

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: August 11, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: August 27, 2025

Business Item: 2025-208

Authorize Grant Agreement with the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota for Washington Ave. Bridge Suicide Prevention Barriers

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a grant agreement in the amount of \$2 million with the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota for the design and construction of pedestrian and suicide deterrent barriers on the Washington Avenue bridge.

Summary of Transportation Committee discussion/questions

Metropolitan Transportation Services Grants Manager Nicole Clapp presented this item. Cameron and Obisakin stated how important this is for families and communities who have lost loved ones. Metropolitan Transportation Services Executive Director Charles Carlsons stated that since this was directed by the Legislature and that TAB members were able to select it as a project, that TAB asked that it not be brought through the TAB process.

Motion by Osman, seconded by Obisakin. Motion carried, consent to Council.

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District(s), member(s):	District 7 – Yassin Osman
Policy/legal reference:	FM 15-2 Grant/Loan Approval Policy, FM 14-2 Expenditures for the Procurement of Goods and Services Policy
Staff prepared/presented:	Arin Knutson, Sr. Grant Administrator, MTS (612) 349-7643 Nicole Clapp, Grants Manager MTS Finance & Admin. (651) 602-1723
Division/department:	Transportation / Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a grant agreement in the amount of \$2 million with the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota for the design and construction of pedestrian and suicide deterrent barriers on the Washington Avenue bridge.

Background

In the 2025 legislative session the legislature allocated \$2 million for a grant in fiscal year 2026 to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota for the design and construction of pedestrian enclosures and suicide deterrent barriers on the Washington Avenue pedestrian bridge on the Twin Cities campus. This project may include a new railing system, improved integrated lighting, surveillance, signage, and related site and utility improvements. The money may also be used for improvements to existing temporary barriers on the bridge.

The funding for this grant was allocated by the legislature from the Transportation Advisory Board's active transportation portion of the Regional Sales and Use Tax authorized by Minnesota Statutes 473.4465, subdivision 3.

Rationale

Council action is required for the Regional Administrator to execute agreements over \$500,000. The requested action will allow the Regional Administrator to execute the grant agreement with the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota. The Metropolitan Council may award grant funds to meet specific public purpose needs.

Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, these projects promote stewardship, equity, sustainability, and livability by furthering access to transit.

Funding

Funding for this grant agreement is \$2,000,000 in Regional Sales and Use Tax funds authorized in Business Item 2025-107 JT, approved by the Council on June 25, 2025 for use in active transportation projects.

Small business inclusion

The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity did not review for small business goals. The University of Minnesota is handling the solicitation for this project, and their small business programs will be applied.

