

### Transportation Committee

Meeting date: August 24, 2020

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 26, 2020

**Subject:** Authority to Execute the Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Full Funding Grant Agreement if Awarded by the Federal Transit Administration  
**District(s), Member(s):** All  
**Policy/Legal Reference:** Minn. Stat. §§ 473.3997; 473.3999  
**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510  
Jim Alexander, Project Director, 612-373-3880  
Joan Hollick, Deputy Project Director, 612-373-3820  
**Division/Department:** Metro Transit / Green Line Extension Project Office

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Chair and the Regional Administrator to execute the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Project (SWLRT) with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in an amount of \$928.8 million if awarded by the FTA.

### Background

In May 2010, the Council approved the Locally Preferred Alignment and amended the Transportation Policy Plan to include SWLRT. In September 2011, the FTA approved the Council’s application to enter Project Development. In May 2015, the SWLRT Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement was published and in May 2016, the Final Environmental Impact Statement was published. In July 2016, the FTA issued a Record of Decision that determined the SWLRT, as proposed by the Council, met the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). In February 2018, the SWLRT Supplemental Environmental Assessment was published and in May 2018, the FTA issued an Amended Record of Decision.

SWLRT scope includes 16 new stations, 14.5 miles of new double track, 27 new light rail vehicles, modifications to the existing Franklin Operations and Maintenance Facility, and a rail support facility centrally located in Hopkins. SWLRT will operate primarily at-grade, with structures providing grade separation of LRT crossings, roadways, and water bodies at specified locations. It will operate in an LRT tunnel in a portion of the Kenilworth corridor in Minneapolis and under Trunk Highway 62 at the Minnetonka-Eden Prairie city line. The overall SWLRT budget is \$2.003 billion.

### Rationale

The FTA has completed its technical capacity and capability assessment, and financial capacity assessment, and found the Council fit to design, construct, and operate SWLRT. Furthermore, the FTA has approved four Letters of No Prejudice (LONP) enabling the Council to incur construction costs for the Project prior to the FFGA and retain eligibility of those expenditures for future FTA grant assistance once the FFGA is executed.

The SWLRT FFGA was formally submitted to Congress on August 4, 2020, for the required 30-day review. This requested action is to seek Council authority to execute the FFGA as soon as the FTA indicates it is ready to do so.



## **Thrive Lens Analysis**

- Livability  
SWLRT will increase the region's prosperity as it will provide access to 80,900 forecasted jobs and a new transportation option for 55,800 forecasted residents within ½ mile of the planned new stations in addition to the 145,300 forecasted jobs and 35,600 forecasted residents in downtown Minneapolis.
- Prosperity  
SWLRT supports minority and women owned small businesses with nearly \$80 million paid for engineering and construction work to DBE registered firms.

## **Funding**

All local match funding in the amount of \$1.074 billion is committed from local funding partners including the former Counties Transit Improvement Board, Hennepin County, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, the State of Minnesota, and the cities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

All local funding partners support the Council executing the FFGA.