

Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of February 9, 2022

Subject: METRO Blue Line Extension Master Funding Agreement with Hennepin County

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Master Funding Agreement #211032 with Hennepin County (County) for the METRO Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit Project (Project).

Summary of Discussion

METRO Blue Line Project Lead Nick Landwer presented this item. Chamblis commented on her appreciation for the cooperation on the process.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Fredson. Motion carried.

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: January 24, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of February 9, 2022

Subject: METRO Blue Line Extension Master Funding Agreement with Hennepin County

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: FM14-1 Procurement Policy

Staff Prepared/Presented: Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510
Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507
Nick Landwer, BLRT Engineering Lead

Division/Department: Metro Transit / Blue Line Extension Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council (“Council”) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Master Funding Agreement #211032 with Hennepin County (County) for the METRO Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit Project (“Project”).

Background

The proposed Master Funding Agreement (“MFA”) provides the method for transfer of funds from the Council to the County for reimbursement of professional and construction services and provides a method for the transfer of funds from the County to the Council for activities related to the Project. The proposed MFA also identifies required federal, state, and local clauses, provisions, and procedures that govern Subordinate Funding Agreements (“SFA”s) and the MFA establishes the ability to enter into subsequent SFAs with Hennepin County. The SFAs are work order agreements that define the scope of work, authorize the use of funds, establish the schedule, and govern the transfer of funds between the Council and County. The Council anticipates executing future SFAs with Hennepin County for staffing, design, and construction related activities related to the BLRT Project.

Since August 2020, when the County and Council issued a joint statement on advancing the Project without using 8 miles of freight railroad right-of-way, the Council and County have been working together to explore community-supported alignments that mitigate the use of freight rail property. The Project anticipates recommending a community-supported route in March 2022, which will trigger the resumption of Environmental, Design and Engineering activities for the project. This MFA is necessary to support those activities and to advance the Project.

Rationale

The MFA will provide the ability for the Council to compensate the County for use of its technical and professional staff working on the Project and to transfer of funds from the County to the Council for expenses and activities related to the Project.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Investment in high-quality transportation options advance the Thrive outcome of Prosperity by providing new and improved access to economic and personal opportunity throughout the project corridor and increasing available workforce with affordable, convenient transportation.

Increased access to financial opportunities, educational opportunities, and health services are a key outcome of implementing the Project, advancing the Thrive outcome of Livability.

The Project advances Equity by investing in high quality, fast and frequent transit service. Roughly half of the corridor population identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). There are approximately 8,225 (14%) zero car households in the corridor and nearly 15 percent of households living below the poverty level.

Funding

There are no funding impacts associated with authorization of this MFA. Future SFAs would authorize use of funds for Project activities within the frameworks established by this MFA.

Small Business Inclusion

Not applicable for this type of agreement

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to the execution of the Master Funding Agreement.