



Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission Meeting

November 5, 2015

10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Jury Assembly Room, Goodhue County Justice Center
454 W. 6th Street, Red Wing, MN 55066

Union Depot, Suite 200

214 4th Street East

St. Paul, MN 55101

651-266-2760

www.mnhighspeedrail.com

RIVER ROUTE MEMBERS:

Dakota County
Regional Rail Authority

Goodhue County
Regional Rail Authority

Ramsey County
Regional Rail Authority

Wabasha County
Regional Rail Authority

Winona County
Regional Rail Authority

Cottage Grove

Goodview

Hastings

La Crosse Area
Planning Commission

Lake City

Prairie Island Indian Community

Red Wing

St. Charles

St. Paul

St. Paul Park

Utica

Wabasha

Winona

AGENDA

Item	Action Requested
1. Call to Order and Introductions	
2. Approval of Agenda	Approval
3. Minutes of the September 3, 2015 Meeting *	Approval
4. Checks and Claims *	Approval
5. Second Chicago-Saint Paul Passenger Train	
a. Contribution toward an Environmental Assessment *	Approval
6. Final 2016 Work Plan and Budget *	Approval
7. Public Outreach and Advocacy Activities	
a. Report from RMS Public Relations *	Information
8. MnDOT Passenger Rail Report	
a. Passenger Rail Studies - Dan Krom , MnDOT	Information
9. La Crosse Area Planning Committee Potential Membership	Information
10. Commissioner Reports	Information
11. Other	Information
a. Next scheduled meeting: January 7, 2016	
b. Appointment of members and alternates for 2016	
c. MN HSR meeting packet format	

* Information Enclosed

Information to be provided at the meeting

Questions? Contact Kevin Roggenbuck of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority at 651-266-2790 or by email at kevin.roggenbuck@co.ramsey.mn.us.

Agenda item #3

**MINNESOTA HIGH-SPEED RAIL COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2015
JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM, GOODHUE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, RED WING, MN
MEETING SUMMARY**

MEMBERS:

Ramsey County, Janice Rettman, Chair	City of Red Wing, Dan Bender
Dakota County, Mike Slavik	City of St. Charles, Wayne Getz
Goodhue County, Ted Seifert	Prairie Island Indian Community, Marc Mogan (ex officio)
Winona County, Jim Pomeroy	LAPC, Tom Faella (ex officio)
City of Lake City, Andru Peters	

STAFF AND GUESTS:

Ramsey County RRA, Kevin Roggenbuck	CCARL, Nora J. Felton
Ramsey County RRA, Sandie Jacobson	AAMN, John Goodman
Goodhue County, Ethan Seaberg	All Aboard MN/BNSF, Jack Barbier
Lockridge, Grindal, Nauen, Dennis McGrann	MnDOT Passenger Rail Office, Dan Krom
MnDOT Passenger Rail Office, Praveena Pitaparthi	

1. Call to Order and introductions

Chair Rettman called the meeting to order at 10:04 am, a quorum was present. Members introduced themselves and briefly described their interest in high speed passenger rail.

2. Approval of Agenda

Commissioner. Slavik moved approval of the agenda, seconded by Mr. Jim Pomeroy. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

3. Minutes of the July 2, 2015 Meeting

Mr. Getz moved for approval of the minutes, seconded by Mr. Bender. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. Checks and Claims

Mr. Roggenbuck explained the invoice and letter from RMS Public Relations regarding the six month contract (invoice #47). A motion to approve was requested. Commissioner Slavik moved for approval of the checks and claims, seconded by Mr. Dan Bender. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

5. MN High Speed Rail Commission Insurance: Waiver of Liability Limit

Mr. Roggenbuck provided information on the coverage (October 6, 2015 to October 6, 2016) so it's time to renew. He presented the question of whether to waive the statutory tort liability claims. This Commission has chosen NOT to waive the liability limits in the past and staff recommends this again. Cost was about \$925 this year (2014-2015), so cost will be about the same. Mr. Andru Peters moved for approval, seconded by Mr. Wayne Getz and Commissioner Slavik. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. Federal Passenger Rail Update

Mr. Dennis McGrann with Lockridge, Grindal, Nauen, provided a report. He stated that both House and Senate have passed rail authorization legislation. Senate bill is considerably better; pushes Federal Rail Administration to move funding out more quickly. House is much more parochial and focused on the Northeast Corridor.

