

Metropolitan Council

Meeting date: April 9, 2014

Subject: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension): Project Scope and Budget

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. 473.3994

Staff Prepared/Presented: Brian Lamb, General Manager 612-349-7510
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Division/Department: Metro Transit/Southwest LRT Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

(1) adopt the attached Resolution to direct the Southwest LRT Project Office (SPO) to proceed with Project Development;

(2) prepare and submit Municipal Consent Plans on the Southwest LRT (SWLRT) Project to Hennepin County and the five host cities, Eden Prairie, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Minnetonka and St. Louis Park with, among other features, 15.8 mile light rail transit line extension of the Green Line, 16 new LRT stations, two shallow LRT tunnels in the Kenilworth Corridor with an LRT bridge over the channel, an Operations and Maintenance Facility (OMF) in Hopkins and a westernmost station at Mitchell Road in Eden Prairie; and

(3) hold a joint public hearing with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority on the plans on May 12, 2014.

Background

In May, 2010, the Metropolitan Council selected the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment and LRT mode as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Southwest Transitway.

In September 2011, the FTA granted approval for the Southwest LRT project to start Preliminary Engineering and required that the project scope include determination of the location of freight rail.

In October 2012, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) published the Southwest LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) based on a 15.8-mile light rail transit line extension of the Green Line, extending from downtown Minneapolis, through St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka to Mitchell Road in Eden Prairie and includes 17 new stations.

In November 2012, HCRRA held three public hearings on the Southwest LRT DEIS. The public comment period ended on December 31, 2012. Nearly 1000 comments were received.

In December 2012, the Council awarded contracts to two engineering consultant teams to design project components to a 30% level.

From January through October 2013, the SPO staff sought input on design features from agency technical staff, Business Advisory Committee members, Community Advisory

Committee members and the Corridor Management Committee. SPO also sought input at 16 public open houses, attended by over 2,200 people, receiving over 1,200 comments.

In November 2013, the SPO commissioned independent studies on freight rail relocation and water resources and initiated an inventory of existing vegetation in the Kenilworth Corridor.

In January and February 2014, SPO sought public feedback on the scopes and draft reports on the independent studies and tree inventory by holding four town hall community meetings, which were attended by over 1,200 people.

On March 21, 2014, the final reports were published.

In Q2 2014, the SPO will be seeking municipal consent from the County and the five host cities.

Rationale

Approval of the Project scope is necessary to advance the project and to obtain municipal consent.

Funding

The cost of the recommended project scope is estimated at \$1.683 billion in year of expenditure dollars. This action does not directly require a funding commitment from the Council or Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) or Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) or state funding partners at this time. Determining a project scope and determining the location of freight rail which meets FTA requirements is necessary to secure 50% federal funding.

Known Support / Opposition

CTIB, HCRRA and the state have all committed their funding shares through the Project Development phase.