

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: January 22, 2024

For the Metropolitan Council: January 24, 2024

Business Item: 2024-20 SW

METRO Blue Line Extension Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement, Contract 23P182

- District(s), Member(s):** District 2 (Reva Chamblis)
District 7 (Yassin Osman)
District 8 (Anjuli Cameron)
- Policy/Legal Reference:** FM 14-2 Expenditures for the Procurement of Goods, Services, and Real Estate Policy
- Staff Prepared/Presented:** Lesley Kandaras, General Manager, 612-349-7513
Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507
Nick Landwer, BLE Director of Design and Engr, 651-373-3847
Neha Damle, BLE Environmental Compliance Lead, 612-373-3811
- Division/Department:** METRO Blue Line Extension Project Office (BPO)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute the Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) Contract 23P182 with HDR Engineering for environmental consulting services for the METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension (BLE) Project in an amount not to exceed \$3,858,246.

Background

The BLE Project is located in Hennepin County extending from downtown Minneapolis to the northwest serving the communities of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park and providing transit improvements in the highly traveled northwest area of the Twin Cities.

The BLE Project was given approval to enter into the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Project Development Phase by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on August 22, 2014. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released in July 2016, followed by FTA's issuance of a Record of Decision in September 2016 and then Entry into the Engineering Phase on January 19, 2017. At its June 22, 2022 meeting, the Metropolitan Council took action to advance a proposed route modification which does not utilize freight rail right-of-way, as outlined in the 2022 Route Modification Report (see Business Item 2022-158). FTA determined that the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Class of Action required for addressing the route modification was to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The proposed new route forms the basis of additional technical and environmental analysis and community outreach and engagement which is currently underway.

The BLE Project is currently undergoing preparation and publication of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). This document is anticipated to be published in May 2024. A public comment period of 45 days will be allotted from the date of the publication of the SDEIS. Upon completion of this comment period, the project office will start preparing for the SFEIS which is anticipated to be published in the Spring of 2025.

A Request for Proposals was issued on September 11, 2023. A pre-proposal meeting was hosted by Council staff that outlined the solicitation requirements, discussed project specifications, and responded to plan holder inquiries. There were seventeen registered plan holders, ten consultants, four subcontractors, three plan rooms, and eight of the plan holders identified as minority, woman, veteran, small or disadvantaged business enterprises. On October 25, 2023, the Council received one proposal to be evaluated for the consideration of award. Procurement staff conducted an adequate competition analysis and determined the solicitation was open, fair, and there was no indication that the specifications were restrictive and there was adequate competition for this project.

In accordance with the Brooks Act, the evaluation of the proposal followed a two-step process. For the first step, an evaluation panel, consisting of Council staff, project partners and subject matter experts, reviewed the proposal and ranked the technical merits of the proposer. Following approval of the evaluation panel findings, conclusions, and recommendation, the costing data of the proposer was opened and reviewed by a negotiation panel that negotiated pricing for the second step of the process. The negotiation panel agreed that the final price has been determined to be fair and reasonable and recommend the HDR Engineering proposal as the most advantageous to the Council.

Rationale

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

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 BLE Project advances the Equity outcome by distributing transit resources throughout the region and improving access to jobs, educational opportunities, and health services to diverse communities.

Advancing the BLE Project addresses the Livability outcome by increasing access to transit connections to the greater METRO system, including current and planned light rail and bus rapid transit lines, for communities in the region.

Funding

Local funding is fully provided through the executed Capital Grant Agreement #22I068 with Hennepin County and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and incorporated into the Council's Authorized Capital Budget under Project #61403.

Small Business Inclusion

The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO) assigned a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal of 20% for this contract. OEEO has determined that the recommended proposer has met the Council's DBE requirements for this contract.

