

MBA APPROVES \$1.5 MILLION FOR INTERCHANGE PROJECT

At its August 20, 2010 Board meeting, the Minnesota Ballpark Authority (MBA) authorized the designation of up to \$1.5 million to assist in constructing public plaza and public realm improvements associated with Hennepin County's Interchange Project.

Phase 1 of the Interchange Project will replace Hennepin County's existing Environmental Services Building with an LRT platform and public plaza space, connecting directly to the ballpark's promenade near the Vertical Circulation Building and Gate #6 at Target Field.

MBA Executive Director Dan Kenney says the Minnesota Twins and Metro Transit have done outstanding work managing post-Twins game crowds who are using transit options (approximately 7,000 per game), but it can be a challenging pedestrian environment on both 5th Street and the ballpark's promenade. Kenney says the need for additional public queuing space will be even greater when the Central Corridor LRT reaches the ballpark in 2014.

"The Interchange Project represents a unique opportunity to improve transit operations, to enhance the pedestrian environment for residents approaching both downtown and the ballpark, and to stimulate future private investment and development in the vicinity of Target Field," said Kenney who added the funding will come from the remainder of the Ballpark Project's Infrastructure account, and if necessary, the Authority's interest earnings on construction bond proceeds.

Under the resolution, the MBA will convene a group consisting of City, County, and other public agency representatives, along with representatives of the Minnesota Twins, and other interested parties to identify areas of common interest for public realm improvements and potential development opportunities.

Over the past two years, the MBA has partnered with a number of organizations and public entities to deliver public realm improvements around Target Field in advance of Opening Day. The Minnesota Twins and Target Corporation provided significant resources to enhance the base plaza design and that infusion of new money enabled the Ballpark Authority to commit to extending the plaza to 1st Avenue North.

In addition, the Minnesota Department of Transportation funded the elevated walkway between Ramp A and the ballpark. The MBA also worked with Hennepin County to design and construct the pedestrian and bike improvements on Twins Way to connect the Cedar Lake Trail to the ballpark and transit options on the 5th Street side of the facility, and to design and construct the pedestrian improvements along 7th Street next to the HERC plant.

Interchange Project

