

RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

July 26, 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 James Mogan, Assistant County Attorney, Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at 11:25 AM.

AGENDA

Commissioner Carter moved approval of the Agenda of the July 26, 2011 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Ortega. Roll Call: Ayes – Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

MINUTES

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the Minutes of the June 28, 2011 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Roll Call: Ayes – Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

1. Granting a permanent sidewalk easement at the Union Depot to the City of Saint Paul for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Ortega. Roll Call: Ayes – Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0. (R11-24)

WHEREAS, The beginning of the Central Corridor light rail transit line will be the station in front of the Union Depot, and

WHEREAS, The Central Corridor project will construct a new sidewalk adjacent to the station platform on Union Depot property, and

WHEREAS, A 10.5 foot wide permanent easement to the City of Saint Paul is required on the Union Depot property; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approves an easement for the City of Saint Paul at the Union Depot for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project, and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the Chair to execute the easement

2. Joint Powers Agreement with Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority for Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis Study

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Parker.

Commissioner Rettman asked why Ramsey County is being asked to pay for half when only three miles of the corridor is in Ramsey County, and how did staff arrive at these numbers. She has concern about setting a precedent.

Josh Olson, Planning Specialist, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA), explained that the Robert Street Transitway is a critical piece of the Union Depot project. Staff from Dakota County RRA (DCRRA) and RCRRA felt it was fair to split those costs evenly because the feasibility study identified significant ridership in Ramsey County portion. He did not have the numbers in front of him to say that it was an equal breakdown, but those numbers can be provided.

Commissioner Ortega commented that this is the planning stage and we need to assess where the impact is. He said with the Gateway Corridor, the funding was equally split into thirds between the Met Council and Counties of Ramsey and Washington, and there is even less mileage in Ramsey County for Gateway than there is for Robert Street Transitway.

Commissioner Reinhardt said it would be helpful to have the numbers in front of them, but has confidence that thorough discussion took place on determining the appropriate level of funding, as has happened with the other corridor projects.

Commissioner Carter suggested adding to either lines 6 or 31 of the resolution, where the resolution is introduced or where we are talking about being a co-sponsor, a line that that speaks to the importance of this transitway to the Union Depot. On line 6 we might add, "Whereas the Transitway Alternatives Analysis Study is important to Union Depot planning". On line 31 we could add in, "given the potential of the corridor in Union Depot planning". She said it may help to document this as we move forward.

Commissioner Reinhardt added that in previous resolutions like these, we typically add a statement saying that the funding formula is solely for this one item, so it does not set a precedent.

Chair McDonough said we can include language that says "this funding formula is for this phase of the project only".

Commissioner Reinhardt offered that as a friendly amendment, seconded by Commissioner Carter.

The amendment was seen as friendly.

Commissioner Rettman asked why there are only two members for RCRRA, yet there are four members for DCRRA listed under the Membership section of the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), page 3, (iv).

Jim Mogan, Assistant County Attorney, Ramsey County Attorney's Office, clarified that the JPA before them is just for this stage of the project.

Mr. Olson said the membership breakdown of two for RCRRA and four for DCRRA was a request by Dakota County because it went through four commissioner districts. We agreed to the breakdown because the Steering Committee is not a voting body necessarily, but rather a means to form a consensus on the plan and ultimately the JPA decision will come back to each of the rail authorities for action.

Chair McDonough said he is comfortable with the funding and the membership formulas because this is a very strong corridor. We have to elevate the importance of this corridor for our partners in Dakota County and we need them to be able to become leaders as we look at how we build out our system. If that means we will pay 50% of this funding to get us to the first point, and we get four Dakota County commissioners engaged in this corridor to potentially become leaders for the development of this corridor, then these are positive steps and they dramatically benefit Ramsey County.

Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 6. Nays – Rettman - 1.
(R11-25)

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has worked to advance several transitway corridors to the benefit of the citizens of Ramsey County, including the Robert Street Transitway; and

WHEREAS, The Robert Street Transitway Corridor stretches 14 miles from downtown St. Paul to the City of Rosemount; and

WHEREAS, The Robert Street Transitway has significant transportation and land use issues; and

WHEREAS, There are opportunities for a variety of multimodal transportation improvements to the Robert Street Transitway, including light rail, bus rapid transit, multi-use trails and roadway improvements; and

WHEREAS, The Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority submitted an application to the Federal Transit Administration, under the Alternatives Analysis Program, for funding of an Alternatives Analysis of \$1.2 million; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of an Alternatives Analysis Study is to conduct an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives and general transit alignment options for identified transportation needs in a particular travel corridor; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Transit Administration awarded Dakota County a grant of \$1.18 million to conduct a federally compliant Alternatives Analysis Study for the Robert Street Corridor; and

