



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Public Works

Date: June 4, 2013

To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: **Southwest Corridor Preliminary Engineering Update**

Recommendation:

Receive and file a presentation by the Southwest Corridor Project Office.

Previous Directives:

- December 4, 2012: Approve the proposed comments on the DEIS for the Southwest Corridor LRT project and direct the Public Works Department to submit the comments to Hennepin County.
- January 15, 2010: Approve resolution supporting Locally Preferred Alternative as recommended by the Southwest Transitway Technical Advisory Committee, Policy Advisory Committee and Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority and forwarded to the Metropolitan Council for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Policy Plan.

Department Information:

Prepared by: Don Pflaum, P.E., P.T.O.E., Transportation Planner

Approved by: _____

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee: Don Pflaum
Southwest Corridor Project Office

Financial Impact

- No financial impact

Community Impact

- Neighborhood Notification
- City Goals
- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Code

- Other

Supporting Information

Background

In January 2013 the Metropolitan Council became the lead agency on the Southwest Corridor project after the DEIS comment period ended on December 31, 2012. Since that time, the SW Project Office has been established and a design consultant has been hired to complete preliminary engineering work. The SW Project Office formed Issue Resolution Teams (IRT's), which currently meet weekly to discuss 25 major topics identified in the DEIS, including one IRT dedicated to freight issues. Representatives from various cities and agencies participate in these sessions. The Freight IRT meetings are comprised of representatives from the City of Minneapolis, City of St. Louis Park, MNDOT, Met Council, Twin City and Western Railroad (TC&W), Canadian Pacific Railroad (CP), Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), Hennepin County, and the project team. A representative from the St. Louis Park School District has been recently added to this group.

In 2011 the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) permitted the SW Corridor to enter the Preliminary Engineering phase of development, which allows the project to continue to compete for Federal New Starts funding. The FTA required that the project team re-evaluate two potential options for how to accommodate existing freight service operated by the TC&W railroad that will be disrupted by the SW Corridor Project. One option is to relocate freight service from the Kenilworth Corridor to the Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern (MN&S) corridor in St. Louis Park (also called the Re-Location Option). The other option is to combine freight, light rail, and trail uses together in the Kenilworth Corridor (also called the Co-Location Option). The SW Project Office has recently complied with the FTA's request and has assembled several design choices for both the Re-Location and Co-Location options. Both options have varying degrees of impacts to adjacent property owners in both cities. These options will be revealed publically as part of the June 4th TPW meeting presentation.

It is important to note that the City of Minneapolis took a position as part of the DEIS comments submitted in December 2012 to oppose any Co-Location alternative. The recent work by the Southwest Project Office confirms that the Co-Location alternative requires 94 feet of width throughout the Kenilworth Corridor. Because the Kenilworth Corridor is constrained at several points (62 feet wide in some places), there are significant property impacts to adjacent property owners. There are also significant parkland impacts if this option is pursued.

Cc: Peter Wagenius – Mayor Rybak's Office

SW Corridor Management Committee (Minneapolis Delegate)