

AGENDA

Rush Line Corridor Task Force Meeting

November 21, 2019

4:30 p.m.

Maplewood Community Center Conference Room A/B

2100 White Bear Ave, Maplewood

	Item:		Action Requested:
Chair Victoria Reinhardt	1.	Call to Order/Introductions	
Chair Victoria Reinhardt	2.	Approval of the Agenda	Approval
Chair Victoria Reinhardt	3.	Summary of April 18, 2019 Meeting*	Approval
Peter Dahlberg, MnDOT	4.	Presentation on MnDOT Rail and Freight Programs*	Information
Andy Gitzlaff, Ramsey County Public Works	5.	Draft 2020 Workplan and Budget*	Information
Andy Gitzlaff, Ramsey County Public Works	6.	Rush Line BRT Project Update*	Information
Frank Alarcon, Ramsey County Public Works	7.	Support for 2020 Ramsey County State Funding Request for Rush Line BRT Project*	Approval
Frank Alarcon, Ramsey County Public Works	8.	Federal Transit Administration Transit Oriented Development Grant Application	Information

*attachments

For questions related to this material, please contact Andy Gitzlaff at 651-266-2772 or <u>andrew.gitzlaff@co.ramsey.mn.us</u>.



Rush Line Corridor Task Force Meeting April 18, 2019, Maplewood Community Center Room A/B, 4:30 pm Draft Meeting Summary

MEMBERS:

Ben Montzka, Chisago County Commissioner	Kelly Monson, Forest Lake Councilmember	
John Mikrot, Pine County Commissioner	Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County	
	Commissioner	
Amy Brendmoen, St. Paul Council President	Fran Miron, Washington County	
	Commissioner	
Scott McCune, White Bear Township Board	Linda Nanko-Yeager, Wyoming	
	Councilmember	

OTHERS:

Andy Gitzlaff, Ramsey County Public Works	Jeanne Witzig, Kimley-Horn
Sandie Jacobson, Ramsey County Public	Ben Picone, Washington County
Works	
Frank Alarcon, Ramsey County Public Works	

1. Call to Order / Introductions

Chair Reinhardt called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Introductions were made by the Task Force members and attendees.

2. Election of Officers*

Chair Reinhardt asked for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair. Commissioner Miron nominated Commissioner Reinhardt as Chair and Councilmember Nanko-Yeager as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monson. The motion passes.

3. <u>Approval of the Agenda*</u>

A motion to approve the agenda was requested. Councilmember Monson moved for approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Miron. The motion passes.

4. Summary of November 29, 2018 Meeting*

A motion to approve the meeting minutes was requested. Commissioner Miron moved for approval. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Nanko-Yeager. The motion passes.

5. Final 2019 Workplan and Budget*

Mr. Andy Gitzlaff provided a summary of the workplan and budget which was reported on in detail at the last meeting. The Rush Line BRT Environmental Analysis Phase is the main area of focus this year. Mr. Gitzlaff asked for comments or suggestions for things to consider in the future. If there are other things to add please let us know. Staff can be present at meetings to assist you, if needed. Insurance premiums are the only financial investment. Commissioner Miron moved for approval. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Nanko-Yeager. The motion passes.

6. Insurance Renewal*

Mr. Gitzlaff provided an overview of the insurance renewal requested and indicated that staff recommends not to waive the statutory tort liability coverage. Supervisor McCune had questions regarding the purpose of the insurance. Mr. Gitzlaff responded that this group has insurance because there is a joint powers agreement, therefor coverage is required under state statute. Commissioner Montzka asked about open meeting law coverage and if it's not that expensive it may be worth having this as well. Mr. Gitzlaff responded he would find out how much it costs. Councilmember Amy Brendmoen said the amount is rather low and suggested that if it's another \$30 per year it would be worth it to also have this insurance. Mr. Gitzlaff stated we haven't gotten the estimate yet for this year so we can ask them to include for this year, if not too expensive. Commissioner Mikrot asked what the fifth county is. Mr. Gitzlaff responded it is actually now four counties that pay for this insurance. This needs to be corrected. Commissioner Montzka moved for approval with the provision that we add the additional insurance if it isn't expensive, and we do not waive the tort liability. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monson. The motion passes.

7. State Legislative Update

Mr. Alarcon provided this update (information in agenda packet). He asked for comments. Supervisor McCune stated there's a possibility of a bonding bill but typically it doesn't happen in odd years. If the Rush Line bonding request is not approved as part of a bonding bill, does that affect the timeline for the Rush Line BRT project? Mr. Alarcon replied the County, using its ½ cent county wide sales tax, does have the funding to continue the BRT project even if the bonding request is unsuccessful.

