

T Transportation Committee
Meeting date: February 22, 2010
Council Meeting: February 24, 2010

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: February 16, 2010
Subject: Authorization to set public hearing date for 2030 TPP Amendment for Southwest Transitway LPA
District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: FTA New Starts Process
Staff Prepared/Presented: Arlene McCarthy, Director 651-602-1754
Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director 651-602-1058
Mary Karlsson, Senior Planner 651-602-1819
Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Select light rail transit (LRT) on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (Alternative 3A) as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Southwest Transitway and adopt the proposed amendments to the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) for the purposes of holding a public hearing and receiving public comment; and
- Authorize a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan to be held on April 12, 2010 at 5 pm.

Background

The Metropolitan Council is required, under both state and federal law, to develop a multi-modal regional transportation plan that identifies transportation system goals, needs, and priorities over a 20-year period. The current Transportation Policy Plan was adopted in 2009, before a locally preferred alternative (LPA) was recommended for the Southwest Transitway. The adopted Plan currently does not specify mode or alignment for the Southwest Transitway.

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority has been the lead agency for the Southwest Alternatives Analysis and recommended light rail transit on the Kenilworth-Opus Golden Triangle alignment (LRT Alternative 3A) as the LPA on November 3, 2009. This action will amend the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan to include the recommended LPA for the Southwest Transitway for the purposes of receiving public comment and holding a public hearing on the proposed amendments.

The proposed amendments to the TPP reflect the decision to proceed with LRT on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment for Southwest Transitway. The Metropolitan Council submitted the Air Quality Conformity Analysis and Documentation to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on December 15, 2009. The MPCA response and concurrence to the proposed conformity determination is attached and will be made available to the public as part of the public comment process.

During the Council Committee of the Whole information session held on January 22, Council members requested revisions to the AA and LPA Recommendation Summary Report to more clearly describe why the BRT alternatives were eliminated from consideration. Hennepin County has issued a revised AA and LPA Recommendation Summary report reflecting this revision which will be mailed separately. In addition, questions arose concerning the relocation of freight rail from the Kenilworth corridor and the ability of the existing and planned wastewater system to accommodate increased development. Documents addressing these two issues will also be transmitted under separate cover.

Rationale

Under federal law prior to a New Starts project entering into Preliminary Engineering, the LPA must be selected and amended into the TPP. The LPA selection and incorporation into the 2030 TPP will allow the Metropolitan Council to submit the Southwest LRT New Starts application and proceed into PE during 2010.

Funding

This action does not require funding. If selected to enter PE, project costs will be shared as follows: 50% federal, 30% CTIB, 10% state and 10% regional rail authorities.

Known Support / Opposition

The following support is known:

- Metropolitan Council's Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC);
- Southwest Transitway Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- The Southwest Transitway Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA)
- The cities of Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, and Edina have all passed resolutions supporting the LPA recommendation.

Opposition to the recommended LPA selection was voiced through the public hearings conducted by the PAC and HCRRA including:

- Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association
- Calhoun Isles Condominium Association
- Testimony provided by the volunteers who organized a petition supporting LRT3C-2 (11th/12th) that included 3,800 signatures from Minneapolis and suburban residents

Transportation Advisory Board

of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

Bill Hargis
Acting Chair

February 18, 2010

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Peter Bell, Chair
Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street No.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Mr. Bell,

On February 17, 2010, the Transportation Advisory Board voted to recommend adoption of an amendment to the region's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan to include the selection of light rail transit on the Kenilworth/Opus/Golden Triangle alignment (alternative 3A) as the Southwest Transitway locally preferred alternative for the purpose of holding a public hearing.

The TAB forwards this action to the Metropolitan Council along with additional information described in TAB action transmittal 2010-09.

Sincerely,



for Bill Hargis, Acting Chair
Transportation Advisory Board

ACTION TRANSMITTAL

No. 2010-09

DATE: February 18, 2010
TO: Metropolitan Council
FROM: Transportation Advisory Board
SUBJECT: 2030 Transportation Policy Plan Amendment

MOTION: The TAB recommended adoption of an amendment to the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan to include the selection of light rail transit on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (LRT Alternative 3A) as the Southwest Transitway locally preferred alternative for the purpose of holding a public hearing.

