

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: September 22, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: September 24, 2025

Business Item: 2025-238 SW

Airport Employee Dial-a-Ride Service, Contract 23P201 – Amendment 1

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute an amendment to contract 23P201 with Transportation Plus, Inc. that will increase the contract value by \$650,000 for a total contract not to exceed amount of \$4,131,500.

Summary of Transportation Committee discussion/questions

John Harper, Manager of Contracted Transit Service, presented the item including sharing information about the service as a whole and specific to the contract. He shared that the program is not considered public transit from the Federal Transit Administration, and, therefore, is not an appropriate fit for the MTS service portfolio. Thus, MTS intends to sunset the program at approximately year end 2025.

Discussion followed about the program overall. Member Cameron shared her perspective on transportation as a common barrier to connecting immigrant communities to employment. Harper shared that staff within MTS recognize the value of connecting employees to entry level jobs during the late night/early morning timeframe. MTS staff has reached out to Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) staff and Metro Transit Service Development to help find alternative transportation options for participants.

Chair Chamblis and Member Cameron encouraged continued outreach to MAC and the airport employers to investigate options that may replace this service. Exec. Dir. Carlson shared that MTS will continue partner communication and coordination.

Member Toni Carter shared her appreciation for the program and the ongoing work of providing transportation access to employment.

Motion by Cameron, seconded by Toni Carter. Motion carried.

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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:	Charles Carlson, Executive Director, 651-602-1761 Gerri Sutton, Director of Contracted Services, 651-602-1672 John Harper, Manager Contracted Services, 651-602-1744
Division/department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services/Contracted Services

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute an amendment to contract 23P201 with Transportation Plus, Inc. that will increase the contract value by \$650,000 for a total contract not to exceed amount of \$4,131,500.

Background

In January 2024, the Metropolitan Council authorized the Regional Administrator, through Business Item 2024-11, to negotiate and execute Contract 23P021 with Transportation Plus to provide transit service to airport employees. The Airport Employee Dial-a-Ride Service is a shared ride public transportation service for employees of airport-related employers located at or adjacent to MSP International Airport. The service provides trips to entry-level employees who have no reasonable fixed-route transit option available because their shift either starts or ends late at night or early in the morning. The service is offered to employees of airport-related employers who agree to pay the employees' fare for each trip and play a role in facilitating efficient service delivery.

The service started in 2016 and was designed to connect new immigrants and other underserved populations to entry-level airport jobs. The program started as a pilot partnership with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, with the possibility of folding in other overnight employees with no public transit option, but the expansion didn't materialize. The service was provided using Transit Link vehicles and operators for a few years, then transitioned to Metro Mobility contracts given nearly 24-hour availability of drivers. Ultimately, the service was shifted to its own contract, through a competitive process, in early 2024.

Earlier this year, the National Transit Database reviewers notified the Council that the service did not qualify as public transit given its availability to a limited scope of employees and employers. Additionally, demand for the service has more than doubled in the last year and expenses have far outpaced original projections. Given these developments, Council staff has notified our project partners, Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and Ramsey County Workforce Center that the

service will be discontinued.

MTS recommends extending the service through December 31, 2025, in order to allow these employees and employers time to explore alternative transportation options so as to retain employment.

Rationale

Council Policy requires amendments exceeding 10% of the original authorized contract value be approved by the Council if the cumulative value exceeds \$500,000. Amendments to contracts that exceed 10% of the original value constitute sole source procurements.

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, this amendment will promote the Thrive Outcome of Prosperity by providing access to jobs for immigrants and other targeted residents of the region and by improving service delivery at a critical regional facility until other solutions are found.

Funding

Funding for this service is included in the 2025 Transit Link budget.

Small business inclusion

The original procurement was done utilizing a sole source. Therefore, the Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity did not assign a Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business (MCUB) goal. There are no impacts with this amendment.

