

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: January 10, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of January 26, 2022

Subject: Gold Line 2022-2026 Capital Grant Agreement #21I042 with the Joint Powers Board

District(s), Member(s): District 12 (Gonzalez), District 11 (Vento), District 13 (Lee)

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statutes, Section 473.399

Staff Prepared/Presented: Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510
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Chris Beckwith, Gold Line Project Director, 651-602-1994

Division/Department: Metro Transit/METRO Gold Line Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute METRO Gold line Bus Rapid Transit (Gold Line) Capital Grant Agreement #21I042 with the Gold Line Joint Powers Board (JPB) in the total amount not to exceed \$148,840,529 for calendar years 2022 through 2026.

Background

The Gold Line is a planned 10-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 was granted entry into the Engineering phase of the Capital Investment Grant Program by the Federal Transit Administration as a New Starts project in April 2021. A Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) from the FTA will be requested early in 2022.

In 2019, the Council executed a Capital Grant Agreement (Business Item 2019-228) with the JPB to fund Project Development, Engineering, and Right-of-Way acquisition activities through 2021 and this agreement was amended to extend to March 31, 2022. The proposed Capital Grant Agreement, which will supersede the current Capital Grant Agreement, will provide the remainder of local funding contributions for the Gold Line from the Counties of Washington and Ramsey who comprise the JPB, and will allow the Council to continue pursuing project activities including issuance of a civil construction contract for the project.

This agreement would allow the Council to receiving funds with financial oversight from the JPB through the Project's start of revenue service.

Rationale

Council Policy requires that interagency agreements valued at greater than \$500,000 be approved by the Council. The Capital Grant Agreement for 2022 through 2026 establishes a framework for the partnership between the Counties and Met Council for delivering the Gold Line Project, and 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. For those adults in the Gold Line corridor communities 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 will increase the Council's ability to carry out its principle of working collaboratively.

Funding

The proposed action will make available committed funding from Washington and Ramsey Counties through their Joint Powers Board to the Council for the Gold Line Project. After the agreement is executed, a separate Council action will seek to authorize agreement funds into the Council's Authorized Capital Program in project 61402. The project is included in the CIP.

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.