

**TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council**

**FROM: City Administrator Ron Johnson**

**SUBJECT: Approve Zip Rail Technical Advisory Committee Membership and Appoint Representative**

**DATE: February 27, 2015**

**BACKGROUND**

At its 2/17/15 meeting, Council adopted a resolution in opposition to the Zip Rail Line and any other new railroad line construction in or near the city of Cannon Falls. Council also discussed its interest in having Administrator Johnson be a member of the Zip Rail Technical Advisory Committee.

Please note that project manager, Chuck Michael, stated that Zip Rail folks would be pleased to meet with the city of Cannon Falls to address specific issues, concerns or opportunities as they may arise.

**REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION**

Approve the city of Cannon Falls' membership on the Zip Rail Technical Advisory Committee and appoint City Administrator Ron Johnson as the city's primary representative to the committee.

Attachment(s): Zip Rail TAC info



***Invitation to Participate:***  
**Technical Advisory Committee**

The purpose of this letter is to invite your City to participate in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) established by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Olmsted County Regional Railroad Authority (OCRRA) for the:

**Rochester-Twin Cities Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (Zip Rail)**

The initial evaluation of potential corridors between Rochester and the Twin Cities identified about 1,200 possible combinations of routes. The Alternatives Analysis has now narrowed this initial field down to 8 end-to-end alternative corridors – 4 corridors north of Coates and 2 corridors south of Coates in addition to a No Build Alternative that will proceed through the next planning step. Your community has been identified as within or in proximity to one or more of these alternative corridors.

A brief overview of the project includes the following key features:

- The purpose of the project is to provide an alternative method of safe transportation between the Twin Cities and Rochester for the thousands of daily travelers and visitors. The number of daily travelers is expected to increase dramatically over the next 20 years due to growth in both the Twin Cities and Rochester areas.
- The project will maximize to the greatest extent practicable the use of existing highway and railway right-of-way.
- The project will minimize to the greatest extent practicable the requirement for additional right-of-way.
- A funding plan for the project will be developed as part of the Service Development Plan (SDP) that is being prepared concurrent with the Tier 1 EIS. The funding plan anticipates significant private sector participation.

On January 20, 2015 MnDOT published the Final Scoping Decision document describing these alternative corridors. A map of the alternative corridors is attached for your convenience, and the Final Scoping Decision document can be found at [http://www.goziprail.org/info\\_center/](http://www.goziprail.org/info_center/). Preliminary end points include downtown Rochester, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and/or Union Depot in St. Paul. An intermediate station is also under consideration in Dakota County.

With completion of the Final Scoping Decision document, the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will now begin. We invite you to participate in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) during the preparation of the Tier 1 EIS. The TAC will provide comment on the various tasks including the Tier 1 EIS, Ridership/Revenue Studies, Operational Analysis, and Capital/Operating Cost development. At the conclusion of the Tier 1 EIS a preferred alternative will be identified, with subsequent work subject to continued funding availability.

During the course of the Tier 1 EIS there will be opportunities for elected and senior administrative officials to review the project progress. The TAC members will be responsible for advising and informing their respective elected and senior administrative officials in each jurisdiction of project progress on a regular basis.

The TAC will meet approximately every other month for the duration of the next phase of the project, estimated to be completed in late 2015. Meeting locations will vary depending on availability of meeting space along the corridors.

Please advise of your interest in participating in the TAC. The next meeting will be held in late March/early April at a location to be determined.

Should you desire any additional information, please reply to this email or contact one of the following:

Dan Krom, MnDOT Passenger Rail Office (651-366-3193)  
Praveena Pidaparathi, MnDOT Project Manager (651-366-3199)  
Chuck Michael, Project Manager (612-581-3003)

Thank you in advance for your interest in the project. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Chuck Michael

**Charles R. Michael, PE**  
Project Manager – Zip Rail

Direct: 612.581.3003