Transportation re-authorization bill – the Senate passed a six year bill and it's the first time that's gone through. Now the House needs to act. Right now we have authorization for funding which expires at the end of October. There is a lot of pressure on Congress to get that passed.

Mr. Andru Peters asked about the TIGER grant program funding. Mr. McGrann responded he thinks it will maintain where it currently is.

Mr. Peters asked whether there was any pending legislation on pipelines and movement of oil. Mr. McGrann mentioned the Keystone XL pipeline controversy and said there is a bill sitting with the President. The focus has been on improving oil tank car safety.

Mr. Peters also asked about this election year – what do you see with gridlock with a change in administration? Mr. McGrann replied that the administration wants to fully fund a six year transportation bill and that it is not a partisan issue.

Chair Rettman discussed the 2nd train study and moving forward with WisDOT, and the next study and being prepared to get it together and doing this study well. She emphasized that we need McGrann's group to be making sure all legislators know this is critical. Chair Rettman mentioned the letter she sent earlier this summer. Mr. McGrann responded how important Chair Rettman's words are regarding passenger rail and moving forward with this study. Rettman stated "we're about high speed rail. We've got to get that second train to Chicago."

7. Public Outreach and Advocacy Activities

The monthly report covers June 22 to July 15, 2015. Most notable was the Amtrak Feasibility Study (included in this packet). The website was updated. There has been positive feedback on Facebook with a lot of "likes".

8. Public Relations Consultant Update

Mr. Roggenbuck provided an update on the negotiation with RMS on one-year extension, per the direction from the commission. The offer to RMS is to perform as much work as possible (based on RFIQ from earlier this year) with a \$35,000 budget. Staff met with RMS twice (over the phone) and came to agreement on the Scope of Services for July 16, 2015 to July 15, 2016; this one year extension is retroactive to when their last contract expired.

There are a couple changes to the Scope of Work: RMS will NOT prepare and maintain the community calendars; RMS will not do video. The scope still includes the critical items: RMS will provide support materials for our members when they go out into the community for meetings: maintain our website and Facebook page, electronic newsletters, other media materials, and electronic materials will continue to be produced by them. Chair Rettman stressed the importance of keeping our stakeholder and media lists up to date and asked Mr. Roggenbuck to follow-up with RMS to ensure this is being done. Chair Rettman also stated that if you have information that needs to be posted to the website, contact Kevin.

Mr. Slavik asked about what was taken out of their original scope to fit in the budget of \$35,000? Mr. Roggenbuck responded that the main items removed from the original scope were the video production and maintaining a monthly community calendar. Mr. Peters mentioned that videos of the River route were taken some time ago and asked if they were still relevant to post. Mr. Roggenbuck stated he would look into this.

Mr. Andru Peters moved for approval, seconded by Mr. Jim Pomeroy. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Chair Rettman stated that now is the time for commission members to talk with various companies and ask them to bid on this RFIQ in several months. If there are agencies or organizations that do this type of work on a regular basis, we need to make them aware and inquire if they would like to bid on this public relations work. Mr. Peters asked about a partnership of some sort with Amtrak regarding the second train. Chair Rettman stated this is separate from the public relations work.

9. 2016 Work Plan and Budget

Mr. Roggenbuck described the draft 2016 work plan and budget for discussion. The draft work plan is largely reflected in the scope of services for our public relations consultant, includes an offset, and highlighted eight key features from the cover memo in the meeting packet. Mr. Roggenbuck and staff ask that the MN HSR Commission discuss these priorities in light of the completion of the 2nd Amtrak Train Feasibility Study, the emergence of the North American High Speed Rail Group, the lack of funding from the 2015 legislative session and other developments, and provide direction to staff for priorities for the 2016 work plan and budget.

Mr. Peters asked for staff to put together some boiler plate information / standard message to share with our cities so that we are all providing the same information. Chair Rettman stated the focus needs to be on the Second Train Study.

Mr. Slavik asked about using the reserve fund to help fund the second Amtrak train Environmental Assessment. He's equally concerned about Zip Rail as he is on the second train study. He stated that the commission should be prepared for the North American High Speed Rail Group to request public funding and make sure we are proactive. He asked how comfortable everyone is with the budget that we have, and with the possibility of depleting the reserve, and how comfortable everyone is with replenishing it quickly.

