

ACTION TRANSMITTAL No. 2021-09

DATE: February 10, 2021

TO: Transportation Advisory Board

FROM: Technical Advisory Committee

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SUBJECT: Program Year Change Request: City of Brooklyn Park CSAH 103 Projects Near the Blue Line Extension

REQUESTED ACTION: The City of Brooklyn Park requests a program year change for two CSAH 103 projects to move funding to 2025 and 2026 to align with the Blue Line Light Rail Transit Extension.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the Transportation Advisory Board consider technical committee comments and determine whether to approve moving the following two CSAH 103-related Regional Solicitation grants potentially changing years:

- CSAH 103 from 85th Ave to 93rd Ave reconstruction/lane expansion from 2022 to 2025 (110-020-041)
- CSAH 103 from 74th Ave to 93rd Ave streetscape and transit improvements from 2023 to 2026 (110-020-042)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: Based on issues with BNSF railroad, the City of Brooklyn Park is requesting an exception to TAB’s Program Year Policy (attached). The City would like to move two projects back three years each to align with construction of the Blue Line Extension (Bottineau LRT).

In the 2018 Regional Solicitation, Brooklyn Park was awarded two projects that tie into the Blue Line Extension: a reconstruction and lane expansion project (strategic capacity funding category) with the LRT running down the center median and a streetscaping and transit improvements project in between future LRT stations (pedestrian facilities funding category) (see Table 1 and the attached project one-pagers). The Blue Line extension was originally scheduled to begin construction in 2019. However, Hennepin County’s and Metro Transit’s negotiations with the BNSF railroad have delayed the project until 2024 or 2025, as project partners explore options to advance the project without using the railroad property.

Table 1: Regional Solicitation Awards CSAH 103

Funding Cycle	Applicant	Project	Award Amount	Existing Year	Requested Year
2018	Brooklyn Park	Reconstruct, 2-to-4-lane conversion with trails	\$7,000,000	2022	2025
2018	Brooklyn Park	Streetscaping / transit improvements	\$1,000,000	2023	2026

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) manages the \$90 million annual program of projects programmed by the Regional Solicitation. The request does not follow TAB's Program Year Policy, which states that the maximum length of a program year extension is one year. Due to extenuating circumstances, the applicants are requesting an exception to the policy.

STAFF ANALYSIS: While the program year policy only allows for one-year, one-time program year extensions, this is a unique circumstance. The projects are dependent on Metro Transit's construction of the Blue Line Extension.

From a programming perspective, there are no known issues with the request. There are enough projects to fill the \$7,000,000 funding hole left in 2022 and the \$1,000,000 hole left in 2023.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS: At its January 21, 2021, meeting, the TAC Funding & Programming Committee voted unanimously to forward comments to the Technical Advisory Committee. Members also discussed the need to potentially revisit the Program Year Policy and add guidance for when exceptions to the policy can occur (e.g., when a project is delayed because the project sponsor conducts a longer Environmental Impact Statement instead of the more common Environmental Assessment).

At its February 3, 2021, meeting, the Technical Advisory Committee voted unanimously to forward comments to the Transportation Advisory Board. In addition to comments provided by staff and the Funding & Programming Committee, TAC noted that the Blue Line Extension's schedule is uncertain, which could jeopardize the letting dates of these projects. Members also suggested that the Program Year Policy needs to consider what type of projects should be considered for exceptions to the standard one-year and one-time rules.

Table 2: Pros/Cons of Granting Exception to Program Year Policy

Pros	Cons
-Pulling the funding may result in one or more of the Regional Solicitation projects not being included in the larger project or other project elements not being included to stay within budget.	-There is time for the City of Brooklyn Park to reapply next funding cycle for the streetscaping project (the roadway project request is for 2025, which was just programmed in the 2020 Regional Solicitation).
-This section of the Blue Line Extension alignment is not on the BNSF right-of-way, rendering it a low risk for change, provided the project moves forward.	-There is risk that the Blue Line Extension could be delayed further as a new alignment is not known at this time.
-Limited financial impact to the overall Regional Solicitation program.	-The approach is not consistent with how TAB deals with other program year extension requests.
-TAB has the ability to help with the success of one the largest transit expansion projects planned in the region in the next decade.	
-Combining projects is better for the travelling public due to minimization of construction impacts.	

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE SCHEDULED/COMPLETED
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	1/17/2021
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	2/3/2021
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Approve	2/17/2021