

Kenilworth Corridor Landscape/Greenscape Analysis for the Shallow LRT Tunnels

Background

The COUNCIL's Southwest LRT Project Office (SPO) has proposed to design and construct the SWLRT line through the Kenilworth Corridor by means of two shallow tunnels that would carry the LRT tracks and would extend next to the existing freight rail tracks and lie beneath the at-grade Kenilworth trail.

In order to assist policy makers in the decision of whether to pursue the shallow tunnel design, SPO has been requested to:

- Conduct an independent analysis of freight rail relocation alternatives that may be viable in lieu of keeping the freight rail in the Kenilworth Corridor;
- Conduct an independent evaluation of potential impacts to water resources that may result from the construction and/or operation of the shallow LRT tunnels; and
- Complete a survey of the existing vegetation in the Kenilworth Corridor and identify impacts to the vegetation and identify areas suitable for planting trees and areas suitable for planting understory vegetation or groundcover under the shallow LRT tunnel configuration.

The results of these analyses will be shared with Project stakeholders and policy makers to inform the decision of whether to pursue the shallow LRT tunnels in the Project scope or other design alternative.

Scope of Work

The objective of this phase of the work is to complete an inventory of existing conditions and identify impacts to help inform decisions on the scope of this portion of the SWLRT Project.

The following activities are planned:

- SPO to conduct an inventory of the existing physical conditions within the Corridor. The inventory shall include: location, diameter, species and condition of existing trees; general species, quantity and condition of existing understory vegetation; and type, condition and limits of groundcover (turf).
- SPO to conduct an analysis of historic vegetation in the Corridor, surficial soil conditions and Corridor access.
- SPO to develop a graphical representation of the impacts to trees and other vegetation within the Corridor by comparing existing conditions within the Corridor to conditions within the corridor immediately following construction.
- SPO to review available studies, reports and meeting materials related to landscape design of the Kenilworth Corridor with the SWLRT prepared by agency led committees. SPO to prepare a summary of the document research which identifies an understanding of concerns and issues, establishing an overall design direction for SPO design staff to

prepare landscape plans for the Kenilworth Corridor. This summary will be reviewed and confirmed with City, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) and County staff.

- SPO to identify areas suitable for planting trees and areas suitable for planting understory vegetation or groundcover under the shallow LRT tunnel configuration. SPO to develop a graphical representation of this information.
- SPO to review and evaluate impacts with the City, MPRB, MCWD and County staff.
- SPO to prepare a draft documentation identifying the impacts and potential mitigation measures.
- SPO to present the findings to the Project advisory committees.
- SPO to develop a draft public involvement plan that includes coordination activities with Project stakeholders and an active engagement process with community members and businesses within the Kenilworth Corridor. The plan will identify steps to develop a public charrette or other public engagement process to seek input to inform the landscape design of the Kenilworth Corridor. The plan will incorporate stakeholder input as appropriate.