10. Feasibility Study for 2nd Amtrak Train

a. Results of 2nd Train Study:

Praveena Pidaparathi, MnDOT Passenger Rail Office, gave this update. Highlights of the presentation included station options between Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois; schedule options; RTC rail modeling software used to test possible infrastructure solutions; 2nd conventional passenger train model; RTC model and modeling results; equipment needs; estimated annual ridership; capital investment needs; recommendations; and next steps. Ms. Pidaparathi stated the FRA is comfortable with the ridership numbers, but we need to do additional modeling. There are currently seven round trip trains between Chicago and Milwaukee. The 2nd train could be an extension of one of these trains.

b. Discussion of next steps:

The next step is to determine how much it costs. WisDOT has \$300,000 available for an Environmental Assessment that will determine the capital improvement needs and the environmental impacts of both the capital improvements and the service increase. Discussion carried over to the next agenda item.

11. MnDOT Passenger Rail Report

Dan Krom, MnDOT

A. Passenger rail studies Update:

Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) modeling and having a dialogue with the freight railroads is the next step we need to do. Following the modelling, the Environmental Assessment must be completed. The next phase will be a minimum of \$600,000. WisDOT currently has \$300,000 available, but MnDOT does not have funds to match. MnDOT is in discussions with RCRRA staff to secure \$300,000 to be able to continue this phase. Chair Rettman stated that she went to the Ramsey County Board Commission meeting and got the \$300,000 on the budget. Chair Rettman also stated she is willing to support this, but does not want Ramsey County to be the only local government funder. Chair Rettman is willing to talk with other cities and counties along the corridor to get support.

There were questions about the doubled cost to go from Minneapolis to Saint Cloud and how the second train could impact ridership on the current Empire Builder route. Ms. Pidaparathi stated the majority of the cost in going to Saint Cloud is in going through Minneapolis and that ridership on the 2nd train is in addition to the current Amtrak ridership.

Mr. Slavik stated he believes his board would not support a contribution to the second train EA and it should be the responsibility of the state. Mr. Pomeroy agreed and stated his concern with Ramsey County using its funds without assurance of the second train being funded over the long term. Chair Rettman stated the funding (\$300,000) was already in this year's budget and stated we need to fund this, otherwise this opportunity will be greatly delayed. Chair Rettman said Ramsey County will not provide funding without a written guarantee from Wisconsin DOT that they have \$300,000 available for the study. The Commission will have "a seat at the table" in the preparation of the RTC modelling and Environmental Assessment, ensuring that our money is being spent wisely.

B. Preliminary State Capital Bond Requests

Mr. Krom discussed the requests for funding during the next session. If they receive funding, then they won't have to partner. Mr. Krom stated the bond requests are in everyone's packets for review.

12. Freight Rail Update – This item will be moved to the November meeting.

13. La Crosse Area Planning Committee Membership

Mr. Tom Faella reported that their meeting agenda for October includes discussing being a financial partner to MN HSR Commission. He stated that La Crosse is very committed to high speed rail and believes his committee would look on this favorably. They hope to get something accomplished before the November meeting. Mr. Faella said he will continue to work with Kevin on this.

14. Commissioner Reports

Mr. Peters reported they had an oil train presentation by their fire chief. He asked if it would be appropriate to give this presentation to this Commission. Chair Rettman stated there are several requests from parties who want to give presentations.

Mr. Roggenbuck stated he did get in contact with the National High Speed Rail Group to schedule a presentation to the commission on their plans for a connection from Rochester to Chicago, but was told it is not appropriate at this time.

15. **Other**

Mr. Roggenbuck said the Federal Railroad Administration recently announced a grant program to fund innovative safety solutions for railroad/highway grade crossings.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is November 5, 2015.

Commissioner Rettman thanked the Commission and adjourned the meeting at noon.

Agenda item #4



MEMORANDUM

TO: Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission Members
FROM: Staff
DATE: October 29, 2015
RE: Checks and Claims

The cover letter and invoice from RMS Public Relations for services provided from July 16 through October 16, 2015 was not available at the time the meeting mailing was sent. Information will be provided to the Commission via email prior to the November 5, 2015 meeting if available. Hard copies will also be provided at the Commission meeting.

