual aid.

K12 Threat Assessments

Priority

Support mandated K12 threat assessments teams.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation requiring school districts to establish a team of trained subject matter experts to examine and address school safety issues based on the national best practice known as behavioral threat assessment.

Relevant Information

- This legislation would move our state beyond physical school safety measures, such as infrastructure improvement grants, passed by the Legislature in 2018.
- Threat assessment is an evidence-based way to identify, assess, and manage threatening situations away from violence.
- Threat assessment, properly done, is considered a standard-of-care/best practice by numerous organizations and advocacy groups including the U.S. Department of Education, National Association of School Psychologists, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- K-12 threat assessment teams and legislation have been officially supported by the MN Chiefs of Police Association and the MN Sheriff's Association.



Public Safety

Permit to Purchase Fees

Priority

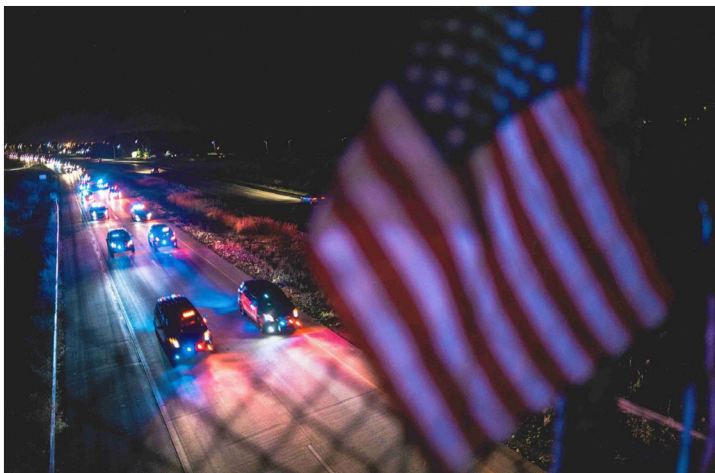
Support allowing agencies to charge a reasonable fee for processing a permit to purchase.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports allowing local municipal police departments to charge a reasonable fee for processing a permit to purchase an application.

Relevant Information:

- Currently Minnesota Statute § 624.7131 Subd 3. states there shall be no charge for forms, reports, investigations, notifications, waivers or any other act performed, or materials provided by a government employee or agency in connection with application for or issuance of a transferee permit. The permits and their renewal shall be granted free of charge.



Catalytic Converter Theft Legislation

Priority

Support strengthening legislation of catalytic converter thefts.

Legislative Direction

Support legislation that would make it illegal to possess a used catalytic converter unless you can prove ownership. Scrap yards would only be allowed to buy them from legitimate businesses like auto repair shops.

Relevant Information

- Cottage Grove has witnessed an increase catalytic converter theft driven by the high prices of precious metals used to manufacture the devices.
- It is difficult to catch a thief in the act of cutting loose a catalytic converter. The devices lack vehicle identification numbers and distinguishing markings, making it hard to link them to specific makes and models.
- The legislation needs to include stiffer penalties, education and funding for victims of thefts as insurance often reimburses a portion of the cost associated with the loss.



Public Safety Contact:
Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director/Police Chief
pkoerner@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-6003

Parks and Recreation

Mississippi Dunes Park

Priority

Cottage Grove desires to improve public recreational access and habitat preservation along the Mississippi River.

Legislative Direction

Work with Cottage Grove to acquire funding support to be used for land acquisition, land/water recreational use development and habitat preservation and restoration. This work not only improves access to the Cottage Grove region, it also compliments the habitat preservation efforts at the State's Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific and Natural Area. Funding support may be in the form of grant programs, bonding programs or other.



Relevant Information:

- The City has been planning for such land use at the former Mississippi Dunes Golf Course, which includes nearly 2,000 linear feet of Mississippi River shoreline.
- The City is currently planning for an approximate 40-acre public park that consumes the entire shoreline of this property. Acquisition, construction and habitat preservation/restoration costs are projected at more than \$10 million. Cottage Grove will need state and regional funding support to fulfill the goals of the master plan.

Future Highway 61 Trailway

Priority

Funding for future Highway 61 Trailway.

Legislative Direction

The City of Cottage Grove would like support for planning, design, and future funding of a Highway 61 Trailway connection between Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park and Point Douglas Regional Trail/Park.

Relevant Information

- A trail along Highway 61 from Cottage Grove Ravine Regional Park to Point Douglas Regional Trail/Park would be a unique recreational experience for the region, state and outstate visitors. Highway 61 is both historic and scenic but has no recreational trail access. The trailway would connect Cottage Grove's Ravine Lake to the confluence of the Mississippi and St Croix rivers as well as historic Hastings downtown via the Highway 61 arch bridge trail.



Revenue and Taxation

Truth-in-Taxation Process

Priority

Maximize citizen engagement in the budgeting process.

Legislative Direction

Additional statutory requirements to the local truth-in-taxation process were enacted and will take effect in 2022. Cottage Grove supports a legislative review of current and new requirements, with local official input, prior to the law taking effect.

Relevant Information

- The new requirements are significant and will be administratively challenging to produce and disseminate.
- Existing requirements are expansive and were designed to maximize citizen engagement in the budgeting processes.



Restrictions on Local Government Budgets

Priority

Maintain City autonomy in deciding the appropriate level of local taxation and services.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove strongly opposes levy limits, reverse referenda, super majority requirements for levy, and valuation freezes, or other restrictions on local government budgeting and taxing processes.

Relevant Information

- These types of restrictions undermine local budgeting and taxing processes, planned growth and the relationship between locally elected officials and their residents.



Revenue and Taxation Contact:
Robin Roland, Finance Director
rroland@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-2832

Revenue and Taxation

Sales Tax on Local Government Purchases

Priority

Sales tax exemption for purchases of goods and services made by cities.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports the 2013 reinstatement of the sales tax exemption for purchases of goods and services made by cities, specifically granting an extension of the motor vehicle sales tax (MSVT) exemption to all municipal vehicles that are used for general city functions and are provided by governmental entities.

Relevant Information

- Currently, only certain vehicles, including road maintenance vehicles purchased by townships and municipal fire trucks and police vehicles not registered for use on public roads, are exempt from the MVST.



Special Assessments

Priority

Clarification of “benefits received” regarding special assessments.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports modifications to state laws governing special assessments for construction projects or other improvements arising from legislative authority to clarify the definition of “benefits received.”

Relevant Information

- When property owners challenge special assessments based on application of the special benefit test, some courts have interpreted “benefits received” to mean the one-year increase in property value that is directly attributable to a construction project.
- There is currently no consistency between state laws and rulings by some courts on the term “benefits received.”
- The modified definition should more closely align with how special assessments are calculated and recognize that the benefit of the improvement to a property may be realized over time and not within one year.



Water Quality and Sustainability

Impaired Water

Priority

To support continued metropolitan development while protecting all water resources.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports continued funding to improve the region's ability to respond to developmental market demands including, but not exclusive to, surface water impairment assessments, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development and stormwater or wastewater construction grants.

Relevant Information

- The City supports and values initiatives aimed at protecting water resources at the municipal, county, state and federal level, which includes the Clean Water Act.
- Cottage Grove opposes entity-specific exemptions from fees because every type of property is required to pay stormwater fees.



Groundwater and Well Monitoring

Priority

To support water quality and well monitoring efforts in accordance with the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove strongly encourages continued funding of grant money through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to assist communities in implementing their wellhead protection plans (specifically drilling additional sentinel wells to monitor aquifer levels and contamination plumes).

Relevant Information:

- Cottage Grove supports additional funding for Perfluorochemicals (PFC) Biomonitoring in the area.
- The City also supports working with the MDH on the continuous monitoring of city groundwater and wells for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), having completed part one of our Wellhead Protection Plan in August 2015 and part two in March of 2017.



Water Quality and Sustainability Contact:
Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator
jlevitt@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-2890

Water Quality and Sustainability

Water Conservation

Priority

Contributing to a statewide effort to promote water conservation while providing municipal autonomy relative to individual communities.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports legislation promoting aquifer recharge, change in water use practices, development of minimum irrigation standards, applying technology for smart water use, additional scientific data collection and exploring water reuse options at contaminated sites that rely on water extraction or pollution containment.

Relevant Information

- A single “catch-all” option should not be applied to a region or sub-region.
- The City opposes funding of any implementation cost involved with the DNR North & East Metro Groundwater Management Area if it does not directly result in supplying water to the City of Cottage Grove and its residents.



