

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: June 25, 2012

Metropolitan Council Meeting of July 11, 2012

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: June 13, 2012
Subject: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension):
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Responsible
Government Unit (RGU) Transfer
District(s), Member(s): All
Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statutes 116D.04, 473.399
Staff Prepared/Presented: Brian Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510
Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Mgr, 612-602-1942
Chris Weyer, SWLRT Project Director, 651-373-3820
Nani Jacobson, SWLRT Assistant Director,
Environmental & Agreements, 651-373-3808
Division/Department: Metro Transit/Southwest Project Office (SPO)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to accept Responsible Government Unit (RGU) status from the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) upon completion of the Draft EIS (DEIS) public comment period.

Background

HCRRA was identified as the RGU for the Southwest Transitway project responsible for completing the DEIS under Mn Administrative Rules 4410.0500. As such, HCRRA completed the DEIS Scoping Process and Scoping Decision Document in 2009 in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The Scoping Decision Document was accepted by HCRRA on January 27, 2009.

The Notice of Availability for the DEIS is planned for publication in the Federal Register in August 2012, initiating the public comment period. Upon completion of the public comment period in October, the Council becomes the lead agency responsible for developing the Final (FEIS), in partnership with FTA. The Council will be responsible for developing mitigation measures where appropriate through the Preliminary Engineering phase that will be captured in the FEIS. A notice will be posted in the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) Monitor after HCRRA and Council approval of the transfer and acceptance of RGU status, respectively. Acceptance of RGU status is consistent with Governor Dayton's designation of the Council as the lead agency for the SWLRT.

Rationale

Acceptance of RGU status will establish the Council's roles and responsibilities for completion of the FEIS and NEPA process for the SWLRT Project. RGU acceptance upon closure of the DEIS public comment period provides a logical timeframe for the transfer of this responsibility. This action requires Metropolitan Council authorization.

Funding

Transfer of RGU responsibility does not require funding.

Known Support / Opposition

HCRRA supports this action and is anticipated to approve during the July board meeting. No known opposition.