Agenda Item #5a**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission Members

FROM: Staff

DATE: October 29, 2015

RE: MN HSR Commission Contribution toward the Second Chicago–Saint Paul Passenger Train Environmental Assessment

At the September 3, 2015 meeting of the MNN HSR Commission, Praveena Pidaparathi from MnDOT's Passenger Rail Office gave a presentation on the results of the Feasibility Study for a Second Amtrak Passenger Train between Chicago and the Twin Cities. The results of the feasibility study showed that one additional round trip between Chicago and Saint Paul was the most feasible, carrying an estimated 155,000 passengers per year. The study recommended an environmental review of the project to determine the need for capital improvements in rolling stock, track and other facilities, to develop a service plan that fits with freight rail traffic, and to assess the environmental impacts and needed mitigation for the project. Completion of the EA will make the project ready for construction funding and implementation.

The total cost to do an Environmental Assessment has not been determined yet; however, preliminary estimates put the total cost at approximately \$850,000. The Wisconsin DOT has secured \$300,000 for the EA, provided that Minnesota contributes an equal amount, making both states equal financial partners. The Minnesota DOT does not have funds available to match Wisconsin's contribution; however, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority has budgeted \$300,000 to match Wisconsin's funding. Ramsey County recognizes the importance of funding the EA and ultimately implementing a second round-trip passenger train between Chicago and Saint Paul, benefitting both travelers and freight rail traffic in the short term, and demonstrating the viability of high speed passenger rail service in the long term. Without these funds from the RCRRA, the EA could not be started and Wisconsin's funding could be redirected, and this opportunity lost. A board action to provide these funds will be prepared and put to a vote tentatively on November 17.

MnDOT, WisDOT and RCRRA staff have met with Federal Railroad Administration staff to discuss the EA several times. The group met on October 29, prior to the distribution of this meeting packet. The group agreed that MnDOT would lead the EA. Together, the group has developed a draft RFP to hire a consulting firm. MnDOT and RCRRA staff have also developed a draft partnership agreement between both organizations. The RFP will be refined and firms will be solicited as soon as funding from both states is secured.

The funding available from Wisconsin and Minnesota is not enough to complete the entire EA and make get the project ready for construction. The funding that will be available is expected to be enough to complete the Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) modelling to determine the capital and facility needs, the development of a service plan that is coordinated with new, additional service from Chicago to Milwaukee, and begin conceptual design of the project. This work will also include public engagement and coordination with the host railroads.

The MN High Speed Rail Commission currently has approximately \$65,000 in unspent previous year's appropriations (reserves) and will invoice the Financial Parties for 2015 membership dues in the total amount of \$39,000 before the end of the year. If the MN HSR Commission contributes a meaningful amount toward the EA, it will have "a seat at the table" among the project's leadership group. The commission representative must be decided by the commission, but Chair Rettman recommends that the commission be represented by one of the five Financial Parties, excluding Ramsey County.

A contribution for the commission would be used as contingency funding toward this first phase of work, meaning it would not leave the commission budget until needed and requested for release.

After discussion at the September 3 commission meeting, staff recommends providing \$50,000 in the 2016 budget as a contribution toward the Second Chicago-Saint Paul Passenger Train Environmental Assessment, to be used as contingency funding. This amount does not deplete the commission's reserves. Including the revenue anticipated from the 2015 Financial Party dues, the reserves can be substantially replenished in one year while still using an offset to reduce member contributions in 2016.

Action Requested: That the commission include \$50,000 in the 2016 Work Plan and Budget to be used as contingency funding for the Second Chicago-Saint Paul Passenger Train Environmental Assessment.



Agenda Item #6

MEMORANDUM

TO: Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission Members

FROM: Staff

DATE: October 29, 2015 (Revised November 2, 2015 underlined text)

RE: Final 2016 Work Plan and Budget

The MN HSR Commission discussed the draft 2016 Work Plan and Budget at its meeting on September 3, 2015. Given the discussion and direction regarding the commission's contribution toward the Second Chicago-Saint Paul Passenger Train Environmental Assessment, the impact on the commission's funding reserves and replenishment of the reserve, staff has prepared a final 2016 Work Plan and Budget. Due to discussions among members following the September 3 meeting and at the direction of the Chair, staff has revised the revenue table to be identical to that of the 2015 Work Plan and Budget.