Stormwater and Wastewater

Priority

To ensure attempts to address water supply sustainability take all water users (and variables) into account, including municipalities, industry, private wells, agriculture and contamination containment.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove supports the removal of barriers to wastewater and stormwater re-use and advocates for improved interagency coordination on all levels, including on the state level.

Relevant Information

- Water regulation is complex and compartmentalized, requiring strategies to cross agency jurisdictions through improved coordination and cooperation.



Administration



Newspaper Notification Requirement

Priority

Provide the most efficient newspaper notification requirement.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove requests the state repeal the newspaper notification requirement due to the costs for municipalities, the decline of local newspapers and the increase and proliferation of technology information tools.

Licensure of Massage Therapists

Priority

Seeking state help in the licensure of massage therapists.

Legislative Direction

Cottage Grove requests the implementation of a statewide licensing system for massage therapists, ensuring minimum competency requirements are met.



Administration Contact:
Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator
jlevitt@cottagegrovemn.gov, 651-458-2890

MINUTES

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CHAMBER
12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH

January 19, 2022

SPECIAL MEETING - 6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed the legislators who were present.

2. ROLL CALL

Those present introduced themselves: Tony Jurgens, State Representative, District 54B; Keith Franke, State Representative, District 54A; Karla Bigham, State Senator; Tony Khambata, City Council; Steve Dennis, City Council; Myron Bailey, Mayor; Dave Thiede, City Council; Justin Olsen, City Council; Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator; Christine Costello, Community Development Director; Brian Burfeind, Public Works Director/City Engineer; Pete Koerner, Director of Public Safety; Joe Fischbach, HR Manager/City Clerk; Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director; Jen Longaecker, Communications Manager.

3. AGENDA ITEM

A. 2022 Legislative Agenda

Mayor Bailey thanked the legislators for joining us tonight as we work through the legislative priorities for the City of Cottage Grove. We appreciate that all of them work with us every year on important projects for citizens in this area. We know how supportive they've been for us in the past to make things like the HERO Center happen.

Mayor Bailey and those present spoke about the following City priorities for 2022: 100th Street Extension Project: Director Burfeind stated this project ties into Washington County's Southwest Arterial Study, as they identified a need for an arterial roadway south of Highway 61, eventually down to Grey Cloud Island. This is the first phase; it was further out in our planning, but with the growth of our Business Park, we really identified the need for another outlet to get to Highway 61. Jamaica Avenue is currently the only outlet from our Business Park, which puts a lot of stress on the 2007 roundabouts. This outlet will include putting bridges over the railroad tracks, and to improve safety, it will eliminate railroad crossings. There will be interchange improvements on the south side of the Innovation Road bridge, as there are currently

traffic problems there at peak hours with 3M. This traffic issue needs to be addressed and resolved.

Administrator Levitt stated the impetus for this is the NorthPoint Development. They're bringing 3.4 million square-feet of industrial space, with over 1,800 livable-wage jobs; so, they absolutely need the bridge over the railroad for the logistics component. 3M has closed their incinerator, so now they're open to selling additional land; that's an opportunity that previously did not exist, and would be over 350 additional acres of industrial land that could now be utilized. We have a lot of synergy in the market for industrial; that's why this project is our top priority because it will build a lot of tax base and many jobs for our community and our area.

Mayor Bailey stated NorthPoint has purchased all of the properties except for one, for which they have a Letter of Intent (LOI) to purchase it outright; they'll own 300 acres square, along with Gene Smallidge's property that crosses Ideal Avenue. He spoke of expansions of local companies (Renewal by Andersen, North Star Sheets), as well as LOIs for other parcels in that area. That will seal up the rest of our Business Park for development, though we're working with CP Rail to see if they'd be willing to sell some additional parcels; there's also a bit more property left by North Star Sheets. The intent would be to continually move down the new 100th Street, as long as 3M is willing to sell some property. That's the catalyst here because we all know that as this area continues to develop, from business and housing standpoints, traffic will continue to get tougher to navigate; we need another access point off Highway 61, so that's why this is a huge priority. NorthPoint will break ground this spring for their first phase, but there'll be a lot of construction in this area during the year.

