



Other Business

For Metropolitan Council Meeting: **May 28, 2008**

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	May 28, 2008
Subject:	Central Corridor Light Rail Transit – Washington Avenue Transit/Pedestrian Mall (Resolution 2008-11)
District(s), Member(s):	All Members
Policy/Legal Reference:	
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Brian Lamb, General Manager 612-349-7510 Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager 651-602-1942 Rich Rovang, AGM – Transit Systems Development 651-602-1941
Division/Department:	Metro Transit / Central Corridor Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopt the attached Resolution 2008-11 to reaffirm its action of February 27, 2008 and direct the Project Office to proceed with Preliminary Engineering and make application to the Federal Transit Administration to move the CCLRT Project into Final Design with, among other features, a University of Minnesota at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Mall on Washington Avenue with no vehicular traffic except emergency vehicles, light rail vehicles and buses.

Background

The University of Minnesota has conducted a Feasibility Analysis of a northern alignment as a possible alternative to the Washington Avenue at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Alignment.

Rationale

The northern alignment Feasibility Analysis shows a lower ridership, higher estimated Cost-Effectiveness Index, along with a number of significant outstanding issues that have been identified relating to environmental (including contaminated soils), design, construction, operations and maintenance, railroad-related matters and project schedule of the Northern Alignment, which create additional uncertainty and risks.

Funding

The cost of the Washington Avenue alignment is estimated at \$892 million in year of expenditure dollars. This action does not directly require a funding commitment from the Council or state and county funding partners at this time. It must be stressed that FTA will expect firm funding commitments totaling at least one half of the required local match by August 2008 to demonstrate the local partners’ funding commitments to the project.

Known Support / Opposition

Project partners Minnesota Department of Transportation, MN Department of Finance, Ramsey County, Hennepin County, City of St. Paul, and City of Minneapolis support the Washington Avenue at-grade transit/pedestrian alignment. The University of Minnesota at this time does not support this alignment. The Council is committed to working with project stakeholders to further develop mitigation measures and resolve other issues as preliminary engineering moves forward.

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
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RESOLUTION NO. 2008-11

**RESOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO
THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT**

WHEREAS:

1. The Central Corridor Management Committee recommended and the Metropolitan Council on February 27, 2008 directed that the Central Corridor Project Office proceed with Preliminary Engineering and make a New Starts application to the Federal Transit Administration to move the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (CCLRT) Project into Final Design with, among other features, a University of Minnesota at-grade Transit Mall on Washington Avenue.
2. The University of Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis, and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority have requested further definition and planning of a Washington Avenue at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Mall, with special emphasis on design and operation of the Mall, mitigation measures, and bus operations in the University Area, which includes the nearby neighborhoods.
3. The University of Minnesota has conducted a Feasibility Analysis of the Northern Alignment as a possible alternative to the Washington Avenue at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Alignment.
4. The results of the Northern Alignment Feasibility Analysis show lower ridership and a higher estimated Cost Effectiveness Index (CEI).
5. A number of significant outstanding issues have been identified relating to environmental (including contaminated soils), design, construction, operations and maintenance, railroad-related matters and project schedule of the Northern Alignment, which create additional uncertainty and risks.
6. Great progress has been made in the definition of a mitigation package for the Washington Avenue at-grade alignment in the University Area by all affected parties.
7. The Central Corridor Management Committee, by resolution adopted on May 28, 2008, attached hereto as Exhibit A, has made certain recommendations to the Metropolitan Council.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Metropolitan Council as follows:

1. The recommendations of the Central Corridor Management Committee embodied in that committee's resolution adopted on May 28, 2008 are hereby adopted by the Metropolitan Council.
2. The Metropolitan Council hereby reaffirms its action of February 27, 2008 and directs the Central Corridor Project Office to proceed with Preliminary Engineering and make application to the Federal Transit Administration to move the CCLRT Project into Final Design with, among other features, a University of Minnesota at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Mall on Washington Avenue with no vehicular traffic except emergency vehicles, light rail vehicles and buses.
3. The Metropolitan Council directs the Project Office to discontinue all work related to the Northern Alignment, effective immediately.
4. The Metropolitan Council expresses its intent to continue to work toward the development of (i) a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Minnesota, the Hennepin County Regional

Railroad Authority, and City of Minneapolis, focused on mitigation measures in the University Area and (ii) a second MOU regarding design, construction, ownership, right-of-way, operational and maintenance issues, in the University area.

5. The Metropolitan Council expresses its intent to work cooperatively with the parties represented in the Central Corridor Management Committee in order to (i) submit a New Starts application in early September, 2008, (ii) advocate timely federal approval of the New Starts application, and (iii) take all the necessary actions with the FTA to maintain the project on its current schedule, with entrance into Final Design in Spring, 2009.

Adopted on May 28, 2008.

Peter Bell
Chair

Pat Curtiss
Recording Secretary

Central Corridor Resolution
Adopted by Central Corridor Management Committee
May 28, 2008

WHEREAS:

1. The Central Corridor Management Committed and the Metropolitan Council on February 27, 2008 directed that the Project Office proceed with Preliminary Engineering and make a New Starts application to the Federal Transit Administration to move the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (CCLRT) Project into Final Design with, among other features, a University of Minnesota at-grade Transit Mall on Washington Avenue;
2. The University of Minnesota, City of Minneapolis and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority have requested further definition and planning of a Washington Avenue at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Mall, with special emphasis on design and operation of the Mall, mitigation measures, and bus operations in the University Area, which includes the nearby neighborhoods;
3. The University of Minnesota has conducted a Feasibility Analysis of the Northern Alignment as a possible alternative to the Washington Avenue at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Alignment;
4. The results of the Northern Alignment Feasibility Analysis show a higher estimated Cost-Effectiveness Index.
5. A number of significant outstanding issues have been identified relating to environmental (including contaminated soils), design, construction, operations and maintenance, railroad-related matters and project schedule of the Northern Alignment, which create additional uncertainty and risks;
6. Great progress has been made in the definition of a mitigation package for the Washington Avenue at-grade alignment in the University Area by all affected parties;

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Corridor Management Committee recommends that the Metropolitan Council refine its action of February 27, 2008 and direct the Project Office to proceed with Preliminary Engineering and make application to the Federal Transit Administration to move the CCLRT Project into Final Design with, among other features, a University of Minnesota at-grade Transit/Pedestrian Mall on Washington Avenue with no vehicular traffic except emergency vehicles, light rail vehicles and buses;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Corridor Management Committee recommends that Metropolitan Council direct the Project Office to discontinue all work related to the Northern Alignment, effective immediately;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Corridor Management Committee recommends that the Metropolitan Council, the University of Minnesota, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and City of Minneapolis continue to work toward the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) focused on mitigation measures in the University Area and a second MOU regarding design, construction, ownership, right-of-way, operational and maintenance issues, in the University area;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the parties represented in the Corridor Management Committee agree to work cooperatively to (a) submit a New Starts application in early September, 2008, (b) advocate timely federal approval of the New Starts application, and (c) take all the necessary actions with the FTA to maintain the project on its current schedule, with entrance into Final Design in Spring, 2009.