The commission's work as an advocacy organization for development of high speed passenger rail in the River Route is done largely through the scope of services in contract with our public relations firm. The commission's public engagement and advocacy was updated during the recent issuance of a RFIQ. The 2016 Work Plan and Budget reflects the updated public engagement work scope and the additional advocacy efforts by the commission and its member organizations. Below are several bullet points highlighting the 2016 Work Plan and Budget.

- Desire to adopt a work plan and budget similar to what was adopted for 2015.
- Focus on traditional efforts of advocacy and outreach through the High Speed Rail website, printed materials, e-newsletters and social media.
- Continue to provide logistical support for Jerry Miller's advocacy efforts.
- Continue to budget funds for insurance.
- Consider having a larger presence at the state capitol during the legislative session.
- Continue to track the progress of the Chicago to Twin Cities Tier 1 EIS and other important studies affecting passenger rail service in Minnesota.
- Contribution of \$50,000 toward the Second Chicago-Saint Paul Passenger Train Environmental Assessment to be used as contingency funding.
- Continue to maintain a contingency amount for unforeseen advocacy opportunities.
- Apply unspent appropriations from previous years to offset membership dues.

Action Requested: Approval

Minnesota High-Speed Rail Commission

Final 2016 Work Plan and Budget

1. General Activities

The Minnesota High-Speed Rail Commission (Commission) will work with counties and municipalities, the Prairie Island Indian Community, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the Metropolitan Council, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Amtrak, Canadian Pacific Railway, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Union Pacific Railway, corridor chambers of commerce and others to continue the advancement and development of high speed rail from La Crescent, MN to Union Depot in St. Paul, MN 'the River Route'. To accomplish this the Commission will do the following:

- Monitor the progress of high-speed rail activities in the United States and the Midwest.
- Monitor progress and offer guidance on high-speed rail studies involving the River Route.
- Monitor progress and offer guidance on studies for additional passenger rail service along the River Route.
- Monitor progress and offer guidance on freight rail studies involving the River Route
- Coordinate with MnDOT on high-speed, passenger, and freight rail studies that impact the River Route.
- Coordinate with other interested parties on high-speed, passenger and freight rail improvements throughout the United States.
- Offer formal comments on high-speed rail studies and state and federal policy as needed.
- Work for the seamless integration of high-speed rail into the River Route's municipalities' comprehensive plans.
- Offer guidance and assistance to municipalities, MnDOT, Metropolitan Council, freight railroads, and others for the advancement of high-speed rail along the River Route.

General Activities will be led by commission staff working with agency staff to advise the commission on when its involvement is needed.

2. Advocacy and Legislative Coordination

The Commission will continue to develop policy positions and advocate for improved high-speed and passenger rail service in the River Route and throughout the Midwest Regional Rail System. To accomplish this, the Commission will do the following:

- Inform legislators about the benefits of high speed rail projects implemented in the United States.
- Inform legislators about the benefit of and need for high-speed rail service along the River Route.
- Inform legislators about the benefit of and need for increased freight rail capacity along the River Route.
- Advocate for increased funding to improve and expand the existing Amtrak passenger rail service along the River Route.
- Advocate for increased funding to improve freight rail infrastructure along the River Route.

- Coordinate legislative initiatives with impacted freight railroads, the Prairie Island Indian Community, the Counties Transit Improvement Board, MnDOT the Metropolitan Council, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Amtrak, other high-speed passenger rail corridors, and other impacted parties.
- Coordinate legislative initiatives with the Red Rock Corridor Commission for those initiatives that impact both corridors.
- Coordinate legislative initiatives with partner agencies for those initiatives that impact the River Route.
- Establish positions on state and federal legislative initiatives that affect the River Route.
- Encourage Minnesota and Wisconsin to continue advancing the Milwaukee to Twin Cities portion of the Twin Cities to Chicago high-speed rail corridor through design and into construction.
- Host joint meetings and forums with high-speed rail advocates to encourage the implementation of high-speed rail along the River Route.
- Advocate for the continued analysis of high-speed rail along the River Route and work to strengthen the conclusions of the Minnesota State Rail Plan which identified the River Route as a priority high speed rail corridor.
- Advocate for a multimodal transportation system that improves mobility through connecting corridor communities without stations to each other and to communities with stations.
- Advocate for rail safety improvements including at-grade crossings and track upgrades.
- Advocate for increased passenger rail service between the Twin Cities and Chicago in addition to high-speed rail service.
- Seek membership in similar advocacy organizations such as the Midwest High Speed Rail Association and Go Rail.

