

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: September 23, 2024

For the Metropolitan Council: October 9, 2024

Business Item: 2024-260

Midtown Greenway Trail Expansion Planning – Authorization to Negotiate Contract for Planning and Engineering Services

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute contract 24P136 with Kimley-Horn and Associates to provide transportation planning and engineering services in an amount not to exceed \$534,350.

Summary of Transportation Committee Discussion/Questions

Metropolitan Transportation Services Planning Analyst Steve Elmer presented this item.

Sierra Club spoke near the beginning of the meeting and offered the following comment relating to this business item:

The public and other levels of government want to ensure, as dictated by state law, that the Met Council's planning identifies

1. "estimates for construction costs broken out by segments and features"
2. legal parameters of "a reasonable easement or shared use agreement for the Short Line Bridge between the railroad [CPKC] and the entity responsible for operating the trail."

In response to these questions raised by the Sierra Club, MTS Director Charles Carlson said that the Council will address all of the activities specified in the state law and that the easement agreement with the railroad, because it is specialized and not engineering related, is not included in this contract, but would be addressed through a separate RFP or some other mechanism. Also in response, Steve Elmer stated that detailed construction costs will definitely be covered under multiple tasks and sub-tasks.

Council member Carter asked if it makes sense to do this technical work of assessing alternatives ahead of drafting an agreement with the railroad not knowing whether there would be a real option for the railroad? Elmer replied that railroad coordination will be a big part of this contract and that it may be unlikely for a railroad to commit to an alternative, one way or the other, this early in the design process. To address this possible outcome, this work has included an option for a separate trail-only crossing of the Mississippi River as a contingency option in the event there's not an agreeable alternative for using the rail bridge. Elmer noted there was strong support among the participating agencies in this planning work for adding this contingency option into the work scope. Member Carter asserted that there may be a level of technical work on alignment options that is required to put forth a clear alternative for consideration by the railroad and that was the intent of including this option. Elmer affirmed the statement. Chair Barber stated appreciation for the parallel dual path approach outlined for this planning effort, given the intention of the legislation is to make the connection.

It was moved by Chamblis, seconded by Carter, Toni. Motion carried.

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Midtown Greenway Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Expansion Planning, Contract 24P136

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:	Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director, Finance & Planning, 651-602-1058 Cole Hiniker, Senior Manager, Multimodal Planning, 651-602-1748 Steve Elmer, Planning Analyst, 651-602-1756
Division/Department:	Transportation / Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

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Background

An extension of the Midtown Greenway over the Mississippi River via the existing Short Line rail bridge in Minneapolis has long been contemplated as a promising opportunity to connect the Twin Cities for people biking, walking, and rolling. The 2023 State Legislature included this Midtown Greenway Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Expansion Planning project within the Omnibus Transportation Finance Bill (MN Session Law-2023, Article 4, Sec. 120). The law directed the Metropolitan Council to plan a continuous and dedicated bicycle/pedestrian trail from the current eastern terminus of the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis, across the Mississippi River and terminating at Allianz Field in Saint Paul, and to include a branch trail connection to the University of Minnesota main campus that terminates at 27th Avenue SE in Minneapolis. The purpose of this contract is to provide consultant support to meet the state law requirements. This project has an anticipated completion date of late 2025.

A Request for Proposals was issued on June 13, 2024. A pre-proposal meeting was hosted by Council staff on June 20, 2024, outlining the solicitation requirements, discussing project specifications, and responding to plan holder inquiries. There were twenty-two registered plan holders with eighteen identified as consultants, and eleven plan holders identified as minority, woman, veteran, small, or disadvantaged business enterprises. The Council received four proposals on July 13, 2024, to be evaluated for the consideration of award and used proposer quality, qualifications, experience, and price as criteria. The evaluation panel reached a consensus on August 19, 2024, that the proposal submitted by Kimley-Horn and Associates is most advantageous to the Council and recommend for award.

Rationale

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

Thrive Lens Analysis

This study project advances a major bicycle and pedestrian trail concept which, upon construction, will provide a major trail connection between the Twin Cities that supports three Thrive Outcomes. A completed Midtown Greenway trail extension will support

- Equity, by connecting communities with high BIPOC and/or lower income populations
- Livability, by providing attractive opportunities for recreational walking, biking, and rolling, and
- Sustainability, by adding new transportation routes and connections that will enhance biking and walking as viable and attractive alternatives to driving alone

Funding

The Midtown Greenway Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Expansion is to be funded from revenues of the Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax as per state legislation. The project funding is included in the MTS Division's 2024 Operating Budget and draft 2025 Operating Budget. The project is also included in the Draft 2025 Unified Planning Work Program as a non-Consolidated Planning Grant funded project.

Small Business Inclusion

The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (OEEO) assigned a Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business (MCUB) goal of 11% for this solicitation. OEEO determined that the firm being recommended for award met the MCUB requirements of this contract.

