Northstar Commuter Rail
A Story of Partnerships, Public Involvement and Persistence
2005 Rail~Volution Conference
Minnesota Trivia

- 90,000 miles of shoreline - more than California, Florida, and Hawaii combined.
- Minneapolis - more golfers than any other city in the country.
- One recreational boat per every six people, more than any other state.
- Minnesota inventions: masking tape, Wheaties, Bisquick, HMOs, bundt pan, and Post-It Notes.
- The Mall of America is the size of 78 football fields – 9.5 million square feet and has received over 40 million visitors.
Rail History

- In 1931, Twin Cities Rapid Transit had the best intercity streetcar system in the nation with 530 miles of track and 1021 streetcars. It was the largest employer in the area.
- The last streetcar ran in Minneapolis in 1954 (street cars still run elsewhere in U.S. and Mexico).
- Demise of streetcar system was reportedly linked to the rise of the automobile and oil industry.
- Minnesota opened its first light rail line in 2004 – ridership is more than double projections.
- Northstar will be Minnesota’s first commuter rail line – the second leg of a regional rail system.
Regional Growth

• By the year 2030, nearly 1 million people will be added to the Twin Cities region – the equivalent of two Denvers.

• By 2030, there will be 600,000 more jobs in the Twin Cities region.

• The Northstar Corridor is one of fastest growing areas in nation.
### Phase 1 Preliminary Capital Cost Estimate

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commuter Rail</td>
<td>$116.3</td>
<td>$77.5</td>
<td>$38.8</td>
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<td>Hiawatha Connection</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>$44.2</td>
<td>$265</td>
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Cost in million of dollars, Fiscal Year 2008, based on 4-car trains.

Operational Cost (FY 2008): $11 million
Partnerships + Public Involvement + Persistence = Success
Partnerships
Northstar Corridor Development Authority

• Established by joint powers agreement in 1997.
• Members include 30 units of government (counties, regional railroad authorities, cities and townships).
• Created strong coalition of advocates for Northstar Commuter Rail.
• The NCDA oversees project planning, engineering, public involvement, and BNSF negotiations necessary to advance in the Federal New Starts funding program.
Partnerships Forged in 2005

- Northstar Project Office comprised of staff from Northstar Corridor Development Authority, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and Metropolitan Council.
- New Starts request to enter final design submitted jointly by three agencies in July 2005.
Transit Oriented Development Partnerships

• NCDA provided early guidance and assistance:
  – Published Station Neighborhood Development Principles and Guidelines
  – Hosted TOD workshops
  – Contracted with consultants to assist communities

• $4 billion in TOD springing up in Corridor
• Led by public – private partnerships
• Developers have needed little incentive to engage
Elk River Station

• City of Elk River adopted a resolution committing to transit oriented development.

• Began process of incorporating TOD principles into the comprehensive planning and zoning ordinances.

• City approved TOD project (submitted by team of developers) immediately northeast of station site.

• Remaining area north and west of station is open to TOD planning.
Elk River Station Development

- Elk River Station Development includes:
  - commercial, retail and rental office space
  - 475 residential units

- Transit supportive parking policies
  - 2 spaces per dwelling unit rather than 2.5

- Pleasant and safe pedestrian environment
  - 10 park areas
  - Sidewalks connect commercial, residential, park and transit areas
Public Involvement Since 1997

- Corridor wide mailings to 350,000+ residents
- Project update mailings to 12,000+ supporters
- Hundreds of presentations to businesses and community groups
- Fact sheets and brochures
- Surveys
- www.mn-GetOnBoard.com
Commuter Rail Demonstrations
Events, Open Houses and Neighborhood Meetings
Other Non-Traditional Methods

• Statewide Media Tour
• Business Action Kit
  – Led to letters of support from Medtronic, United Defense and other employers in Corridor
• Citizen Action Groups
  – Conducted rallies at Capital; NCDA not involved
Public Involvement Tips

- Make sure your vision is concrete.
- Find a champion – for us it was NCDA.
- Identify business and citizen advocates early – agency shouldn’t do all the talking.
- Invest in public involvement!
- Grassroots effort is most successful.
- Create your own reality.
NORTHSTAR COMMUTER RAIL

Congratulations HIWATHA

meet you in 2008
Persistence
Persistence

- NCDA’s 30 governmental bodies have stuck together through monthly meetings for 8 years.
  - Early years focused on establishing Northstar as second leg of regional rail system.
  - Latter years focused on securing state and federal funds.
- FTA cost effectiveness index forced NCDA into phased approach but northern communities support stills leads the way.
Persistence

- Congress has authorized federal funding for Northstar every year since 1998 due to bipartisan congressional support.
- Current governor is a convert.
- Northstar became issue in local elections; Northstar turned the corner when four legislators lost their seats.
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Success!

April 11, 2005
Thank you!