

# T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: April 11, 2011

Metropolitan Council Meeting: April 13, 2011

## ADVISORY INFORMATION

**Date:** April 2, 2011  
**Subject:** Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration  
**District(s), Member(s):** All  
**Policy/Legal Reference:** MN Statutes 473.3997 and 473.3999  
**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Brian Lamb, General Manager 612-349-7510  
Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager, 651-602-1942  
**Division/Department:** Metro Transit/ Central Corridor Project Office

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Chair and the Regional Administrator to execute the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration in an amount of \$956.9 million.

### Background

The Metropolitan Council approved the Locally Preferred Alignment for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (CCLRT) Project and amended the Transportation Policy Plan to include the Project in June 2006. Application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was subsequently made to enter Preliminary Engineering which FTA approved in December 2006. The Council executed contracts for engineering services to design the Project and for environmental services to compile a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

A Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement was published June 2008 that considered specific design details including an Operation and Maintenance Facility in Lowertown St. Paul, infrastructure for three infill stations in St. Paul, Washington Avenue Transit/Pedestrian Mall, and the Central Corridor connection with Hiawatha LRT.

A Final Environmental Impact Statement was published in June 2009 identifying adverse impacts caused by the CCLRT Project and mitigation measures for adverse impacts. The FTA issued a Record of Decision in August 2009 that determined the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 had been satisfied for the CCLRT Project as proposed by Metropolitan Council.

The FTA adjusted its policy regarding the Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI) pass/fail criterion to the CEI being a 20% weighted evaluation criteria. This permitted Met Council to incorporate three infill stations at Hamline, Victoria and Western Avenue. An Environmental Assessment was published to document the full build-out of these stations in January 2010.

The CCLRT Project's final scope includes 18 new stations, 9.8 miles of new double track, 31 Light Rail Vehicles and an Operation and Maintenance Facility for an overall budget of \$956.9 million.

## **Rationale**

The FTA has completed its technical capacity and capability assessment and financial capacity assessment and found Met Council fit to design, construct and operate the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project.

Furthermore, FTA has approved nine Letters of No Prejudice (LONP) enabling the Council to incur construction costs for the Project prior to the FFGA and retain eligibility of those expenditures for future FTA grant assistance once the FFGA is executed.

FTA has received approval to proceed with execution of the CCLRT Full Funding Grant Agreement from the executive branch Office of Management and Budget and Office of the Secretary of Transportation. The CCLRT FFGA package was formally submitted to Congress for the required courtesy 60 day review which has now been successfully completed. FTA is prepared to execute the FFGA with Met Council in the second half of April.

## **Funding**

All local match funding in the total amount of \$478.45 million is committed from local funding partners Counties Transit Improvement Board, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, state of Minnesota, city of St. Paul and Metropolitan Council. Upon execution of the Full Funding Grant Agreement, the \$478.45 million federal share will be contractually committed to the Council and CCLRT Project. Federal appropriations are expected in federal fiscal years 2011 through 2015.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

All local funding partners are fully supportive of the Council executing the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Full Funding Grant Agreement.