

Minnesota Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

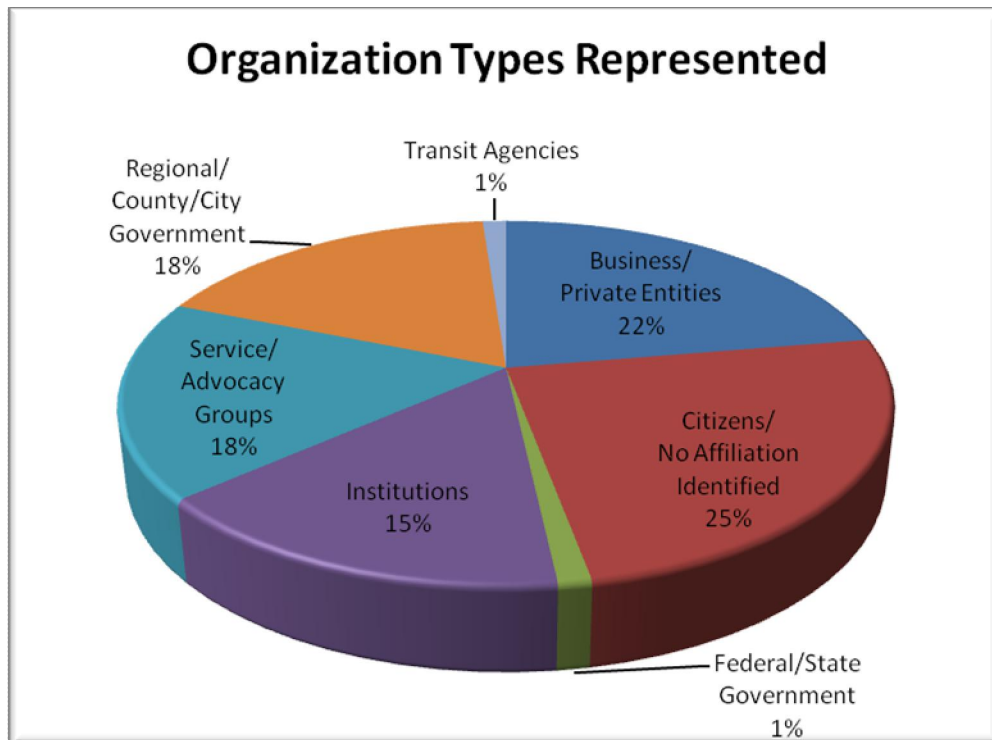
OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY – ROCHESTER

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Rochester Community/Technical College – Heintz Center

5:00PM – 7:00 PM

TOTAL NUMBER SIGNED IN: 85



WRITTEN COMMENTS SUBMITTED: 3

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS: *(as summarized by staff)*

- What is the connection between political capitals and railroads?
- Rail would be beneficial to the Rochester Airport.
- Is there funding available for rail between Rochester and Twin Cities, or does it have to be part of the Chicago to Twin Cities line?
- Don't assume rail will follow population growth; "build it and they will come."
- Rochester is an economic growth center; short-term costs should be balanced with long-term benefits.
- Upgrading existing rail lines will be faster and cheaper – make sure benefit/cost analysis looks at opportunity costs of upgrading existing rail vs. rail on virgin land (including the opportunity to open the line earlier).
- Recognize that we have great "innovation centers" in the state – Mayo Clinic, University of Minnesota – is enabling innovation a part of building a transportation system?
- Look at bus commuting patterns when determining potential train ridership.

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- The 2003 rail plan envisioned a rail line down Highway 52.
- Interested in quality of rail travel - what kind of amenities will be considered in the various rail lines being studied?
- Are there any focus groups planned for citizens, or just experts and consultants?
- If high speed rail is implemented between Rochester and Twin Cities, it could run all hours of the day and night. Why do we need to keep studying it? If you put it in, it will get used.
- Concerns about role of Advisory Committees and representation of Rochester issues.
- Rochester is a growing metropolitan area that deserves passenger rail service to the Twin Cities.
- Service must assure health and safety of Mayo Clinic guests and patients.
- Rochester is an economic hub – both freight and passenger rail systems must be improved.

MAIN THEMES:

- Passenger service between Rochester and Twin Cities is viable and necessary to serve the growing Rochester area and patients/visitors to Mayo Clinic.
- Both freight and passenger improvements must be considered.