WHEREAS, To access the federal funds, a 20% (\$295,000) match from non-federal sources is required; and

WHEREAS, The Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority has requested the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to serve as co-sponsor in the completion of the study and contribute one-half (\$147,500) of the required local match; and

WHEREAS, To formalize the relationship between Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and the Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority, a Joint Powers Agreement for the Robert Street Transitway Alternatives Analysis Study was developed for Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's consideration; and

WHEREAS, The scope and term of the Joint Powers Agreement is limited to the completion of the Alternatives Analysis study which is expected to take approximately 18-24 months, culminating in the Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority and Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority recommending a locally preferred alternative to the Metropolitan Council. Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority hereby approves the Robert Street Corridor Joint Powers Agreement; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the Chair to execute the Robert Street Joint Powers Agreement; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes a payment in an amount not to exceed \$147,500 for Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's share of the cost of the Alternatives Analysis Study; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the County Manager to make all necessary budget adjustments including increasing estimated revenues and appropriations.

3. Presentation of the 2012-2013 Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Budget

Julie Kleinschmidt, Ramsey County Manager presented the proposed 2012-2013 RCRRA budget.

[The presentation is on file with the RCRRA office]

Ms. Kleinschmidt said a sound transportation and transit infrastructure and the ability to move people is vital to a strong economy, and a lot of the discussion in the county's budget was about job creation. We need to continue to make this investment to stay competitive and become more competitive. We tie the RCRRA into the county's goals and critical success indicators.

The RCRRA advocates for, coordinates, funds, plans, and implements transit for county residents and businesses. Our vision is a seamless, multimodal transit network that is designed to ease congestion, make it easier to get to and from destinations, and improve the economic competitiveness and vitality of St. Paul, Ramsey County and the East Metro region. RCRRA develops a long range vision, helps to shape the future of Ramsey County and works in a manner that is sensitive to the financial impact to county taxpayers.

Ms. Kleinschmidt talked about the long-term financing strategy that the RCRRA adopted in 2005. We adopted this with broad community support for the financing strategy, in other words, how we and the community will pay for this vision. RCRRA adopted a long-term 2006-2014 capital plan for funding RCRRA share of the transit projects with a goal to keep the property tax levy stable and not increase it. RCRRA wanted to keep borrowing costs low, keep within the county's overall debt benchmark goals, and provide flexibility to take advantage of state and federal funding. Finally, RCRRA wanted to use its investments to leverage private investments to the greatest capacity possible. Ms. Kleinschmidt said current cash flow projections for RCRRA indicate a need for short term borrowing, but not a need to issue long-term bonds. This is due the RCRRA's success in attracting state and federal investments in the Union Depot project and its work on CTIB with Central Corridor. The proposed tax levy for 2012-2013 is \$19,938,811, which has been the same since 2005 and is less than the authorized maximum. The 2012-2013 proposed operating budget includes estimates for Union Depot operating cost estimates, which is why there is an increase in the operating budget. The estimated cost for renovating the Union Depot to operational by the end of 2012 is \$243.4 million. This project was fully budgeted through 2011. RCRRA has been awarded over \$138 million in state and federal funds; the project is 25% complete with no major latent conditions found; most construction bids are coming in at or below estimated costs; the project is currently on schedule and on budget.

Chair McDonough added that 500 people have been trained to work on the Union Depot site in terms of job creation from this project.

Ms. Kleinschmidt continued her presentation to talk about the Central Corridor Light Rail project (CCLRT), which connects Union Depot to downtown Minneapolis and the Hiawatha Light Rail Line. The RCRRA's obligation for the CCLRT project is \$66.4 million. This project is currently under construction and scheduled to open in 2014. A full funding grant agreement from the Federal Transit Administration was received in 2011. The proposed budget includes sufficient funding to fulfill the Central Corridor obligations for 2012 and 2013. Funding is also provided in the proposed budget to study the Rush Line, Red Rock, Gateway, Robert Street, Northeast and Northeast Diagonal, Riverview, and High Speed Rail corridors.

Ms. Kleinschmidt closed her presentation by providing the next steps for the proposed 2012-2013 RCRRA budget as follows:

- September 6, 2011 – RCRRA 2012-2013 Budget Hearing; Public Hearing # 1 (public testimony on the budget)
- September 13, 2011 – Set the 2012 maximum levy
- November 28, 2011 – Public Hearing # 2
- December 13, 2011 – Final approval of budget and 2012 levy

CORRIDOR UPDATES

No updates were reported.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair McDonough declared the meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.