

Metropolitan Council

Meeting date: July 9, 2014

Subject: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension): Minneapolis Municipal Consent

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. 473.3994

Staff Prepared/Presented: Pat Born, Regional Administrator, 651-602-1723
Brian Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510
Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager, 651-602-1942

Division/Department: Metro Transit/Southwest LRT Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- (1) approve the attached resolution to direct the Southwest LRT Project Office to proceed with Project Development in the city of Minneapolis;
- (2) approve the Memorandum of Understanding and Exhibit 1 with the city of Minneapolis for the proposed redesign of a portion of the Southwest Light Rail Project in Minneapolis and authorize the Regional Administrator to execute it;
- (3) prepare and submit revised Municipal Consent Plans on the Southwest LRT (SWLRT) Project to Minneapolis and Hennepin County with major features set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding including a single shallow LRT tunnel in the Kenilworth Corridor south of the channel with an at-grade LRT bridge over the channel and five stations in Minneapolis including an at-grade station at 21st Street;
- (4) and hold a joint public hearing with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority on the plans August 13, 2014.

Background

On April 9, 2014, Metropolitan Council approved the Southwest LRT revised base scope and budget and authorized the Regional Administrator to direct Southwest Project Office Staff to distribute the municipal consent plans to Hennepin County and the five cities along the Southwest Corridor.

On April 22, the correct set of municipal consent plans were distributed to the county and all cities.

On May 29, the Council and Hennepin County hosted a joint public hearing on the municipal consent plans.

During May and June, the county and cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, and St. Louis Park all conducted their own public hearings.

During May and June, representatives of the Council and Minneapolis met several times together with retired federal Judge Arthur Boylan who was acting as facilitator.

The outcome of the process is the Memorandum of Understanding with Exhibit 1 addressing the proposed redesign of the Kenilworth Corridor portion of the SWLRT Project in Minneapolis and other adjustments to the physical design components elsewhere in Minneapolis.

Rationale

The proposed Memorandum of Understanding reflects substantial proposed changes to the physical design components included in Minneapolis from those incorporated in the municipal consent designs approved by the Council April 9. Specifically in the Kenilworth Corridor, the north shallow LRT tunnel is eliminated north of the channel. The south shallow LRT tunnel remains as does the at-grade LRT bridge crossing of the channel and the Kenilworth Trail. The 21st Street Station is reinstated as an at-grade station where the April plan did not include any station at 21st Street.

These physical design changes result in an overall cost reduction of \$60 million. Fifty percent of the cost reduction realized from these changes (up to \$30 million) will be available to meet the city's other proposed physical design adjustments. The remaining 50% (\$30 million) will be used to reduce the overall budget of the SWLRT Project.

Funding

The net reduction of \$30 million to the project results in a revised budget of \$1.653 billion. Each of the funding partners would experience their proportional reduction in funding requirements per the current project funding model, Federal Transit Administration 50% (\$15 million), Counties Transit Improvement Board 30% (\$9 million), Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority 10% (\$3 million) and State of Minnesota 10% (\$3 million).

Known Support / Opposition

The designated representatives of the city of Minneapolis including the Mayor of Minneapolis and two members of the city council, support this Memorandum of Understanding and Exhibit 1 and are recommending its approval by the Minneapolis City Council.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Proposed Redesign of a Portion of Southwest Light Rail Project

This Memorandum of Understanding is between the City of Minneapolis (City) and the Metropolitan Council (Council).

After lengthy discussions, the City and the Council have reached an understanding of how certain changes to the Preliminary Design Plan of the Southwest Light Rail Project (Project) within the City of Minneapolis would render the Project more acceptable to the City. In consideration of the mutual agreements set forth herein, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Upon approval by the Council, it will finalize certain design plan changes, as set forth in Exhibit 1 attached hereto. Among the design plan changes is the elimination of the North shallow tunnel and the addition of an at-grade station at 21st Street. These two changes will result in a net savings of approximately \$60 million for the Project.
2. Fifty percent of the net savings realized from the changes in paragraph 1 above (\$30 million) will be available to meet the City's proposed physical design changes. The remaining 50 percent will be used to reduce the overall budget of the project. Improvements requested by the City that fall outside the allotted 50 percent will be considered along with other contingency funding requests as the project progresses.
3. It is understood that the proposed design plan changes are subject to acceptance for funding by the Federal Transit Administration.
4. Upon approval by the Council of this MOU and the revised preliminary design plan reflecting the changes set out herein, the municipal approval process set forth in Minnesota Statutes Section 473.3994 as applied to the City will commence again from the beginning of that process. Since the design plan changes contemplated in this MOU do not involve any other municipality, amendments to the Minneapolis portion of the Project, is not intended to change the approval process or timeline already underway for other municipalities.

Metropolitan Council
Regional Administrator

Date: _____

City of Minneapolis

Date: _____

Exhibit 1

Amendments to the preliminary design of the SWLRT Corridor in Minneapolis

The following changes are each subject to the eligibility of federal transit funding.