8. <u>Support for 2019 Ramsey County State Funding Request for Rush Line BRT Project*</u>

A motion to support the funding request was requested. Commissioner Montzka moved for approval. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Nanko-Yeager. The motion passes.

9. Rush Line BRT Project Update

Mr. Gitzlaff provided an update about the Rush Line BRT Project. Mayor Jo Emerson of White Bear Lake is now chair of the Policy Advisory Committee for the Rush Line BRT Project, as former chair Nora Slawik stepped down to take a position as chair of the Metropolitan Council. Councilmember Jim Lindner is now the vice-chair of the Policy Advisory Committee.

The downtown White Bear Lake Station location will be at 7th Street and Washington Avenue. This location was determined following a public engagement process that evaluated six potential downtown station locations. The project team is working with the adjacent property owner to minimize impact to their property (Bear Town Bar and Grill). Commissioner Miron asked about whether the downtown White Bear Lake station will accommodate the potential connecting bus to Forest Lake. Mr. Gitzlaff replied that space for a potential connecting bus routes is being considered as the design process continues.

Andy reviewed BRT station features (raised platforms, NexTrip real-time departure signs; maps; benches; heat; lighting; bike racks; trash and recycling bins; ticket machines). Elements to consider for station design include safety and security; design and aesthetics; additional station amenities; sidewalk and trail connections to stations; and accessible connections. Potential added amenities include designated vehicle drop-off and pick-up zone; bicycle lockers; bicycle tune-up station; wayfinding signage to local institutions and attractions; landscaping and greenery; WiFi hotspot; and USB charging port or outlet.

The project team will continue public engagement during the spring and summer throughout the project area. Every Tuesday night in June there will be pop-up events on the Bruce Vento Trail to gather input about the future design of the Ramsey County rail right-of-way where the BRT will run alongside the Bruce Vento Trail.

Recent public engagement activities include February – Hmong Village survey; March 6 – Pedro Park Open House; March 26 – Hamm's area business engagement meeting; March 27 – RC Rail Right of Way visioning workshop; April 7 – Northeast Metro Community Expo; April 9 – update to Capitol River Council. There are more scheduled upcoming public engagement activities.

Mr. Gitzlaff then shared the next steps for the project (see presentation for additional information).

The meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.



<u>Agenda Item #4</u>

MEMORANDUM

TO .	Duch Line Comiden	Tool Conco	
TO:	Rush Line Corridor	TASK FOICE	wiembers

FROM: Staff

DATE: November 18, 2019

RE: Presentation on MnDOT Rail and Frieght Programs

Peter Dahlberg from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations will give an overview presentation on MnDOT Rail and Freight Programs including the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program (MRSI) and an update on the state supported rail line improvement project between Hugo and White Bear Lake.

Action Requested: Information

RUSH LINE CORRIDOR TASK FORCE DRAFT 2020 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

NOTE: INDICATES PROPOSED CHANGES FROM 2019 APPROVED WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

WORK PLAN

The 2020 Rush Line Corridor Task Force (Task Force) Work Plan will include the following items:

1. GENERAL ACTIVITIES

The Task Force will work with corridor counties, municipalities, transit agencies, the Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to continue the advancement of the Rush Line Corridor. To accomplish this, the Task Force will do the following:

- a. Coordinate corridor studies with MnDOT, Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, and others.
- b. Monitor progress and offer guidance on studies that impact the Rush Line Corridor.
- c. Offer formal comments.
- d. Continue to educate public officials along the Rush Line Corridor on corridor and regional transit and transportation developments.
- e. Local government coordination including the encouragement of the adoption of the Rush Line Corridor Joint Powers Agreement and ex-officio membership, to increase attendance at Task Force meetings, and to increase information sharing amongst corridor communities.
- f. Seek input on all forms of transportation, including <u>roadways</u>, transit, <u>rails</u> and trails, at Task Force meetings.

2. <u>RUSH LINE BRT PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS</u>

The Rush Line Corridor has undergone extensive technical analysis, community engagement, and inter-agency coordination at both the staff and policymaker level through the Pre-Project Development study led by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority on behalf of the Task Force. The Pre-Project Development study resulted in the selection of a locally preferred alternative that best meets the needs of the communities along the corridor.

The locally preferred alternative is defined as bus rapid transit within a dedicated guideway generally along Robert Street, Phalen Boulevard, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way and Trunk Highway 61 from Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul to downtown White Bear Lake. It would be co-located with the Bruce Vento Trail through the portion of the route that utilizes the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority right-of-way. A connector bus from White Bear Lake to Forest Lake and other bus service improvements will continue to be explored.

