

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: February 22, 2010

Metropolitan Council Meeting: February 24, 2010

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	February 12, 2010
Subject:	Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project Scope
District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	Federal Title 23 CFR, Part 771, FTA New Starts Process
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510 Mark W. Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager, 651-602-1942
Division/Department:	Metro Transit / Central Corridor Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt changes to the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project scope to add construction of above-grade elements of LRT stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, and Western Avenue into the Project. This will increase the Project scope to \$956.9 million and will be reflected in an amended business item 2010-45, "2010 Unified Capital Program Amendment."

Background

The construction of below-grade infrastructure of LRT stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, and Western Avenue is part of the Project scope and budget and was approved by the Metropolitan Council on February 27, 2008, (2008-64). Construction of above-grade elements was not included in the Project scope and budget at that time because of concerns regarding the impact of doing so on the Project's Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI) as it was then applied by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). With repeal of the pass/fail requirement to the CEI announced on January 13, 2010 by U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, the above-grade construction of the additional stations is now possible.

As part of fulfilling federal obligations for environmental review, the Metropolitan Council prepared, on behalf of FTA, a Central Corridor LRT Infill Stations Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of above-grade construction of LRT stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, and Western Avenue. The EA was published on January 11, 2010. Following the conclusion of a 30-day review and comment period, the FTA will publish a Finding of No Significant Impact (*anticipated for February 19 - 23, 2010*). The FONSI will find that construction of above-grade elements of the additional stations will have no significant impact on the environment and that no additional mitigation, beyond that previously committed to in the Project's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD), is required.

Rationale

Local funding partners, community groups, non-profit organizations, and members of the general public have expressed interest in and concern regarding the need for construction of additional stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, and Western Avenue since publication of the Project's Alternatives Analysis / Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) in 2006. Installation of below-grade infrastructure was

included in the current Project scope and budget to facilitate future construction at such time that funding became available.

Funding

Funding sources to construct above-grade elements of additional stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, and Western Avenue have been identified, and are summarized as follows:

Federal Transit Administration	\$7.8 million
Saint Paul	\$5.2 million
Counties Transit Improvement Board	\$1.56 million
Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority	\$0.52 million
Central Corridor Funders Collaborative	\$0.52 million
Total	\$15.6 million

Overall, the adjusted Project scope, with addition of the three stations, would total \$956.9 million.

Known Support / Opposition

Federal Transit Administration, local funding partners, and other Project stakeholders support construction of the above-grade elements of LRT stations at Hamline Avenue, Victoria Street, and Western Avenue, as evidenced in the commitment of 100 percent of funds needed for their construction.