

---

**Sponsor:** Public Works

**Meeting Date:** 3/19/2024

**Title:** First Amendment to the Operating Agreement with National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)

**File Number:** 2024-007

---

**Background and Rationale:**

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) executed a twenty-year operating agreement with National Railroad Passenger Corporation on November 29, 2013, for Amtrak's use of the terminal tracks and platforms at the renovated Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul, a multi-modal transit and transportation hub. The agreement allowed Amtrak to operate the Empire Builder, a passenger train service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland, at and through Union Depot. Amtrak began train service and train passenger operations at Union Depot in second quarter 2014. Concurrent with the execution of the operating agreement, a lease agreement was executed providing space for Amtrak's ticket, baggage and passenger services.

Amtrak intends to add a second west-bound train in 2024 arriving at Union Depot from Chicago and returning to Chicago the following day. The additional service will follow the same route and serve the same station cities as Amtrak's *Empire Builder* long-distance train, plus two additional stops in Wisconsin. The new service will be complementary to the *Empire Builder* schedule, arriving at Union Depot in the early evening and leaving Union Depot midday. The new service will be a state-supported route, meaning Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois fund the service and Amtrak provides equipment and crews.

The first amendment provides for the overnight storage of one train at Union Depot and use of an expanded area of the terminal tracks. The amendment removes Amtrak's exclusive use of the tracks and platform and their role in approving other trains and also eliminates the third-party claims administration fund with the return of the fund balance in 2025 assuming there are no claims in the next year. Amtrak will be responsible for payment of a train storage fee and utility costs associated with the overnight train storage in accordance with the Station Lease.

**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority resolved to:

1. Approve the first amendment between National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), 60 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20002, and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority to provide use of the terminal tracks and platform associated with storage of one train overnight at Union Depot for the term of the agreement.
2. Authorize the Chair to execute the first amendment.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Reinhardt, seconded by Commissioner Martinson. Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

