



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
ci.northfield.mn.us

Legislation Text

M2014-207

File #: 14-258, **Version:** 1

City Council Meeting Date: December 9, 2014

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Councilor Suzie Nakasian

Subject:

Inter-City Passenger Rail Initiative

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council will consider a letter of support endorsing inter-city passenger rail between Northfield and the Minneapolis Metropolitan Area.

Summary Report:

A grass roots effort is forming to restore inter-city passenger rail service between Minneapolis to Albert Lea. In order to do so, MNDOT must amend their Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan. This plan currently identifies the proposed line as Tier Two. The intent with forming this active coalition of communities along the rail corridor is to elevate the project status to Tier One. If successful, MNDOT will then proceed with a preliminary study.

To date, two regional meetings have been held in Northfield on this topic. This matter is officially endorsed by Representative David Bly. These sessions have been well attended from metro and communities throughout southern Minnesota. The most recent session held on December 3rd presented the attached letter asking cities to endorse.

Staff notes that this project ties in with other related local initiatives including the proposed Save the Northfield Depot Project and Transit Hub concept previously discussed by the City Council which will be brought back for discussion in January 2015.

Finally, Councilmember Suzie Nakasian has been very active in this effort and will provide greater background to the issue, proposed role for the Northfield City Council and immediate steps moving forward.

Alternative Options:

None

Financial Impacts:

At this point there is no financial consideration.

Tentative Timelines:

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This matter is time sensitive as the Comprehensive State Rail Plan is updated every 10 years with the current round of public comments coming to a close January 2015.



December 9, 2014

Dave Christianson
MnDOT Passenger Rail (Mail Stop 480)
395 John Ireland Boulevard
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Mr. Christianson,

Representatives of the Northfield City Council have met with the leaders of other communities in our region to explore a common interest in pursuing restored inter-city regional passenger rail service from south central Minnesota to the Twin Cities on existing rail lines through Northfield.

The Northfield City Council supports restored intercity regional passenger rail service between our south central Minnesota communities and the Metropolitan area, as well as the potential inter-state rail connections that our particular rail line would open for Minnesotans by virtue of the intersection of our line with 3 of Amtrak's most heavily trafficked inter-state lines, immediately to the south of us (Kansas City and Des Moines). We feel strongly that this project presents sufficient merit as to warrant serious study for possible development in the next five years.

The 2009 Minnesota Comprehensive Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan identifies the Northfield – Metropolitan corridor for Tier II development. Elevation of rail service on one of the existing rail lines connecting Northfield to the Twin Cities to Tier One status for purposes of an evaluative preliminary study is more than justified by the forecasted levels of usage, the apparent technical and financial feasibility of this project in comparison to other proposed passenger rail projects, and the enthusiastic support of the undersigned affected communities.

We strongly encourage MnDOT to elevate restored regional inter-city passenger rail service from south central Minnesota on existing rail lines through Northfield to Tier One status in the State's revised Rail Plan, and urge MnDOT to commence an evaluative study of that routing as part of your statewide rail planning.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dana Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Dana Graham
Mayor of Northfield



MINNESOTA FREIGHT RAILROAD MAP

Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations

July 2014



