

City of Minneapolis

Request for Committee Action

To: Transportation & Public Works
Date: 6/7/2016
Referral: N/A
From: Public Works Department
Lead Staff: Paul Miller, Project Manager, Transportation Planning & Programming
Presented by: Paul Miller, Project Manager, Transportation Planning & Programming
File Type: Action
Subcategory: Environmental Review

Subject:

Southwest Corridor (Green Line Extension) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) Comments.

Description:

Approving the attached comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Southwest Corridor (Green Line Extension) LRT project and directing the Public Works Department to submit the comments to the Metropolitan Council.

Previous Actions:

September 25, 2015: Approved the preliminary design plans for the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project that were submitted to the City of Minneapolis by the Metropolitan Council on July 23, 2015, in order to fulfill the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, Section 473.3994, Subd. 3.
July 24, 2015: Approval of the comments dated July 14, 2015, on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Southwest Corridor (Green Line Extension) Light Rail Transit Project and directed the proper City officers to submit said comments to the Metropolitan Council.

Ward/Address:

All Wards
All Neighborhoods

Background/Analysis:

The Southwest Corridor (Green Line Extension) is a regional light rail transit corridor that serves Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. Once completed, the Southwest Corridor will directly connect to the Hiawatha LRT Corridor (Blue Line), to the Northstar Commuter Rail Line, and to the planned Bottineau Corridor Line (Blue Line Extension) in Downtown Minneapolis.

In 2012 the City of Minneapolis commented on the original Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest LRT Corridor. The Metropolitan Council also released a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) in 2015 to discuss a number of items that the original document did not address including the operations and maintenance facility location and scope, the adjusted Eden Prairie alignment, and the shallow tunnel design along the Kenilworth Corridor. A number of public hearings were held in late June 2015 to address the SDEIS.

On May 13, 2016 the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was issued for public review, with comments on the adequacy of the FEIS to be accepted by the Metropolitan Council through June 13, 2016. The FEIS is considered adequate under Minn. Rule 4410.2800, subp. 4, if it:

- A. Addresses the potentially significant issues and alternatives raised in scoping so that all significant issues for which information can be reasonably obtained have been analyzed in conformance with part 4410.2300, items G and H;
- B. Provides responses to the substantive comments received during the draft EIS and SDES review concerning issues raised in scoping; and
- C. Was prepared in compliance with the procedures of the act and parts 4410.0200 to 4410.6500.

Or, as summarized, the FEIS will be determined adequate if it addresses and analyzes the significant issues raised in scoping, responds to substantive comments on the draft EIS and SDEIS, and is prepared in compliance with the environmental rules. Therefore, comments by City staff on the adequacy of the document will address whether it meets those standards.

Following a review period and consideration of the comments on the FEIS, the Metropolitan Council is expected to pursue a Federal Record of Decision and a Full Funding Grant Agreement by fall of 2016, with construction starting in 2017. The Green Line Extension is expected to begin operations in 2020.

Recommendation:

Approve the attached comments on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Southwest Corridor (Green Line Extension) LRT project and direct the Public Works Department to submit the comments to the Metropolitan Council.

Financial Review:

No financial impact.

Attachments:

1. Southwest LRT Final Environmental Impact Statement - Notice of Availability.
2. FEIS Staff Comments.