



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

Date: April 1, 2014

To: Honorable Kevin Reich, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Referral: Honorable John Quincy, Chair Ways & Means Committee

Subject: **Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar Project**

Recommendation:

Authorize staff to submit an application for a TIGER 2014 grant to implement the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar project, pending consideration of other regional transit projects and final authorization to submit an application by the City's Rail Policy Group.

Previous Directives:

- March 28, 2013 - City Council authorized the proper city officers to amend the existing contract with URS Corporation to complete additional pre-project development tasks for the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar project.
- December 6, 2013 - City council authorized a master funding agreement with the Metropolitan Council to conduct environmental review and pre-project development activities for the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar.
- October 4, 2013 - City Council approved a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives Study and recommended the LPA to the Metropolitan Council for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Policy Plan.
- August 16, 2013 - City Council authorized a contract amendment with URS Corporation to complete the NEPA process for the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives Study.
- June 25, 2013 - City Council established a project area and value capture district for streetcar financing.
- May 24, 2013 - City Council authorized staff to submit an application for a TIGER V grant to implement a starter streetcar line in the Nicollet-Central corridor.
- April 2, 2010 - City Council approved the long-term streetcar network.
- March 23, 2010 - T&PW received and filed Streetcar Funding Study.
- January 22, 2008 - T&PW received and filed Streetcar Feasibility Study.

Department Information:

Prepared by: Anna Flintoft, Transportation Planner, 673-3885

Approved by: _____

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

Presenters in Committee: Anna Flintoft

Financial Impact

- None. Action is within the current project budget.

Community Impact

- City Goals: Jobs & Economic Vitality - Planes, trains and streetcars move goods and workers smartly; Strong commercial corridors, thriving business corners. Livable Communities, Healthy Lives - Equitable, integrated transit system.

Supporting Information

On October 4, 2013, the City Council recommended that the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Nicollet-Central Transit Corridor be modern streetcar running between Lake Street and at least 5th Street NE on Nicollet Avenue, Nicollet Mall and Hennepin/1st Avenues, using the Hennepin Avenue bridge to cross the Mississippi River. The Council also acknowledged that an extension of modern streetcar further northeast of downtown is desirable, the length of which depends on funding availability and the location of an operations and maintenance facility. The next phase of study is to conduct an Environmental Assessment and Section 106 Review for the recommended modern streetcar project. That work is underway and includes an evaluation of potential operations and maintenance facility sites and further refinement of stop locations and track alignment.

On March 3, 2014, the U.S. Department of Transportation announced the availability of \$600 million for infrastructure investment through the TIGER 2014 program. Applications are due April 28, 2014. Staff is seeking City Council authorization to submit a TIGER 2014 grant application to implement the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar project. Because other priority regional transit projects, such as the I-35W Transit/Access Project, may also be good candidates for the TIGER 2014 grant program, staff will seek final authorization to submit an application for the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar project from the City's Rail Policy Group prior to the April 28, 2014 deadline.