

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: July 13, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 22, 2015

Subject: Southwest Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Municipal Consent Plans and Public Hearing

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statutes: 473.3994

Staff Prepared/Presented: Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510

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Division/Department: Metro Transit/Green Line Extension Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Direct staff to prepare Southwest LRT Municipal Consent Plans consistent with the project scope as approved on July 8, 2015, and submit to Hennepin County and the cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis; and
- Authorize scheduling and conducting a joint public hearing with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council on the revised plans on August 27, 2015 at Hennepin County's Minneapolis Central Library.

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 Transitway Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and in November 2012, HCRRA held three public hearings on the Southwest LRT DEIS. The public comment period ended on December 31, 2012.

On April 9, 2014, the Council approved the project scope, with two shallow tunnels in Minneapolis, and budget at \$1.683 billion. On July 9, 2014, the Council further refined the project scope by removing the shallow tunnel north of the Kenilworth channel and reduced the project budget to \$1.653 billion. The County and all five host cities provided municipal consent by the end of August 2014.

In August 2014 the Counties Transit Improvement Board committed \$496 million and HCRRA committed \$165 million towards the project.

SPO continued design and engineering through the remainder of 2014 and early 2015. On April 27, 2015, the Council released an updated project cost estimate of \$1.994 billion and started holding meetings with project partners and advisory

committees to discuss options and receive direction. The outcome of those discussions was the Corridor Management Committee's recommendation to end the line at Southwest Station, deleting Mitchell Station and deferring Town Center Station. On July 8, 2015, the Metropolitan Council approved the revised project scope and budget. The updated project cost is estimated at approximately \$1.744 billion.

Rationale

Given recent Council action of \$250 million in scope reductions throughout the entire corridor, staff is recommending that the Council initiate municipal consent plan review from Hennepin County and all five cities along the alignment, including Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis, in the interest of transparency.

Funding

The cost of the recommended project scope is estimated at \$1.744 billion in year of expenditure dollars. This action does not require additional funding commitment from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) or Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) or state funding partners at this time.

Known Support / Opposition

The Southwest LRT Community Advisory Committee and Business Advisory Committee support the revised project scope.

The Corridor Management Committee, which includes representatives from funding partners, Hennepin County and the host cities along the line, recommended the revised scope.