

T Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of February 25, 2009

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date Prepared: February 24, 2009

Subject: Hiawatha Light Rail Transit Platform Extensions and Grade Crossing Control Upgrades,
Projects 63730 & 65651

Proposed action:

Authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Sheehy Construction, for the construction of the platform extensions and signal upgrades to the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (HLRT) line at a cost of \$10,598,800.

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions:

Staff outlined that this contract would extend the platforms at nine LRT stations to facilitate the operation of three car trains and through the installation of grade crossing control upgrades, improve the reverse running of trains in both directions. This contract award omitted the construction of the American Boulevard Station, modifications to the Government Station and replacement of tactile strips on platforms all due to funding limitations at the time of bidding.

Committee Chair Meeks asked if staff had considered re-bidding the work. The bid documents outlined that any combination of the three parts of the overall project (Platform Extensions, American Boulevard and Grade Crossing Control Upgrades) could be awarded if funding was available for each individual part to be awarded. In this case, funding was not sufficient for American Boulevard, but was available for funding the low bids on the Platform Extensions and the Grade Crossing Control Upgrades. The project is on a tight timeline for completion about year end. Awarding the platform extensions and grade crossing work at this time, while re-evaluating the American Boulevard design and funding, positions the Council to operate three-car trains by the spring of 2010. It is staffs proposal to re-bid the American Boulevard Station after reviewing the design and assuring that funds will be available to make an award.

Council Member McFarland asked when staff planned to re-bid the American Boulevard portion of the project. Staff are currently evaluating the existing plans in an attempt to reduce project costs. Staff plans re-bid upon completion of any revised plans and cost estimate, and the identification of sufficient funding. Staff anticipates that such re-bidding could begin in about two months.

Council Member McFarland asked about how the low bid was determined. The low bidder was first determined by summing all three parts of the project. Federal procurement procedures indicated that Council could not pick separate contractors for each part of the project based on the individual bid components. Evaluating the bids for all three parts including American Boulevard, Graham Construction was the apparent low bidder. Graham's cost for American Boulevard was about \$800,000 higher than the funding available. Bid amounts for the American Boulevard Station ranged from about \$3 million to \$3.9 million from the three lowest bidders whereas funding was limited to an award of about \$2.2 million.

Council Member McFarland asked if we are potentially seeing a trend towards higher bids, even though there is recessionary pressure to lower costs. Unknown "soft costs" associated with working adjacent to an active line with work restrictions may have added contractor risk and cost. Much of the work is expected to be completed during the over night hours and on the weekends. The work that can be completed during the day will require close coordination with rail operations and many stoppages can be expected. These unknown "soft costs" are hard to predict and bidders costs reflect the inherent risks they run in bidding on such a project. Recent construction bids for more conventional park and ride structures indicated costs significantly below the estimates.

The proposed action was moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: February 23, 2009

For Metropolitan Council Meeting: February 25, 2009

ADVISORY INFORMATION	
Date:	February 17, 2009
Subject:	Hiawatha Light Rail Transit Platform Extensions and Grade Crossing Control Upgrades, Projects 63730 & 65651
District(s), Member(s):	District 5, Polly Bowles 952 922-8426, polly.bowles@metc.state.mn.us District 7, Annette Meeks 612-341-8168, annette.meeks@metc.state.mn.us District 8, Lynette Wittsack 612-788-1235, lynette.wittsack@metc.state.mn.us
Policy/Legal Reference:	MN Statutes 473.405 subd.3
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit 612-349-7510 Tom Thorstenson, Director Engineering & Facilities 612-349-7689 MarySue Abel, Project Manager 612-349-7638
Division/Department:	Metro Transit/ Engineering & Facilities

Proposed Action

Authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Sheehy Construction, for the construction of the platform extensions and signal upgrades to the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (HLRT) line at a cost of \$10,598,800.

Background

Initially and as bid, this HLRT improvement project consisted of three main elements: Platform Extensions, construction of the American Boulevard Station and Grade Crossing Control Upgrades. These three elements had been combined in one contract to minimize the impact to rail operations and reduce construction costs.

- As part of the three-car train program, the Platform Extension portion of the project involves full extensions to platforms at nine stations. Platform modifications to the Government Station and the replacement of existing tactile warning strips at 9 stations will be bid separately.
- The construction of the American Boulevard Station in Bloomington has been deleted from the contract award due to funding limitations.
- The Grade Crossing Control Upgrades portion of the project will improve the reverse running of trains in both directions through grade crossings.

On January 29, 2009, 7 bids were received and opened publicly. The bids ranged from \$10,598,800 to \$14,491,306. The engineer’s estimate for this work was \$9,944,778. The lowest bid of \$10,598,800 was 6.5% above the engineer’s estimate. Sheehy Construction has committed 13% of the work to be directed to Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) companies.

Rationale

Authorization to award and execute a contract for the construction of the HLRT Platform Extensions and Grade Crossing Control Upgrades allows construction to begin with sufficient time to complete construction by April 2010 and position the agency to run three car trains. The execution of a construction contract in excess of \$1,000,000 requires Council approval.

Funding

Sufficient funding from federal and local sources is available to award the construction contract as well as provide 5% contingency in the event of changes required during construction. Funding for the platform extensions is available in grant MN-05-0018. Funding for the signal upgrades is available in grant MN-03-0106.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition.