

ACTION TRANSMITTAL No. 2020-32

DATE: August 26, 2020

TO: Technical Advisory Committee

FROM: TAC Funding and Programming Committee

PREPARED BY: Cole Hiniker, Manager of Multimodal Planning (612-743-2215)
Steve Peterson, Manager of Highway Planning and TAC/TAB Process (651-602-1819)

SUBJECT: 2020 Regional Solicitation: Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project Selection Timeline Revision

Metro Transit requests that the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) approve the following:

REQUESTED ACTION:

- Allow a timeline extension of the project selection for F Line in the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project funding category from December 2020 to April 2021.
- Include \$25 million for the F Line arterial bus rapid transit project in the 2020 Regional Solicitation project selection.

That the Technical Advisory Committee recommend that TAB approves the following:

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

- Allow a timeline extension of the project selection for F Line in the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project funding category from December 2020 to April 2021.
- Direct staff to include \$25 million for the F Line arterial bus rapid transit project in all 2020 Regional Solicitation funding options brought forward for TAB consideration.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: When the 2020 Regional Solicitation was released, a new funding category was created to allow for a single arterial bus rapid transit project to receive up to \$25 million without needing to submit a formal application for funding. This new category was created in acknowledgement of the past success of arterial bus rapid transit applications and also the inefficient approach to funding corridors one \$7 million award at a time. It was also viewed as a positive step in making other transit applications more on par with each other from a competitiveness perspective, since arterial bus rapid transit projects would no longer compete in Transit Expansion or Transit Modernization.

The selection process for the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project category states the following:

“The arterial bus rapid transit project will not be evaluated with a scored application. TAB will select the arterial BRT project concurrent with other Regional Solicitation project selections. Background information on the potential arterial BRT lines and the prioritization through Network Next will be provided by Metro Transit along with a funding recommendation for TAB decision-making.”

Since the time when the Regional Solicitation applications were released, there have been some significant changes to the schedule for Network Next in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent civil unrest following George Floyd's murder. There are increased expectations for authentic and robust community engagement in Network Next in addition to new challenges resulting from the pandemic. Metro Transit is proposing to expand the engagement around Network Next and the specific plan to develop a list of arterial bus rapid transit projects, which includes specifically naming the F Line. Specific to the selection of the F Line, Metro Transit is planning to engage communities in fall 2020 and winter 2021 prior to asking the TAB to select and confirm the F Line in spring 2021 as part of the ongoing Regional Solicitation.

With this delay in the F Line identification, there is no reasonable way to identify a specific project in time for the Regional Solicitation project selection process that is scheduled to occur at TAB in December 2020. Metro Transit is requesting a delay until April 2021 to accommodate their revised schedule, meaning project selection will occur after the rest of the Regional Solicitation. Metro Transit is committed to bringing an update to TAB in December 2020 to share the top tier of potential F Line corridors (likely 3-4 corridors). In addition, because the staff will begin drafting funding scenarios for the Regional Solicitation in September 2020, they need direction on how to accommodate the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project category in the funding scenarios. Metro Transit is requesting that \$25 million be allocated for the selection of an F Line, which is expected to be necessary given the recent experience with arterial bus rapid transit project costs and the estimated length of the ABRT lines on the potential corridor list.

The Regional Solicitation Policymaker Work Group met on August 6, 2020 and were supportive of the proposed action, including the information brought forward by Metro Transit on the Network Next schedule adjustments. The item is scheduled for an information presentation at TAB on August 19 and any feedback from that discussion will be brought forward to the technical committees.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: TAB approves Regional Solicitation project selections for concurrence by the Metropolitan Council and recommends the Transportation Improvement Program for approval to the Metropolitan Council.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ACTION: At its August 20, 2020, meeting the Funding & Programming Committee voted unanimously to recommend the following:

- Allowing a timeline extension of the project selection for F Line in the Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Project funding category from December 2020 to April 2021.
- Direct staff to include \$25 million for the F Line arterial bus rapid transit project in all 2020 Regional Solicitation funding options brought forward for TAB consideration.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	SCHEDULED / COMPLETION DATE
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	8/20/2020
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	9/2/2020
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Adopt	9/16/2020
