

RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

May 10, 2011

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met with the following members present: Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Absent: 0. Also present was Julie Kleinschmidt, County Manager and Phil Carruthers, Director of Civil Division, Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

AGENDA

Commissioner Carter moved approval of the Agenda of the May 10, 2011 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Parker. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

MINUTES

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the Minutes of the April 5, 2011 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Bennett. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

1. Metro Transit – Presentation: Designation of primary colors to transitways in the metro area, and the branding concept of the regional transitway network

[The Metro Transit presentation is on file with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority office and is viewable at <http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/cb/meetings/>]

Bruce Howard, Director of Customer Services and Marketing for Metro Transit, introduced himself to the Board and said he would give an update on the Metropolitan Council's transitway identity and branding approach, specifically naming our transitways with the use of colors and selecting a system name for the region's transitways. Mr. Howard said the reason we brand our transitway service is because there are challenges and opportunities with a growing transitway system - there are new services beyond just a single light-rail line; there is a need to communicate service expectations to users/visitors; they want to distinguish transitway service from local or express bus service; they want to establish consistency for services that extend beyond one county/area and connect the entire region. Mr. Howard briefly explained the types of services they will be branding. The types he will talk about today are highway bus rapid transit (BRT) station-to-station and light rail. He said over the past year, staff has been figuring out the best approach for branding our transitway system. They have looked at best practices around the country and they also have a Transitway Guidelines Development Project taking place in which they receive feedback from local stakeholders who are their partners in the transit system.

Mr. Howard said in December, the Metropolitan Council approved four principles for the transitway branding framework. The four principles are: 1. Position, brand, and identify LRT and highway BRT station-to-station service as one system; 2. Name LRT and highway BRT station-to-station lines using colors; 3. Unify the LRT and BRT station-to-station services brand using a distinct system name; 4. Apply regional transit color scheme to the LRT and BRT station-to-station services. With this framework in place, they referred to the Draft Regional Transitway Guideline on how to approach selecting specific colors for each of the LRT and BRT station-to-station lines. They would select the colors with input from the communities through corridor policy groups; they want to make sure the colors distinguish between the lines, fit within the regional system, and allow line through-routing; they want to use colors with common, succinct names; the colors should show up clearly on maps but lines should always be labeled for those who may be unable to visually distinguish colors. The five primary corridors this affects are Hiawatha LRT, Cedar BRT, I-35W BRT, Central LRT, and Southwest LRT. Mr. Howard mentioned that the line colors will only apply to corridors once the locally preferred alternative is formally selected.

Commissioner Reinhardt asked if the reason Northstar is not among the color designation is because it is commuter rail.

Mr. Howard said yes, Northstar was not included in the color designated line scheme because its service operates during the rush hours in comparison to BRT or LRT, which operate throughout the day. However, Northstar will be identified as a part of the transit system on their system map of region.

Mr. Howard briefed the Board on the peer region color uses by showing a visual of the transit systems of Dallas, San Diego, Washington DC, and Boston.

Commissioner Carter noted that some of the more built-out systems incorporate their local bus routes with the color designations of their LRT and BRT lines, and asked what the potential implication might be for the Twin Cities as we look at building out the identity and branding of our services.

Mr. Howard said the plans for the transitways are to denote the corridor lines with color and look at other services in the region such as arterial BRT, which is different from highway station-to-station BRT. They would probably create a different identity for that particular service. Therefore, the local buses would remain the way we see them today, the transitways would become the colored line designation, and other services might have a different name to identify its different type of service.

Mr. Howard briefly discussed the line name (colors) identification process saying the gathering of input from the corridor commissions on the color line designations began in January 2011, it proceeded through April, and eventually the information will be communicated to the Metropolitan Council who will make a decision on the color assignments. The Metropolitan Council received an update at the Transportation Committee meeting last night, and on May 23, 2011, they will begin the approval process. They received overwhelmingly supportive feedback from stakeholders on the approach of using colors. Mr. Howard showed a map of the Twin Cities LRT and BRT station-to-station line name (colors) proposal that will be going back to the Metropolitan Council. The line names are: Green - Central/Southwest LRT; Blue-Hiawatha LRT; Red – Cedar Avenue BRT; Orange – I-35W BRT. It made sense to combine Central and Southwest into one line name because, when both are built-out, they will be through-routing the trains allowing riders to stay on the same train through both of the corridor lines. Mr. Howard went through some of the next steps of the system name process, and the milestone timeline. He said in January they talked with stakeholders about the process; February and April they accepted names from the public; May, June and July they will test, advise and select a name; July and August they will work on the system identity; September they hope to have the process completed and select the identity.

Commissioner Parker commended Mr. Howard for taking on this project. She believes the Northstar line should be included in the map as part of the system, even if it is called 'Northstar Commuter Rail' to differentiate it from the other lines. She said in addition to the colors, it may also be important to distinguish the lines by their end points and have the final destinations labeled on the lines.

Commissioner Reinhardt agreed with the suggestion to include Northstar commuter rail, and also commuter buses. In addition to the Northstar, they have the Rush Line and Red Rock Corridors, and people need to know how they can travel from one mode to the other.

