
Sponsor: Public Works

Meeting Date: 1/27/2026

Title: Purchase of 1840 English Street from Wanless, LLC

File Number: 2026-028

Background and Rationale:

Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) owns property and buildings to provide existing and future transit and transportation use in Ramsey County. In 1992, the RCRRA purchased the Northeast Corridor from approximately I-94 in St. Paul north to Beam Avenue in Maplewood from BNSF Railway. A subsequent purchase extended RCRRA ownership north to I-694. In addition to the mainline railroad corridor, two rail access parcels in Maplewood were included in the purchase as they provided access between the railroad mainline and the former railroad shops at the Gladstone Savannah nature preserve.

The Northeast Corridor is home to the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and has been included as a route in past transit analysis for the Rush Line and METRO Purple Line projects. In December 2025, Ramsey County, Metro Transit and the cities of Saint Paul and Maplewood announced the METRO Bronze Line, a reimagined bus rapid transit project that built upon the former METRO Purple Line. The Bronze line's routing in Maplewood is along White Bear Avenue, not the RCRRA property, providing the RCRRA with the opportunity to sell excess property. The two railroad access parcels are no longer needed for transit or transportation uses beyond providing a small trailhead and access between the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and Gladstone Savannah. However, they are small, and their disposition and redevelopment would benefit greatly by combining them with adjacent parcels as available. One such adjacent parcel, 1840 English Street recently became available and its purchase and incorporation with the two railroad access parcels would greatly improve redevelopment potential bringing the combined property under RCRRA ownership to 2 acres.

The proposed purchase of 1840 English Street and parcel supports strategic objectives in an area that has experienced recent development activity. The combined property will provide a redevelopment opportunity that would otherwise not exist should the parcels remain in separate ownership.

This acquisition creates opportunities for equitable development through shared cooperation via a city led coordinated planning effort that can align redevelopment with community priorities while maximizing public benefit. The inclusion of a small trailhead for the Bruce Vento Regional Trail and connection to the Gladstone Savannah nature preserve and Gloster Park as part of this planning effort will enhance public access, connectivity, recreation and transportation infrastructure.

Redevelopment of these parcels in a manner consistent with the county's Economic Competitiveness and Inclusion Plan will transition tax-exempt properties into taxable status, generating new property tax revenue and contributing to the long-term fiscal health of the city and county. Overall, the purchase represents a strategic investment that advances development potential, community goals, and long-term public revenue.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority resolved to:

1. Approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement of land with Wanless, LLC, 1840 English Street, Maplewood, MN 55109, for the purchase of parcel 152922320083, in the amount of \$325,000.
2. Authorize the Chair to approve and execute the purchase and sale agreement, settlement statements, closing documents, and any other documents necessary to complete the transaction, in a form approved by the County Attorney's Office.
3. Authorize the County Manager to execute future amendments to the agreement that do not have a financial impact.
4. Authorize Property Management to pursue a sale of the combined surplus property, parcels 152922320083, 152922320093, 152922320094, and 152922320095 in accordance with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Real Estate Management Plan and to return to the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority with the negotiated terms of sale for approval.
5. Approve the transfer of \$325,000 plus closing costs from Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority tax levy fund balances to the 2026 Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority capital budget to be used for this purchase.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Moran.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, Miller, Moran, Ortega, and Xiong

Excused: - 1: McMurtrey

By: 

Jason Yang, Chief Clerk - County Board