



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

Date: July 22, 2002
To: The Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy
Transportation and Public Works Committee
Referral to: The Honorable Barbara Johnson
Ways & Means and City Council

Subject:
Starting Salary – Engineer I Candidates

Recommendation:
Approve the Department of Public Works request for authorization to offer Step 4 to 7 of the Engineer I salary schedule to finalists for Engineer I positions.

Previous Directives:
(Any past Council actions or directions to staff)

Prepared or Submitted by: Rhonda Rae, P.E., Engineer III
Approved: David J. Sonnenberg, P. E., City Engineer, Director of Public Works
By: Michael D. Kennedy _____
Presenters in Committee: Rhonda Rae, P.E.

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
- Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact (use any categories that apply)

- Neighborhood Notification
- City Goals
- Comprehensive Plan
- Zoning Code
- Other

Background/Supporting Information Attached

Currently Public Works has 6 Engineer I vacancies that are being filled and believes this number may increase to 7. The hiring process has reached a critical point.

We have obtained approval from Human Resources to offer up to Step 3 of the pay rate scale to candidates who have outstanding qualifications. None have accepted the position under these conditions of pay and benefits. It is critical that we are able to respond to potential rejections in a timely manner in order to try and persuade these candidates to accept a position with the City.

The Department of Public Works is requesting approval to offer up to Step 7 for some of these Engineer I positions as necessary based on the individual candidate's level of competency and experience. This approval will allow the Department, with consultation and agreement from Human Resources to negotiate with each candidate based on their individual credentials. We request that this approval apply until the point in time the Department can successfully fill these positions. The Department of Human Resources is in support of this request.

The Department of Public Works and the Human Resources Department will use the following criteria to determine the appropriate pay step for each candidate:

1. Previous recent years of very similar work experience;
2. Previous accomplishments in the same areas of responsibilities as the new job;
3. Recent relevant educational accomplishments exceeding the job requirements;
4. Difficulty in filling the position;
5. Current compensation of candidate, if performing a very similar job;
6. Department's capacity to pay for the increased starting salary.

The Department of Public Works' budget can accommodate this increase in pay for all positions.

Public Works is facing the same difficulties as described in the July 8, 2002, Star Tribune article entitled "A shortage of civil engineers looms for MnDot" by Laurie Blake. The number of students earning degrees in the field has dropped nationwide (see attachment). In the article the Head of the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Minnesota said that his department could find two summer jobs for every student and that the employment rate for graduates is 100 percent. The City of Minneapolis is in direct competition with MnDot and the private sector for Civil Engineer positions. For the City of Minneapolis to compete for candidates, we need to offer a fair market competitive starting wage for candidates with additional qualifications and experience.

Therefore, the Department of Public Works requests authorization for the ability to offer above step 3 for select candidates for Engineer I positions.

Attachment: Star Tribune Article

Copy: Ann Eilbracht, Director Human Resources