Questions followed:

1. Representative Jurgens: Will 100th Street continue to be a City street? Mayor Bailey replied that no, it will become a County Road. The estimated total cost is \$21M for everything that's displayed; some costs would be City, some costs would be County, and some of it might be done through TIF. Our intent would be to do some intersection improvements on Jamaica Avenue and maybe over in front of 3M, for the interim, to help alleviate some of the traffic congestion that would go through there. The goal here is to get this road completed all the way out to Highway 61.

2. Senator Bigham: Is this in Washington County's CIP, has it been voted on and supported, and will they do this? Administrator Levitt replied that we're currently working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County regarding the turn-up situation where we would be giving them the roadway. The designs of all of the intersections are completely consistent with the County; we've acquired all the necessary right-of-way and have fulfilled all of the County's requirements. Now it's just more of a funding issue. Mayor Bailey stated everything for the road from Jamaica Avenue almost to Hadley Avenue is going to be paid for by NorthPoint and/or Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Administrator Levitt stated with the construction of the infrastructure, we will probably have about 600 new housing units adjacent to this development; we anticipate seeing those plats in the coming months. Mayor Bailey stated this area of the Business Park would no longer go farther south because of the housing units flanking it from the south.

3. Representative Jurgens: How much of this would be paid for through assessments of those businesses or through the developers who are going to build the homes? Administrator Levitt replied at this time with the actual right-of-way acquisition across 3M, we're looking at a land transfer; so, we would give them back Miller Road in exchange for the future right-of-way that we would need to construct this. Based upon their support, we did not anticipate using assessments against them for their partnership and assistance on the right-of-way, as it may not be a one-for-one. We'd probably be looking at TIF as one element for any future industrial growth that we would have on the additional 350 acres.

4. Representative Jurgens: Regarding the County Road 19 extension and turning up this portion back to the County, to what potential point, maybe Jamaica? Mayor Bailey replied 100th Street will eventually go all the way down to Grey Cloud Island; 100th Street, as you go down to Hadley, to Grey Cloud Island, is a County Road. Because this would be a new extension of the County Road, it would continue to be a County Road. If you're coming down County Road 19, after it crosses, it will then be 100th, and that will eventually make its way all the way down to Grey Cloud Island.

5. Representative Jurgens: How much of this funding is secured right now? Administrator Levitt replied that we have no secured funding at this point. Mayor Bailey stated there are right-of-way and County funds; 3M would like to do a land swap, as they'd like to move their entrance coming off of County Road 19 for Homeland Security reasons. So, Miller Road makes sense to them because they'll loop it and push it farther down to this new road. It will lessen traffic at their front gate, so it's a win for them to work with us on that. He stated 3M has a good working relationship with NorthPoint; so, we think with all of us working together, we can make this happen.

6. Representative Jurgens: When would the City know what it would be looking for from the State? Administrator Levitt replied the County is working on the preliminary design; we're trying to make sure that everything is shovel ready so we're working on the survey, soil borings, and getting the preliminary design work underway. The County has made that commitment. Director Burfeind added they're just kicking off the preliminary design in February, so Washington County has fully funded the preliminary design work effort; that's what they added to their CIP. That will really show us the real design costs, construction costs, etc.

Representative Jurgens stated going into 2022, for this coming legislative session, we won't know what to even ask for at this point. He stated the matching isn't lined up, so if we go the bonding route we'll need that and the local match. He said expecting anything out of this legislative session might be premature unless you can get some of those answers by the final deadline, and we don't know that date yet.

Senator Bigham said it's going to be pretty tight just because of the short session. She stated they haven't even received any guidance on Federal funding yet, and she assumed this would be an eligible expense for that because it involve roads; so, we ought to be looking at a dual track on that, meaning State bonding and Federal funding. Once we find out the requirements, a form and any deadlines, they'll usually send out steps for us to give to you.

Mayor Bailey stated other cities and counties we've spoken to have had success with hiring a lobbyist, so at our City retreat on Saturday we'll be discussing hiring a lobbyist

for the City of Cottage Grove to work for us in Washington, D.C. We'd previously used a local lobbyist for the HERO Center. Our goal is to do whatever we need to do to get this project moving, as it's not just big for Cottage Grove; it's big for this area and for the State, with all the tax revenue and jobs that it's going to generate. Senator Bigham noted one of the State's largest employers will benefit from it, too.