Advocacy and legislative coordination activities will be led by Commission staff working with the Chair to identify which items merit commission involvement. If Commission involvement is merited, and time allows, the items will be brought to the Commission for discussion. If time does not allow, the Chair will determine whether or not the Commission shall be involved. In all instances, the Chair shall be the spokesperson for the Commission.

3. Public Engagement

The Commission's public involvement activities will be developed to increase public awareness of high speed rail, high-speed rail along the River Route, the Commission, the larger Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, the importance of investing in high-speed rail and existing passenger rail service. These activities will be separate from, but coordinated with the MnDOT's public involvement activities related to the implementation of the completed Minnesota State Rail Plan, the ongoing Tier One Environmental Impact Statement for the Twin Cities to Milwaukee corridor and the Environmental Assessment of a second Amtrak train between Chicago and Saint Paul. Specific Commission activities will include:

- Implement a Public Communications strategy that builds upon the Commission's Strategic Communications Plan. This strategy will guide the Commission's public involvement activities including:
 - Public Information
 - Community Relations
 - Media Relations

- Corridor Positioning
- Website Presence
- Social Media (Facebook)
- Supporter Distribution List
- Materials Development and Production
- Revise the Strategic Communications Plan as needed
- Coordination with partner agencies on high-speed rail and River Route advocacy
- Presentations to civic and community groups throughout the Corridor
- Support for similar organizations (e.g. Midwest High Speed Rail Association)
- Media recognition of Commission meetings and events through print, radio, and public access television
- Coordination and recruitment of supporters, including those in the business community, to advanced high-speed rail and passenger rail along the River Route.

Public Involvement Activities will be led by commission staff working with the Commission's public communications consultant. Public involvement strategies will continue to be discussed with the Chair before being brought to the Commission.

4. Management, Policy, and Administrative Activities

Commission activities will include but not be limited to the following:

- Prepare and adopt the 2017 Work Plan and Budget.
- Review insurance needs and procure appropriate insurance.
- Provide Commission and staff administration.
- Manage Commission expenses.

Management, Policy, and Administrative Activities will be led by Commission staff. The deliverables will continue to be brought before the Commission for their approval.

2016 Expenditures

Expenditure Category	Amount
Advocacy and Legislative Coordination	
- Publications	\$2,000
- Materials	\$3,000
- Special Events/Mileage ¹	\$1,000
Subtotal	\$6,000
Public Engagement	
- Strategic Counsel Services	\$9,000
- Media Relations/Communications	\$3,500
- Public Information Materials and Production	\$17,000
- Corridor Advocacy	\$4,000
- Expenses	\$1,500
Subtotal	\$35,000
Management/Administration	
- Materials	\$3,000
- Insurance	\$2,000
Subtotal	\$5,000
Second Amtrak Train Milwaukee to Saint Paul	
- Contribution toward Environmental Assessment ²	\$50,000
Subtotal	\$50,000
Contingency	\$19,000
Total	\$115,000

¹ Travel to out of state events/conferences would be the responsible of each individual member.

² MnDOT will be the lead agency conducting an Environmental Assessment of the current Amtrak route from Milwaukee to Saint Paul that will identify needed capital improvements that will be eligible for federal funding. MNHSR Commission funding will come from unexpended previous year’s appropriations.

Note: Multiple Financial Members currently have contracts with federal and state lobbyists. These lobbyists may provide federal and state lobbying services as an in kind contribution of the financial members to the Commission.

