
Sponsor: Public Works

Meeting Date: 3/19/2024

Title: Second Amendment to Station Lease Agreement with National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak)

File Number: 2024-006

Background and Rationale:

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) executed a twenty-year lease agreement with National Railroad Passenger Corporation on December 16, 2013, for space at the renovated Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul, a multi-modal transit and transportation hub. Concurrent with the execution of the lease agreement, an operating and maintenance agreement was executed allowing National Railroad Passenger Corporation, operating under the business name of 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. A first amendment to the lease agreement was executed in 2015 to provide Amtrak with additional unfinished space under the train deck, near the leased premises, to better accommodate customer package shipments and provide a storage area for equipment.

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, leaving Union Depot approximately three hours later and arriving at Union Depot approximately three hours earlier. The new service will be a state-supported route, meaning Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois fund the service and Amtrak provides equipment and crews.

The second amendment provides for the overnight storage of one train at Union Depot and addresses the ancillary space and services associated with this expanded use of the facility. Revenue for storage is estimated at \$108,000 per year, prorated for 2024, with Amtrak responsible for utility and trash costs associated with the trains and for any additional services required. The amendment also establishes an increased rent limit for 2024 with annual 3% increases.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority resolved to:

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

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

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

By: 
Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board