



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

Date: June 10, 2008

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

Subject: **Central Corridor LRT Preliminary Design Plans**

Recommendation:

Adopt a resolution approving the preliminary design plans for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project and identifying specific expectations that the Minneapolis City Council has of the Project to resolve certain issues that are not adequately addressed in the preliminary design plans.

Previous Directives:

- June 16, 2006: Resolution 2006R-342, Recommending Light Rail Transit for the Central Corridor.
- June 16, 2006: Approve summary comments and final detailed comments on the draft EIS regarding the Central Corridor Project.

Prepared by: Kelly Moriarity, P.E., Project Manager, 673-3617
Heidi Hamilton, P.E., Deputy Director of Public Works

Approved by:

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

Presenters: Kelly Moriarity, P.E., Project Manager, Transportation Planning and Engineering

Reviews

Permanent Review Committee (PRC):	Approval	NA	Date
Civil Rights Affirmative Action Plan	Approval	NA	Date
Policy Review Group (PRG):	Approval	NA	Date

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- Business Plan: Action is within the plan. Action requires a change to plan.
- Other financial impact (Explain):
- Request provided to department's Finance Dept. contact when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: The Central Corridor Project Office is working regularly with the neighborhoods impacted by the project through a Community Advisory Committee, and a Business Advisory Committee, as well by holding various meetings with individual neighborhoods, residents and business groups.

City Goals: A SAFE PLACE TO CALL HOME: the city's infrastructure will be well-maintained, people will feel safe in the city.

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES: Connected network of Transportation Options.

Comprehensive Plan: The Comprehensive Plan is being met.

Zoning Code: Not Applicable

Background/Supporting Information

The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project is an 11-mile LRT line connecting downtown Minneapolis and Downtown St Paul and linking with the Hiawatha LRT line and the new Northstar Commuter Rail line.

The Metropolitan Council has prepared Preliminary Design Plans for the Central Corridor LRT and has submitted these plans to the City on April 28, 2008 for approval or disapproval as provided by law and commonly described as Municipal Consent. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 473.3994, the City held a public hearing and received testimony on these plans on June 3, 2008.

Content of Preliminary Design Plans

The Central Corridor Preliminary Design Plans include track locations, station locations, roadway features (turn lanes, lane widths, traffic signals), sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and system elements (catenary system, traction power substations, and signal houses).

A staff report "Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Preliminary Design Plans" describes and evaluates in detail the Preliminary Design Plan submittal.

Ongoing Design and local input after Municipal Consent

The Met Council's Central Corridor Project Office (CCPO) has committed to ongoing coordination with local project partners beyond the Municipal Consent process, though Preliminary Engineering and Final Design, as well as throughout construction.

Areas of ongoing design beyond the preliminary design plans will include Streetscape Design, Public Art, Property Access, Parking Mitigation, Station Design, Construction Phasing and Mitigation, Utility Relocation, Traffic Signals and Traffic Mitigation, Traction Power Substation Location and Screening. A description of this ongoing coordination is included in the attached document "Ongoing Coordination and Project Partner involvement in the Decision Making Process Beyond Municipal Consent".

In addition, the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available for public and agency review and comment later this summer, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement, scheduled to be completed early next year.

Traffic

The CCLRT plans as proposed will divert all auto traffic from Washington Avenue between Pleasant and Walnut. Prior to the I-35W bridge collapse Washington Avenue carried just over 18,000 vehicles per day, of which approximately 1100 are buses. Since the bridge collapse,

volumes have increased and it currently carries approximately 26,000 vehicles per day. The majority of traffic on Washington Avenue is destined to or from the University campus.

The CCPO has completed traffic modeling to identify the expected impacts of prohibiting auto traffic from Washington Avenue. CCPO has committed to making improvements to those intersections that are projected to fail in 2030 if the intersections would not have failed without CCLRT in place. Failure is defined as a Level of Service (LOS) E or F in the evening peak hour. Examples of intersections in Minneapolis that currently operate at LOS E and F in the evening peak hour include Hennepin Ave and Franklin Ave as well as 50th St and France Ave. Based on this analysis, the CCPO has identified intersections in Minneapolis for improvements as part of the project, but only some of the proposed improvements/mitigations are included in the PDP (see attached report for specific information). The remainder of the mitigation plans will be developed as the project planning and design proceeds. Any changes to the city street system will come to the City Council for approval.

There are other intersections that currently function poorly that will receive additional traffic if Washington Avenue is closed to traffic. These intersections include:

- East River Parkway/27th Avenue/Franklin Avenue
- University Avenue and 4th Street at 10th Avenue SE
- Cedar Ave/Washington Ave/15th Avenue (Seven Corners area)

City staff have advocated for financial contributions from the project toward improvements in these areas, but CCPO has not accepted responsibility for contributing to improvements due to concerns about FTA eligibility and project budget constraints.

Other transportation system improvements have been identified by the project stakeholders as desirable for better accommodating traffic diverted from Washington Avenue. These include construction of Granary Road between 2nd Street and the East city limits and the extension of East River Parkway northwest to Main Street. A Memorandum of Understanding between the City, Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, and University of Minnesota is being negotiated to jointly advocate for identifying and obtaining funds for these improvements and the intersection of East River Parkway/27th Avenue/Franklin Avenue. Significant work remains to determine the extent of these improvements and to secure the necessary funding.

The Central Corridor LRT is a critical link in a regional rail system and changes in traffic patterns are a necessary part of advancing the broader goal. In order to ensure the overall success of the project and the city's transportation system, it will be necessary for the city to take the lead on defining the scope of work and identifying the agency responsible for improvements, and potentially advancing improvement projects that are not currently included in the city's Capital Improvement Program and that we are not able to get included in the CCLRT project. It will be important to ensure traffic impacts are adequately covered in the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement that will be issued later this summer, and that mitigation is adequately addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and final project design.

Recommendation

After analysis of the Preliminary Design Plans and the supporting technical information it is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution approving the Preliminary Design Plans for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project, identifying specific expectations that the Minneapolis City Council has of the Project to resolve certain issues that are not adequately addressed the preliminary design plans, and making certain requests of the Project to ensure community concerns are addressed.

Attachments

Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Preliminary Design Plans Report

Ongoing Coordination and Project Partner Involvement in the Decision Making Process Beyond Municipal Consent

Maps: Plan1 Hiawatha-Mississippi, Plan2 Mississippi-Huron, Plan3 Huron-Bedford,
Plan4 Bedford-Dewey

Cc: Council Member Gordon, Ward 2
Council Member Hofstede, Ward 3
Council Member Goodman, Ward 7
Peter Wagenius, Mayor's Office
Steve Kotke, Public Works
Heidi Hamilton, Public Works
Jon Wertjes, Public Works
Don Elwood, Public Works
Lisa Cerney, Public Works
Kelly Moriarity, Public Works