

RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

December 16, 2008

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met in the Council Chambers, Third Floor Court House, with the following members present: Bennett, Carter (late), Ortega (late), Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Absent: none.

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at 12:13 PM

AGENDA

Chair McDonough suggested moving the policy item to the end of the agenda.

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the Agenda of the December, 2008 Board Meeting, as amended, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 5. Nays – 0. Motion accepted.

MINUTES

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the Minutes from the November 18, 2008 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Parker. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 5. Nays – 0. Motion accepted.

[Commissioner Carter arrived at this point of the meeting]

MINUTES

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the Minutes from the November 25, 2008 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Rettman. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 6. Nays – 0. Motion accepted.

[Commissioner Ortega arrived during the following discussion]

2. Approve the 2009 tax levy in the amount of \$19,938,811 for the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

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

Commissioner Bennett asked if the 2009 budget of \$32,708,558 contains funds from 2008.

Commissioner Rettman commented that much of the dollar amount is in capital projects.

Chair McDonough said the 0% levy increase for 2009 budget reflects the strategy implemented in 2003 to keep the levy level because of its impact on the community. He asked Julie Kleinschmidt, Director of Ramsey County Budgeting and Accounting, to comment on Commissioner Bennett's question.

Julie Kleinschmidt clarified that in 2003, a fifteen year financing plan was adopted to finance the Regional Railroad Authority's (RRA) work program. This included setting the levy, increasing it over two years and then maintaining it at a level amount for the next ten years. The resulting budgets allow for the accumulation of some cash for financing capital projects allowing the RRA to save money on debt issuance and for the issuance of debt.

Commissioner Rettman reminded the board that she did not vote in favor of the levy increase and while there was a 0% levy increase for 2008, there was a substantive increase in 2007. She said the board voted in favor of joining the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) and the .25% sales tax and she believed now would be an appropriate time to give tax payers a small break by reducing the budget and the levy.

Chair McDonough responded that the financing plan laid out for the local share at that time was a 17% Ramsey County contribution. The passage of the sales tax reduces it to 10%, but it is 10% of a larger dollar amount. It was an \$820 million project when they did this, now they are at 10% of a \$920 million dollar project.

Ms.Kleinschmidt confirmed Chair McDonough’s statement and added that the RRA embarked on the Union Depot purchase and redevelopment and that will be a substantial cost.

Commissioner Bennett asked if they would have this every year until it is finished.

Ms.Kleinschmidt responded yes, it was the plan they adopted.

Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 6. Nays – Rettman – 1. Motion accepted. (R08-42)

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority was organized by Resolution 87-230, April 20, 1987, Board of Ramsey County Commissioners, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, 1986, Chapter 398A, as a political subdivision and local government unit of Minnesota, to exercise thereunder part of the sovereign power of the state; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority adopted the County’s plan to develop and implement two year budgets beginning in 2006; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, on December 18, 2007, approved the 2009 Proposed Budget of \$32,708,558; and

WHEREAS, The 2009 approved budget hasn’t changed; and

WHEREAS, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority established the proposed net tax levy of \$19,938,811 by Resolution R08-33, September 9, 2008, to finance the 2009 budget; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority wishes to continue to improve access to transit and transportation services in the region with other agencies, including the Metropolitan Council, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and other county regional railroad authorities; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approves the 2009 tax levy in the amount of \$19,938,811 as summarized below:

	RCRRA Operations	CIP	2009 RCRRA Total
Gross Budget	\$ 3,908,558	\$28,800,000	\$ 32,708,558
Less – Revenues	<u>- 475,400</u>	<u>- 16,000,000</u>	<u>- 16,475,400</u>
Subtotal	\$ 3,433,158	\$ 12,800,000	\$ 16,233,158
Plus– Fund Balance	<u>+</u>	<u>+ 3,314,695</u>	<u>+ 3,314,695</u>
Subtotal	<u>\$ 3,433,158</u>	<u>\$ 16,114,695</u>	<u>\$ 19,547,853</u>
Plus – Estimated Tax Delinquency	<u>+ 68,664</u>	<u>+ 322,294</u>	<u>+ 390,958</u>
Total Tax Levy	\$ 3,501,822	\$ 16,436,989	\$ 19,938,811

3. Approve Requests for the Reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU and Federal Fiscal Year 2010 Funding Requests

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

Commissioner Rettman recommended that they combine the Central Corridor and Red Rock Corridor request with the authorization/reauthorization requests of Union Depot, Rush Line Corridor, Riverview, High Speed Rail and I-94 Corridor. She also pointed out that the list did not reflect any order of importance and that they are all equally important.

