



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: January 18, 2005
To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee
Referral to: Honorable Scott Benson, Chair, Intergovernmental Relations Committee
Subject: Resolution supporting the Red Rock Corridor Transitway in preparation for the federal TEA-21 reauthorization

Recommendation:

Approve the attached resolution language supporting the proposed Red Rock Corridor Transitway.

Previous Directives:

- Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan – Movement Chapter

Prepared by: Donald Pflaum, Transportation Engineer, 612-673-2129

Approved by:

Klara A. Fabry, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Jon Wertjes, P.E., P.T.O.E., Director, Traffic and Parking Services

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.

(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase – Capital Only

Action requires use of contingency or reserves

Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/History: The Red Rock Corridor Transitway is part of the proposed Twin Cities regional transit system. The Metropolitan Council's 2004 Transportation Policy Plan identifies the Red Rock Corridor as a transitway on a dedicated right-of-way that runs between Hastings and Minneapolis. By being on a dedicated right-of-way, the Corridor will have transit service that provides a travel-time advantage over the automobile, improves service reliability, and maximizes the potential for transit oriented development and redevelopment. Attachment A is a

map of the Red Rock Corridor Transitway. It is 30 miles long, approximately 19 miles between Hastings and downtown St. Paul, plus 11 additional miles between downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis. It touches Dakota, Washington, Ramsey and Hennepin Counties. About 200,000 residents and 140,000 jobs are located near the southeast segment of the corridor. Major employers along the southeast route include 3M, North Star Steel, Janesville Transport, Up North Plastics and Renewal by Anderson.

Commuter rail is only one of the potential transit modes for the Red Rock Corridor. A study began this summer to analyze alternatives and alignments in the corridor. The study will compare rail, busway and roadway options. The goal is to identify which mode can move the most people in the most cost-effective manner. The Northstar and Red Rock Corridors eventually would connect. If commuter rail also were selected for Red Rock, diesel-powered trains would run on existing railroad tracks used to move goods and freight.

Federal Transit Funding: The Federal Transit Administration has outlined the following three project development phases in acquiring federal new starts funding:

Phase I – Alternatives Analysis

Local project sponsors are required to perform an alternatives analysis that evaluates the mode and alignment options in the community. This analysis informs local officials and community members on the benefits, costs and impacts of transportation options, so that the community can identify a preference. This phase is complete when local and regional decision makers select a locally preferred alternative, and it is adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) into its long-range transportation plan.

Phase II - Preliminary Engineering

During the preliminary engineering (PE) phase of project development, local project sponsors consider their design options to refine the locally preferred alternative and complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Preliminary engineering hones the estimates of project costs, benefits, and impacts. In addition, during the PE phase of development, local sponsors finalize management plans, demonstrate their technical capabilities to develop the project, and commit local funding sources.

Phase III - Final Design

Final design is the last phase of project development, and includes the preparation of final construction plans, detailed specifications, construction cost estimates and bid documents

The Red Rock Corridor is currently in the Alternatives Analysis phase and has been identified by the Metropolitan Council in the Transportation Policy Plan as a Tier 2 transit priority. Tier 1 transit project priorities include the Northstar, Northwest, Cedar Avenue, I-35, and Central Corridors. Tier 2 transit project priorities include the Red Rock, Rush Line, and Southwest Corridors.

