

RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

April 6, 2010

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met with the following members present: Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, McDonough – 7. Absent - 0. Also present were Julie Kleinschmidt, County Manager, and David MacMillan, Assistant County Attorney.

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at 1:36 P.M.

AGENDA

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the Agenda of the April 6, 2010 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Rettman. Roll Call: Ayes – Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

MINUTES

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the Minutes of the March 16, 2010 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Roll Call: Ayes – Ortega, Parker, Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0

1. Approve a contract for the East Metro Rail Capacity and Engineering Improvements Study

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

WHEREAS, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has worked to advance The Union Depot Multi-Modal Transit and Transportation Hub (Union Depot) to the benefit of the citizens of Ramsey County; and

WHEREAS, The Union Depot will be a terminus for numerous transportation modes including Amtrak service, inter-city passenger rail, commuter rail, and Midwest Regional Rail (High Speed); and

WHEREAS, The railroad capacity constraints in the east metro are an obstacle to achieving Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's vision for the Union Depot; and

WHEREAS, A study of east metro rail capacity would be beneficial to identifying improvements required for enhanced freight capacity and for the implementation of increased Amtrak, commuter, inter-city, and high speed rail service to the Union Depot; and

WHEREAS, The Red Rock Corridor Commission in Resolution 2009-13 authorized the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority the use of \$1,600,000 in 5339 federal funds for the completion of this study; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approved a Subrecipient Agreement with the Metropolitan Council to access federal 5339 funds from the Federal Transit Administration; and

WHEREAS, Resolution R09-12 provided up to \$400,000 of Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority levy funds to cover the 20% match to federal funds for the completion of this study; and

WHEREAS, The services of a consultant to complete an East Metro Rail Capacity and Engineering Improvements Study is helpful in assuring the success of the Union Depot as a regional multimodal transportation hub; and

WHEREAS, Resolution R09-53 authorized the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to issue a Request for Proposals for an East Metro Rail Capacity and Engineering Improvements Study; and

WHEREAS, A Proposal Review Committee (“PRC”), comprised of staff members from Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, Washington County RRA, Dakota County RRA, Mn/DOT, Metropolitan Council, Amtrak, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Union Pacific Railroad Company, and Canadian Pacific Railway was formed to review the three proposals submitted by consultant firms; and

WHEREAS, The PRC interviewed all three consultant firms; and

WHEREAS, Resolution R10-24 approved the selection of TranSystems Corporation and authorized staff to enter into contract negotiations for the completion of the East Metro Rail Capacity and Engineering Improvements Study; Now Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, That the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute a contract with TranSystems Corporation, 2400 Pershing Road, Suite 400 Kansas City, MO 64108, for completion of an East Metro Rail Capacity and Engineering Improvements Study for a not-to-exceed price of \$2,000,000, subject to approval by the County Attorney’s Office, Regional Railroad Authority, and Budgeting and Accounting.

2. Presentation on the Central Corridor Investment Framework by John Shardlow, Bonestroo

Chair McDonough gave some background information for this item. He said several months ago there was a discussion about the formation of an informal workgroup to share information and look at the Central Corridor’s investment opportunities. He and Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, Hennepin County co-chair the workgroup that has brought together Mayor R.T. Rybak, Mayor Chris Coleman, Chairman Peter Bell from the Metropolitan Council, and Commissioner Dan Bartholomay from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency to explore how they need to position themselves to maximize these opportunities. There are 35 small area plans along the Central Corridor, where communities worked diligently to organize plans for their specific areas. John Shardlow from Bonestroo was brought on to coordinate these efforts and assist the workgroup in prioritizing the public investment opportunities.

John Shardlow, Bonestroo, presented the Central Corridor Transit Orient Development (TOD) Investment Framework to the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. In addition to the Working Group members, mentioned by Chair McDonough, the TOD Investment Framework Project Team includes The Center for Transit Orient Development (CTOD), Bonestroo and Springstead. Its Primary Objective is “To Build Community and Maximize Private Investment Along the Corridor to Implement Community Based Plans”. Mr. Shardlow emphasized that they are not creating new plans. They are looking at the existing adopted small area plans and gathering information about the investments necessary to implement those plans.

(The Central Corridor TOD Investment Framework presentation is on file with the RCRRA Office)

Mr. Shardlow added that their partners at CTOD are looking at case studies across the United States to identify successful transit oriented development projects and the public investments that seemed to have made the most difference. Some of the most important investments included improvements to streetscape, availability/accessibility to parks and open space, improved walkability, proximity to commercial opportunities, and site remediation. They are in the process of gathering a set of recommendations on how to set up the investment framework and how each of the participating local units of government should be involved in that process. The region with the leadership of the McKnight Foundation, put together a letter of interest for a Living Cities Grant and this group has been selected as one of a small number of regions to submit a grant application due at the end of April. This is a total of \$75-80 million in grants. He added that there is an upcoming tour on Thursday, April 8 with officials from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to see this project and tour the region, which could have a positive effect on the grant process.

Commissioner Bennett said it is a Ramsey County policy that when they do major reconstruction on a street they install fiber optics, and asked if the RCRRA was planning to do this along University Avenue from the

University of Minnesota to downtown St. Paul. He said it would likely be a great benefit for new development along the corridor.

Tim Mayasich, Director, RCRRA, said it is his understanding that conduit is going to be placed but not the fiber itself.

Chair McDonough said they will explore that option further. This could become one of the top priorities for early investment to help stimulate the private dollar investments.

Commissioner Rettman commented that Ramsey County and the City of St. Paul recently submitted for funds for broadband. If successful, it would offer a possible funding opportunity for fiber optics.

Commissioner Reinhardt commented that when they are talking about the investment possibilities, it is a mixture of funding and only a small percentage is actually public funds that would go toward areas that government generally covers. She said they are talking about potential investment over a 30 year period and none of this will happen quickly.

Commissioner Rettman commented on the need to create a variety of long term livable jobs from this project, even after construction is over.

Mr. Shardlow clarified that they are not coming up with economic development strategies for Minneapolis and St. Paul. However, they are trying to create a framework that shows how economic development strategies could be employed within. He agreed with Commissioner Rettman that jobs are a critical component.

Commissioner Parker asked if there are standards for people to make the shift of becoming less reliant on cars and more reliant on transit. She said Toronto, for example, has performance measures of the percentage of their population that is able to live without a car. The hope would be for us to move in that direction as well.

Mr. Shardlow replied CTOD is essentially creating their own set of standards with their research by identifying components of neighborhoods that are necessary to improve their ability to maximize transit oriented development. It will take some strategic thinking and they will certainly provide a policy framework for the communities to make those decisions going forward.

Chair McDonough made a final comment that the work done by CTOD and the cooperation between Ramsey and Hennepin Counties, the Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and the Metropolitan Council should really help make this a success. He thanked Mr. Shardlow for his presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair McDonough declared the meeting adjourned at 2:10 P.M.