



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

Date: January 22, 2008

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

Referral: Honorable Paul Ostrow, Chair Ways and Means Committee

Subject: Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Intercity Passenger Rail Study

Recommendation:

- a. Authorize proper city officials to enter into the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance Joint Powers Agreement
- b. Transfer \$57,750 from the Municipal parking fund (07500-1270100-904101) to the Permanent Improvement Fund (04100-9010000-387501) and increase the appropriation in the Permanent Improvement Fund (04100-9010000-801500) by \$57,750 to fund the City's portion of the rail study

Previous Directives:

- No previous directives

Prepared by: Donald Pflaum, P.E., P.T.O.E - Transportation Planner (612-673-2129)
Donald Elwood, P.E. - Director of Transportation Planning and Engineering Services

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

Presenters in Committee: Donald Pflaum, P.E., P.T.O.E - Transportation Planner

Permanent Review Committee (PRC)	Approval _____	Not applicable	<u> X </u>
Policy review Group (PRG)	Approval _____	Not applicable	<u> X </u>

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- Business Plan: Action is within the plan. Action requires a change to plan.
- Other financial impact: Action accepts outside
- Request provided to department's Finance Dept. contact when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification:

Neighborhood Meetings:

City Goals:

Comprehensive Plan:

Zoning Code:

The purpose of this action is to enter into a joint powers agreement with several project partners to study a passenger rail line between the City of Duluth and the City of Minneapolis. The action also funds the city's 2008 contribution and allows for a voting member to sit on the Joint Powers Board.

Project Description:

The proposed 150 mile long Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail project would utilize active trackage owned and operated by the Burlington Northern Sante Fe (BNSF) Railway Company. Historically, rail service has been operated in this corridor, which is commonly known as the Hinckley Subdivision. Rail service on this line ended in 1985. Within the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis-Duluth/Superior Passenger line would utilize the same corridor that will be used by the Northstar Corridor. Improvements would likely need to be made to the Northstar platform in Downtown Minneapolis to accommodate longer trains, but minimal improvements would be made elsewhere throughout the city. In addition to Downtown Minneapolis, current station locations are being proposed in Coon Rapids, Cambridge, Hinckley, Superior, and Duluth.

Project Partners, Funding, and Timeline:

This project is a partnership between the City of Minneapolis, the Anoka County Regional Railroad Authority, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, the Isanti County Regional Railroad Authority, the Pine County Regional Railroad Authority, the St. Louis-Lake County Regional Railroad Authority, the City of Duluth, and Douglas County, Wisconsin. A joint powers agreement has been drafted and it is expected to take effect on February, 2008 upon approval from all agencies involved.

Three options are currently being examined based on train speed; a 79 mph maximum speed corridor, a 110 mph maximum speed corridor, and a 125 mph maximum speed corridor. The 79 mph corridor is expected to cost between \$75 to \$219 million, the 110 mph corridor is expected to cost approximately \$350 million, and the 125 mph corridor is expected to cost approximately \$750 million. Operational costs vary greatly between options. It is still unclear how the corridor will be operated and whose funding responsibility this will be. Early reports have suggested that 800,000 to 900,000 people per year would use this line.

The project timeline is highly dependent on state and federal funding. Federal funding is being pursued through the Federal Railroad Administration. Much of this project is located in districts represented by Dave Obey (WI), Chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Jim Oberstar (MN), Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Funding is also being pursued at the MN State Legislature to help fund study and capital costs.

Upon the execution of the joint powers agreement, this project will be moving into the Programmatic EIS (PEIS) phase, which will take about 2 years to complete. Final design/engineering would take place upon completion of the PEIS.

Attachment 1: Draft Joint Powers Agreement

cc: Joe Gladke – Hennepin County
Pat Born - Finance
Pierre Willette - IGR
Karin Berkholtz - CPED