

RAMSEY COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

August 17, 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 Darwin Lookingbill, Director, Civil Division, County Attorney's Office.

Chair McDonough called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.

AGENDA

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the Agenda of the August 17, 2010 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Ortega. Roll Call: Ayes – Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

MINUTES

Commissioner Parker moved approval of the Minutes of the August 3, 2010 Board Meeting, seconded by Commissioner Carter. Roll Call: Ayes – Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

1. Approve Second Amendment to the Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for Rush Line Corridor Federal Funds

Commissioner Reinhardt moved approval of the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Ortega. Roll Call: Ayes – Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0. (R10-40)

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is a member of the Rush Line Corridor Task Force, and is administering the grant agreement for the Rush Line Corridor Alternatives Analysis study; and

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority entered into a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to access \$400,000 in federal funding to conduct an alternatives analysis study for the Rush Line Corridor; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority hereby authorizes the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority Chair to approve and execute the grant amendment with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to extend the grant termination date to September 30, 2010, at no increase in contract cost.

2. Public Utility Easement for Storm Sewer Purposes

Commissioner Ortega moved approval of the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Parker. Roll Call: Ayes – Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0. (R10-41)

WHEREAS, In 2009, The Saint Paul Port Authority purchased and is redeveloping the site of the former 3M plant on Phalen Boulevard; and

WHEREAS, to facilitate this re-development the CITY OF SAINT PAUL, a municipal corporation under the laws of the State of Minnesota, is requesting a Dedication of Easement for Public Utility Purposes agreement for a storm sewer, which will be located near Forest Street and will run perpendicular to and under a portion of RCRRA corridor property; and

WHEREAS, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority supports the Saint Paul Port Authority's re-development of this site because of the significant positive impact it will have on the neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the underground storm sewer installation does not appear to create any conflict for future transportation development, including the possibility of light rail; Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority authorizes its Chair to execute a Dedication of Easement Agreement for Public Utility Purposes to the CITY OF SAINT PAUL for a storm sewer, which will run adjacent to Forest Street and under a portion of RCRRA corridor property.

3. Commitment to Twin Cities Consortium on HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative

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

Chair McDonough explained that, early on, the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) came together to form what is now known as the HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative. The purpose of the initiative is to stimulate more integrated and sophisticated regional planning to guide state, metropolitan, and local investments in land use, transportation and housing, as well as to challenge localities to undertake zoning and land use reforms. He said it is important that Ramsey County be involved in this to work as a community with the investments, businesses, and opportunities along the Central Corridor. Discussions will need to be had about structuring Ramsey County's participation in this effort, but it is necessary to commit to this initiative otherwise it will move forward without Ramsey County. He suggested that a future Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) workshop be held to compile information, determine how to coordinate efforts within the County and maximize the opportunities.

Commissioner Carter agreed that they need to move forward and position themselves to be a part of the discussion. It has been difficult working through the complexities of the Central Corridor project and integrating the future need for development with addressing concerns of the community and identifying the appropriate project partner. Since this opportunity does involve many areas of the County, it is important to support it from that overall perspective.

Chair McDonough commented that in the past the responsibilities were divided and perhaps simpler. However, with the events that have taken place, the Metropolitan Council, the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County all have a responsibility to come together to resolve the issues. If we are not all sitting at the table, then we are not doing the best job we can do. The message from HUD, DOT and EPA is that everyone has a responsibility to be involved.

Commissioner Parker commented that she was not aware of this specific initiative and appreciates it being brought forward. The initiative is very consistent with that of Active Living Ramsey County. It is a culture change in how we approach transit, pedestrian and bike oriented development. Discussion on how to integrate these together is important.

Commissioner Rettman said it is necessary that all the commissioners receive ongoing updates so that they have the complete picture and are not only being informed of beginning and end pieces.

Chair McDonough said the need to proceed with this item occurred very quickly. The intent here is to position ourselves to be competitive.

