

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: July 9, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 25, 2018

Subject: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Amendment #6 to the Nossaman, LLP Contract

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statutes 473.399, Minnesota Statutes 473.129

Staff Prepared/Presented: Ann Bloodhart, General Counsel, 651-602-1105
Brian Lamb, Metro Transit General Manager, 612-349-7510
Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, 612-373-3810
Jim Alexander, SWLRT Project Director, 612-373-3880

Division/Department: Office of General Counsel and Metro Transit / Green Line Extension LRT

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve and authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a sole source contract amendment to the legal services contract (14P026) with Nossaman LLP related to freight rail for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension), to add \$325,000 for a total authorized contract value of \$1,625,000.

Background

The original contract was executed on August 28, 2014 for \$95,000. Amendment #1 was executed on October 13, 2015 to increase the total contract value to \$250,000. Amendment #2 was executed on July 6, 2016 to increase the total contract value to \$500,000. Amendment #3 was executed on June 15, 2017 to increase the total contract value to \$800,000. Amendment #4 was executed on November 17, 2017 to add \$500,000 for a total authorized contract value of \$1,300,000 to support the preparation of additional agreements necessary for the Surface Transportation Board (“STB”) filing. Amendment #5 was an administrative amendment to extend the duration of the contract to June 30, 2019.

On April 4, 2018, the Council petitioned the STB to request that the STB confirm that it does not have jurisdiction over the Council's acquisition of rights-of-way and physical freight rail assets that are required for construction of the Southwest LRT Project. On April 5, 2018, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) filed its petition with the STB (procedurally called a Notice of Exemption), which includes a notification that HCRRA intends to assume common carrier obligation on the Bass Lake Spur. On April 24, 2018, Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TCWR) filed comments with the STB on the Council's and HCRRA's petitions and asked the STB to dismiss them, stay both proceedings, or set a procedural schedule to allow for public comment, discovery, and evidentiary submissions. The STB granted TCWR's request to stay HCRRA's Notice of Exemption and required the Council and HCRRA to submit an Operations and Maintenance Agreement related to freight activities on the Bass Lake Spur and Kenilworth Corridor. In addition to filing comments with the STB, TCWR filed a lawsuit against HCRRA and named the Council as a party. As a result of these actions, the Council has utilized the amount authorized under the previous amendment and needs to increase the contract for the following activities:

- Preparation of STB documents and obtain STB approval

- Support Council in litigation activities related to siding track replacement or other freight rail operational issues
- Advisory and consultation services
- Legal analysis and opinions

Amendment #6 will add \$325,000 for a total authorized contract value of \$1,625,000.

Rationale

No alternatives are recommended due to the need to maintain continuity in completing the STB process and resolving outstanding litigation. The contract amendments are for additional time needed to advise the Southwest Project Office on the critical freight rail agreements with CP, TCWR, and HCRRA. The need for additional hours is due to ongoing negotiations.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Coordination with freight rail companies is necessary to construct and operate the Green Line Extension that will increase the region's prosperity as it will provide access to 80,900 forecasted jobs and a new transportation option for 55,600 forecasted residents within ½ mile of the planned new stations in addition to the 145,300 forecasted jobs and 35,600 forecasted residents in downtown Minneapolis.

Funding

Legal Services is a project budgeted activity and a project eligible expense.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to amending the Nossaman, LLP contract.