

Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

ACTION TRANSMITTAL

No. 2012-07

DATE: February 9, 2012
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: Technical Advisory Committee
SUBJECT: Sunset Date Extension for St Louis Park for SP#2706-226: TH 7 and Louisiana Avenue Interchange

MOTION: That the TAB approve a one year sunset date extension from March 31, 2012 to March 31, 2013 for St Louis Park for SP#2706-226: TH 7 and Louisiana Avenue Interchange.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: This project would replace the at-grade intersection at TH 7 and Louisiana Avenue with a grade separated interchange. The City needs additional time for private utility work coordination and relocation, right of way acquisition and construction plan completion. The work has been delayed partially because MnDOT had to complete a value engineering (VE) study on the project that they require for all large federal projects. The VE study resulted in eight recommendations that affected the design, material and construction options, including a new concept design for the interchange layout. The revisions do not require a formal TIP amendment. Background material is attached.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: Projects awarded federal transportation funds through the regional solicitation process have a sunset date of March 31 of the year following the original program year. The sunset date is the date when the federal funds are no longer available to the project sponsor. The sunset date is a regional policy intended to be an incentive for project sponsors to get their project ready for authorization in a timely manner. Adopted policy allows project sponsors to extend the sunset date due to unforeseen circumstances, provided the sponsor has been working on project development.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	January 19, 2012
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	February 1, 2012
TAB Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Approve	



Experience LIFE in the Park.

January 6, 2012

TAC Funding and Programing Committee Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

Re: Request for Sunset Date Extension - S.P. No. 2706-226 and S.A.P. No. 163-010-038
TH 7 and Louisiana Avenue Interchange Project

Dear Chair:

The City of St. Louis Park respectfully requests that the Funding and Programming Committee consider a one year sunset extension for the above referenced project at its January 19, 2012 meeting.

The enclosed information provides project background, progress to date, a revised schedule and justification for the extension request. The City has made substantial progress on the project which will construct a new grade separated interchange at the intersection of TH 7 and Louisiana Avenue. However, additional time is needed to complete plans, acquire right of way, relocate utilities and successfully construct the project. We request the committee's support for this one year sunset extension on our project.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this project, please contact me at 952-924-2552 or by email at jolson@stlouispark.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Olson".

Jim Olson, P.E.
Engineering Project Manager

Enclosures

C: Mike Rardin, Public Works Director, City of St. Louis Park
Scott Brink, City Engineer, City of St. Louis Park
Colleen VanWagner, Mn/DOT Metro District State Aid

Request for Sunset Date Extension
for
S.P. No. 2706-226 and S.A.P. 163-010-038
Trunk Highway (TH) 7 / Louisiana Avenue Interchange Project
in the City of St. Louis Park, Hennepin County

1. Project Background

A. Project Name:

TH 7 / Louisiana Avenue Interchange Project

B. Location Map:

See Appendix for location map (Exhibit A).

C. Sponsoring Agency

City of St. Louis Park
5005 Minnetonka Blvd
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

D. Other Participating Agencies

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN/DOT)
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

E. Project Description

The proposed project includes the construction of a grade-separated interchange at the Trunk Highway (TH) 7/Louisiana Avenue intersection in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, in order to improve safety and operations for a number of modes of transportation including vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle modes, transit and freight flow. The proposed project consists of a tight diamond interchange configuration with roundabouts along Louisiana Avenue for traffic control at the Lake Street and Walker Street intersections. The project also includes pedestrian and bicycle friendly improvements along with reconfiguration of local roads (West Lake Street, Walker Street) to enhance access, safety, and traffic flow for the Highway 7 corridor and Louisiana Avenue.

F. Funding Category:

STP Urban Guarantee Funding

G. Federal Funds Allocated

\$7.63 Million

H. Local Share and Source

\$2,398,000 in Local funds are committed from the City's HRA Levy proceeds.

I. Fiscal Year Programed:

The project is currently programed for Fiscal Year 2012.

2. Project Progress

A. Project Schedule:

The City began the consultant selection process for the project design work in August, 2008. A consultant contract was approved in December 2008. The City's consultant developed a work plan/schedule which included four phases: scoping and data collection (Phase 1), concept design and alternative analysis (Phase 2), preliminary design and environmental assessment (Phase 3) and final design, right of way acquisition and bidding documents (Phase 4). See Appendix for work plan/schedule developed prior to and during Phase 1 and 2 (Exhibit B).

