

Other Business

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of July 14, 2021

Subject: Participation in the Lake Street – Greenway Partnership

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Stat. § 473.129; Council Policy FM 2-2 Finance and Asset Management Policy; Council Procedure FM 2-2c Memberships, Sponsorships and Event Attendance Procedure

Staff Prepared/Presented: Charles A. Zelle, Council Chair

Division/Department: Chair's Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Chair to: (1) continue the Council's participation in the Lake Street – Greenway Partnership (as renamed); and (2) make reasonable annual fee payments to help support strategic counsel and management of the Partnership.

Background

Since 1998, the Council has participated in the Midtown Community Works Partnership with Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis, the Lake Street Council, Midtown Greenway Coalition, Allina Health, Wells Fargo, and other public and private partners. The partnership was designed to integrate policy, mobilize resources, and promote community engagement in the Greenway – Lake Street Corridor. In the past 22 years, the partnership has contributed to the completion of the Greenway, reconstruction of Lake Street, major transportation improvements including I-35W Transit/Access, Bus Rapid Transit and potential plans for future rail transit in the Greenway, redevelopment of the former Sears property to become Midtown Exchange and headquarters for Allina Health and the Global Market, redevelopment of the former Honeywell property to become headquarters for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, projects bringing over 7,000 new jobs to the Corridor, and the development of over 4,000 new units of housing in the Corridor, while witnessing hundreds of new businesses emerge along Lake Street in a vibrant cultural district.

The Greenway – Lake Street Corridor experienced new challenges in 2020, presented by civil unrest following the tragic death of George Floyd, the need to rebuild local businesses along Lake Street, a persistent increase in unhoused people seeking shelter, and an increase in safety concerns throughout the Corridor. The entities comprising the partnership are changing the name to Lake Street – Greenway Partnership. While recognizing that the Partnership has no authority to bind the participating public bodies to any decisions or funding commitments, the intention is for the partnership to be a forum for communication, coordination, and development of valuable and well-informed recommendations for the reinvestment and recovery of the Lake Street – Greenway Corridor. The Partnership's current priority initiatives include Lake Street Recovery and Investment, and Greenway Safety and Connections.

For the past several years, the General Manager or other senior personnel from Metro Transit have represented the Council in this initiative.

Rationale

The Council has participated in the Midtown Community Works Partnership for 22 years. The Partnership has been a valuable forum for ensuring transit- and transportation-related issues are incorporated into Corridor development and redevelopment discussions and planning. The Partnership's renewed focus on integrating policies and mobilizing investments for a vibrant Lake Street Midtown Greenway Corridor are consistent with the directions and guidelines for future regional growth and development identified in *Thrive MSP 2040*. The focus on Greenway safety and connections overlaps with the work of multiple Council divisions, including Metro Transit and Community Development.

The Council's participation is voluntary and is a forum for communication, coordination, and development of valuable and well-informed recommendations for the reinvestment in and recovery of the Lake Street – Greenway Corridor. The Council's ability to adopt policies in this area is unfettered because neither the Partnership nor the Council's participation in the Partnership can bind the Council without formal Council action.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The Council's participation in the Partnership supports the *Thrive* Outcomes of Prosperity, Equity, and Livability.

Funding

Annual fees currently are \$10,000 and will be covered by the Council-approved Metro Transit Bus Operating Budget.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to this business item. Current members of the Partnership support the Council's continued participation.