Chair McDonough clarified that the request for Central Corridor comes from the Project Office and Red Rock comes from Washington County. The rest are requests of the Regional Railroad Authority.

Commissioner Reinhardt then offered a friendly amendment to eliminate the second resolved clause and combine Central Corridor and Red Rock Corridor into the first "resolved".

The amendment was accepted as friendly.

Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.
Motion accepted. (R08-43)

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority recognizes that although congestion is increasing at a dramatic rate, there is insufficient roadway capacity to meet current and future needs, and roadway capacity cannot be increased to meet demand without significant environmental and social costs; and

WHEREAS, Several studies have demonstrated broad public support in the Twin Cities for aggressive and diverse solutions to congestion, including a mix of buses, commuter rail, light rail and high speed rail; and

WHEREAS, Case studies of cities throughout the United States have shown that rail transit, when combined with supportive public policies, is a catalyst for development, enhances the tax base, and acts as an economic stimulus in cities where it is located; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has progressed the development of rail transit throughout the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as part of the Counties Transit Improvement Board; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has progressed the development of rail transit in the Eastern Twin Cities through the Union Depot multi-modal hub, Central Corridor, Rush Line Corridor, Red Rock Corridor, I-94 Corridor, Riverview Corridor, and High Speed Rail; and

WHEREAS, progressing these projects requires local, state, and federal funds; and

WHEREAS, over the past six years federal funds were critical to completing the transit priorities of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority and will be critical for completing its transit priorities over the next six years; and

WHEREAS, SAFETEA-LU, the federal law covering surface transportation, is set to expire on September 30, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the successor to SAFETEA-LU will guide federal investments in transportation for the next six years.

Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, that Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority requests authorization/reauthorization in accordance with the next federal transportation bill for the following projects:

- (1) Union Depot
- (2) Rush Line Corridor
- (3) High Speed Rail
- (4) I-94 Corridor
- (5) Riverview Corridor
- (6) Central Corridor
- (7) Red Rock Corridor

And Be it Further

RESOLVED that the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority requests federal 2010 appropriations to develop the Union Depot as a multi-modal transit hub for Amtrak, bus, commuter rail, high speed rail, light rail, bicycles, and pedestrians in the amount of \$15 million to be used for engineering, and construction.

And Be it Further

RESOLVED that the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority requests Congress to reaffirm the Federal Railroad Administration recognized Midwest Regional Rail Initiative as the federally designated high speed rail system for the Midwest.

And Be it Further

RESOLVED that as part of this reaffirmation the Twin Cities to Chicago High Speed Rail Corridor shall continue to be the Canadian Pacific Railway's mainline between the Twin Cities and Chicago that enters Minnesota at La Crescent and travels north along the Mississippi River for 150 miles to the Union Depot in St. Paul.

4. Approve Subordinate Funding Agreement (RCRRA-2) with the Metropolitan Council for Central Corridor Preliminary Engineering Staff Support for January 1, 2009 to August 31, 2009

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Parker. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0. Motion accepted. (R08-44)

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is a funding partner of the Central Corridor light rail preliminary engineering; and

WHEREAS, The preliminary engineering funding agreement provides for reimbursement to the Authority for staff provided to the preliminary engineering effort; and

WHEREAS, Dan Soler, a RCRRA Engineer, has been working out of the Central Corridor Project Office providing traffic engineering services; and

WHEREAS, The agreement with the Metropolitan Council for Mr. Soler's services expires December 31, 2008; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the County Manager to approve and execute the Subordinate Funding Agreement (RCRRA-2) with the

Metropolitan Council from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009 at a cost not to exceed \$133,000.

5. Approve Second Amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with URS Corporation for Union Depot Conceptual Engineering and Environmental Assessment Services

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

Commissioner Rettman asked if the scope of work would need to be amended due to the change in the operation and maintenance facility location.