Council Member Olsen stated the County will also benefit significantly, and the County already has a lobbyist that works for them in Washington, D.C.; so, it might be beneficial to work hand in hand with the County to lobby for this project.

7. Representative Jurgens: Where is the Public Works building on the drawing that was displayed? Director Burfeind replied we have thoughts about some land south of 100th Street, near the location of our new water treatment plant, towards River Acres. Mayor Bailey stated we've acquired the land both for the water treatment facility and the future Public Works site that's needed.

8. Representative Jurgens: Has all of this land been acquired? He saw a "For Sale" sign in front of the former Majestic Ballroom. Mayor Bailey replied no, not in that area; the City owns acreage in that area, but there's also the Majestic site and individual homeowners there. The EDA bought the house that used to be next to the Majestic.

9. Representative Jurgens: It was confirmed that with this project there was no work on the bridge over Highway 61 included; he asked if that was something that was also being looked at, as the sight line with that bridge isn't great, and didn't know if that would be better or worse with a roundabout there. Director Burfeind stated they'd looked at that with the County when they did the roundabout on the north side, wondering if we could get roundabouts on both sides; it reduces the need for all of those turn lanes on the bridge if you have roundabouts on both ends. With the existing bridge, it would work pretty well, and we'll look at the sight lines; the way you enter the roundabout can really be improved as everybody has to slow down to make their entrance, so he really thinks it will address those issues.

103rd Street Bridge: Mayor Bailey stated this bridge is obviously deficient when it comes to width; this is another area we feel is important for safety and width, in order to get traffic of all types through there. Council Member Thiede asked if we knew what plans BNSF has for that bridge; Director Burfeind stated we're still waiting to hear back from them, and Mayor Bailey stated spring was the last he heard. Council Member Thiede stated obviously they want to extend 95th Street. Representative Franke stated that's if it all comes to fruition; we're still not 100% on that either. There is some discussion that it might fizzle, and he told St. Paul Park City Administrator Kevin Walsh that they really needed to start being involved in these discussions and working much better with their neighbors. He told Administrator Walsh that St. Paul Park needs to start having discussions with Washington County and with Cottage Grove; depending on which way all of this goes, they're going to need a working hand-in-hand partnership. That adds a whole other dichotomy, besides the Mississippi Dunes development, but maybe they're just waiting to see what BNSF has to say.

Mayor Bailey stated that we'd been looking at 95th Street going through as housing because we assumed that would be a residential area. The challenge was pushing

truck traffic through the neighborhood so we had to go another direction.

Representative Franke stated that whole thing was poorly designed. So, now it's all getting overused and it's undersized. Senator Biggam stated St. Paul Park already has a big ask, too, on 3rd, as they're not going to want many trucks coming down that street after they get some money for that. Representative Franke stated they still have the mining trucks to deal with. Mayor Bailey stated if either of us hears something, we need to work together; having that down there isn't going to benefit them.

Representative Franke asked what they'd heard from BNSF on this potential project; Administrator Levitt replied BNSF is a little hard to engage. Representative Franke said their lobbyist often sees him at the Capitol, and he always has plenty to say to him.

Administrator Levitt stated we're working hand in hand with Washington County on this because obviously if the island is ever going to develop as a Regional Park, this is a critical element to that; clearly, we recognize it's a public safety issue, but we also know the governor's commitment, to build back better, and it's related to infrastructure. We know we have a safety issue here, and would like to improve that, so that's our commitment. Right now, we're at about \$8.5M for the bridge. Representative Franke suggested for that bridge, we should see if we can maybe get some of that money for a project like this, as it's a prime candidate. Mayor Bailey stated it's amazing how it's over \$8M now, and it could have been \$900K not that long ago.

Representative Jurgens asked if there had been a design completed on this and if we knew how the new bridge would look; also, if vehicle traffic would go over the rail or how that would be done. Director Burfeind stated traffic still has to go underneath, so we'd actually have to dig out more under the bridge; we looked at the tie-down points with the County, and it's just too far out in each direction. It's a challenging build because you have to actually build a temporary track next to the current tracks, build a temporary bridge, build a new bridge, and then put the track; unfortunately, it's a very extensive, expensive project. Administrator Levitt it's also the Mississippi River Trail Corridor so we know we're going to have the bike path, too, so it will be wide enough to support that and a full County Road design.

