



## Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

**Date:** July 26, 2011  
**To:** Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee  
**Subject:** **The Interchange – Accept HCRRA’s Invitation for the City of Minneapolis to Become a Formal Cooperating Agency**

**Recommendation:**

Accept the invitation from the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority to become a formal cooperating agency on The Interchange project with the understanding that: City staff will have a strong role in developing, reviewing and participating in upcoming Requests for Qualifications, Requests for Proposals and public engagement activities, and that the public will be engaged in finalizing the design elements that are not “fixed technical required elements” – i.e. the aesthetic design/landscape of the public space.

**Previous Directives:**

July 23, 2010: Council Action, Approve the appointment of three elected representatives from the City of Minneapolis to serve on The Interchange Working Group.

**Prepared by:** Jenifer Hager, P.E., Principal Professional Engineer 673-3625  
Don Elwood, P.E., Director Transportation Planning & Engineering 673-3622

**Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

**Presenters:** Jenifer Hager, P.E., Principal Professional Engineer

**Reviews**

Permanent Review Committee (PRC): Approval \_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Civil Rights Approval Approval \_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Review Group (PRG): Approval \_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Financial Impact**

- No financial impact
- Action is within the Business Plan

**Community Impact**

Neighborhood Notification: Not Applicable  
City Goals: Jobs & Economic Vitality, Livable Communities, Healthy Lives

Comprehensive Plan: Supporting the development of a multi-modal Downtown transportation system that encourages an increasingly dense and vibrant regional center is consistent with the transportation goals in the Comprehensive Plan.  
Zoning Code: Not Applicable

### **Background/Supporting Information**

The Interchange in downtown Minneapolis brings together transit and development, creating a civic space that will connect multiple transportation options, support a vibrant regional economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase mobility.

The Interchange is operational today with 250 arrivals and departures daily via Hiawatha LRT and Northstar Commuter Rail. This will increase to 500 daily rail trips when Central Corridor LRT opens in 2014. The future Southwest Corridor LRT and Bottineau Transit Corridor lines will provide additional transit service and are anticipated to bring thousands of additional daily passengers to The Interchange. In addition, as of today, more than 1,900 bus operations occur within walking distance of The Interchange and the recent extension of the Cedar Lake Bike Trail will add access for 2,000 plus bike riders per day. The Interchange will also accommodate future intercity passenger rail service, including the Northern Lights Express from Duluth and high-speed rail from Chicago via St. Paul. Given these planned transit improvements, The Interchange is poised for expansion.

The Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA) is leading efforts to advance development of The Interchange, provide facilities and services to support existing transit users and prepare for future growth. The Interchange has brought together multiple partners, including representatives from the community, neighborhood groups, the Minnesota Ballpark Authority, businesses, and local, state and federal agencies.

Collaboration among the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, the Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Department of Transportation will be particularly important given the numerous elements that will require multi-jurisdictional expertise and participation through planning and implementation, such as facility siting and footprint; identifying and phasing public infrastructure investments; evaluating environmental and traffic impacts; and enhancing the public realm.

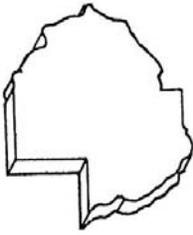
To that end, the City is in receipt of an invitation from the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority inviting the City to be a project partner and a formal cooperating agency on the project. Neither the invitation nor the acceptance is a requirement of the federal processes for which this project is engaged. Rather, acceptance of this invitation formalizes our partnership with the Project Office and sends a message of local commitment and support for the project.

The City has been actively supporting and participating on this project with both staff and elected officials. It is the recommendation of staff that this invitation be accepted with the following stipulations:

- That City staff be included in developing, reviewing and participating in any Requests for Qualifications and Requests for Proposals that are issued for the project along with the ongoing public engagement effort.
- The City expects that the public will be engaged in finalizing the design elements that are not “fixed technical required elements” – i.e. the aesthetic design/landscape of the public space.

Attachments.: Invitation from HCRRA

Cc: Council Member Colvin Roy  
Council Member Schiff  
Council Member Samuels



## HENNEPIN COUNTY REGIONAL RAILROAD AUTHORITY

417 North Fifth Street, Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN 55401-1362 (612) 348-9260  
FAX: (612) 348-9710

June 8, 2011

Mayor R. T. Rybak,  
Council President Barb Johnson  
City of Minneapolis  
City Hall Room 331, 307  
350 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415

Re: The Interchange Transportation Project  
Invitation to Become a Project Partner - Cooperating Agency

Dear Mayor Rybak & Council President Barb Johnson,

For the purpose of supporting the progress on the project and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA), in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Interchange project in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The purpose of the project is to identify and implement transportation improvements in downtown Minneapolis in the area where numerous transit and transportation facilities interconnect. Refer to the attached project area map illustrating the specific area.

Because your agency has jurisdiction and interest in the infrastructure in the vicinity of The Interchange project, we are inviting your agency to be a project partner and a formal cooperating agency. We appreciate your support to date on this project, and would like to formalize our partnership and cooperation in planning, designing, and constructing this project.

Pursuant to Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (23 USC §139), cooperating agencies are responsible to identify, as early as practicable, any issue of concern regarding the potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts of a project that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting a permit or other approval that is needed for a project. We appreciate how your agency has supported proactive engagement and review of the potential project impacts and the following items:

- 1) Providing meaningful input into the purpose and need, the range of concepts considered, and the refinement of the concepts based your agency's input and community engagement.
- 2) Participating in coordination meetings, including participation on the interchange working group and on site field reviews.
- 3) Providing timely review and comment on the EA to reflect your agency's views on the adequacy of the document, concepts considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Peter McLaughlin  
Chair

Mike Opat

Mark Stenglein

Gail Dorfman

Randy Johnson

Jan Callison

Jeff Johnson

To either accept or decline this invitation to be a project cooperating agency partner, please respond as indicated below, scan and return via email to Ed Hunter by June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our agencies' respective roles and responsibilities, please contact Ed at 612-543-7273, or at [ed.hunter@theinterchange.net](mailto:ed.hunter@theinterchange.net).

Thank you for your agency's continued cooperation and interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Peter McLaughlin, Chair  
Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority



Ed Hunter, Project Manager  
Interchange Project Office

Invitation Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date

Invitation Declined: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Date

Enclosure: Map of Project Limits

# Interchange Project Boundaries