The current phase of the Rush Line BRT Project includes environmental analysis under the Federal and State environmental review processes to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts while maximizing mobility, accessibility and surrounding economic development opportunities. The public will continue to be engaged throughout the environmental review process and subsequent design, engineering and construction phases to ensure that the project is reflective of the needs of the diverse communities within the Rush Line Corridor. The environmental analysis phase of the project began in early 2018 and will take approximately <u>three</u> years to complete. Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority will continue to be the lead agency for the environmental phase and funding will be provided by Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. The Technical and Policy Advisory Committees will continue to meet through the duration of the next phase. Membership in these committees reflect the geography of the 13-mile Rush Line BRT Project, and thus differ somewhat from the committees that operated during the PPD Phase.

The Task Force will:

- 1. Receive project updates from the project team and will be provide input at key project milestones.
- 2. Continue to engage the various affected interests along the Rush Line Corridor.

3. ROUTE 275

The Task Force will continue to coordinate with the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit to monitor the performance of route 275.

4. CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS AND PROJECTS

Local Government/Agency Coordination:

The Task Force will coordinate with corridor counties, municipalities, transit agencies, MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council to identify potential capital improvement projects along the Corridor including supporting communities' implementation of land use tools to preserve land for the identified capital projects.

Rush Line Corridor Transit Service:

Encourage Metro Transit, the Metropolitan Council, Chisago-Isanti Heartland Express, Arrowhead Transit and others to provide additional bus service in the Rush Line Corridor as demand warrants. This includes, but not limited to, improved bus service along I-35E to the northern portion of the Rush Line Corridor, circulator bus service, the planned route 54 extension and other improvements along the East 7th Street and White Bear Avenue corridor.

Metropolitan Council Highway BRT Study

Coordinate with the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit on any additional analysis in the Rush Line Corridor related to the findings of the 2014 Highway Transitway Corridor Study including the incorporation of its analysis into the Pre-Project Development Study.

Funding:

Work with task force members to identify corridor improvements eligible for state and federal funding and seek funding for their completion. Assist local governments in the preparation of grants for Corridor improvements. Work with funding recipients to ensure the timely expenditure of funds on corridor projects.

Corridor Preservation:

The Task Force will work with corridor communities to preserve the former and existing freight railroad corridor and adjoining properties for future transportation uses. The Task Force is committed to the co-existence of the rail corridor with other transportation modes, including multi-use trails and bus transit.

I-35E MnPASS expansion

MnDOT added new MnPASS express lanes on both directions of I-35E between Cayuga Street and Little Canada Road in 2015. The MnPASS lanes were extended north to County Road J (northbound) and Highway 96 (southbound) in 2017. This is the first MnPASS investment in the East Metro area and an essential link for people commuting between downtown St. Paul and the suburbs to the north. The Task Force will continue to work with MnDOT to promote the implementation of the service.

5. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Task Force will continue to provide information to the public on the corridor. It will work with Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to coordinate outreach efforts with the Rush Line BRT Project to increase corridor awareness and to maintain consistent messaging.

6. ADVOCACY AND LEGISLATIVE COORDINATION

The Task Force will continue to develop policy positions and advocate for improved transit to serve the Rush Line Corridor and the Twin Cities region. Task force activities include:

- a. Informing legislators of the need for transitway improvements in the Rush Line Corridor
- b. Advocating for increased transit capital and operating funding to improve and expand the existing transit service in the corridor
- c. Coordinating legislative initiatives with other transitway corridors
- d. Establishing positions on legislative initiatives that affect the Rush Line Corridor
- e. Coordinate legislative initiatives with corridor regional railroad authorities, counties, and municipalities for the advancement of the Rush Line Corridor.

7. MANAGEMENT, POLICY, AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Commission activities will include:

- a. Prepare and adopt the annual Work Plan and Budget
- b. Prepare the annual financial report
- c. Review insurance needs and procure appropriate insurance
- d. Provide Task Force and staff administration
- e. Manage Task Force expenses

f. Manage the consultant(s) selected by the Task Force for completion of various work tasks

2020 Budget

Revenues/Sources of Funding

General corridor funding for administrative functions and staffing committees and corridor advocacy is provided through "in-kind" contributions of staff time to the task force. Funding for insurance is provided through regional railroad authority and county member contributions.

<u>Agenda Item #6</u>



MEMORANDUM

то:	Rush Line Corridor Task Force Members
FROM:	Staff
DATE:	November 18, 2019
RE:	Rush Line BRT Project Update

At the Task Force meeting, RCRRA staff will provide an update on the project and solicit input from the Task Force members.