Mayor Bailey stated we know the County is continuing to work to acquire additional land on the island.

Transportation: Mayor Bailey stated they'd asked for funding to improve lighting on Highway 61 for some time. He'd attended a Transportation Advisory Board meeting with the Metropolitan Council today, and traffic deaths in the metro area on roadways are up almost 100%, year after year. Discussion took place as to what's causing that; they were told only 2% of those deaths are related to mass transit, so, it's not buses or trains, it's happening out on the highway. We're going to get more information for our meeting next month, but there's a target of zero deaths; within three years, they want us to get to 180 or less deaths in the State of Minnesota. We're currently well beyond that, so it's going to be quite a challenge to do that. One of the things discussed was lighting on roads makes a huge difference; he thought it was ironic that we'd be having this conversation tonight about the lighting on Highway 61. We've had some fatalities, specifically in the area near Highway 95 and Zywiec's. He knows the lighting has been

in and out of different bonding bills at the Capitol, but that is also one of the items that he'd like to bring up because he thinks it's important through this corridor.

Senator Bigham stated she'd spoken with Administrator Levitt, and the HERO Center has been a huge success. She knows that tough decisions were made during that process about what to include; we did what we did and then we can build on it, and that was smart. Now we're in that build on it side, and things have changed what we're doing and what we're facing. There is cash in the bonding bill; the three of us legislators are in the minority, and they obviously need us and our votes to pass the bill. She can't predict whether or not the bonding bill will pass, but a cash bill does not need a super majority. She thinks some improvements to Public Safety, using the cash option, would be a bipartisan and appropriate use of that money. When she did the tour last spring, there was discussion about confined space, especially with the jail side of it, and how you're training for that; there are more of those models, they're more mobile, able to be changed out, and able to incorporate different partners in law enforcement to come here and do the training, etc. She would like a list of those improvements, with some numbers given for each, and the three of us can sit down, talk about those, and see what we want. She thinks it's a priority to address the regional significance.

Senator Bigham stated the disability claims for law enforcement and first responders is a big financial burden for local governments. She would like to begin the discussion of what that would look like, considering the amount of mutual aid that cities and communities provide to each other. With that partnership of State, Counties, and Cities working together on different incidents through the years, we need to see if the State can't take over some of that responsibility or help, even if it's a one-time thing. Whatever it would look like, she'd like to start beginning that discussion; she wanted everyone to know that that's on her radar. The three of us were at a meeting yesterday with the CLEOs in the area; she thought it was very well attended and a lot of good information was gained about what we can do. Many data-sharing things and school threat assessment teams that she and Representative Franke worked on are in here, and they're still committed to working on those.

Council Member Olsen thanked Senator Bigham, as they're both huge advocates for Public Safety. He had two requests for the legislators: 1) The HERO Center should be looked at as a true first-responder facility; it's not just police officers, but also firefighters and EMTs. We have to recognize that our firefighters train in that facility regularly. One of the things that they don't have, that they'd like to have, is a burn tower; so, if there are any funds available for something along those lines, that would make the HERO Center a true Public Safety training facility. It would have all of the elements that Fire needs, in addition to police officers and paramedics. 2) Mental health element of Public Safety: He knows they've all been talking about the evolution of Public Safety Departments in the State and what that should look like. One thing many people land on as common ground is the need to provide law enforcement agencies with support from social workers. We're seeing a little bit of that in Woodbury right now, but that really falls upon the Counties as much as it does the Cities. Those social workers or mental health professionals tend to come from the County, and then there's that partnership with Public Safety. Director Koerner has given a lot of thought to that and

has spoken with Public Safety Director Vague in Woodbury and others about how that should look, what it's going to take, the funding mechanism, etc. He asked that they put those two things on their plate for conversation on Public Safety this year, as it would be useful to not only the City of Cottage Grove, but also to our mutual aid communities of St. Paul Park, Newport, and Woodbury; it might be something that would be helpful to the entire South Washington County area.

Council Member Khambata reiterated that he thought the 100th Street expansion serves the whole County in terms of the tax base and accessibility. He's glad to see that we have made that a priority, and if we have to come up with money to match, that's been made a priority for the City and he thinks also at the County level. If there's any money available from the State, he thinks that will have a real long-term, positive impact on the County and especially in the City.

