

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: January 9, 2012

Management Committee Meeting: January 11, 2012

Metropolitan Council Meeting: January 25, 2012

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: January 4, 2012

Subject: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension):
Authorization to Purchase Office Furniture and
Information Technology Equipment for Southwest
Project Office

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Council Policy 3-3 Expenditures, Federal Transit
Administration Circular 4220.1F Third Party Contracting
Guidance

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Division/Department: Metro Transit / Southwest Project Office

Proposed Action

Authorize the Regional Administrator to purchase office furniture and information technology (IT) equipment for the Southwest Project Office (SPO) in a total amount not to exceed \$1,975,000 for office furniture and IT equipment for Phase One of the project office mobilization through preliminary engineering (PE) in 2012 and 2013.

Background

Metropolitan Council (Council) authorization is required to authorize the purchases greater than \$250,000. This Business Item is related to Business Item 2012-09 which requests the Council to authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a lease agreement for permanent Southwest Project Office (SPO).

The SPO will be mobilized in two phases. Phase One is the preliminary engineering (PE) phase in 2012 and 2013 for approximately 110 to 120 staff. Phase Two will begin with final design in 2014 and will require an expansion to accommodate an additional 20 to 30 staff. The total estimated staffing need is approximately 140 staff over the seven-year project period. Authorization for Phase Two expansion will be requested when necessary.

Estimates for office furniture are approximately \$775,000 to furnish the work station and meeting space needs for 110 to 120 staff in Phase One. Estimates for IT equipment are approximately \$1,200,000 to support Phase One staffing which includes initial network infrastructure costs, as well as computers and software for routine work, and specialized equipment to support complex engineering design.

Rationale

There are both organizational and cost avoidance benefits of a project office. The organizational benefits are gained by co-locating the public agencies and the consultants in one location with IT equipment that supports collaborative communication among engineering disciplines to resolve complex design issues, and in a location that is easily accessed by the public and stakeholders.

The cost-avoidance benefits are realized by lower field labor rates which the Council negotiates with consultants for the opportunity to co-locate their staff in the project office. SPO estimates that the investment of project office infrastructure (lease, office furniture, IT equipment) to co-locate the consultant staff will yield a cost avoidance of \$3.8 million in the two-year Phase One for PE, and a total of \$15.7 million of cost avoidance over the seven year project period.

Examples of the specialized technical IT equipment that is needed to support engineering services are:

- Computer-aided design and drawing (CADD) software for specialized for civil, utilities, and architectural uses; Scheduling and Cost Estimation database software and traffic modeling software;
- High-resolution plotters and printers for design review;
- Specialized computer and network equipment to support the creating and sharing of large data files.

Three previous transitway projects (Blue Line/Hiawatha, Northstar and Central Corridor) have demonstrated the positive benefits of investing in a project office for a major capital project as complex as a New Starts rail project.

Therefore, due to the productivity and cost efficiency of a light rail transit project office, the purchase of office furniture and IT equipment is a cost-effective investment to support full functionality and peak productivity of the Southwest Project Office.

Funding

The Southwest Light Rail Transit Project has available funds from the Counties Transit Improvement Board and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority.

Known Support / Opposition

No known opposition