Chair McDonough replied that it had already been incorporated into the design process.

Steve Morris, Transit Project Manager for the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, confirmed to the Board that the entire property was always part of URS' work scope.

Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0. Motion accepted. (R08-45)

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is developing the Union Depot concourse as a multi-modal transit hub; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority entered into a contract with URS Corporation to provide conceptual engineering and environmental assessment services for the Union Depot; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, That Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the County Manager to approve and execute the contract amendment with URS Corporation to extend the contract termination date to June 30, 2009 at no increase in contract cost.

7. Approve Amendment 1 to Agreement with McGrann, Shea, Anderson, Carnival, Straughn & Lamb, Chartered for Intergovernmental Relations Assistance

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Carter. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 6. Nays – Rettman – 1. Motion accepted. (R08-47)

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority will have several major transportation-related initiatives pending at the state level in 2009; and

WHEREAS, The Central Corridor, Union Depot, Rush Line Corridor, I-94 Corridor, and high speed rail will be the subject of state funding requests in 2009; and

WHEREAS, The agreement with McGrann, Shea, Anderson, Carnival, Straughn & Lamb, Chartered for state intergovernmental relations assistance expires on December 31, 2008; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, That Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the County Manager to approve and execute a contract amendment with McGrann, Shea, Anderson, Carnival, Straughn & Lamb, Chartered, in an amount not to exceed Forty-Eight Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$48,000.00), from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009.

6. Approve Consultant Services Agreement with Thompson Coburn LLP for legal assistance on the Union Depot and Central Corridor projects

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Roll Call: Ayes – Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 6. Nays – Rettman – 1. Motion accepted. (R08-46)

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is the recipient of federal grants for transit projects, and

WHEREAS, It is advantageous to have specialized technical assistance in the complex area of federal requirements for transit projects; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has an existing contract with Ed Gill of Thompson Coburn LLP law firm to assist in working with the Federal Transit Administration that expires on December 31, 2008; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the County Manager to approve and execute a contract with Thompson Coburn LLP from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009, at a cost not to exceed \$25,000.

1. Approve Central Corridor alignment in Union Depot area

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

Commissioner Rettman said she would be voting no on this item for several reasons including her consistent concern with the Board's tendency to give up when the Metropolitan Council makes substantive changes to the project. She has voiced her concerns on the environmental issues many times. Another issue of importance is where construction will start. As the Board has previously discussed, if it starts at the Union Depot and proceeds west toward Minneapolis, then she would agree to it because it would be definitive that the lines would come through downtown St. Paul. Finally, she believes that the RRA should be reimbursed either for the cost of the land or for the cost of the additional tracks that will be needed to get the trains to the back of the Union Depot. She believes they should have a statement in case private owners of the property being looked at for the maintenance facility say no.

Chair McDonough said the reason they have URS Corporation and the tremendous dedication of the Regional Railroad Authority (RRA) staff, is so that they can do independent evaluations of any changes proposed by the Met Council. Even though contracts and staff time add to the cost, these things are of great value to the RRA and he does not believe that the RRA has just accepted everything the Met Council project office presents to them.

Discussion continued with Commissioner Bennett adding that even though it may not be possible to begin construction in St. Paul, he agrees with Commissioner Rettman that they should try. Additionally, he cannot support the Met Council's proposed changes because he strongly believes the Light Rail Transit (LRT) station should be located behind the Union Depot and as a result of the proposed changes, some tracks are removed from the rear of the Depot without compensation.

Commissioner Carter said she understands the concerns regarding the light rail station at the Union Depot, the loss of track behind the Depot, and the lack of compensation. However, at the Board's workshop, the advantages of the changes were detailed and they provide a cost benefit to the project. She believes the Board should continue to advance the project and maintain its commitment to providing a seamless system. She thinks they need to continue to explore with the Met Council what Ramsey County can gain with the development of the Union Depot as a seamless station. Commissioner Carter then asked the Chair to clarify discussions held with the Met Council on how this change impacts Ramsey County and how the project can continue to move forward.

