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REPORTER SEAN RYAN

Builders pack streetcar pre-bid meeting

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More than 70 people packed a Milwaukee City Hall meeting room until it was standing room only when officials held the pre-bid meeting May 3 for the streetcar construction project.

Construction of the streetcar's mainline track and overhead wires will launch later this year. Up for bids is the contract to lead construction of almost three miles of track through downtown, and on a spur to the downtown lakefront. The city estimates construction will cost nearly \$80 million and last into 2019.

The pre-bid meeting a chance to ask ques plans to select the winner June 27.

Some details on the project from the pre-bid meeting:

The project drew attention from several out-of-state contractors, including Delta Railroad Construction Inc., Ashtabula, Ohio, and Chicago builder Walsh Construction, which



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Ashley Booth of HNTB outlines the streetcar project during the pre-bid meeting.

reconstructions. Wisconsin contractors in the mix include Waukesha paver Zignego Co. Inc., Volkmann Railroad Builders in Menomonee Falls and Vinton Construction Co. of Manitowoc.

The shelters at the streetcar stops will be “upgraded, modified bus shelters, essentially” with a back wall and roof that will resemble those in Seattle’s streetcar system, said Ashley Booth, of streetcar project manager HNTB Corp. A maintenance facility for streetcar vehicles will begin construction in fall under the Interstate 794 freeway bridges at North Fourth and West Clybourn streets. The building will have a wash bay for the vehicles and two service areas. The placement under I-794 creates challenges for contractors who have to work around the freeway piers and will have limits on the weight of materials they can stockpile around the piers, Booth said. Construction will be complete in November 2017, a month before the first streetcar vehicle arrives in Milwaukee. The Interstate 794 highway bridges also will create challenges for the streetcar as it runs under them on North Broadway near the Milwaukee Public Market. Some of the overhead clearances in that area are less than 16 feet, but the standard minimum height for the streetcars overhead wires is 19.5 feet, Booth said. Project planners are working with the Department of Transportation to determine what that will mean.

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