

**Rush Line Corridor Task Force Meeting
November 19, 2009
Meeting Summary**

Members:

Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey Co. RRA	Therese Furhman, North Branch
Dennis Hegberg, Washington Co. RRA	Paul Janssen, Pine City
Rhonda Sivarajah, Anoka Co. RRA	Linda Nanko –Yeager, City of Wyoming
Diane Miller, Harris	Tom Weidt, Hugo
Renae Fry, Columbus	Doug Carlson, Pine County
Bill Blesener, Little Canada	Lee Raudabaugh, Rock Creek
Bryan Belisle, White Bear lake	Bob Kermes, White Bear Township
Will Rossbach, Maplewood	

Others:

Mike Rogers, Ramsey Co. RRA	Julie Dresel, North Branch
Mark Sather, City of White Bear Lake	Bob Vockrodt, Mn/DOT
Dan Meyers, URS	Joe Triplet, Chisago County
Ann Pung- Terwedo, Washington Co. RRA	
Mary Karlsson , Metropolitan Council	
Kate Garwood, Anoka County	

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 3:35p.m. The group members introduced themselves.

2. Summary of September 23, 2009 Meeting

Motion by Bill Blesener to approve the meeting summary of September 23, 2009. Seconded by Linda Nanko-Yeager.

All in favor. **Approved**

3. Alternative Analysis Final Report

Dan Meyers, URS stated that the Rush Line Alternative Analysis report is complete and has been distributed to the Task Force. Mr. Meyers noted that one additional comment regarding commuter rail was received and incorporated into the plan. He reiterated to the Task Force that the recommendation of the Alternatives Analysis was to select Light Rail Transit from the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul to White Bear Lake along the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way and Bus Rapid Transit along I-35E/35 to Forest Lake/Columbus as two alternatives in need of additional analysis.

Motion by Councilmember Nanko-Yeager, Seconded by Councilmember Belisle to approve the Alternative Analysis report with the recommendations that the two alternatives, LRT and BRT, be further studied at a detailed Advanced Alternatives Analysis and that commuter rail could

still be a possibility should passenger rail investments take place in the Corridor. All in Favor.
Approved

Chair Reinhardt thanked the Task Force as well as URS for their hard work on the Alternative Analysis report.

4. Rush Line Commuter Coach

a. Fare Reimbursement Agreement

Mr. Rogers summarized that there needs to be a fare box agreement with the Met Council due to the Task Force's decision to utilize the Regional Fare Box Policy and to allow no cost transfers between its service and other regional transit services. To accomplish this goal, the Task Force's service will need to accept both cash and convenience (regional fare media) fares. Cash fares will be credited to the Task Force directly by the provider. However since convenience fares are purchased in a lump sum with the value stored electronically in the Metropolitan Council system, an agreement is needed to define how these fares are reimbursed to the Task Force. Commissioner Hegberg questioned how they fares were paid electronically on the Northstar Corridor? Mr. Rogers stated that prepaid cards like 'Go-To' were read as they were tapped across a scanner and the fare information was then stored electronically.

Motion by Councilmember Weidt, Seconded by Commissioner Hegberg to adopt Resolution 2009-1 authorizing the Chair to negotiate and sign a Fare reimbursement Agreement with Metropolitan Council.

b. Subrecipient Agreement

Mr. Rogers stated that this agreement is needed to formalize the relationship between the Task Force and the Metropolitan Council for the receipt of federal funds. The Met Council requires the execution of this agreement prior to the distribution of federal funds that flow through them to a sub-recipient.

Motion by Councilmember Weidt, Seconded by Councilmember Fuhman to adopt Resolution 2009-2 authorizing the Chair to negotiate and sign a Sub-recipient Agreement with Metropolitan Council. **Approved.** Commissioner Sivarajah, Abstained

c. Contract Administration

Mr. Rogers reviewed the federal requirements that are part of contract administration whenever federal funds are used. By providing the service, the Task Force would be responsible for ensuring that the federal requirements are followed. Mr. Rogers noted that as staff has gotten more information on these requirements it is their belief that contract administration should be handled by someone familiar with enforcing them. For this project that would be the Metropolitan Council. The Council has agreed to handle administration for a fee. Mayor Blesener asked how much the Met Council

would charge the Task Force for Contract Administration. Mr. Rogers noted that it would be approximately \$6,000 for 12 months.