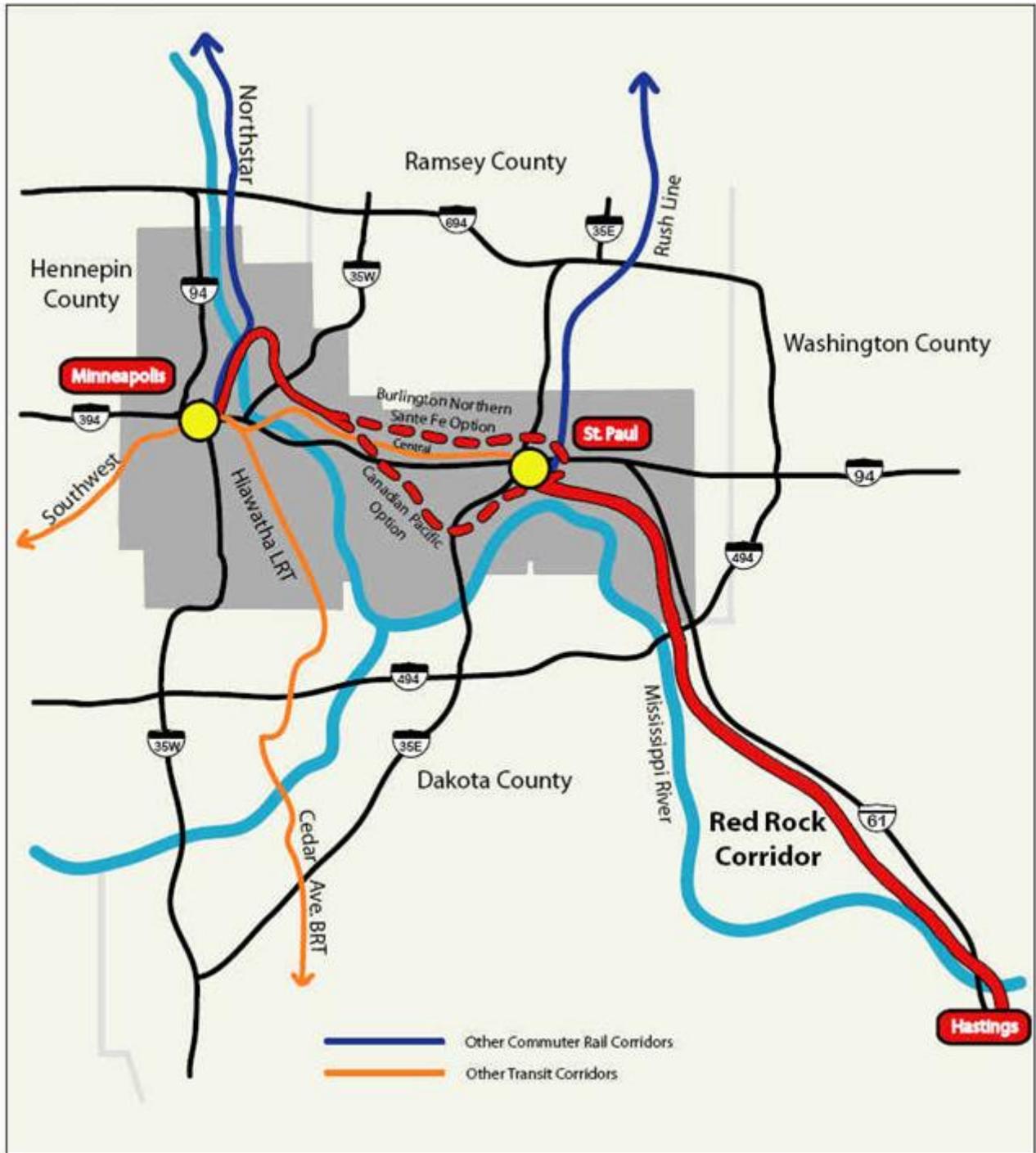
As part of the TEA-21 federal transportation bill reauthorization, the Red Rock Corridor will be submitting a request to be authorized as a transitway corridor through construction. Currently the Corridor is authorized through environmental work (Phase II – Preliminary Engineering). While it isn't impossible to receive federal funds if the project is not authorized, being authorized through construction provides the corridor with an advantageous position when funds for preliminary engineering, final design, and construction are requested.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the attached resolution supporting the Red Rock Corridor be included as part of the TEA-21 reauthorization.

Attachment A: Map of Red Rock Corridor

C: Gene Ranieri, Director Intergovernmental Relations

Attachment A – Map of Red Rock Corridor



RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE RED ROCK CORRIDOR TRANSITWAY IMPROVEMENTS

WHEREAS; The Red Rock Corridor is a 30-mile transportation corridor from Hastings to Minneapolis being roughly parallel to Trunk Highway 61 (TH 61), Interstate 94 (I-94) and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Canadian Pacific (CP) rail lines, traversing the Counties of Dakota, Washington, Ramsey, and Hennepin; and

WHEREAS; this corridor has regional, statewide, and national significance as a transportation route for automobile, truck, and rail travel; and

WHEREAS; TH 61 is a principal arterial, part of the National Highway System, and a National Scenic Roadway. I-94 is a principal arterial and part of the Interstate Highway System. The BNSF and CP rail lines are the main routes for freight heading from Chicago to Seattle/Vancouver, Amtrak's Empire Builder, and the proposed Midwest Regional Rail System; and

WHEREAS; this corridor is the primary route for Southeast Metro and Southeast Minnesota residents to access downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis along with the I-494 business strip in Bloomington, the University of Minnesota, and the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport; and

WHEREAS; Washington, Dakota, Ramsey, and Hennepin Counties along with Corridor municipalities formed the Red Rock Corridor Commission to address the transportation needs in the corridor; and

WHEREAS; a 'highways only' solution will not provide for the future travel needs of the corridor and that a 'transit and highways' solution is needed to meet these needs; and

WHEREAS; The Red Rock Corridor Commission completed a Commuter Rail Feasibility Study in 2001 and recommended continued study of commuter rail in the Corridor; and

WHEREAS; The Red Rock Corridor Commission in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation will continue to work towards implementing a 'transit and highways' solution for the Corridor; and

WHEREAS; this work involves completing an Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Preliminary Engineering, Final Environment Impact Statement, Final Design and Construction of a transitway option for the corridor to complement the Wakota Bridge Project; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS that; the Red Rock Corridor Transitway be authorized as Federal Transit Administration New Start through construction during reauthorization of TEA-21.