



Request for City Council Committee Action From the Department of Public Works

Date: February 28, 2012

To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Referral: Honorable Betsy Hodges, Chair Ways & Means Committee

Subject: **2012 Northern Lights Express (NLX) Fees**

Recommendation:

Authorize \$30,875 to be expended from fund (00100 6000200) to allow 2012 City of Minneapolis participation in the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance Board for the development of the Northern Lights Express.

Previous Directives:

- January 22nd, 2008: Authorize city officials to enter into the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance Joint Powers Agreement.
- January 22nd, 2008: Approved funding for the city's portion of the rail study in the amount of \$57,750.
- April 28th, 2009: Authorize \$50,000 to be expended from fund (04100-600100-507007) to allow 2009 City of Minneapolis participation in the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance Board for the development of the Northern Lights Express.
- June 22nd, 2010: Authorize \$48,000 to be expended from fund (04100-600100-507007) to allow 2011 City of Minneapolis participation in the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance Board for the development of the Northern Lights Express.
- November 4, 2011: Authorize \$38,000 to be expended from fund (04100-600100-507007) to allow 2011 City of Minneapolis participation in the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance Board for the development of the Northern Lights Express.
- November 4, 2011: Authorize the appropriate city officials to amend the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance Joint Powers Agreement to allow for payment of these funds in 2011 and for subsequent years (2012 to 2016) when funding has been budgeted.

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Approved by:

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works

Presenters: Donald Pflaum, Transportation Planner 673-2129

Reviews:

Permanent Review Committee (PRC):	Not Applicable
Civil Rights Affirmative Action Plan:	Not Applicable
Policy Review Group (PRG):	Not Applicable

Financial Impact:

Action is within current department budget

Community Impact:

Neighborhood Notification: NA

City Goals: Supports City Transportation Goals

Comprehensive Plan: Supports Comprehensive Plan Goals

Zoning Code: NA

Background/Supporting Information

In January 2008 the City Council authorized the City of Minneapolis to enter into the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance. As part of this action the City agreed to contribute \$57,750 toward the 2008 Rail Alliance budget. The City Council took action to pay \$50,000 in 2009, \$48,000 in 2010, and \$38,000 in 2011. Since the Joint Powers Agreement did not specify annual payments after 2008, this action is needed to continue membership on the Joint Powers Board. An effort was made to simplify the process in 2011 by the City Council authorizing the appropriate city staff to amend the agreement when funds have been budgeted. However, specific funding was not earmarked in the 2012 budget for this project. There is sufficient funding in the Public Works operating budget (00100 6000200) to cover this expense.

The 2012 contribution has been calculated to be \$30,875.

Project Status

The development of the Northern Lights Express (NLX) project from Minneapolis to Duluth continues to move forward. A \$5 million dollar U.S. Department of Transportation grant was awarded to the project in May 2011 to get the preliminary engineering plans to 30% complete. Since this funding was announced, the Federal Railroad Administration has provided a letter of concurrence stating that one alignment (route option 9) be pursued. The environmental work is currently being wrapped up and the engineering/design work has begun.