



Milwaukee streetcar project has a construction manager

By: Alex Zank, alex.zank@dailyreporter.com August 19, 2016 4:01 pm

Milwaukee officials announced Friday that Kiewit Infrastructure Co., of Omaha, Neb., will be overseeing the construction of the city's long-planned streetcar project.

Ghassan Korban, commissioner of the city's Department of Public Works, said that Kiewit Infrastructure Co., a subsidiary of Kiewit Corp., was chosen partly because of its experience building urban light-rail projects. Korban also noted Kiewit's strong presence in the Chicago area.

Kiewit and its subsidiaries have been either the construction manager or have led joint ventures overseeing various prominent projects throughout the U.S. They include the Metro Gold Line in Los Angeles, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit "Orange Line" extension, and an extension of the Draper Light Rail system in Draper, Utah.

Korban also expressed confidence that the company could meet the inclusion goals that are attached to the streetcar's construction. Project planners announced earlier this year that the job would require that 20 percent of all contract dollars go to disadvantaged businesses and that 40 percent of all construction-labor hours be performed by workers certified through the city's Residents Preference Program. That program aims to provide construction jobs to unemployed or underemployed city residents.

"Not only did they show understanding (of the inclusion goals), but they showed commitment," Korban said of Kiewit. He added that the contractor put together a "roadmap" detailing how the goals would be met.

Work on the streetcar could begin as early as this fall, although it won't start until the necessary construction materials have come in, Korban said. These include the rail itself.

Some work has already begun. The city started removing utility equipment from the streetcar route's path this spring in anticipation of the construction work.

Angie Nemeth, a spokeswoman for Kiewit, said that company officials are thrilled to be a part of the streetcar project.

"We look forward to working with the city, businesses, residents and other stakeholders on the Milwaukee streetcar," Nemeth said in a written statement. "The project will bring new transportation options to the community and serve as a catalyst for meaningful economic development."

The \$124 million streetcar will initially consist of a 2.5-mile downtown loop and 0.4-mile lakefront line extension. City officials hope to add more extensions in the future.

The city has already set aside \$20 million in tax incremental financing money that would cover half the cost of a second extension that would run to the doorstep of a new Bucks arena. But city officials recently found out that that planned extension was not awarded a federal grant that would have covered the rest of the costs.

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