



Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

Union Depot, Suite 200, 214 4th Street E
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 (651) 266-2760 / FAX (651) 266-2761

July 15, 2014

Susan Haigh, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Chair Haigh,

As we work together to bring a robust and sustainable transportation network to the region, we would like to express our concerns regarding the advancement of the B Line by Metropolitan Council. We all agree that improved transportation along the W. 7th Street corridor is essential to retain current and attract future employees and employers, as well as to improve access to education, housing and recreation. As you know, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) has launched a study to evaluate a mode and alignment to best serve the Riverview Corridor which includes W. 7th Street. This study is not in isolation. As partners, we have been working with Metropolitan Council, Metro Transit, MnDOT, Saint Paul, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, and business partners - including the Mall of America. Our purpose is to build on previous work, thoughtfully determine a mode and alignment, then act quickly to move into engineering, design and construction.

During our meeting on May 21, 2014, you expressed your support for the Riverview Corridor Pre-Project Development Study and agreed that implementation of the B Line study would be deferred if it was determined to be detrimental to the advancement of the Riverview Corridor New Starts process. A deferral will allow development of additional and more refined information to define transit improvements for the corridor, including those for implementation of bus rapid transit. We believe in strong partnerships and want to support RCRRA's Riverview Corridor Pre-Project Development Study as it follows the New Starts process. In the spirit of partnership, we ask your support of a delay in implementation of the B Line until completion of the Riverview Corridor Pre-Project Development Study for the following reasons:

- Implementing the B Line prior to determining the best mode and alignment for the Riverview Corridor will create a situation in which expenses tied to the cost of B Line construction, including station infrastructure and signal priority software, may require federal reimbursement if another mode is selected for the corridor. Vocal opponents of public transit will have a legitimate point in stating that the money spent on the B Line was money wasted.
- Implementing the B Line will send a confusing message to residents in the corridor about regional transit planning. Although the Metropolitan Council has said the B Line would not preclude construction of a Riverview Project, having the B Line in place undermines RCRRA's ability to complete the Riverview Corridor study and seek New Starts funding.
- Implementing the B Line while RCRRA is performing the Riverview Corridor study will give Riverview Corridor residents and businesses the impression that they are bearing an inordinate

amount of transportation infrastructure construction that negatively affects their quality of life and ability to do business.

- Implementing the B Line prior to the completion of RCRRRA's study will negatively affect our ability to quantify and evaluate transit markets in the Riverview Corridor. The study will examine these markets to develop a transit improvement plan that will serve the market needs.
- Implementing the B Line creates a competition between enhanced local bus service and a potential high quality, dedicated guideway transit service in the Riverview Corridor. Metro Transit has stated that they may need to run both transit projects together in the corridor. Taxpayers will see that as excessive and unnecessary competition that devalues the benefits of the Riverview Corridor project.
- Implementing the B Line prior to the completion of the Riverview Corridor study will demonstrate a lack of regional coordination that is essential from the Federal Transportation Administration's New Starts and Small Starts funding processes.
- Implementing the B Line will likely result in an increase in the number of transit riders in the Riverview Corridor. While increased ridership may show market cultivation for a future transitway project, this increased ridership will negatively affect the Mobility and Cost Effectiveness measures in the New Starts evaluation process by raising the baseline level of transit ridership in the corridor over what is currently provided, making it more difficult for the Riverview Project to show incremental ridership gains.

Any enhanced transit investment in the Riverview Corridor should be the product of a coordinated and thoughtful study regarding the most appropriate transit investment to address both current and future transit needs in the corridor, as well as implement a catalytic investment that will shape travel patterns and economic development. This evaluation should be undertaken in the context of the Riverview Corridor study where the alternatives will be studied and a decision regarding the Locally Preferred Alternative.

We appreciate your support and commitment to the Riverview Corridor as a priority for RCRRRA and the region and ask that the development of the B Line be reconsidered upon completion of the Riverview Corridor Pre-Project Development Study.

Sincerely,

Rafael E. Ortega, Chair
Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor
City of Saint Paul

Dave Thune, Councilmember
City of Saint Paul

Chris Tolbert, Councilmember
City of Saint Paul

Matt Kramer, President
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

cc: The Honorable Betty McCollum
Toni Carter, Commissioner, Ramsey County
Blake Huffman, Commissioner, Ramsey County
Jim McDonough, Commissioner, Ramsey County
Mary Jo McGuire, Commissioner, Ramsey County
Victoria Reinhardt, Commissioner, Ramsey County
Janice Rettman, Commissioner, Ramsey County
Dan Bostrom, Councilmember, Saint Paul
Amy Brendmoen, Councilmember, Saint Paul
Kathy Lantry, Councilmember, Saint Paul
Russ Stark, Councilmember, Saint Paul
Dai Thao, Councilmember, Saint Paul
Kristin Beckman, Deputy Mayor, Saint Paul
Peter McLaughlin, County Commissioner, Hennepin County
Peter Wagenius, Policy Director, City of Minneapolis
Tim Busse, Councilmember, City of Bloomington
Pat Mancini, Riverview PAC
Jon Commers, Councilmember, Metropolitan Council
Laurel Severson, Riverview PAC
Pat Harris, Commissioner, Metropolitan Airports Commission
Scott McBride, MnDOT
Timothy A. Mayasich, Director, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority