

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: October 28, 2019

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of November 13, 2019

Subject: Gold Line BRT Ramsey and Washington Counties Capital Grant Agreement for 2020 & 2021

District(s), Member(s): District 12 (Gonzalez), District 11 (Vento), District 13 (Lee)

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statutes, Section 473.399

Staff Prepared/Presented: Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510
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Division/Department: Metro Transit BRT Projects/METRO Gold Line Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a METRO Gold line Bus Rapid Transit (Gold Line) Capital Grant Agreement with the Ramsey and Washington Counties' Joint Powers Board in the total amount not to exceed \$75,000,000.00 for calendar years 2020 & 2021.

Background

The Gold Line is a planned 10-mile transitway that would run generally along the north side of Interstate 94 in primarily an exclusive lane for buses within Ramsey and Washington Counties. The Council is the local project sponsor or lead agency for the Gold Line and was granted entry into the Project Development phase of the Capital Investment Grant Program by the Federal Transit Administration as a New Starts project in January 2018. An application to enter the Engineering phase will be submitted in 2020.

The proposed Capital Grant Agreement will provide funding for the Council to continue pursuing project activities under existing professional services contracts as well as funding for staffing from multiple agencies into the Engineering phase in 2020 and 2021.

In August 2019, both Ramsey County and Washington County took board actions for full funding commitments for the remaining local share for the \$460.9 million project. The counties are in the process of forming a Joint Powers Board which will award this and future funding grants and provide financial oversight on behalf of the counties to the Gold Line Project.

Rationale

Council Policy requires that interagency agreements valued at greater than \$500,000 be approved by the Council. The Capital Grant Agreement for 2020 & 2021 establishes a framework for the partnership between the Counties and Met Council for delivering the Gold Line Project will make funds available for project activities, anticipated to be authorized in separate capital budget amendment(s).

Thrive Lens Analysis

Investment in high-quality transportation options will advance the Thrive outcome of prosperity, by making the region more economically competitive through increased workers' access to employment, and support to employers by increasing available workforce with affordable, convenient transportation.

The Gold Line project advances the Equity outcome by distributing transit resources throughout the region, benefitting regional residents and increasing transit service quality. For those adults in the Gold Line corridor communities without a vehicle, increased access to financial opportunities, educational opportunities, and health services are a key outcome of implementing the Gold Line, advancing the Thrive outcome of livability.

By laying the foundation for a productive partnership between agencies, these agreements with Washington County and Ramsey County will increase the Council's ability to carry out its principle of working collaboratively.

Funding

The proposed action will make available \$75 million in committed funding from Washington and Ramsey Counties through their Joint Powers Board to the Council for the Gold Line Project. A separate, Council action will seek to authorize agreement funds into the Council's Authorized Capital Program in project 61402. The project is included in the CIP.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition. The Gold Line Project is a key transportation priority of the project's local funding partners party to the requested agreement authorizations.