

# Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: January 26, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: February 11, 2026

## Business Item: 2026-20

Metro Transit Customer Support, Text for Safety, and Outreach Technology Modernization, Contract 25P148

**District(s), member(s):** All

**Policy/legal reference:** FM 14-2 Expenditures for the Procurement of Goods, Services, and Real Estate Policy

**Staff prepared/presented:** Kelly Morrell, Senior Project Administrator, (612) 349-7563

**Division/department:** Metro Transit/Customer Experience

### Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize its Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute contract 25P148 with Catalyst Consulting Group Inc that will provide Customer Support, Text for Safety, and Outreach software and implementation services in an amount not to exceed \$19,646,725.

### Background

Metro Transit serves customers and regional stakeholders by providing multiple pathways to request assistance and report issues. The Transit Information Center is responsible for providing customers with trip planning assistance. Customer Relations is responsible for the intake, triage, routing, and resolution of inquiries, complaints, suggestions, and commendations. Text for Safety allows customers to report safety and security issues via SMS. Metro Transit Outreach is engaging customers and stakeholders every day, soliciting valuable feedback for projects and ongoing improvements to transit service.

The technology systems used by these work units are isolated from one another; some are more than twenty years old. The systems have become barriers to Metro Transit meeting customers' expectations for support communication and fast issue resolution.

The vision for this modernization effort is to implement a unified solution that records, triages, routes, and reports every customer and stakeholder interaction, protecting rider safety while delivering transparent, coordinated, best-in-class service for both the public and our teams. This vision translates to the following improvements for transit customers and regional stakeholders:

- A more personalized experience when support staff across work units have visibility into a unified customer and issue record.
- Faster issue resolution when items are routed to the right team the first time and prioritized effectively.
- An improved transit experience, as the agency can identify trends and address root causes with fewer repeat contacts on the same issue.

The Request for Proposals consisted of two packages. Package A included software and implementation services for Customer Experience/Customer Relations customer contact management, as well as stakeholder management and engagement activity tracking for Metro Transit Outreach. Package B included a SMS communication management software and implementation services for Text for Safety. Proposers were invited to bid on either or both packages.

A Request for Proposals was issued August 20, 2025. A pre-proposal meeting was hosted by Council staff that outlined the solicitation requirements, discussed specifications, and responded to plan holder inquiries. There were thirty-four registered planholders, thirty prime consultants, two subcontractors, two planrooms, and sixteen of the plan holders identified as minority, woman, veteran, small or disadvantaged business enterprises. The Council received thirteen proposals for Package A and thirteen proposals for Package B for consideration of award. An evaluation panel consisting of Council staff evaluated all proposals using five criteria, in descending order of importance: solution fit, technical approach (service delivery), qualifications & experience, key personnel, and pricing/total cost of ownership. Panel members read and evaluated proposals for both solution Packages independently.

A shortlist of vendors in the competitive range were invited to provide demonstrations to the evaluation panel. Following the demonstrations, the evaluation panel reached consensus that the proposal submitted by Catalyst LLC is the most advantageous to the Council for Package A and Package B and recommends it for award.

## Rationale

The execution of a professional service contract exceeding \$500,000 requires Council approval.

## Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, the proposed action supports **Stewardship** and **Prosperity**. A modern system will capture valuable customer and stakeholder data, providing Metro Transit actionable insights into service pain points, recurring operational issues, and rider behavior patterns. These insights will help Metro Transit invest in the right places, improving system performance, vehicle and facility cleanliness, and safety. A clean, safe, well-performing system will be more attractive to regional residents and visitors. Additionally, **Equity** is supported when a modern contact center ensures every customer and stakeholder—regardless of income, language, disability, or digital access—is heard and helped efficiently and effectively.

## Funding

Funding for this project is included in the Capital Improvement Program (project 68518) and the Information Services operating budget.

## Small business inclusion

The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO) thoroughly reviewed this procurement for Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business (MCUB) opportunities in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations as well as contract specifications. Upon conclusion of OEEO's research and analysis, no MCUB goal was set.