

March 27, 2012

Mr. Willis E. Branning  
Chair and Commissioner  
Dakota County Regional Rail Authority  
1590 Highway 55  
Hastings, MN 55033-2343

RE: Support for Modified Cedar Avenue BRT Station Stop Scope of Work

Dear Mr. Branning:

On behalf of the City of Apple Valley, I wanted to thank the Regional Rail Authority for its vision and partnership in working with the City of Apple Valley to make the Cedar Corridor BRT Red Line a possibility.

Station Stop planning work for facilities near 140<sup>th</sup> and 147<sup>th</sup> Streets have continued to evolve in recent weeks and the plans you will receive on March 27 recognize City involvement and input. The most dramatic change is the emphasis on growing the 147<sup>th</sup> Street Station Stop facility.

The Apple Valley Economic Development Authority (EDA) met on March 22 to review and comment on Station Stop plans to that date. To summarize:

- We have a shared mission with the Regional Rail Authority to pursue the type of BRT facility improvements that will convince drivers to become BRT riders.
- As expert Alan Hoffman would say, BRT facilities in the United States may fall short and we should be “exceeding expectations” to grow ridership.
- Ridership is one component but not the sole indicator for facility design. Apple Valley’s high energy economic strategy is attracting an intensity of business interest much sooner than anticipated to exceed expectations in ridership.
- There is local and business support, based on development opportunities underway, to install a skyway at 147<sup>th</sup> Street sooner rather than later. An estimated 300 to 500 jobs could be realized near the 147<sup>th</sup> Street Station in less than a year. These are specific jobs that serve transit oriented young and old including veterans.
- A 2011 study by the American Institute of Architects, and a planned study in the summer of 2012, will evaluate future land use and development intensity. There is a basis to amend Comprehensive Plan related employment and residential projections that grow ridership. Therefore, ridership projections based on the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and 2010 Implementation Plan Update may underestimate ridership.
- The EDA supports good Station Stop design that is safe, well lighted, weather protected and offering traffic protected crossing of Cedar Avenue. Enclosed space as being

presented to the Regional Rail Authority is designed to be appealing to suburban riders that have other transportation choices.

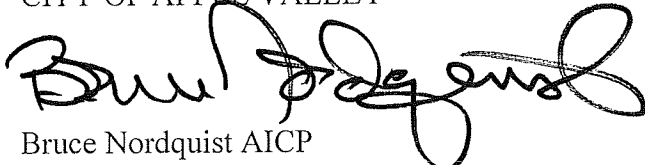
- As Chamber President Ed Kearney has recently said: “if you’re going to build a Station Stop, make it a good one”.
- Express bus facilities all over the Metropolitan area have excelled at providing appealing facilities for that group of riders. LRT riders also have a certain type of facility need. BRT facilities should also exceed expectations. The City maintains that Metropolitan Council Transitway Guidelines in 2012 fall short in BRT facility design. We know, as we’ve participated with the Regional Rail Authority in planning these facilities since 2008 in Apple Valley.
- To comply with state law and local option fire safety requirements, the Station Stop buildings must be sprinkled and have janitor closets with water and sewer service.

Apple Valley wants facilities that demonstrate bus service permanence, something that triggers and supports development investment nearby, and provides weather and high volume traffic protected environments on a corridor easily exceeding 50,000 ADT.

The Mayor Mary Hamann-Roland and City Administrator Tom Lawell requested I deliver this message on their behalf. You are encouraged to continue your support of a Cedar Corridor BRT system that exceeds expectations.

Thank you,

CITY OF APPLE VALLEY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Nordquist", written in a cursive style.

Bruce Nordquist AICP  
Community Development Director