2016 Revenue

Revenue Source		Amount
Federal Appropriations		\$0
Subtotal		\$0
State Appropriations		\$0
Subtotal		\$0
Regional Railroad Authority:		2016 Contribution
	Percentage ¹	
- Ramsey County	40.50%	\$26,325
- Dakota County	27.00%	\$16,200
- Winona County	13.50%	\$8,775
- Goodhue County	11.50%	\$7,475
- Wabasha County	7.50%	\$4,875
TOTAL	100%	\$65,000

¹ Per the Joint Powers Agreement, the Financial Parties' contribution is based on the following formula: 50% based on the proportionate share of population among all Financial Parties; 10% based on the proportionate share of corridor mileage among all Financial Parties; 31% based on the location of existing or planned high speed and commuter rail stations within the Financial Parties' jurisdiction; and 9% allocated equally among the Financial Parties.

2016 Revenue

Revenue Source				Amount
Federal Appropriations				\$0
Subtotal				\$0
State Appropriations				\$0
Subtotal				\$0
Regional Railroad Authority	Percentage	2016 Contribution	Proposed Offset ¹	Adjusted 2016 Contribution
- Ramsey County	40.50%	\$26,325	<u>\$10,530</u>	<u>\$15,795</u>
- Dakota County	27.00%	\$17,550	<u>\$7,020</u>	<u>\$10,530</u>
- Winona County	13.50%	\$8,775	<u>\$3,510</u>	<u>\$5,265</u>
- Goodhue County	11.50%	\$7,475	<u>\$2,990</u>	<u>\$4,485</u>
- Wabasha County	7.50%	\$4,875	<u>\$1,950</u>	<u>\$2,925</u>
TOTAL	100%	\$65,000	<u>\$26,000</u>	<u>\$39,000</u>

¹ Proposed offset to reduce Financial Party contributions. The offset amount approved in the 2015 Work Plan and Budget was \$26,000.

Fiscal Note: By the end of CY 2015, the commission is expected to have approximately \$65,000 in unexpended previous year's appropriations plus receipt of \$39,000 for the 2015 dues assessment, for a total of \$104,000.

Agenda item #7a**MEMORANDUM**

TO: MN High Speed Rail Commission
FROM: Staff/RMS Public Relations
DATE: October 29, 2015 (revised November 2, 2015)
SUBJECT: Public Outreach – October Activity Update

Work completed since our memo of July 16 included:

- Posted approximately 70 Facebook updates. Responded to comments.
- Reviewed high-speed rail news generated locally, nationally and internationally.
- Drafted plans for city spotlight and commission member spotlight to be featured on commission website.
- Drafted plan for speaker's bureau community liaison support and schedule for presentations into 2016.
- Updated Fact Sheet with information regarding Amtrak Second Train Study.
- Updated news section of website with relevant stories.
- Reviewed Gmail account, answered questions from interested parties.

Analytics Report**Highlights**

- Website visits continue to drop. Plans for a home page update and new city and commission member spotlight content should increase traffic.
- Facebook Likes increased from 1,461 to 1,655 between June and October.
- On September 3, Union Depot Facebook had a post about MNHSR. The result was 75 MNHSR website visits, 60 more than average. Two thirds of visitors came from Facebook. Likewise, MNHSR Facebook likes peaked Sept. 3 with 43 new likes.
- No E-newsletters were sent during this time period.

Website

The Google analytics report for <http://www.mnhighspeedrail.com> for the current time period is attached. Some basic web statistic comparisons are below.

Time Period	Sessions	Sessions/Day	Pages/Session	Ave Session Duration	% New Sessions
Aug 21-Oct 20, 2014	1,688	27	1.87	1:23	86.36%
Oct 21-Dec 20, 2014	1,275	21	1.99	1:37	85.57%
Dec 21-Feb 20, 2015	1,584	26	1.94	1:20	83.14%
Feb 21-Apr 20, 2015	1,294	22	1.63	1:00	85.83%
Apr 21-Jun 20, 2015	997	17	1.70	1:02	88.57%
Jun 21-Aug 20, 2015	1,000	17	1.77	1:15	87.40%
Aug 21-Oct 20, 2015	893	15	1.86	1:10	88.24%

Facebook:

The approach to Facebook has been narrowed a bit compared to the past, with less articles being scheduled hoping to focus on the most relevant material. Shares from other pages have been used to supplement activity and we have seen a good amount of views and participation from scheduled and shared posts. A mention by Union Depot caused a drastic uptick in likes on September 3 with small increases since then.