1. The tunnel south of the water channel will be built as indicated in the current municipal consent package.
2. The tunnel north of the water channel will be removed and a station will be added at 21st Street. The 21st Street Station will include pedestrian connections to Cedar Lake. Light rail trains will operate at-grade on a bridge over the Kenilworth Channel and at grade north of the channel.
3. The parties agree that the Kenilworth Corridor (Corridor) is located in a park-like setting. In the event that LRT is constructed in the Corridor with co-location of LRT, freight rail and a bicycle and pedestrian trail, the Corridor shall be designed to a park-like level of amenity, not only restoring, but improving pre-existing conditions. Design and restoration shall include but not be limited to native plantings, mature trees and the like. It is understood that the Corridor, along with the bicycle and pedestrian paths located on the Corridor, is a significant part of the City's chain of lakes park system, one of the most prized, highly used recreational attractions in the region and that the parties intend for the Corridor to be landscaped and restored so that it continues to be an asset to the chain of lakes park system. It is agreed that the Corridor shall be restored and constructed consistent with this park-like environment and the proximity to the chain of lakes, to the extent reasonably possible, so as not to impact neighboring parks or water bodies or to impair the existing park-like setting. The Council will select a landscape architect with the City and MPRB serving on the evaluation panel. The City, MPRB and representatives of the affected neighborhoods will participate with the Council in a collaborative design process for the Corridor.
4. Noise mitigation will be added based on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
5. Add freight rail safety improvement recommendations made by the TranSystems Freight Rail Report as follows:
 - a. Freight Rail guardrail from north of West Lake Station to Cedar Lake Parkway
 - b. Freight guardrail from north of Kenilworth Channel crossing to Burnham Road
 - c. Freight guardrail from west 21st Street to 1,000 feet north of West 21st Street
6. Royalston Station

- a. Upgrade to embedded track along Royalston Avenue both north and south of the station.
- b. Upgrade to painted tubular overhead catenary poles in Royalston Station area and at station.
- c. Build enhanced pedestrian connections to the Farmer's Market, from both the north and south, via the frontage road and Holden and Border Avenues.

7. Van White Station

- a. Dunwoody Blvd sidewalk improvements including improvements to the under-bridge area and intersection improvements at Stadium Pkwy/Emerson Ave S.
- b. Build a pedestrian bridge to Bryn Mawr Meadows.

8. Penn Station

- a. Improve and enhance pedestrian connections from the Penn Ave station across I-394 and north to Mount View Ave.
- b. Additional ADA compliance improvements to be made at each intersection along Penn continuing north to Cedar Lake Road.
- c. Build additional sidewalks, as enhanced pedestrian connections, along the south side of Wayzata Blvd from I-394 pedestrian bridge at Thomas Ave east to the access to Penn Ave station.
- d. Light and sign the existing trail segment from Cedar Lake Trail to Kenwood Parkway.

9. West Lake Station

- a. Build enhanced pedestrian connections along West Lake Street between Drew Ave S and Market Plaza and along Excelsior Blvd between Market Plaza and W 32nd St.
- b. Realign Abbott Ave and Chowen Ave to accommodate development on the HCRRA property as shown the Transitional Station Area Action Plan (TSAAP)

and build “Mid-Town Station” ready.

- c. Build enhanced pedestrian connections along Chowen and Abbott Aves and along the newly realigned street segment.
- d. Conduct an areawide traffic study with partner agencies to assess non-motorized needs and opportunities.

10. Other

- a. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities, to be determined, within three miles of LRT stations to provide the level of access for transit dependent populations who cannot use Park and Ride facilities.
 - Improvements shall include:
 - i. Closing a trail gap along Van White Boulevard/Fremont Ave N between Van White Memorial Blvd and 2nd Ave N.
 - ii. Work with City and MPRB staff to redesign the connection of the Cedar Lake Trail and Kenilworth Trail near the Penn Ave station for a more functional connection.
 - iii. Add a “trail actuated signal” or some form of traffic control at the intersection of Cedar Lake Road and the Kenilworth Trail.
 - iv. Connection to “Hidden Beach” from 21st St Station including a wayfinding kiosk and wayfinding to the Beach, Franklin Ave and Lake of the Isles.
 - v. Convert the existing 7th St bikeway to a protected bikeway facility between 2nd Ave N and Plymouth Ave N.
 - vi. Provide a new pedestrian access from The Lakes Citihomes Condos to improved sidewalks along West Lake St.
- b. Lighting and security improvements throughout the corridor in the proximity of station areas.
- c. High quality aesthetic design, including community engagement, of all fence and railings throughout the corridor with agreements for long term maintenance.

July 9, 2014

**Metropolitan Council Resolution to Adopt Revised Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension)
Project Scope and Budget**

WHEREAS:

1. The Governor designated the Metropolitan Council (Council) as the responsible authority for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Project;
2. The Council established the Corridor Management Committee (CMC) to advise the Council in the design and construction of the SWLRT Project;
3. The Council established the Southwest LRT Project Office (SPO) to advance the design and manage construction and overall delivery of the SWLRT Project;
4. The Council engaged with the city of Minneapolis in a series of sessions regarding physical design components within the Kenilworth Corridor portion of the SWLRT Project and other adjustments elsewhere in Minneapolis; and
5. The CMC adopted a resolution on July 9, 2014, that recommends the SWLRT Project scope to include the redesigned physical design components in the city of Minneapolis.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council adopt the revised Southwest LRT Project Scope that includes the reinstatement of the at-grade 21st Street Station and the elimination of the north shallow LRT tunnel located north of the Kenilworth Channel and other adjustments in the city as presented in Exhibit 1;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council adopt a revised project budget of \$1.653 billion consistent with the above reference adopted project scope;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the city of Minneapolis for the proposed redesign of a portion of the SWLRT Project within the city;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to prepare and resubmit SWLRT Project Municipal Consent Plans to the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County for their approval pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 473.3994; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council holds a joint public hearing with Hennepin County and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority to receive public testimony on the reissued Municipal Consent Plans on August 13, 2014 or such other dates as selected by the Regional Administrator, Hennepin County and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority.