

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: May 11, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 20, 2015

Subject: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension): Authorize Public Hearings for Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS)
District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: 23 C.F.R. Part 771, Minnesota Rule 4410.3000, and Council policy 2-1b: Public hearing procedures

Staff Prepared/Presented: Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510
Mark W. Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager, 612-373-3810
Robin Caufman, Asst. Director Admin/Comm/Outreach, 651-602-1457
Nani Jacobson, Asst. Director Environmental/Agmts, 612-373-3808

Division/Department: Metro Transit / Southwest LRT Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize scheduling and conducting public hearings for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). Public hearings are scheduled for the following dates and times:

- June 16, 6:00 p.m. Hopkins Center for the Arts, Hopkins
An open house will precede the hearing from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- June 17, 6:00 p.m. Eden Prairie City Center, 8080 Mitchell Road, Eden Prairie
An open house will precede the hearing from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- June 18, 6:00 p.m. Dunwoody College of Technology 818 Dunwoody Blvd., Minneapolis
An open house will precede the hearing from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Background

The Southwest Transitway Draft EIS was published on October 12, 2012, with the public comment period concluding on December 31, 2012.

On July 22, 2013, the FTA, the federal lead agency, and the Metropolitan Council, the local lead agency, published the Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Draft EIS for the SWLRT project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

The purpose of the SDEIS is to evaluate design adjustments developed since publication of the DEIS that may result in new significant impacts in the following three areas: portions of Eden Prairie, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis and the proposed location of the Operations and Maintenance Facility in Hopkins. The design adjustments included in the SDEIS are based on the project scope and budget adopted by the Council in April and July 2014.

The SWLRT Project Office and FTA are responsible for preparing the SDEIS, in cooperation with the US Army Corps of Engineers. The agencies are planning to publish the document in the *Federal Register* and *EQB Monitor* in late May 2015 to be followed by a 45-day public comment period including three public hearings. The

public comment period must remain open for a minimum of 10 calendar days following the hearings.

Once the SDEIS is published, staff will present an informational overview of the document at an upcoming Transportation Committee meeting.

Rationale

Holding a minimum of one public hearing is a requirement of state and federal environmental regulations. Holding three public hearings is desirable to thoroughly gather public input and provide reasonable opportunities for the public to attend.

Funding

The Southwest LRT project includes funding to publish the SDEIS and conduct the required public hearings.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to publishing the SDEIS and holding public hearings.