Motion by Councilmember Weidt, Seconded by Councilmember Fuhman to adopt Resolution 2009-3 authorizing the Chair to negotiate and sign an agreement for Contract Administration with Metropolitan Council. **Approved.** Rhonda Sivarajah, Abstained

d. Tentative Schedule

Mr. Rogers reviewed the tentative schedule for the bus service assuming that an RFP that would be distributed in December and service would begin in March. He indicated that the Rush Line Task Force may need to reschedule their regular meeting in February to March in order to approve the contract service. Councilmember Nanko-Yeager asked how long it would be from the approval of the service to the beginning of the actual express bus service. Mr. Rogers indicated that it would be a couple weeks. Councilmember Carlson inquired about marketing, press releases for the service and when those will need to be distributed.

Commissioner Sivarajah asked about the funding plan beyond one year. Chair Reinhardt stated that the ridership will be monitored to see if it would be successful. Commissioner Sivarajah reiterated Anoka County's concerns about starting a service and creating the expectation that it would be there when there was only enough funding for one year. Commissioner Hegberg stated that in previous discussions with the Met Council, Arlene McCarthy indicated that the service would continue if it met expectations and funding was available.

Commissioner Sivarajah asked if this commitment was in writing and at what were the criteria that determined if the route would be successful.

Mr. Rogers answered that its ridership, cost, and fare box recovery will be compared to other suburban routes prior to making a determination on its viability.

Chair Reinhardt stated that the Task Force has worked diligently on securing funding and completing feasibility studies for this service. If it is successful, which we think it will be, then funding opportunities will be sought beyond the one year commitment that the Task Force has currently made.

Mayor Blesener questioned the transit service we are competing with? Mr. Rogers stated that it is based on the revenue mile. He offered to send out information on this.

Commissioner Carlson and Councilmember Fuhman questioned the marketing of the service and distribution of material. Councilmember Weidt would like it done now. Chair Rheinhardt stated that the Task Force should look at a marketing plan at their meeting in February/March.

5. Legislative Update

Chair Reinhardt stated that she gave a presentation on the Rush Line Corridor at the bonding committee tour in October. She reported that Met Council will be constructing a new park and ride at County Road 14/I-35E as part of the interchange reconstruction project.

Federal Update

Mr. Rogers reviewed the memo to the Task Force on the Federal Update (provided by Lockridge, Grindal and Nauen) He indicated that there will be a six month extension of SAFETEA-LU the current transportation bill. This extension will give Congress time to draft and enact a new six year transportation bill. The House version of this new bill currently includes \$500 billion worth of investment in the nation's transportation system. This compares to \$285 billion in the current bill. Of the \$500 billion, \$50 billion is set aside for high speed rail.

6. Northern Lights Express Route Analysis

Chair Reinhardt reviewed the memo dated November 16, 2009 from Bob Manzoline, Director, Northern Lights Express (NLX), requesting a Rush Line technical staff member attend a workshop on November 23, 2009. The purpose of the workshop is to conduct a preliminary alternative analysis of rail routes as called for in the Federal Administration's Railroad Corridor Transportation Plan.

Commissioner Carlson added that they are only doing this because of the FTA requirement. Northern Lights Express is studying Passenger Rail from the Twin Cities to Duluth.

7. 2010 Work Plan and Budget

Mike Rogers distributed the 2010 Work Plan and Budget. Bill Blesener asked about local government coordination and improvements to park and rides. The Task Force may consider other options. The Task Force will review the 2010 Work Plan and Budget at the next meeting.

Rhonda Sivarajah stated her concerns about the funding for the Express Bus Service to St. Paul. Other funding options for the service need to be identified beyond the one year of service.

Denise Hegberg stated that Washington County can't commit to those funds. He is not sure if Regional Rail funds could be used..

8. Other

Since there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.