Phase 1 and Phase 2 work began in December 2008 and included development of 10 concept designs. An extensive public involvement plan was conducted along with several key stakeholder meetings to ensure the necessary involvement of all project stakeholders. The 10 concepts were screened down to two finalists before concluding Phase 2 in February 2010.

Phase 3, preliminary design and environmental assessment (EA), began in March 2010. The two concept finalists were further evaluated for right of way needs and impacts before selecting a preferred concept. The City Council selected a preferred concept to move ahead with in June 2010.

In August 2010, Mn/DOT performed a value engineering (VE) study on the project as required for larger federally funded projects. Results of the study provided 8 recommendations with respect to design, material and construction options to reduce project costs. One of the recommendations was to consider a new concept design for the interchange layout.

The city's consultant took the recommendations from the VE study and developed two new viable design concepts for consideration as a preferred concept. In September 2010, the City Council selected and approved a new preferred which met all the project goals and reduced the right of way taking. Several months of Phase 3 work was delayed due to the additional work in selecting a preferred concept.

The geometric layout for the preferred concept was approved by Mn/DOT in March 2011. The EA work was essentially complete in June 2011, however, final approval of the EA did not occur until November 2011. This concluded Phase 3 work.

Phase 4, final design and plan preparation, began in April 2011 and ran concurrent with the completion of the EA work. Thirty percent plans were completed July 2011. Right of way field/title work began in August 2011. Sixty percent plans are currently underway and are expected ready for review in January/February 2012.

The Appendix also includes: Progress Schedule sheet (Exhibit C) and a revised bar chart schedule for completing project(Exhibit D).

B. Right of Way Acquisition:

See Appendix for Right of Way Needs Map (Exhibit E).

No parcels have been acquired except those already owned by the City.

Pre-acquisition activities have begun including: Field and title work, parcel descriptions and parcel map. Appraisal and acquisition activities remain to be completed.

C. Plans:

See Appendix for Mn/DOT Staff Approved Level 1 Layout (Exhibit F).

30% plans have been submitted to State Aid and routed for preliminary review and comment in July 2011. 60% plans are being developed and will be completed and ready for Agency review by January/February 2012. Final Plans are anticipated to be completed and ready for review by June 2012.

D. and E. Permits and Approvals:

Gov't Unit	Agency	Type of Application/Permit	Status
Federal Agency			
	FHWA	Environmental Assessment Approval	Complete
		EIS Need Decision	Complete
		De Minimus Section 4(f) Determination	Complete
		Section 106 Determination	Complete
	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit -- Letter of Permission	To be Requested
	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act Section 7 Determination	Complete
State Agency			
	Mn/DOT	Environmental Assessment Approval	Complete
		Environmental Assessment Worksheet Approval	Complete
		Study Report	To be Completed
		Geometric Layout Approval	Complete
		Construction Plan Approval	To be Requested
		Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act	To be Requested
	SHPO	Section 106 Consultation	Complete
	Mn DNR	State Endangered Species Review	Complete
		Water Appropriations	To be Requested
	MPCA	NPDES-Construction Storm Water Phase II Permit	To be Requested
		401 Water Quality Certification	To be Requested
	MN Dept of Health	Water Main Permit	To be Requested
	BWSR	Wetland Conservation Act	To be Requested
	Met Council	Controlled Access Permit	To be Requested

Local Agency			
	City of St Louis Park	Municipal Consent	To be Requested
	Minnehaha Creek Watershed District	Storm Water Management and Erosion Control Permit	To be Requested

F. Identified Funds Spent to Date on Project:

The City has expended approximately \$1,392,000 of its funds on preliminary and final design activities to date. It is estimated that a total of \$1.8 million in City funds will be used to complete all engineering activities necessary for preparing final plans and specifications. It is also estimated that \$2.7 million of City funds will be used in right-of-way acquisition.

3. Justification for Extension Request

A. What is unique about this project that requires an extension of the sunset?

The City of St. Louis Park requests an extension to the sunset date based on the need for additional time for private utility coordination and relocation, right of way acquisition and construction plan completion.

As described in the Project Progress section above, the work has been delayed at various points during the project development which has caused the overall project schedule to slip. In addition, City Council is requesting context sensitive design solutions be used with respect to the project aesthetics and landscape design. Council has also requested extra and/or enhanced efforts be used for utility location, relocation and coordination activities to reduce the risks of unforeseen construction work and delays that may result in contractor claims. Direction from the City Council to incorporate this extra work has resulted in additional delays to the final plan completion.

