

# T Transportation Committee

## Metropolitan Council meeting of September 28, 2011

Item: 2011-241

**Date****Prepared:** September 13, 2011**Subject:** Northstar Corridor, Ramsey Station – Authorization to Negotiate and Execute a Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement**Proposed Action:**

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement with the Anoka County Regional Railroad Authority (ACRRA) and the City of Ramsey for the development of the Northstar Ramsey Station Project.

**Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:**

MarySue Abel, Lead Project Manager, Engineering and Facilities, presented the business item.

Council Member Duininck asked about the cost of operating the station and revenue generated from the station. Staff responded that the operating costs for the station, primarily consisting of maintenance costs, are expected to be about \$100,000 per year. The anticipated revenue from passenger fares at the station is expected to be about \$150,000 per year, which exceeds the expected operating costs. In addition, property tax revenue that will be generated when the City of Ramsey joins the capital levy district will be about \$300,000 per year. This capital will offset the Council's capital contribution of \$1.3 million for the station construction in just over four years.

Council Member Duininck asked what agency will administer the construction contract. Staff responded that the Anoka County Regional Rail Authority will administer the construction contract.

Council Member Schreiber asked about Sherburne County's request earlier in the day to have a statement previously sent on behalf of Stearns and Sherburne County Commissioners entered into the record as the position of Sherburne County. This position expressed concern over the addition of the Ramsey Station. Mr. Lamb responded that he had talked with Commissioner Schmiesing from Sherburne County early in the afternoon. Mr. Lamb suggested to Commissioner Schmiesing that he would amend the business item language to summarize the Sherburne county concerns more explicitly. In addition, the business item would refer to a letter that was sent to Council Member Elkins and Chair Haigh. Commissioner Schmiesing seemed pleased with that suggested change. These changes were made to the business item for this meeting.

A motion by Council Member Reynoso was seconded by Council Member Schreiber and passed unanimously.

# **T** Transportation Committee

**Meeting date: September 12, 2011**

**Metropolitan Council Meeting: September 28, 2011**

## **ADVISORY INFORMATION**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>August 31, 2011</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Northstar Corridor, Ramsey Station – Authorization to Negotiate and Execute a Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement</b>
<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	<b>District 9, Edward Reynoso</b>
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	<b>Minnesota Statutes, section 473.4057</b>
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	<b>Brian Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510 Pat Jones, Asst. Director Facilities Engineering, 612-349-7606 MarySue Abel, Lead Project Manager, 612-349-7638</b>
<b>Division/Department:</b>	<b>Metro Transit/Engineering &amp; Facilities</b>

### **Proposed Action**

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement with the Anoka County Regional Railroad Authority (ACRRA) and the City of Ramsey for the development of the Northstar Ramsey Station Project.

### **Background**

The Council is responsible for the planning and development of improvements to the commuter rail facilities or service in the Northstar Corridor. The City of Ramsey, ACRRA and the Council desire to have the Ramsey Station built in the Northstar Corridor.

The City of Ramsey and the ACRRA have been jointly working to secure funding for the Construction of a Northstar station at the City of Ramsey. Additional funding has been secured from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) and, in 2011, State G.O. Bonds totaling \$4.0 million have been made available for the project. With approval of Business Item 2011-206, the Council will authorize \$5.3 million in additional funding for the Ramsey station. This consists of \$4 million in State GO bonds and \$1.3 million in Regional Transit Capital funds.

### **Rationale**

This action will allow the Council to enter into this Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement with ACRRA and the City of Ramsey. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2012.

The key components of the agreement are summarized as follows:

- ACRRA will administer and maintain accounting records for the project
- The Council will acquire commuter rail easements from BNSF
- The Council will manage the construction of the station

## **Funding**

The project is to be funded through financial contributions from the State of Minnesota (State G.O. Bonds), the Council, the ACRRA, the City of Ramsey and the CTIB.

After completion of this Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement, two separate subordinate funding agreements will be established for the transfer of the financial contributions from the State of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

On November 5, 2009, the Northstar Corridor Development Authority passed Resolution #2009-13 supporting a request for State bonding to construct a station at the City of Ramsey.

Sherburne County sent a letter to the Metropolitan Council outlining its concern regarding possible impacts on total travel time, operating fare equity and attractiveness for existing and potential future customers on the service. (See attached letter.)

August 22, 2011

RE: Ramsey Station Impact

Dear Chair Haigh:

We understand that the Ramsey Station is in the process of receiving final approval for funding from your respective committees.

At the recent NCDA meeting, we had hoped to have a discussion of this letter and the concerns from the western end of the line. That did not happen due to agenda compression, so we are forwarding this on behalf of Stearns and Sherburne counties.

Stearns and Sherburne counties remain committed to building the ridership on the Northstar line in order to reduce the subsidy on the line and also to obviously have the support for the completion of the line to St. Cloud.

Now that the Ramsey Station is close to becoming a reality, Stearns and Sherburne counties would ask that Metro Transit review operations to assure, as much as possible, that there is not a negative impact on system ridership from the addition of the Ramsey Station. The close proximity of the Ramsey station to both the Elk River and other Anoka County stations could result in an alteration in ridership from those stations that could be perceived as a negative. In addition, we have growing ridership coming from St. Cloud down to Big Lake, which greatly benefits the metro area in reduced cars on Highway 10 through Anoka and Hennepin Counties, and it is important to not degrade the quality of their ride with this addition.

Specifically, we would ask Metro Transit to review schedules and services in Anoka County and make sure that there is not inappropriate competition with the Northstar service – either in schedule or fees. One scenario that should be considered is to provide some express runs that would bypass at least one of the stations, as an effort to maintain existing service for those riding the greatest distance. This is already being done with the Fridley station for other reasons.

The second specific request would be as consideration is given to establishing fares that the Ramsey fares not compete unfairly with the existing stations, particularly Anoka and Elk River stations.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leigh Lenzmeier, Chair  
NCDA and Stearns County Board of Commissioners

DeWayne Mareck,  
Stearns County Board of Commissioners

Ewald Petersen, Chair  
Sherburne County Board of Commissioners

Felix Schmiesing  
Sherburne County Board of Commissioners

August 22, 2011

RE: Ramsey Station Impact

Dear Chair Elkins:

We understand that the Ramsey Station is in the process of receiving final approval for funding from your respective committees.

At the recent NCDCA meeting, we had hoped to have a discussion of this letter and the concerns from the western end of the line. That did not happen due to agenda compression, so we are forwarding this on behalf of Stearns and Sherburne counties.

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