Council Member Dennis thanked the legislators for their continued support. Having had an opportunity to go through this document and be involved in various aspects of topics on the slides, he thinks what's listed here is reasonable and they can make the case for these asks. This is part of the great direction in which our community is going; these are all items designed to help to make our place be a better home, so he fully supports them. He thanked them again for their support.

Council Member Thiede thanked the legislators for all of their help. Regarding transportation, he's worked on the Red Rock Corridor, the second train, and also East Metro Strong. He gets frustrated with East Metro Strong because they always talk about St. Paul, and so he tries to interject technology into those discussions. With new businesses coming into town, we really need to take a look at transportation. Regarding the Bus Rapid Transit, he'd asked why it had to be a really big bus that goes through town and felt it should be flexible; it turns out there's no difference in cost for a smaller bus than a big bus. It's important for us to ask how we are going to get people around; 3M alone draws a lot of people from outside Cottage Grove and this area. We need to just look at transportation, including the Red Rock Corridor or Bus Rapid Transit, just to make sure that we facilitate and provide a good environment to get quality workers, wherever they come from. We also need to definitely make sure that 100th Street gets put in place because Jamaica can't handle all of that traffic.

Senator Bigham stated regarding transportation, obviously we're in the middle of a pandemic and ridership is down; we don't know when it will come back, but she thinks it's an opportunity to remind people that transit in general is long-term planning. In 2023, the Gold Line's first stop will be in Woodbury, at Tamarack, and then just south of Newport, which gets into our Red Rock. As that starts to evolve, we'll need to have more discussion about it. We have a bill in for a demonstration route; again, we have a lot of Federal money coming in that is specific for Bus Rapid Transit, so that will obviously qualify. We want to do the demonstration route when there's something to demonstrate; right now, many people are still working from home. She thinks in due time that will come out; we must invest in public transit and access for our businesses, for our workforce, and for our economic development. She stated she and Mayor Bailey

have been working on this for 20 years, whether elected or appointed. When we've sat down with 3M and Renewal by Andersen, the top thing they talk about is transportation and how that would look and impact their workforce. So, it's in the front of the mind for employers; we just have to keep looking at it. Newport's Park and Ride maybe should have a direct route to Minneapolis, not St. Paul. She thinks there are things like that she can talk to the Metropolitan Council about, but right now, nobody knows when ridership will be back up. She wanted everyone to know we are talking about it, she spoke about it with Representative Franke last week; we have to keep up on that.

Council Member Thiede asked about technology; Senator Bigham asked if he was speaking of autonomous buses, and stated that we do appropriate funding for emerging technologies in this round. Council Member Thiede stated besides having discussions with MnDOT and attending their sessions, he's actually contacted a national outfit to look at inside the city transit, etc. He wants to talk about that at our Strategic Planning session, to try to advance some of that thought of having some more flexible transportation within the City. He wondered if there was the ability to pull some potential funding, maybe for electric vehicles and potential autonomous transportation. Senator Bigham stated it's also cleaner technology, and there is money dedicated for that for the transit side of things.

Representative Franke stated as he and Senator Bigham had discussed, we're continuing to push and have these discussions. Coming out of this right now, we want to make sure that we can have provability; otherwise, we're not going to get what we want in the end. We're going to continue to push and work and be the buzz in everybody's ears, but we want to make sure that it happens when it's all said and done, and it happens correctly. There are other things going on within the County, some discussions about Newport, and what might happen there; we do know that the focus is getting people to these jobs and to potentially fill these homes in Cottage Grove because that's where we're seeing the growth, the jobs, and that's where we're going to need to pull from for many of the people using that transit. So, those are hand in hand, and we want to get it done.

Senator Bigham stated that conversation isn't just about Cottage Grove; obviously, in that line, Cottage Grove would have the most stops. It's about access for residents of St. Paul Park and Newport to have access into Cottage Grove and into Woodbury where most of our health care providers are located. Another factor is something that's happened during the pandemic, with households down to one car because somebody's now working from home. With a one-vehicle house, they'll still need to have access to places, so it's going to be those types of factors that we don't know yet and how that will impact the rebuild of transportation. The nice thing about the Red Rock Corridor is its very flexible; it's not some huge, light rail, permanent thing. It's Bus Rapid Transit on an existing highway; there will be some nice-quality stops for people to get in and out of, in strategic areas, to provide workforce and economic development.

Mayor Bailey told the legislators that for the future, at this point we're not sure where that money should necessarily go when we're planning this; there are billions coming from the Federal government, but right now when you look at mass transit, it's not there.

He stated we're going to have to look at community busing to the Red Rock to get people from their homes to an area to do their shopping or to a healthcare facility in St. Paul or Minneapolis. He felt that's something we're going to have to look at collectively.

Senator Bailey stated it's going to be popular. Commissioner Weik led the charge on the Gold Line, and we always talked about having two spots: A feeder route or a circulator bus from Tamarack down to Newport, and then having a feeder route to the HealthEast complex. That's a huge destination for our residents, so we have to be able to have continuity with it.

Council Member Thiede stated his vision would be to have autonomous 12-passenger buses; they could even be going along what we see today as the bike paths and some of the other paths. Those are fairly economical, and those would be the feeders into the Bus Rapid Transit or the Park and Ride, etc.

Administrator Levitt stated there are two things she'd like to request: 1) We're really struggling with affordable housing; so, if there is any way that you can help pour money into that bucket, we have many investors and developers who are interested. We have the land, we have it zoned, we have a lot of people coming to visit us, and they want to do it, but there aren't a lot of dollars out there. 2) The MN Job Creation Fund (JCF) really helps us be competitive nationally. As a State, we can track business, and a lot of our Business Park users have used MN JCF; it's a marketing tool, so she hoped that they could help continue to fund those programs because it attracts large businesses to Minnesota, and Cottage Grove has been a great recipient of that. Administrator Levitt stated we're more than happy to assist you if issues come up during the session. If you need information or testimony, we're always available to help.

Representative Jurgens asked when Administrator Levitt mentioned the affordable housing if she was thinking multi-housing or lower cost first-time homeowners; she replied more high-density products. We have a lot of people who have come and visited us, but there's just not enough money in the tax credits, etc. to be able to make it there. Commissioner Howe is really excited and passionate, and so we have the places to put it to use here in Cottage Grove if we had more funds. Mayor Bailey stated those dollars end up getting tied up in Minneapolis and St. Paul. If we want some affordable housing options, even through the Metropolitan Council, the money never gets this far out, so we never get that chance. We've done TIF funding, etc. on our own from the City standpoint for a senior housing project, The Legends of Cottage Grove. For general high-density housing, we've signed up, done LOIs, etc., but developers wait for the funding source to come in, and it doesn't, so they walk away.

Representative Jurgens thanked everyone for bringing them in for this discussion. He felt the burn tower was a great idea, as he'd previously toured one. It's a great training tool, so please remember to put that on the list of how we may improve the HERO Center. Council Member Olsen gave him some ideas on what we can look at as far as mental health professionals and some funding to help our cities and counties with that. Especially with everything we're seeing right now and what we're coming out of, there are issues around mental health in general; he's constantly having conversations about those. Regarding the transit, he likes how all of us work together as we're constantly

having these discussions; he thinks as long as we continue to put forward our ideas and work to be ready when funding opportunities come, we'll be shovel ready. With the meeting yesterday with the law enforcement chiefs, some discussion revolved around the major cities (St. Paul/Minneapolis) that get a lot of funding; we see that in education, public safety, housing, etc. After yesterday's meeting, one of the discussions he's going to start to have with everybody is we need to make sure that things are more equitable. We're running out of opportunity and options in the big cities, so why do we have to continually build up when we could build out with everything. He stated he was going to try to personally be looking into making sure that the disbursements of any funds try to come out to those of us in the suburbs; maybe suburbs need to start to have more of that battle with the big cities.

Representative Franke stated Cottage Grove is doing a fantastic job, and it's a pleasure to represent Cottage Grove; with 574 new homes, that's got to be the largest number in 15 years. From a residential and industrial development standpoint, Cottage Grove is doing things right. He congratulated all present for doing a terrific job; it makes us proud to represent you.

Mayor Bailey stated we're happy that the three of them are representing us, as they've done a lot for us, too. That's why we enjoy having these meetings so that we can share ideas; if you need us for anything at the Capitol for support, let us know, and we'll be happy to go there.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Judy Graf and reviewed by Joe Fischbach, HR Manager/City Clerk.