

5.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The ROD for the Northstar Corridor Rail project documents the public involvement activities that took place during the EIS process (see Appendix A-1). The summary of these activities, in compliance with the NEPA process, are herein incorporated by reference. An overall summary of Northstar Corridor project public involvement activities is summarized below.

The public information tools used throughout the project development process include the following:

Project Updates

The *Northstar Update* is published on a regular basis and sent to over 10,000 households that have requested a copy. The mail list includes residents, businesses, and elected officials inside and outside the corridor. It highlights key events and activities and helps to keep people informed about the Northstar Corridor Rail project and the actions taken by the NCDA. It also provides a source for representatives to use as a briefing to take to their local jurisdictions.

Corridor wide Mailings

The Northstar corridor has over 300,000 residents who receive the corridorwide mailings. These mailings have updated information about the Northstar Corridor Rail project, including cost, number of stations, and focus areas relevant to a specific time period.

Fact Sheets/Information Kits

Fact sheets and information kits provide basic information about the Northstar Corridor Rail project, including: route, station, ridership, timeline, funding, rail cars, and contact information. They are routinely updated and handed out at meetings, open houses, presentations, and workshops.

Web Site

The Northstar Corridor Rail project web site was established in 1998, and has been an efficient and effective way to communicate information about the project. The web site posts information about the corridor, a route map, answers to frequently asked questions, a selection of public comments about the Northstar Corridor Rail project, and updates on project news and events. There is an e-mail address on the site that allows users to contact a staff person directly for responses to their questions. The web site address is www.Mn-GetOnBoard.com.

Presentations

Hundreds of presentations geared toward specific audiences using PowerPoint have been given. These presentations have assisted in 20 different Chambers of Commerce passing resolutions regarding the project.

Information Booths

The NCDA co-hosted an information booth with the Hiawatha LRT project at the state fair in 2002. Since 2001, the NCDA has hosted information booths at fairs in counties located in and adjacent to the Northstar Corridor. The NCDA also has hosted information booths at many conferences and public gatherings since 2001.

Community Action Groups

Private citizens have formed five volunteer advocacy groups. These groups write letters to the editor, speak at community events, attend special events, and act as media spokespeople.

Surveys

The NCDA has conducted four surveys of Northstar Corridor residents. The most recent statewide survey was conducted in February 2004. The purpose of the survey was to gauge opinions on the state’s transportation system, options for addressing transportation challenges, and monitoring support for Northstar Corridor Rail project. The corridor surveys also monitored support, evaluated the effectiveness of the NCDA’s public information program and gathered information for system planning purposes. The results of the survey show strong support for the Northstar Corridor Rail project.

Agency Coordination

Representatives of the Northstar Project Office (NPO) has routinely met with counties, cities, and townships in the MOS corridor (downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake) regarding station design specifics. These meetings cover issues that are unique to the station site; including access, land use, and public safety. Mn/DOT and its partners have coordinated with the City of Big Lake regarding the new station location and the maintenance facility. Additionally, they have also worked with the City of Elk River about moving the originally proposed maintenance facility out of Elk River. Both Big Lake and Elk River are supportive of the proposed maintenance facility in Big Lake. As noted in Section 6.0 (4(f) Evaluation), representatives of the NPO have met with the City of Fridley and Anoka Parks regarding avoiding and /or minimizing impacts to the Rice Creek Regional Trail/Mississippi River Regional Trail and the Springbrook Nature Center.

In compliance with the design review called for in the Northstar Corridor Programmatic Agreement, representatives of the NPO have met with the Minnesota SHPO and the Minneapolis HPC regarding design considerations associated with the LRT alignment on 5th Street, the LRT station and the Downtown Minneapolis Intermodal station.

Permits and approvals for the project are listed in Table 5.1. To facilitate identification of anticipated permit action, the known permits that would be required are italicized below.

Table 5.1 — Agency Approvals and Permits

Government Agency	Type of Review, Approval, or Permit
Federal	
Federal Transit Administration	Revised Record of Decision Section 4(f)
Department of Interior	Section 4(f)
<i>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</i>	<i>Section 404 Permit</i>
State	
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	<i>Work in Protected Waters Permit</i>
	Design Approval of Stormwater Pond Easement
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	401 Water Quality Certification
	<i>NPDES Permit</i>
	Response Action Plan (to be determined)
State Historic Preservation Office	Design Review Defined in Section 106 Programmatic Agreement
Minnesota Department of Transportation	State Environmental Determination on the Adequacy of the FEIS
	Design Review Defined in Section 106 Programmatic Agreement
	Wetland Conservation Act LGU Authority
Minnesota Department of Health	Abandonment/Capping of Existing Wells

Continued



Government Agency	Type of Review, Approval, or Permit
Local	
Cities in Corridor	<i>Land alteration permits for grading and site activities</i>
	<i>Utility Permits</i>
	Design Review Defined in Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (City of Minneapolis HPC)
	Erosion Control Plan
	Station Area Site Plan Review
	Plat Approval for Station Parcels/Maintenance Facility
	Easement/ROW Vacation Approval Utility Plan Reviews

EA Public Review and Comment Period/Public Informational Meetings

The Northstar Corridor Rail Project EA/Draft 4(f) Evaluation will be available for public review and comment on January 2, 2006. The comment period for the EA will run from January 2 to February 16, 2006. During the 45-day review and comment period, Mn/DOT and its partnering agencies will host open house/public hearings as presented below:

January 25, 2006

5:30 PM Open House/7:00 PM Presentation/Comments
Coon Rapids Civic Center, Room B
1155 Robinson Drive
Coon Rapids

January 26, 2006

5:00 PM Open House/6:30 PM Presentation/Comments
Heywood Facility
560 Sixth Avenue North
Minneapolis

January 30, 2006

6:00 PM Open House/7:30 PM Presentation/Comments
Big Lake High School Cafeteria
501 Minnesota Avenue
Big Lake