During the final design process, it has been determined that the project construction schedule must follow complex staging plans which include time dependent soil correction work and construction of a highway by-pass (See Appendix for staging plan – Exhibit G). The staging plans include a work stage prior to the interchange construction for critical utilities to be relocated or replaced. This is needed to reduce delays caused by utility relocations during the interchange construction. The staging of the soil correction work and by-pass construction is also critical so they can be constructed before the end of the first construction season to allow the bridge construction to proceed during the winter months. The staging plan must therefore be executed so that the interchange construction begins no later than the month of July. It is very unlikely that this schedule/work could be accomplished in the 2012 construction season, given the needed utility relocations.

B. What are the financial impacts if this project does not meet its sunset date?

If the project does not meet the sunset date and the Federal STP funds are lost, the project would likely not be built. The loss of \$7.63 million in Federal funds would create too large of funding gap for the City to finance. The City would

likely lose other funds it has secured through Mn/DOT. This includes \$594,000 in Cooperative Agreement funds and \$1 million in Access Management funds.

C. How does the project implement regional policies?

The TH 7/Louisiana Interchange will implement several regional policies. The project will improve traffic operations and safety, increase roadway capacity and improve mobility, support and improve multimodal transportation opportunities, provide better access management along the corridor, maintain and preserve existing infrastructure, incorporate sustainable features, and will help foster economic development in the area.

The need for transportation improvements at the TH 7/Louisiana Avenue intersection has been recognized in numerous planning documents, including:

- City of St. Louis Park Comprehensive Plan.
- Metropolitan Council 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP).
- Mn/DOT Metro District Transportation System Plan (TSP) 2008-2030.
- Mn/DOT Metro District Highway Investment Plan (HIP) 2009-2028.
- 2010-2013 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

D. What are the implications if the project does not obtain the requested extension.

If a sunset date extension is not granted there is not sufficient time to deliver a successful project. The City is not able to meet the current sunset date. With no sunset date extension, the City would forfeit the Federal STP funds and likely abandon the project.

E. What actions will the agency take to resolve the problems facing the project in the next 3 to 6 months.

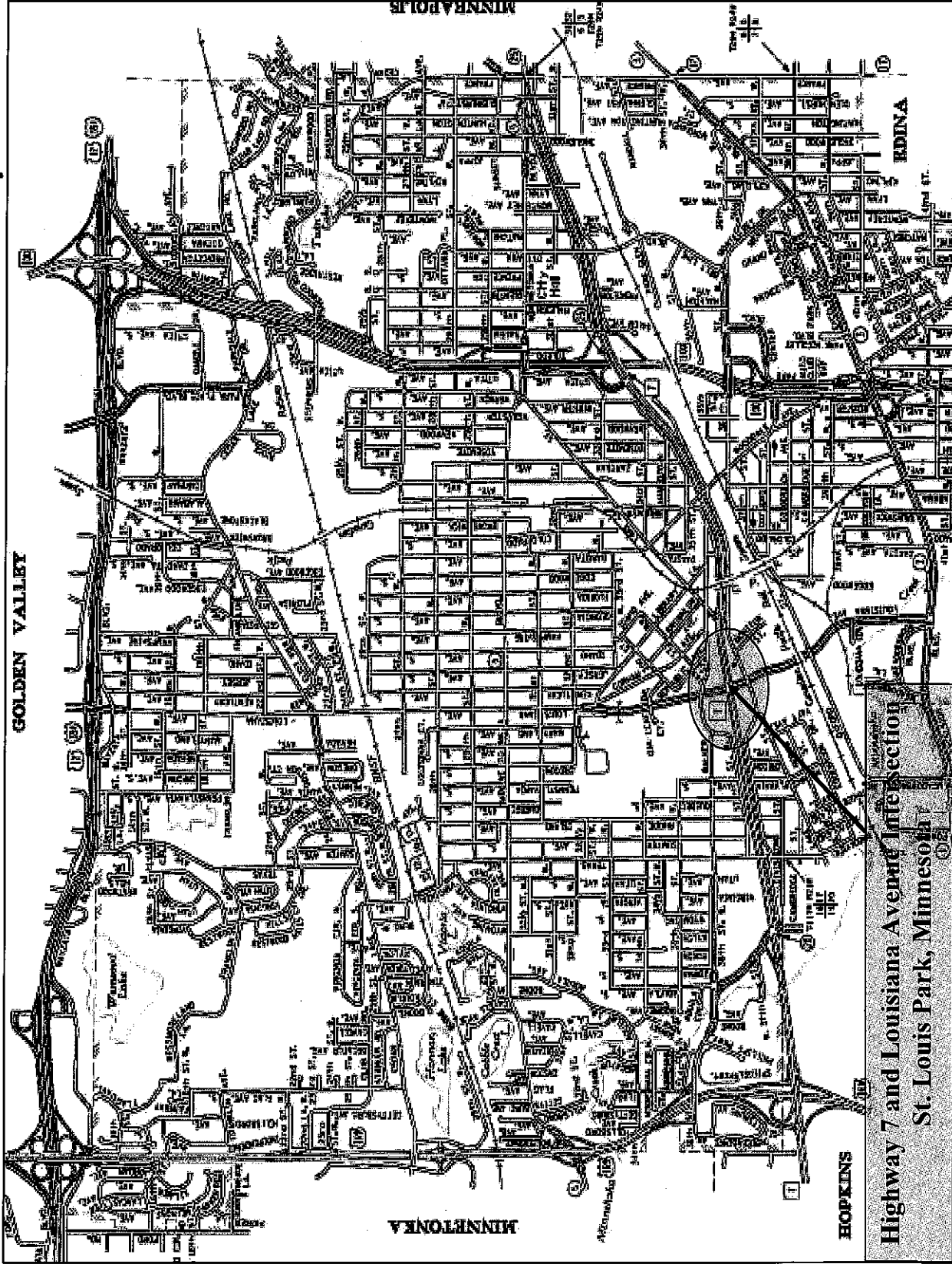
The City and its consultant have developed a revised schedule to meet a one year sunset date extension. The revised schedule provides adequate time to complete final plans, acquire right of way, allow for utility relocations and begin construction in July 2013.

Coordination efforts have begun on private utility relocation activities. Staff has met with most of the private utilities to determine relocation needs. Staging plans have incorporated sufficient time for critical relocation work to occur prior to the interchange construction. Coordination efforts will continue with each of the private utility companies to ensure that the needed relocations are performed in a timely fashion. The City is prepared to execute utility relocation agreements with the private companies where needed to ensure timely performance.

It has been determined that a MCES regional sanitary sewer interceptor line within the project limits will need to be replaced with expanded capacity and redundancy. Plans are being developed for this work, most of which will be constructed in 2012 in advance of the interchange work.

APPENDIX

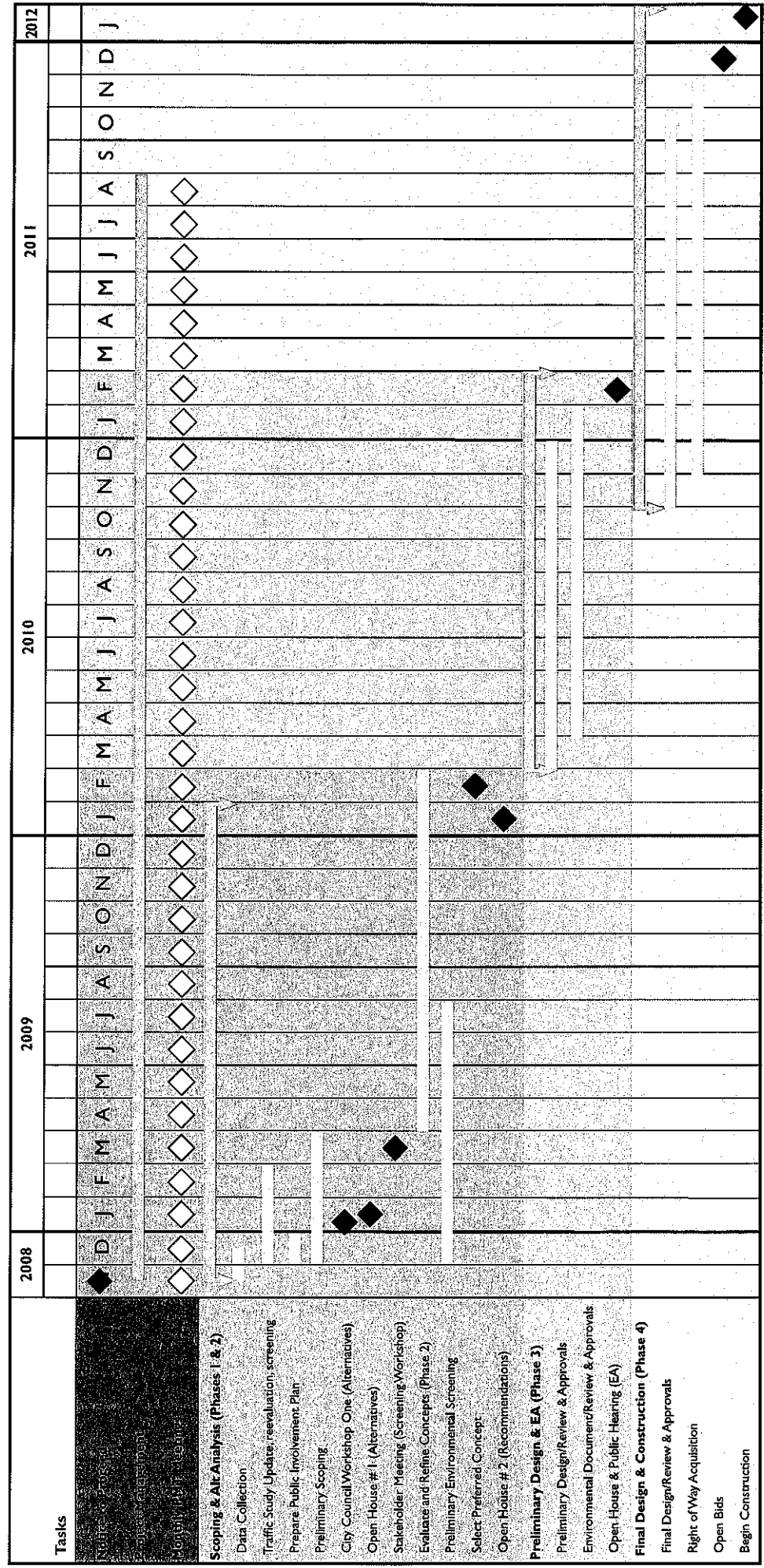
Exhibit A - Project Location



S.P. #163-010-038 and 2708-226
Trunk Highway 7/Louisiana Avenue Interchange Project

TH 7/Louisiana Avenue Interchange Construction Project

Proposed Schedule



Legend
 Phase 1 & 2
 Phase 3
 Phase 4

PROGRESS SCHEDULE FOR SUNSET EXTENSION

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

EA _____ PROJECT MEMORANDUM

Completed/Approved
Date of approval 5/06/11

Not Complete
Anticipated Date of Completion _____

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC HEARING (not necessary for project memorandum)

Completed
Date of approval 6/02/11

Not Complete
Anticipated Date of Completion _____

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (not required for project memorandum)

Completed/FONSI Approved
Date of approval 11/08/11

Not Complete
Anticipated Date of Completion _____

STUDY REPORT (required for Environmental Assessment Only)

Complete/Approved
Date of Approval _____

Not Complete
Anticipated Date of Completion _____

CONSTRUCTION PLANS

Completed (includes signature of District State Aid Engineer)
Date _____
 Not Complete
Anticipated Date of Completion July 2012

RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITION

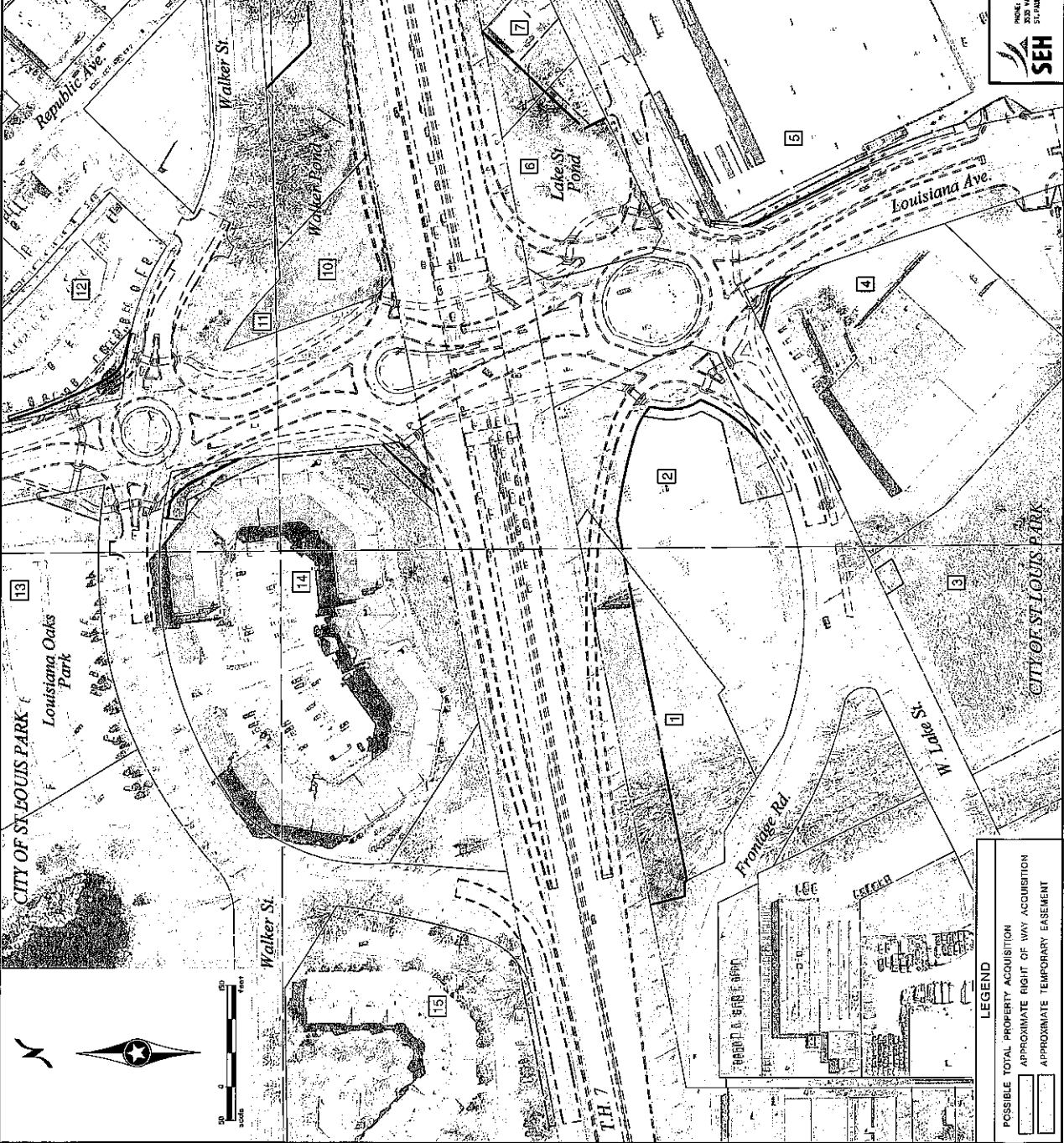
Completed (includes approval of R/W Cert. #1 or #1A)
Date _____
 Not Complete
Anticipated Date of Completion January 2013


LETTING

Anticipated Letting Date June 2013

Exhibit E

PARCEL NO.	PID NO.	PROPERTY OWNER	PW AREA SQ. FT.	TEMPORARY EASEMENT AREA SQ. FT.	OTHER IMPACTS BILLBOARD
1	1711721430073	MAGEGGE OUTDOOR ADV. INC.	33,862	6,042	
2	1711721430074	ST. LOUIS PARK ECON DEV AUTH	32,184	1,213	
3	201172120045	CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK	1,497	2,722	
4	1711721430072	7201 LAKE LLC	1,019	654	
5	1711721430073	STAM'S REAL EST BUSINESS TRUST	6,115	4,942	
6	1711721430078	CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK	3,089		
7	1711721430073	ST. LOUIS PARK ECON DEV AUTH	26,534		
8	1711721430085	ST. LOUIS PARK ECON DEV AUTH	3,829		
9	1711721430084	CLEAR CHANNEL OUTDOOR INC	3,829		
10	1711721430077	CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK	3,829		
11	1711721430084	CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK	3,829		
12	1711721430084	CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK	3,829		
13	1711721430087	CITY OF ST. LOUIS PARK	3,829		
14	1711721430087	MSP SLP APARTMENTS, LLC	3,829		
15	1711721430086	ST. LOUIS PARK HOUSING PARTNERS	3,829		






CITY OF ST. LOUIS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

RIGHT OF WAY NEEDS
T.H. 7 / LOUISIANA AVENUE
INTERCHANGE PROJECT

PRICE: 02/14/2010
DRAWN: 02/14/2010
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



LEGEND

- POSSIBLE TOTAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION
- APPROXIMATE RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISITION
- APPROXIMATE TEMPORARY EASEMENT

Exhibit F

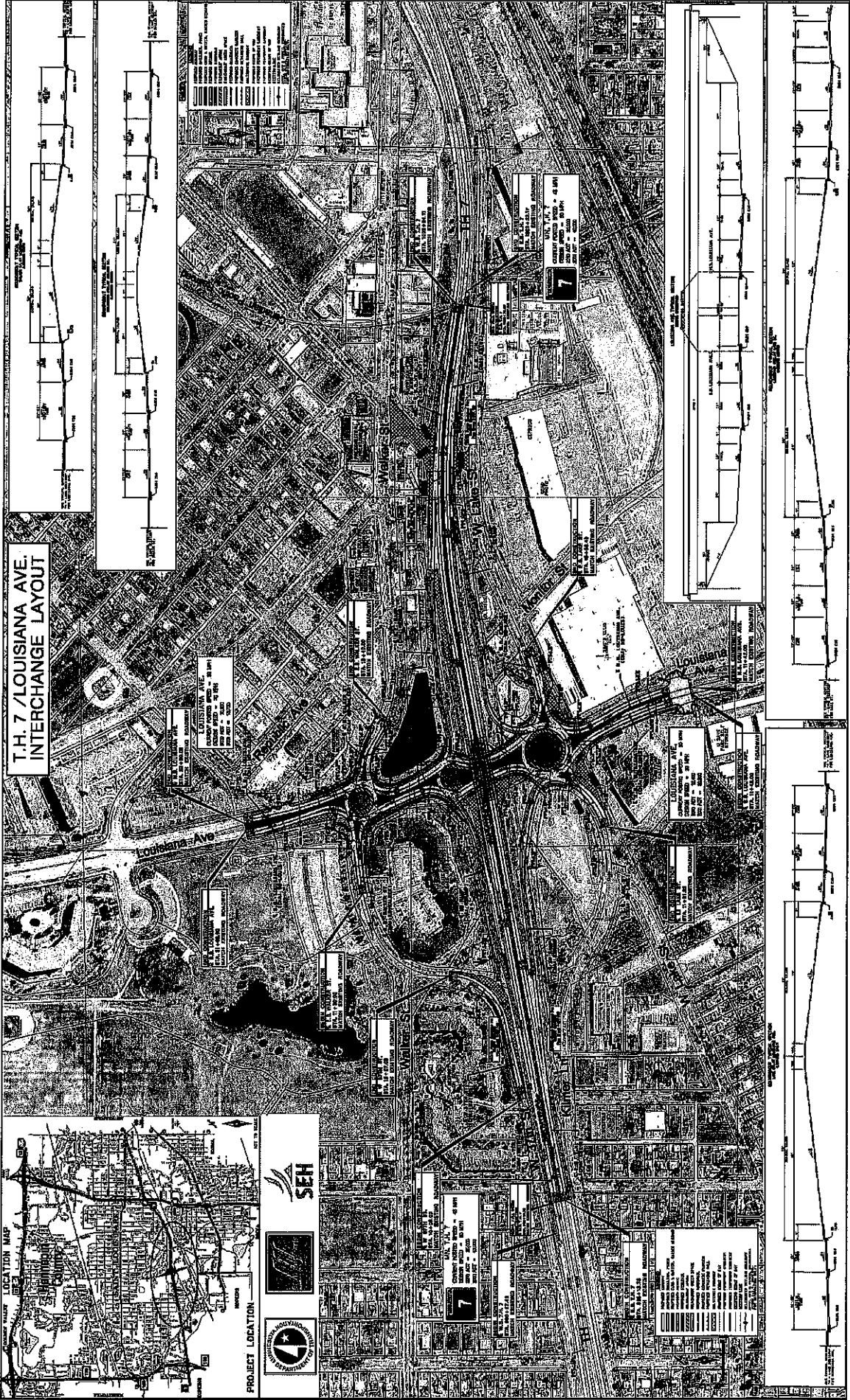


Exhibit G

