F5

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE MEMO

cityadmin@hiawatha-iowa.com
319-393-1515 ext.523

To: Mayor Bennett and City Council

From: City Administrator, Kim Downs

Date: July 28, 2016

RE: RTA Letter of Support

Last fall, MPO entered into a metro community transit study contract with findings submitted last June of this year. In the study it talked about the feasibility of a Regional Transit Authority vs. a Cedar Rapids Municipality Transit System.

There are advantages and disadvantages of a regional transit system but early findings show the advantages out way the disadvantages. As you know the CR Transit System is not necessarily profitable program and both Marion and Hiawatha have not been able to fully bridge the operational gap for the services they provide to our communities.

The Regional Transit Authority (RTA) would be an independent transit authority who can plan and operate transit service with a greater focus on customer service and needs of the system in the region. The RTA would have the ability and authority to tax and bond. Essentially, relieving our general fund burden while reducing jurisdictional barriers.

The concerns of implementing a RTA would certainly be the loss of direct control of transit operations by the City of Cedar Rapids. Some may question whether costs and benefits of a transit are equitably distributed, with communities perceiving that they are subsidizing others.

There are still many questions that need to be answered and to answer them the Corridor MPO is asking the cities of Hiawatha, Robins, Fairfax, Marion and Cedar Rapids to support an in-depth transit study to start the process by identifying stakeholders, developing consensus of governance structure, conduct a financial analysis of a RTA, along with conducting public engagement throughout the process and finally develop and sign agreements to implement a RTA if this is our best option.

The expected duration of the study and implementation process would be between two to three years. The estimated cost to hire a consultant would be around $80,000, not including legal services.

The MPO Executive and Policy Board members will be taking a field trip to Des Moines to speak with their regional transit authority sometime in August to learn more and ask questions.

On Wednesday night Mayor Bennett and I will ask you to support our Corridor MPO in their efforts to conduct a feasibility study of the possibilities creating a regional transit authority. Funding for this study would be through MPO dollars with no local match.

DRAFT

RESOLUTION NO. 16-
City Council

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CORRIDOR METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF A REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HIAWATHA, IOWA, to support the Corridor Metropolitan Planning Organization to continue their studies to determine the feasibility of a Regional Transit Authority within our metro community.

AYES:
NAYS:
ABSENT:

PASSED AND APPROVED this 3rd day of August, 2016.

_____
Bill Bennett, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Kelly Kornegor, City Clerk