Project Description

The Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project is a proposed 14-mile transit route with stops between Union Depot in Lowertown Saint Paul and downtown White Bear Lake. The Rush Line BRT Project includes further exploration of connector bus service north to Forest Lake, along with other transit system improvements. See the handout in the packet for details on the needs for the project. A short video of the project is also available online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99rZ1A00M1U

Environmental Analysis Phase Update

The purpose of the environmental process is to define the project in enough detail to understand its potential benefits and impacts, reduce those impacts as much as possible, and prepare an environmental document that explains why the project is needed, the alternatives that were considered, the project's impacts to the natural and built environments, and mitigation strategies for those impacts. The Environmental Analysis Phase is underway and is expected to be complete in 2021 and includes the following key tasks:

- Environmental analysis.
- Preliminary engineering.
- Station Area planning.
- Community engagement.

Action Requested: Information

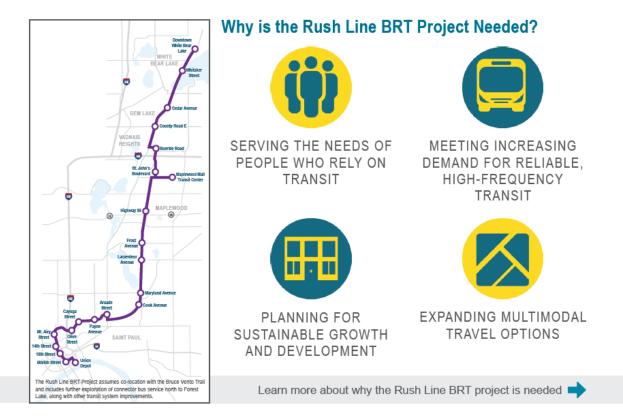


The Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project is a proposed 14-mile transit route between Saint Paul and White Bear Lake. It includes 21 stations that would serve the communities of Saint Paul, Maplewood, Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake, White Bear Township and White Bear Lake. The analysis and design of this transit route is being led by Ramsey County.

Purpose

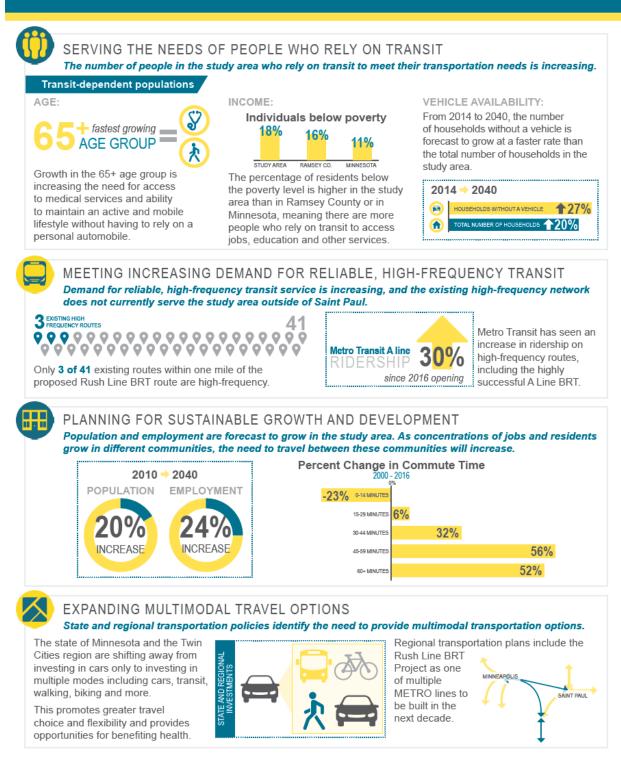
The purpose of the Rush Line BRT Project is to provide transit service that satisfies the long-term regional mobility and accessibility needs for businesses and the traveling public and supports sustainable development within the study area.





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WHY IS THE RUSH LINE BRT PROJECT NEEDED?





<u>Agenda Item #7</u>

MEMORANDUM

то:	Rush Line Corridor Task Force Members
FROM:	Staff
DATE:	November 18, 2019
RE:	Support for 2020 Ramsey County State Funding Request for Rush Line BRT Project

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is requesting \$2 million in state funds from the legislature for predesign and design work, including preliminary engineering and environmental analysis for the Rush Line BRT Project. This work is necessary to continue the development of the Rush Line BRT Project. A resolution of support from the Rush Line Corridor Task Force will help strengthen the request during the 2020 state legislative session.

Action Requested: Approval of the attached resolution supporting Ramsey County request for \$2 million in state funding for the Rush Line BRT Project.

Rush Line Corridor Task Force Resolution 2019-02

Resolution supporting the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority 2020 State Funding request of \$2 million for the Rush Line Corridor

WHEREAS; the Rush Line Corridor Task Force (Task Force), a joint powers board of cities, counties, and townships, was formed in 1999 to address the transportation needs of the Rush Line Corridor; and

WHEREAS; in 2017 the Task Force completed a pre-project development study that resulted in the selection of Bus Rapid Transit as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Rush Line Corridor; and

WHEREAS; following the selection of the locally preferred alternative, engineering and environment analysis will need to be completed to define the project in enough detail to understand its potential benefits and impacts; and

WHEREAS; the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority is requesting \$2 million in state funding for Pre-Design and Design work on the Rush Line Corridor including preliminary engineering and environmental analysis for the locally preferred alternative; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rush Line Corridor Task Force supports the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority request for \$2 million in state funding for Pre-Design and Design work on the Rush Line Corridor including preliminary engineering and environmental analysis for the locally preferred alternative.

Approved:

Chairperson

Date Approved by Task Force

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and correct copy of the resolution presented to and adopted by the Rush Line Corridor Task Force at a duly authorized meeting thereof held on the <u>21st</u> day of <u>November 2019</u> as shown by the meeting summary of said meeting in my possession.

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Montzka				
Paar				
Monson			<u> </u>	
Miller			<u> </u>	
Hopkins				
Weidt				
Torkelson				
Abrams				
Sloan				
Mikrot				
Reinhardt				
Hoffman				
Brendmoen				
Olivolo				
Miron				
Emerson				
McCune				
Nanko-Yeager				

<u>Agenda Item #8</u>



MEMORANDUM

TO: Rush Line Corridor Task Force Members

FROM: Staff

DATE: November 18, 2019

RE: Federal Transit Administration Transit-Oriented Development Grant Application

On September 18, 2019, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity of \$19.2 million for its Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Planning program. This program funds comprehensive planning to encourage ridership, transit access, and economic and mixed-use development near public transportation projects. Ramsey County staff, working with Metro Transit, identified the Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as region's project that would best qualify for the grant.

Rush Line BRT Advanced Station Area Planning would build upon preliminary station area planning work performed in 2018 as part of the Rush Line BRT Environmental Analysis Phase by focusing on completing detailed plans for land use and multimodal connections near stations while analyzing market and housing gaps along the route. This planning effort, involving extensive community engagement and technical analysis, would help maximize expanded economic development opportunities and multimodal connections near stations as well as FTA Capital Investment Grant (New Starts) competitiveness for the Rush Line BRT Project.

Grant applications were due on November 18, 2019. Ramsey County worked with Metro Transit, as the FTA grantee, to submit the application on behalf of Ramsey County for a grant in the amount of \$1,250,000. The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority committed to providing the required 20% local match of \$312,500 if successful. Cities along the route have declared their intention to partner on the proposed planning process. Letters of support were provided by project partners to strengthen the application.

Since applications were due prior to the next Task Force meeting, Chair Reinhardt submitted the attached letter of support on behalf of the Task Force for the grant application. The letter of support does not include a financial commitment. The Advanced Station Area Planning work would allow the Task Force to continue to advance the Rush Line Corridor which is a main objective of the adopted work plan.

Action

Information



November 15, 2019

Federal Transit Administration U.S. Department of Transportation 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE Washington, DC 20590

To Whom it May Concern:

As Chair of the Rush Line Corridor Task Force, I am writing to support the FTA Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning grant application for Rush Line BRT Project Advanced Station Area Planning.

The Task Force is a joint powers board of city, county and township elected officials dedicated to enhancing mobility, promoting economic development and preserving community assets within the 80-mile transportation corridor between Saint Paul and Hinckley, Minnesota. This grant will help us continue to work with our partners to complete Advanced Station Area Planning that is critical to the future success of the Rush Line BRT.

The Rush Line BRT project will have far-reaching regional benefits, and this grant will help provide our local partners with the tools they need to enhance land use around transit stations, improve access to jobs and affordable homes, and turn this multijurisdictional transit investment into a catalyst for economic growth and resiliency. Supportive land uses around Rush Line BRT stations will encourage transit ridership and sustainable growth as our region continues to attract more and more new residents.

The Rush Line Corridor Task Force encourages your favorable support. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Victoria a. Reinhardt,

Ramsey County Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt Chair, Rush Line Corridor Task Force Centerville Chisago County Forest Lake Harris Hinckley Hugo Little Canada Maplewood North Branch Pine City Pine County Ramsey County Rock Creek Rush City Saint Paul Sandstone Stacy Washington County White Bear Lake White Bear Township Wyoming