Commissioner Ortega said this is a great opportunity but we need to operate in a way that allows us to be proactive quickly when the opportunities are upon us. The key task is figuring out how to reorganize ourselves and our resources so that the principles from which we operate can be used to maximize the opportunities.

Commissioner Carter added this is clearly not just about the corridors and transportation planning, but also about economic development and housing and all of the planning we do in all areas. It is about creating healthy sustainable communities, which is everything that we do.

Commissioner Reinhardt said often times government action moves slowly for a reason, and other times opportunities arise that require quick decisions to move forward. However, we know it is not a done deal until the full discussion is had at this table. The fact that our staff has been able to recognize those opportunities and work to quickly pull the information together to allow these further discussions is commendable. She said this is a great opportunity and we need to be part of the discussion. She added if we are successful, we are going to optimize the positive impact on the community.

Roll Call: Ayes – Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.
(R10-42)

WHEREAS, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority /Ramsey County has worked collaboratively with Hennepin County/Hennepin Regional Rail Authority, City of St. Paul, City of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and the McKnight Foundation over the past year in order to effectively respond to two national funding opportunities for regional transit-oriented development planning and implementation in and along planned transit corridors; and

WHEREAS, The first funding opportunity came by invitation to the McKnight Foundation from Living Cities, a private national entity comprised of twelve large foundations and financial institutions, to develop sustainable communities along transit corridors in the twin cities region; and

WHEREAS, The grant application was submitted in June and has recently been awarded funding; and

WHEREAS, The second opportunity for funding is through the federal Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) agency, in the form of a regional planning grant for a maximum of \$5 million, with proposals due August 23, 2010; and

WHEREAS, The same seven agencies have continued collaborating and are forming a consortium to submit the HUD grant proposal, and are considering the addition of other agencies to the Consortium; and

WHEREAS, The Consortium supports the submittal of a proposal to HUD by the Metropolitan Council as the applicant on behalf of the Consortium, for funding to fine-tune existing regional and local plans to create a corridor-based plan approach, standards and metrics for transit and transit-oriented development that supports six “livability principles”; and

WHEREAS, The Livability Principles include providing more transportation choices; promoting equitable, affordable housing; enhancing economic competitiveness; supporting existing communities; coordinating policies and leveraging investment; and valuing communities and neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, If funded, the regional planning grant would support efforts by communities in identified metropolitan transit corridors in achieving outcomes that are closely aligned with the Ramsey County Board’s goals and critical success indicators; and

WHEREAS, The HUD funding opportunity includes the potential for being awarded a “*Preferred Sustainability Status*” (“PSS”) , which could qualify the applicant for a broad spectrum of benefits, including access to capacity-building resources and securing potential points in other funding opportunities managed by other federal agencies such as HUD, DOT and EPA; and

WHEREAS, The HUD grant application process requires each member of the consortium to provide a formal letter of commitment to work together on the proposed activities; Now, Therefore, Be It

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority hereby expresses its commitment to work collaboratively with the consortium members in support of regional planning efforts that advance HUD, DOT and EPA's Livability Principles; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority hereby supports the submission of a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant proposal with the Metropolitan Council designated as the applicant acting on behalf of the consortium; and Be It Further

RESOLVED, The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority hereby authorizes the Chair to sign a letter of commitment to participate in the planning and implementation of the HUD Regional Planning Grant for Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, to accompany the HUD Sustainable Communities grant proposal.

4. RCRRA 2011 Supplemental Budget

Chair McDonough proposed amending the agenda by moving the presentation and discussion on the RCRRA 2011 Supplemental Budget to the next board meeting date, September 7, 2010, due to the tight schedule of today's meetings.

Commissioner Ortega moved approval of the amendment to the August 17th Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Rettman. Roll Call: Ayes – Reinhardt, Rettman, Bennett, Carter, Ortega, Parker, McDonough – 7. Nays – 0.

CORRIDOR UPDATES

No corridor updates were given at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair McDonough declared the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.