BACKGROUND FOR ACTION:

The Metropolitan Council is required, under both state and federal law, to develop a multi-modal regional transportation plan that identifies transportation system goals, needs, and priorities over a 20-year period. The current Transportation Policy Plan was adopted in 2009, before a locally preferred alternative was recommended for the Southwest Transitway. The adopted Plan currently does not specify mode or alignment for the Southwest Transitway.

The Metropolitan Council (Council) proposes to amend its 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (Plan) to include the locally preferred alternative for the Southwest Transitway. The Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority recommended light rail transit on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (LRT Alternative 3A) as the locally preferred alternative on November 3, 2009. Following selection of the LPA by the Council, the Plan must be amended to reflect the selected alternative.

The attached amendments are proposed changes to text in the Plan to reflect the decision to proceed with LRT on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment for Southwest Transitway. The Metropolitan Council submitted the Air Quality Conformity Analyses and Documentation to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on December 15, 2009. The response of the MPCA will be made available to the public as part of the public hearing process.

Following the plan amendment, Council staff will submit a New Starts application to the FTA requesting permission for the Southwest Transitway to enter into Preliminary Engineering.

ROUTING

| TO | ACTION REQUESTED | DATE COMPLETED |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| TAC Planning Committee | Review & Recommend | January 14, 2010 |
| Technical Advisory Committee | Review & Recommend | February 3, 2010 |
| TAB Policy Committee | Review & Recommend | February 17, 2010 |
| Transportation Advisory Board | Review & Recommend | February 17, 2010 |
| Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee | Review & Recommend | |
| Metropolitan Council | Review & Adopt | |

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE 2030 TRANSPORTATION POLICY PLAN**Amendment 1****Chapter 1, Page 4, Last Paragraph, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

Eight other potential transitway corridors are under consideration in this plan. According to the Council's Transit Master Study, two of them show good potential for light rail or a dedicated busway— Southwest, between Eden Prairie and Minneapolis, and Bottineau Boulevard, connecting the northwest suburbs with downtown Minneapolis. Light rail transit (LRT) on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (Alternative 3A) was selected in May 2010 as the Locally Preferred Alternative for Southwest. The LPA selection completes the New Starts Alternatives Analysis process. Bottineau ~~is~~ ~~Both~~ are under study, as is the Rush Line, the proposed link between Forest Lake and St. Paul. An alternatives analysis for Red Rock was recently completed, and bus improvements are currently being planned.

Amendment 2**Chapter 7, Page 95, First Bullet, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

The Southwest Transitway connects Eden Prairie with Minneapolis via St. Louis Park, and Hopkins, and Minnetonka. ~~The project's completed an alternatives analysis and recommended three LRT alternatives for environmental documentation resulted in a May 2010 selection of LRT on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (Alternative 3A) as the Locally Preferred Alternative. The LPA selection completes the New Starts Alternatives Analysis transportation planning process. Consistent with federal guidance to integrate the NEPA process with the transportation planning process, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) study process will continue with the DEIS anticipated to be complete later in 2010. is underway.~~

Amendment 3**Chapter 7, Page 120, Fifth Bullet, make the following, revised text the fourth bullet (revisions noted below):**

Southwest Transitway – ~~Three LRT alignments from an alternatives analysis will be studied in environmental documentation work began in 2008~~ LRT on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (Alternative 3A) was selected in May 2010 as the Locally Preferred Alternative. The LPA selection completes the New Starts Alternatives Analysis transportation planning process. Consistent with federal guidance to integrate the NEPA process with the transportation planning process, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) study process will continue with the DEIS anticipated to be complete later in 2010.

Amendment 4**Chapter 7, Page 123, Fourth Paragraph, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

The Council's 2030 Transit Master Study showed two other corridors with high potential for light rail or a dedicated busway. The Southwest Transitway extends between Eden Prairie and Minneapolis, including the cities of Minnetonka, Hopkins, and Saint Louis Park. An alternatives analysis has been completed for this corridor and a draft environmental impact statement ~~with three LRT alternatives under consideration began in 2008~~ (DEIS) is anticipated in 2010. LRT on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (Alternative 3A) was selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative. Bottineau Corridor runs from Minneapolis along Highway 81 to either Maple Grove or Brooklyn Park. Work has begun on an alternatives analysis for this corridor, with LRT and busway alternatives under consideration.

