

## Transportation Committee

Meeting date: August 14, 2017

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 23, 2017

<b>Subject:</b>	METRO Gold Line - Authorization of Local Cooperative Funding Agreements for Project Development
<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District 12 (Melander), District 11 (Rummel), District 13, (Kramer)
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	MN Statutes, Section 473.399
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Brian Lamb, General Manager, 612-349-7510 Charles Carlson, Senior Manager, BRT/Small Starts, 612-349-7639
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Metro Transit BRT/Small Starts Project Office

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute the following agreements for the METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (Gold Line) Project:

- 1) Cooperative Funding Agreement (CFA) for Project Development (PD) with Washington County, Ramsey County, and Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) in an amount not to exceed \$17,000,000; and
- 2) Assignment and Assumption of the 2015 and 2016 Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) Capital Grant Awards from Washington County to Metropolitan Council in an amount not to exceed \$6,000,000.

### Background

The Gold Line is a planned 9-mile transitway that would run generally along the north side of Interstate 94 in primarily an exclusive lane for buses within Ramsey and Washington Counties. The Council is the local project sponsor or lead agency for the Gold Line and is planning to request entry into the Project Development phase of the Capital Investment Grant Program as a New Starts project in late Summer or early Fall 2017. Acceptance into the Program by the Federal Transit Administration is anticipated in the late Fall 2017.

Metro Transit is procuring consultant services for design, environmental, and project management of the project and related purchases of technology, furnishings, and leased space. The proposed funding agreements and related upcoming capital budget authorization(s) provide funding for the Council to pursue project activities. Approval of consultant contract awards and a project office lease are anticipated in the Fall 2017.

On Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, Washington County is anticipated to take a board action to authorize the Assignment and Assumption of the two existing capital grant agreements from Washington County to the Council. On Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, CTIB is anticipated to take a board action to consent to the Assignment and Assumption of the agreements from Washington County to the Council.

On Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, Washington County, Ramsey County, and Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority are anticipated to take respective board actions to authorize the Cooperative Funding Agreement for PD.

## **Rationale**

Council Policy requires that interagency agreements valued at greater than \$500,000 be approved by the Council. The CFA Agreement establishes a framework for the partnership between the Counties and Met Council for delivering the Gold Line Project. The proposed cooperative funding agreement with Washington County and Ramsey County/RCRRA and assignment of CTIB Capital Grant Awards will make funds available for project activities, anticipated to be authorized in separate capital budget amendment(s).

## **Thrive Lens Analysis**

Investment in high-quality transportation options will advance the Thrive outcome of prosperity, by making the region more economically competitive through increased workers' access to employment, and support to employers by increasing available workforce with affordable, convenient transportation.

The Gold Line project advances the Equity outcome by distributing transit resources throughout the region, benefitting regional residents and increasing transit service quality. The Gold Line project also serves communities that are home to more than 20 percent of the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area's zero car households; approximately 36,000 adults in the corridor communities live without a vehicle. Increased access to financial opportunities, educational opportunities, and health services are a key outcome of implementing the Gold Line, advancing the Thrive outcome of livability.

By laying the foundation for a productive partnership between agencies, these agreements with Washington County and Ramsey County/RCRRA will increase the Council's ability to carry out its principle of working collaboratively.

## **Funding**

The proposed action will authorize agreements to make available \$23 million in committed funding from Washington County, Ramsey County/RCRRA and CTIB to the Council for the Gold Line Project.

When authorized in an upcoming Capital Budget amendment, the funds will join \$2 million appropriated to the Council by the State of Minnesota in 2014. Together, the Gold Line's Project Development phase is fully funded at \$25 million.

The funding agreements must be executed before the Council can begin project PD-phase expenditures.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

There is no known opposition. The Gold Line Project is a key transportation priority of the project's local funding partners party to the requested agreement authorizations.