

# Committee Report

Transportation Committee



**Committee Meeting Date:** July 10, 2023

**For the Metropolitan Council:** July 26, 2023

## Business Item: 2023-137

METRO Blue Line Extension Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Contract #22P366

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Contract #22P366 with Braun Intertec for consultant services for the METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension (BLRT) Project in an amount not to exceed \$616,504.

### Summary of Transportation Committee Discussion/Questions

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Capital Program Nick Thompson provided some background and context as an introduction to this item. Metro Transit Project Director Chris Beckwith introduced Environmental Compliance Lead Neha Damle who presented this item. Dolkar asked if the Phase I and Phase II work would be on the new route or all alternatives and how long will Phase II last. Damle responded that the work will happen on all routes still being considered and that the field work process will take approximately two months but the report will take longer (contract has a December 2024 end date). Dolkar asked in terms of timeline for when the reports are completed to when engineering phase would start and if the report is used to influence the route choice. Beckwith responded that we are studying all routes, and that this information along with other technical inputs will help determine a final route.

Motion by Morales, seconded by Dolkar. Motion carried.



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- 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, Interim General Manager, 612-349-7513  
Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507  
Nick Landwer, Blue Line Ext Dir. Of Design and Engineering, 651-373-3847  
Neha Damle, Blue Line Environmental Compliance Lead, 612-373-3811
- Division/Department:** METRO Transit Blue Line Extension Project Office (BPO)

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Contract #22P366 with Braun Intertec for consultant services for the METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension (BLRT) Project in an amount not to exceed \$616,504.

### Background

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

The BLRT 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.

Phase I ESA and Phase II ESA is required to be completed as a part of this environmental

process. Phase I ESA was completed in the fall and winter of 2022. The Council needs to contract for Phase II ESA environmental services to continue advancing the environmental effort for the project.

The consultant and associated subcontractors will provide services including:

- Drilling and trenching services
- Soil and groundwater sampling
- Sample analysis
- Response action plan for contaminated material management
- Final report for the Phase II ESA analysis

### **Rationale**

A Request for Proposals was issued on January 26, 2023. A pre-proposal meeting was hosted by Council staff that outlined the solicitation requirements, discussed project specifications, and responded to plan holder inquires. The Council received five proposals for Phase II ESA Environmental Services to be evaluated for the consideration of award.

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 highest ranked 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 prices have been determined to be fair and reasonable and recommend the Braun Intertec proposal as the most advantageous to the Council. 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 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 BLRT 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 both executed and pending Capital Grant Agreements 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.

