

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA
DECEMBER 18, 2007

The Washington County Regional Railroad Authority met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. in the Washington County Government Center, County Board Room. Present were Commissioners Peterson, Pulkrabek, Kriesel, Orth, and Hegberg. Absent none. RRA Chair Peterson presided. Also present were James Schug, County Administrator; Molly O'Rourke, Deputy Administrator; Meredith Magers, Assistant County Attorney; Don Theisen, Director of Public Works; Wayne Sandberg, Deputy Public Works Director; John Elholm, Parks Director; Carolyn Phelps, Historic Courthouse Coordinator; Mike Rogers, Associate Planner; Keith Potter, Facilities Manager; Tom Adkins, Community Corrections Director; Kay McAloney, Human Resources Director; Dan Papin, Community Services Director; Cindy Rupp, Community Services Division Manager; Harley Will, Financial Services Director; Patricia Conley, Library Director; Kevin Corbid, Director of Property Records and Taxpayer Services; Lowell Johnson, Director of Public Health and Environment; Sheriff Bill Hutton; Chief Deputy Sheriff Mike Johnson; Captain Steve Pott; Judge Howard Albertson; Mjyke Nelson, Information Technology Director; Melinda Kirk, Budget/Financial Analyst; and Steve Nelson, Public Information Coordinator II.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY CONSENT CALENDAR

Commissioner Hegberg moved, seconded by Commissioner Pulkrabek to adopt the following Consent Calendar:

1. Approval of the October 2, 2007 Regional Railroad Authority Board minutes.
2. Approval of Commissioner travel to the 2007 Rail-Volution Conference in Miami, Florida.

The foregoing Consent Calendar was adopted unanimously.

December 18, 2007

UPDATE ON WASHINGTON COUNTY CORRIDORS

Mike Rogers presented brief updates on the following Regional Rail Corridors:

Red Rock Corridor – This corridor runs from Hastings, through St. Paul, and on to Minneapolis and is 30 miles long. It utilizes the Union Depot in St. Paul as its main station. The Red Rock Corridor approved the alternatives analysis at their November meeting. The alternative analysis looked at how to implement commuter rail long term, and what needs to be done in the next 15 to 20 years until commuter rail can be built in that corridor. In 2008 they will be looking at a bus feasibility study, station area master and site planning, state funding request in the amount of \$2 million in bonding, and \$10 million for the high speed rail. The Senate and House bonding committees are meeting to hear not only Red Rock's request, but other corridors like Rush Line, 94 Corridor and others. On December 12, the Senate and House Bonding Committees met at the Union Depot to hear testimony on why it's important that Red Rock and high speed rail get some funding to move these corridors forward. The county's role is to be involved in the Red Rock Corridor Commission and seek federal funding for Twin Cities Transitway and 5339 funds.

Rush Line Corridor – This corridor runs from Hinckley south through Forest Lake, Hugo, and into downtown St. Paul. This corridor is currently in its alternative analysis. Ramsey County is the lead agency and they have slowed the study down because there is confusion as to how the bus feasibility study that was done in August relates to this alternative analysis. They will restart the alternative analysis in the summer. The bus feasibility study showed there was good ridership from North Branch and Forest Lake into both downtowns. They were lucky enough to get the federal money to implement the Minneapolis services. There are two different pieces for State funding for Rush Line , \$1 million for bonding to get park and ride improvements; and \$700,500 for bus operations from North Branch and Forest Lake area into downtown St. Paul. The Senate and House Bonding Committee held meetings on December 12 at the Union Depot and took testimony.

December 18, 2007

Staff has been doing a lot of work on the Forest Lake Bus services to Minneapolis. The route is numbered 288 and will start in early January. There will be five morning and five afternoon trips. The fare is \$2.75. The Forest Lake Transit Center will be completed in March with a grand opening in the summer.

94 Corridor – This corridor runs from St. Paul to the St. Croix River. The Metropolitan Council, as part of their 2030 Transit Master Plan, is doing high level initial analysis which will be completed in February. The final report will be complete in late summer. They are assuming that by 2030 the North Star will be in place, Central will be in place, Hiawatha will be in place, and there will be two bus ways from Dakota into downtown Minneapolis. They did not include information on Red Rock, Robert Street or the Southwest Corridor. Those studies had already been done and incorporated their study without running a model on it. The state bonding request on the 94 corridor is \$1 million and would allow them to get a more detailed level to find out where the ridership is and what it would cost to do it. They were also heard at the Senate and House Bonding Committee meetings.

Mr. Rogers provided an overview on where the other corridors are at in the region. The 2008 bonding request from the Metro Transitway Development Board is as follows: Central Corridor is requesting \$140 million; Northstar/Fridley is requesting \$10.7 million for a station at Fridley; Cedar Avenue is requesting \$22 million; Union Depot is requesting \$9 million; Red Rock, Rush Line, and I-94 are also part of the Metro Transitways Development Board request. The total request for all the transit corridors is \$217.3 million.

Commissioner Peterson displayed a chart that shows where dollars for transportation are coming from. Property tax is 35%, gas tax is 17%, the vehicle registration is 13%, MVEST is 8%, federal highway is 16%, general fund 3%, federal transit is 4% and fares and other is 4%. She feels this points out the necessity for a fully funded transportation bill. The property tax was never designed to pay for transportation. That is a constitutional responsibility and the State of Minnesota is responsible for putting together transportation funding.

December 18, 2007

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Regional Railroad Authority, Commissioner Pulkrabek moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Orth and it was adopted unanimously. The Regional Railroad Authority adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Myra Peterson, Chair
Regional Railroad Authority

Attest:

James R. Schug
County Administrator