



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

**Date:** May 4, 2010  
**To:** Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee  
**Subject:** Evaluation of the intersections, including traffic signal operations, along Hiawatha Avenue (Trunk Highway 55) between 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 50<sup>th</sup> Street

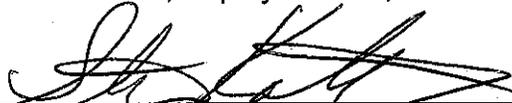
**Recommendation:** Receive and File staff report on the evaluation that is underway to evaluate operation of the intersections, including traffic signal operations, along Hiawatha Avenue (Trunk Highway 55) between 26<sup>th</sup> Street and 50<sup>th</sup> Street

**Previous Directives:**

- 2009 Budget Resolution - Appropriate \$250,000 for Hiawatha LRT Signal Improvements
- 2009 Amended Budget Resolution - Eliminate appropriation of \$250,000 for Hiawatha LRT Signal Improvements

**Prepared by:** Heidi Hamilton, Deputy Director, Public Works 673-3316

**Approved by:**

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

**Presenters:** Heidi Hamilton, Deputy Director, Public Works

**Reviews**

Permanent Review Committee (PRC):	Approval	_____	Date	_____
Civil Rights Approval	Approval	_____	Date	_____
Policy Review Group (PRG):	Approval	_____	Date	_____

**Financial Impact:** None

**Community Impact**

Neighborhood Notification: Input from residents regarding the traffic problems being experience by users of the corridor was solicited via Council Member offices

City Goals: Connected Communities, Great Spaces & Places, Thriving

**Neighborhoods**

Comprehensive Plan: NA  
Zoning Code: NA

## **Background/Supporting Information**

The construction and operation of the Hiawatha Ave Light Rail line parallel to Hiawatha Ave has had a substantial negative impact on the vehicular and pedestrian traffic operation since the line opened in 2004. Although the Department of Public Works, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, has made substantial improvements in the operation of the traffic signals, there continue to be substantial delays to the vehicular and pedestrian traffic, especially to traffic trying to cross the corridor.

In 2008 the City Council appropriated \$250,000 to improve the operation of the intersections along the Hiawatha Avenue (State Trunk Highway 55) corridor. However, when the city was faced with cuts to State Local Government Aid, this funding was diverted to other needs in the amended 2009 budget.

Recognizing the continuing challenges in this corridor, public works is pursuing a scaled back effort (that can be afforded within the department's operating budget) to identify opportunities for further improving traffic operations in this corridor to a more acceptable level of service.

A task force has been convened to evaluate the operation of the traffic signals and intersections along Hiawatha Ave from 26<sup>th</sup> St to 50<sup>th</sup> St and to determine what improvements, if any, could be made to their operations to improve traffic flow for vehicles and pedestrians.

The task force is comprised of traffic signal and railroad operations experts who are familiar with the best practices of the industry. Representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Council Transit Office of Rail Operations, Hennepin County, and two top national consultants in the field of traffic signals and railroad operations, (Tom Urbanik with Kittleson and Associates and Rick Campbell of Campbell and Associates).

This task force will evaluate:

- 1) The operation and phasing of the traffic signals
- 2) The coordination among the traffic signals
- 3) Phasing of the traffic signals to reduce the maximum waiting time to all drivers
- 4) Evaluate the state of the art control equipment and strategies and determine if they could improve the operation of these intersections
- 5) Possible improvements that modeling of the operation of the LRT and traffic signals might produce
- 6) An geometric improvements that might improve the operation of the intersections
- 7) The safety impacts of any proposed changes
- 8) Adjustments to circuit timing for the railroad gates

The task force will identify the concepts and follow up actions that might improve the operation and estimate the benefit(s) for each improvement. An additional task will be to identify a range of costs for the subsequent actions. Possible actions would be new signal control equipment, new traffic signal timing plans, modeling of LRT and traffic vehicles, revision of the roadway geometrics, including widening of the cross streets and channelization island changes.

The task force first convened on April 20 during which very productive discussion were held. Work will continue over the next couple months with a final written report ready by July 31, 2010.

Cc: Council Member Schiff

