

## Transportation Committee

Meeting date: August 25, 2014

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 10, 2014

**Subject:** Cooperative Funding Agreement for Project Development with Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Cooperation Agreement, and Master Funding Agreement with Minnesota Department of Transportation for the Blue Line Extension Project

**District(s), Member(s):** All

**Policy/Legal Reference:** Mn Statutes, Section 473.399, 473.129, and 473.405

**Staff Prepared/Presented:**

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**Division/Department:** Metro Transit

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute the following agreements for the Blue Line Extension Project:

- 1) Cooperative Funding Agreement for Project Development with Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority; and
- 2) Cooperation Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation; and
- 3) Master Funding Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation

### Background

The Blue Line Extension Project (Bottineau Transitway) is a 13-mile project in the northwest Twin Cities area through the communities of Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. The Metropolitan Council amended the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* (TPP) to include LRT as the mode in this corridor, and selected the locally preferred alternative (LPA) May 2013.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for this project was published in April 2014. The Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRRA) have jointly requested Federal Transit Administration approval for entry into Project Development (PD), on June 12, 2014. Metropolitan Council staff is also in the process of securing a contract for PD engineering services and will be requesting Council action shortly for authorization to negotiate and execute that contract.

HCRRRA has committed \$18.4 million for a portion of the PD work, which is anticipated to cost \$46 million. The proposed Cooperative Funding Agreement will allow the Council to draw down those funds once FTA approves entry into Project Development.

In the past for both Green Line (Central Corridor) LRT and Green Line Extension (Southwest) LRT projects, the Council has executed agreements with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to tap their technical expertise and reimburse them for time dedicated to the project. The Cooperation Agreement establishes the framework for the project development and construction. The Master Funding Agreement provides the method to transfer funds. The Council will pass through project funds for costs related to those activities through annual Subordinate Funding Agreements, which will define the amount of funds to be committed by the Council to MnDOT and the specific purpose for those funds. Neither the Cooperation Agreement nor the Master Funding Agreement obligates Council for any particular funding amount.

### **Rationale**

Execution of the Cooperative Funding Agreement with HCRRA is needed prior to securing a professional services contract for engineering services to complete Project Development. Execution of the Cooperation Agreement and the Master Funding Agreement with MnDOT will provide the ability for a Blue Line Extension Project Office to manage the use of MnDOT's technical and professional staff working on the Blue Line Extension project.

### **Funding**

Funding commitments have been made by Counties Transit Improvement Board for \$27.6 million and HCRRA for \$18.4 million for Project Development work upon FTA's approval of entry into PD. The 2014 Capital Investment Bonding Bill, authorized money for the Blue Line Extension (Bottineau) LRT project which the Council allocated \$1 million.

### **Known Support / Opposition**

There is no known opposition to the execution of the three agreements.