Chair McDonough commented it would be difficult to attach conditions and tradeoffs for the approval of this change. This would negatively impact the ability of the project to continue moving forward. He said it is most important for the RRA to have a working relationship with the Met Council's project office. He added that the RRA does have a resolution stating their highest priorities for the Corridor, which are to add the infill stations along University Avenue and connect to the Union Depot for its build-out. He said the long term vision for Union Depot goes beyond Central Corridor to include multiple corridors meeting there. He does not believe that putting the LRT station in front of the Depot will prohibit it from moving to the back in the future. As it was pointed out at the RCRRRA workshop, keeping the maintenance facility in its current location not only restricts the operations of Central Corridor, but also the other lines destined for the Depot. He said it helps to get to Ramsey County's vision of a fully functional intermodal transit station, at the concourse level of Union Depot. He said moving the LRT station behind the Depot will only make sense when the majority of the other lines enter the Depot there as well, which may take several years.

Chair McDonough also said the notion that the project office may run out of money and not get as far as the Union Depot would mean they would have to give up on the maintenance facility as well. This would trigger a change on how this project moves forward, which would come back to the Board. If the Board moved forward with the request to move the LRT station to the back of the Depot, a capital cost of building the LRT line to the back would be added to the budget. This would also potentially cause a problem with the Cost Effectiveness Index (C.E.I.).

Commissioner Bennett pointed out that previous proposals had the LRT lines going to the back.

Chair McDonough responded that there was still going to be an estimated cost of \$22 million to bring the lines all the way into the concourse on that proposal. He added that moving the station also affects the C.E.I. through its impact upon ridership. Moving the station to the back of Depot without the activity of other lines will decrease ridership and station utilization. This happens because many people would use the station at the diagonal, which is not much further away. He believes it is important to move forward and to maximize the available capital in building a line that will work from both ends within Ramsey County.

Commissioner Reinhardt added that she agreed with Chair McDonough's statement and that an LRT station behind the Depot was a longer term vision.

Chair McDonough pointed out that these projects do not stop once the initial building is done. The Hiawatha Line, for example, was not able to have all it wanted up front, but is currently working on an extension that was part of the original plan. These projects always go back to their original vision and he said he is confident that this will be the case with Central Corridor.

Commissioner Bennett commented that more aspects of this project have been taken away from Ramsey County than have been added to it. He said he does not agree with spending \$5 million on the Union Depot project and putting the LRT station in front, if their goal is to have it in the back with the other lines as the station in front is not consistent with the Depot vision.

Commissioner Parker commented that asking for this change now would disrupt the project in many ways. She said if they are patient, they will probably have a better chance of getting what they want and the Depot will have a more successful operation behind it, when the other lines and modes of transportation come into it.

Commissioner Reinhardt said it is important to focus on what they have fought for and the progress they have made in this project. They may not have gotten everything they wanted but they also have not given up on their vision.

Roll Call: Ayes –Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, McDonough – 5. Nays – Bennett, Rettman - 2.
Motion accepted. (R08-41)

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is committed to the development of an effective and efficient Union Depot Multimodal Transportation and Transit Hub, and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has supported development of a Central Corridor light rail line that provides service to Union Depot under the concourse; and

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has agreed to provide some of its property for the operating and maintenance facility for the project; and

WHEREAS, The previously approved preliminary engineering funding agreement for the project required analysis of options that would allow a future station under the Depot concourse; and

WHEREAS, Analysis conducted independently by Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority staff and consultants and Central Corridor project staff and consultants has identified a 4th Street light rail alignment to a operation and maintenance facility at Diamond Products; and

WHEREAS, Analysis conducted independently by Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority staff and consultants and Central Corridor project staff and consultants has determined that the line can be extended via Broadway to a station under the concourse; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approves a change to the municipal consent alignment to provide service on 4th Street to the front of the Depot and continuing to an operation and maintenance facility on the Diamond Products site; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approves that this alignment meets Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's continuing commitment to developing a station under the concourse; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approves that the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority will use its property in the area as part of its Union Depot development instead of donating it to the Central Corridor project.

Commissioner Bennett made a suggestion that the Regional Railroad Authority Meeting use a rotating roll call system, as is used at the County Board Meeting.

The Board agreed to this change.

There being no further business, Chair McDonough declared the meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.