The Facebook Insights report for the current time period included these basic statistical comparisons

Time Period	Likes	Posts Reaching >300
Aug 21-Oct 20, 2014	1,487	3
Oct 21 – Dec 20, 2014	1,529	15
Dec 21, 2014 – Feb 20, 2015	1,576	8
Feb 21 – Apr 20, 2015	1,568	11
Apr 21 – June 20, 2015	1,588	18
June 21 – Aug 20, 2015	1,592	30
Aug 21 – Oct 20, 2015	1,655	20

Facebook “Engagement”

An important goal of the page is to engage Facebook users in order to keep them interested. Proof of engagement include Reach (the number of people who see a post), Shares (when someone shares a post on their page), Likes (those that Like your post), and Comments (people who comment on a post). Engagement has been strong recently on the MNHSR Facebook. These are a few examples of comments from one week in September.

On a “meme” about improving railroad tracks:

[Andru Peters](#) We need to continue to advocate for double tracking along the river route corridor as well make improvements of our at grade crossings. Also need to advocate constructing service roads parallel to the tracks where there are dead end at grade crossings. Doing this raises train speeds from 10 MPH to 70 MPH by closing at grade crossings that have no lights, arms, horns & gates
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · [1](#) · [September 16 at 11:00am](#)

On post about a potential 2nd Amtrak Train between the Twin Cities and Chicago:

[Kate Leisses](#) Please, please, please, please.....!
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · [1](#) · [September 15 at 2:07pm](#)

On an article about Jerry Miller’s presentation in La Crescent:
[Dobriła Stancevic](#) Talking about it is great, but build it please!
[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · [September 15 at 11:44pm](#)

On double tracking on Northstar line helps Empire Builder:
[Kevin Peterson](#) Important upgrade.
[Unlike](#) · [Reply](#) · [Message](#) · [1](#) · [September 14 at 9:12pm](#)

The top Facebook posts this period of August 21 – October 20 were:

Posted	Post Message	Unique Users	Comments	Likes
10/9 10:30 AM	China has signed a contract to build high-speed rail between Los Angeles and Las Vegas.	2,929	11 on post 2 on shares	19 on post 68 on shares
10/13 10:42 AM	Here is an article that tries to answer the question of why the United States does not have high-speed rail. What do you think?	987	2 on post 16 on shares	7 on post 16 on shares
10/6 3:30 PM	Here is another travel option for your upcoming trip across the United States. (Shared from Twin City Model Railroad Museum)	2,612	0	13
9/22 9:05 AM	Southeastern Minnesota's Mississippi River valley is among the most beautiful locations in America. Minnesota High-Speed Rail would travel from the Twin Cities, including a stop at historic Union Depot in St. Paul through picturesque river towns on its way to Milwaukee and Chicago.	1,284	4 on post 3 on shares	14 on post 16 on shares
9/14 9:43 AM	What's good for Northstar is also good for the Amtrak Empire Builder! (Shared from Northstar Corridor Development Agency)	895	1	14
9/11 9:50 AM	High-speed rail in Minnesota would provide many different benefits and connect Minnesotans to many other destinations via the rail hub in Chicago.	1,005	4 on post 2 on shares	15 on post 22 on shares

<p>9/2 1:30 PM</p>	 <p>Minnesota High-Speed Rail</p> <p>Connect great cities. Create great opportunities.</p>	<p>660</p>	<p>4 on post 10 on shares</p>	<p>36 on post 17 on shares</p>
<p>8/26 11:35 AM</p>	<p>Check out this editorial talking about the need for a second train between St. Paul and Chicago and how it would boost the economy along the River Route. (Shared from Midwest High Speed Rail Association)</p>	<p>1,333</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>30</p>

Bitly:

Bitly allows us to track the number of times Facebook users click links to stories they are interested in. Top stories clicked July 15 – October 21.

- July 16 – Second daily train from St. Paul to Chicago gets closer look – KMSP TV (128)
- August 16 – What’s New – All Aboard Minnesota (31)
- August 19 – Rail company speaks out – Republican Eagle (77)
- September 14 – High-speed rail a possibility through La Crescent – Lacrossetribune.com (15)
- October 2 – One thing stopping US building high-speed rail system – Business Insider (20)
- October 11 – Private Rail Company seeks to build high-speed rail across United States – Post Bulletin (19)
- October 13 – Why doesn’t America Have High-Speed Rail – Inverse.com (41)

Facebook Insights:

