

## Transportation Committee

Meeting date: December 9, 2013

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 11, 2013

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**Subject:** Controlled access approval for construction of an interchange at 4<sup>th</sup> Street South and I-35W Northbound in the city of Minneapolis and Hennepin County

**District(s), Member(s):** 7-Gary L. Cunningham, 8-Adam Duininck

**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statute 473.166

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

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

Russ Owen, Senior Transportation Planner, MTS, 651-602-1724

**Division/Department:** Metropolitan Transportation Services

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### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve a request by MnDOT and Hennepin County to construct an interchange with I-35W Northbound at 4<sup>th</sup> Street South in the city of Minneapolis, 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 proposed project will construct an on-ramp from 4<sup>th</sup> St. South to northbound I-35W in downtown Minneapolis and also includes: the addition of an auxiliary lane, which is approximately .9 mile, on northbound I-35W from University Avenue to the Johnson Street exit; the closure of the exit ramp to New Brighton Boulevard; restriping on I-35W to create an additional lane between the Mississippi River and 4<sup>th</sup> St. SE; and reconstruction of the existing median barrier. (see attached map)

Construction is proposed to begin in the spring of 2014 and will be substantially completed by November 2014.

### Rationale

I-35W is a principal arterial highway that serves as an important component of the state and regional transportation system, supporting local and regional economic development. The project is consistent with the regional Transportation Policy Plan. There is limited direct access today to northbound I-35W from downtown Minneapolis, with access only off Washington Avenue. The immediate area of the current access is also home to many facilities including the proposed new Vikings stadium, the University of Minnesota's West Bank campus, Hennepin County Medical Center, Augsburg College, Fairview Hospital and the Guthrie Theater and Mill City Museum. The current access is a relatively short on-ramp which cannot accommodate the demand in the area, creating severe traffic congestion. The congestion creates backups on local streets in all directions, especially on Washington Avenue, forces traffic onto parallel routes and generally reduces the functionality of the street network for several hours every weekday. Special events at the Metrodome or the University can make the problem even worse.

**Funding**

The estimated project cost is \$14.2M and is funded with state and local funds.

**Known Support / Opposition**

There is no known opposition to the project.

# Project Scope