Mr. Howard replied that they have struggled with this because they are trying to show that transitways are different than the other services in terms of hours of operation and frequency. The other services could be included on the ultimate systems map as various levels or layers on the map, but they do not know if they would be included in the transitway colors in order to show that service differentiation. He said they could, for example, designate a color to the different commuter modes but not to every commuter route.

Commissioner Reinhardt added that the commuter services, bus or rail, should have some designation or code that shows their different mode of service, but these should definitely be included on the map as an integral part of the transitway system.

Commissioner Carter commented that it is important to distinguish on the map the line direction as well as mode of service.

Chair McDonough thanked Mr. Howard for the information provided in the presentation and his work on this project.

2. Central Corridor Funders Collaborative – Presentation

[The CCFC presentation is on file with the RCRRA office]

Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Director of the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC), introduced himself to the Board, and said he would give an update on the goals of the CCFC and some examples of the work that has been taking place within the last few years. He said the CCFC is a group or collaboration of 13 foundations, about two-thirds are local foundations and the other third are national, that came together to learn about the opportunities and challenges of adding light rail to a community. The CCFC's vision is to work with others to make the neighbors along the Central Corridor places of opportunity for all. They focus on four key outcomes, which are: allow access to affordable housing; create a strong local economy; build vibrant transit oriented places; promote effective coordination and collaboration among all of the efforts.

Mr. Sage-Martinson said the majority of the CCFC's initiative is to work with partners to build multi-sector/multi-jurisdictional working groups around a set of topics and goals, learn about the local conditions in the corridor as well as the national best practices, and develop a joint strategy for the corridor that has innovative policies and programs to address the issues. He mentioned four examples where the work is underway to achieve the multi-sector strategy. He said there is a joint committee on equal opportunity and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) for the Central Corridor and they worked with that committee to convene a "Great Minds" retreat to come up with a joint strategy around workforce inclusion and DBE participation. This strategy has now been implemented into the LRT Works Project, Contracting for Success Initiative, and the federal policy change around local hiring. He said another example of these working groups is called the Central Corridor Business Resource Collaborative, which came up with a strategy for construction mitigation and business development. Another group is the Transit Oriented Development Investment Framework with the primary responsibility of public investments along the Central Corridor, and these strategies are now being used in the Corridors of Opportunity (Living Cities Integration Initiative and HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grant). The fourth example is the Affordable Housing Coordinated Plan working group, which has just begun its work and plans to have a joint strategy in place by the end of this year.

Commissioner Rettman said there is no indication of a strategy to assure that the "fabric" of this neighborhood and those who are there will get to stay. She said it is already an affordable and diverse community with the businesses and the residents, who do have a right to stay. She said there needs to be a foundation for this.

Mr. Sage-Martinson said the CCFC's goal is to minimize involuntary displacement and to ensure there is enduring affordability near the stations along the line. The Affordable Housing Coordinated Plan working group will narrow down their exact goal for this strategy, which will be determined within the first meetings of this group. The focus is very much on the preservation of existing houses and enduring affordability with new developments. He said hopefully the good points mentioned by Commissioner Rettman will be addressed in this group, in that they have agreed to form the strategies but the strategies just have not been formed yet.

Commissioner Carter commented that affordability in the corridor is really about having a vibrant corridor and making sure that the economy is an improved economy.

Mr. Sage-Martinson mentioned a study that will look at rental rates in non-subsidized housing in the Corridor, which will be monitored regularly to inform what is happening to rents and allow policies to respond to changes that might occur. He said part of minimizing involuntary displacement is to assure income rises quicker than housing costs. This is related to other issues the working groups are working on, which is long-term job access, and bike, pedestrian and transit access. He also talked about the catalyst fund, which divides 41 grants of \$3.9 million among each of the issue areas.

Mr. Sage-Martinson also mentioned that the CCFC developed the Central Corridor Tracker with Wilder Research, which includes 13 indicators that are aligned to these 4 outcomes that they plan to track annually giving people information about the changes taking place in the corridor. They will ask each of the working

groups if the 13 indicators will meet all of their needs to track progress on their strategies or if more indicators need to be added. He said the indicators may grow over time as you all and the other experts in the corridor come to an agreement about the kind of information we need to monitor the change.

Commissioner Rettman asked what baseline they use for tracking.

Mr. Sage-Martinson said the Tracker was produced in 2011 and the data comes from 2007-2010 depending on the source. He said the initial data is broken into three zones in terms of location; there is a zone from highway 280 to the west, 280 to Dale Street, and there is a zone from Dale to downtown Saint Paul at the Union Depot. They think the working groups will probably come up with more specific data than they were initially collecting pertaining to both the businesses and the residents. He said he would send the Central Corridor Tracker booklet to each of the commissioners.

Chair McDonough thanked Mr. Sage-Martinson for the work he has done and to all of the foundations for stepping up to this.

CORRIDOR UPDATES

No updates were reported.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair McDonough declared the meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM.