
Sponsor: Public Works

Meeting Date: 12/17/2024

Title: Transfer of Ramsey County Transit and Transportation Improvement Funds for Union Depot Facility Improvements

File Number: 2024-685

Background and Rationale:

In 2012, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) renovated the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul into a multi-modal transit and transportation hub. The renovation included rail and bus improvements fostering greater regional and national connectivity along with building improvements to provide a welcoming space for transit and transportation users as well as providing event space that has been thoroughly programmed throughout the years. Union Depot is approaching 15 years since its renovation and needs additional resources to continue its service as a hub for transit and transportation, public and private events and as a gathering space for the community.

The Union Depot hosts a multitude of indoor/outdoor events, including public events, private events, arts and cultural festivals, concerts, yoga classes, games, tours and more. Events at Union Depot are typically scheduled for more than 200 days out of the year and growing. The biggest events including the annual Hub for the Holidays, Train Days and Doggie Depot drawing approximately 170,000, 15,000 and 6,000 people annually. An increase in funding would allow for a higher level of maintenance associated with the desire to increase activities beyond current levels prior to staff developing and presenting a transit and transportation plan that reallocates Riverview Corridor funds to the board in Spring of 2025.

Activities anticipated to be funded via the additional funds include:

- Resiliency
 - Flood wall mitigation in Lot B
 - Energy initiatives and LED lighting
- Transportation
 - Bus and train deck structural improvements
- Building
 - Historic building preservation
 - Enhancements to public and event space, technology and wayfinding
 - Security system upgrades
- Strategic Marketing
 - Increased marketing activities to catalyze Union Depot's role in the activation of downtown St. Paul and the greater East Metro.

Maximization of the near-term impact of these funds on Union Depot operations and capital maintenance will be done through the coordination of Public Works, Property Management, Community and Economic Development and the County Manager.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Authorize the County Manager to transfer up to \$3,000,000 from Ramsey County Transit and Transportation Improvement fund balance to the 2025 Union Depot operating budget for operational and capital maintenance costs for near-term improvements.
2. Authorize the County Manager to establish a project budget for Union Depot Facility Improvements of up to \$6,000,000, utilizing up to \$3,000,000 of Transit and Transportation Improvement fund balance and up to \$3,000,000 of Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority fund balance in the Union Depot operating budget.
3. Authorize the County Manager to account for the operational and capital maintenance costs in the Union Depot operating budget.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Ortega, seconded by Commissioner Xiong.
Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

By: 

Jason Yang, Interim Chief Clerk - County Board