

Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 20, 2015

Subject: Approve reconstruction of eastbound I-94 from the East 7th Street Exit to the Mounds Boulevard Entrance in the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County, Review #21381-1

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve a request by MnDOT to reconstruct eastbound I-94 from the East 7th Street Exit to the Mounds Boulevard Entrance in the City of Saint Paul, conditional upon any significant changes in the design of the proposed project being subject to further review and approval by the Metropolitan Council prior to construction.

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Metropolitan Transportation Services Planning Analyst Steve Peterson presented this item. There were no questions from committee members.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Elkins and passed. Hearing no objection, Chair Schreiber said that this item can proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: April 27, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of May 13, 2015

Subject: Approve reconstruction of eastbound I-94 from the East 7th Street Exit to the Mounds Boulevard Entrance in the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County, Review #21381-1

District(s), Member(s): District 13, Richard Kramer

Policy/Legal Reference: Mn. Statute 473.166

Staff Prepared/Presented: Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, 651-602-1754

Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director, Finance and Planning, MTS, 651-602-1508

Connie Kozlak, Manager, Transportation Planning and Programming, MTS, 651-602-1720

Steve Peterson, Planning Analyst, MTS, 651-602-1819

Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve a request by MnDOT to reconstruct eastbound I-94 from the East 7th Street Exit to the Mounds Boulevard Entrance in the City of Saint Paul, conditional upon any significant changes in the design of the proposed project being subject to further review and approval by the Metropolitan Council prior to construction.

Background

Minnesota state law (MS. 473.166) requires that the Council approve any controlled access highway in the metropolitan area before construction or right-of-way acquisition begins. This is to ensure that proposed highway projects are consistent with regional policies and plans.

This project to reconstruct eastbound I-94 from the East 7th Street Exit to the Mounds Boulevard Entrance includes extending an existing auxiliary lane, constructing a new auxiliary lane, constructing two emergency pull-out areas, constructing two noise barriers, reconstructing the outside shoulder, removing bus-only shoulder lanes and repairing/replacing pavement (see attachment).

If approved, construction is proposed to begin in 2016 and will be completed in 2017.

Rationale

The project is identified in the Current Revenue Scenario for the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) and is listed in the Strategic Capacity Enhancements highway investment category for the 2015-2018 timeframe.

Safety and congestion concerns are the primary issues identified in the project area. Crashes and congestion are elevated due to high volumes and closely spaced entrances and exits. The project area has a high crash-severity rate, with a majority of crashes occurring during the PM peak period (2:00 PM – 7:00 PM). In addition, eastbound I-94 is typically congested (speeds less than 45 mph) more than three hours each afternoon. These problems are expected to worsen with the completion of several adjacent projects such as the widening of the ramp from southbound I-35E to eastbound I-94 and the replacement of the Lafayette Bridge (U.S. 52). Traffic volumes will continue to increase based on 2030 traffic forecasts. The proposed project will help alleviate many of the safety and congestion issues identified within the project area.

Removal of the bus-only shoulders is acceptable to Metro Transit as this change will not negatively affect transit operations.

Funding

The estimated project cost is \$3.0M. The project is listed in the TPP's Current Revenue Scenario and will be funded with a combination of federal National Highway System and state funds.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to the project.