Amendment 5**Chapter 7, Page 124, First Paragraph, revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

The Midtown Corridor shows promise as a transitway connecting Hiawatha LRT and Southwest Transitway. With LRT on the Kenilworth-Opus-Golden Triangle alignment (Alternative 3A) selected as the Locally Preferred Alternative for Southwest, the Midtown ~~However, it is not yet clear which Southwest alignment will be selected. This Corridor should be examined after the Southwest Transitway alignment is determined to see if a connection between Hiawatha and Southwest is warranted.~~

Amendment 6**Chapter 7, Page 131, Summary of Transitway Recommendations "Complete, In Construction, Final Design or Preliminary Engineering", revise language to read (revisions noted below):**

Six transitway corridors; Hiawatha LRT, I-35W BRT, Cedar Avenue BRT, I-394 HOT Lane, Northstar Commuter Rail and Central LRT are complete, in construction, final design, or preliminary engineering. Southwest LRT is anticipated to enter preliminary engineering in 2010.

Amendment 7**Chapter 7, Page 132, revise Corridor Status for Southwest to read (revisions noted below):**

Southwest: Alternatives Analysis completed and DEIS for three LRT options underway. Draft EIS and FTA application to enter PE anticipated in 2010.

Amendment 8**Chapter 7, Page 133, revise map:**

Label Southwest Transitway as "Southwest LRT" and show the Southwest Transitway with a solid, red line. See revision, attached.



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

520 Lafayette Road North | St. Paul, MN 55155-4194 | 651-296-6300 | 800-675-3843 | 651-282-5332 TTY | www.pca.state.mn.us

January 13, 2010

Ms. Arlene McCarthy
Director
Metropolitan Transportation Services
Metropolitan Council
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Amendment to the Conformity Documentation for the 2030 Transportation Policy Plan

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff has completed its review of the above referenced document. The Metropolitan Council (Council) is proposing two amendments to its 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (Plan). The first amendment includes the locally preferred light rail transit (LRT) mode and alignment for the Southwest Transitway. The second includes the existing configuration of Interstate (I)-94 between (I)-35W and Trunk Highway 280, as established after the (I)-35W bridge collapse and slightly modified by the (I)-94 managed corridor project.

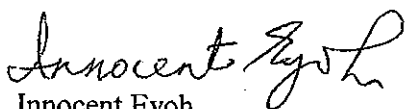
As part of this amendment, the Council has revised the Conformity Documentation (Appendix F) for meeting carbon monoxide (CO) standards. This revision includes a detailed description of the LRT mode and alignment for Southwest Transitway as well as the (I)-94 managed corridor. Air quality analysis that shows daily CO emissions in tons/day for the milestone years 2009, 2015, 2020, and 2030 are provided in this evaluation. Based on this information, the future CO emissions in tons/day will remain below the regional emissions budget established by the MPCA's emissions inventory even with the implementation of the two projects. Therefore, the proposed amendment to the Conformity Documentation for the 2030 Plan fully meets and conforms to the relevant sections of the Federal Transportation Conformity Rule and to the applicable sections of the Minnesota State Implementation Plan for Air Quality.

The MPCA staff appreciates the opportunity given to review the Plan amendment as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Transportation Conformity Rule consultation process, and looks forward to working with your staff to address any other policy concerns. The staff also appreciates the cooperation of the interagency

Ms. Arlene McCarthy
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consultation group that includes the Council, Mn/DOT, EPA, and FHWA, in their immediate assistance in resolving all policy and technical issues with respect to the Plan's air quality conformity determination. Please contact me at 651-757-2347 or by e-mail at innocent.eyoh@state.mn.us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,







Innocent Eyoh
Planner Principal
Air Assessment and Environmental Data Management Section
Environmental Analysis and Outcomes

IE:jab

cc: Mark Filipi, Metro Council
Susan Moe, FHWA
Brian Isaacson, Mn/DOT
Michael Leslie, EPA
John Seltz, MPCA
David Thornton, MPCA
Michael Sandusky, MPCA
Frank Kohlasch, MPCA

Proposed Amendment to Figure 7-44: 2030 Transitway System

- Transitways**
-  Complete / Construction / Final Design / Prelim. Engineering
 -  Develop as LRT / Busway / BRT / Commuter Rail
 -  Develop as Arterial Street BRT
 -  Express Bus Corridors with Transit Advantages

