

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: November 28, 2022

For the Metropolitan Council: December 14, 2022

Business Item: 2022-312

METRO B Line – Hennepin County Joint Powers and Cooperative Construction Agreement

District(s), Member(s):	District 6 (Pacheco), District 7 (Lilligren), District 8 (Muse)
Policy/Legal Reference:	MN Statutes 117.012, 473.405, and Council Policy 3-2-2 Income/Grants
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Wes Kooistra, General Manager, 612-349-7510 Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507 Katie Roth, Director, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7772 Frank Alarcon, Project Manager, BRT, 612-349-7692
Division/Department:	Metro Transit / Arterial BRT

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute agreement 22I046 with Hennepin County to receive approximately \$9,000,000 of funds for County-requested improvements along the METRO B Line corridor and for right-of-way management authority needed for construction of the B Line project.

Background

The B Line project involves construction of BRT stations along a 13-mile corridor from Uptown in Minneapolis to Union Depot in Saint Paul, primarily along Lake Street in Minneapolis and Marshall and Selby Avenues in Saint Paul. Since 2018, Metro Transit has coordinated B Line corridor planning and design with Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

Hennepin County has identified the need to construct pedestrian, signal, and pavement improvements along Lake Street to improve safety and accessibility for roadway users. Council and Hennepin County staff have determined that constructing these projects as part of B Line construction contracts held by the Council is most advantageous to both agencies and the public. The Council will lead construction of the B Line project, along with County-requested and County-funded improvements along Lake Street. Through this agreement, Hennepin County will contribute funds for design and construction of the County-requested improvements along Lake Street.

Also through this Agreement, the County will grant permits and access to easements and rights-of-way owned or maintained by the County for B Line construction at no cost to the Council, and exercise its right-of-way management powers necessary for the construction of the B Line, including but not limited to those powers pertaining to the relocation of utilities within City rights-of-way.

Rationale

Council policy requires that joint powers agreements in any amount and interagency agreements

valued at greater than \$500,000 be approved by the Council. An agreement with Hennepin County will make County funds available to award the construction contract for the project in a future Council action.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The B Line will upgrade and substantially replace Route 21, Metro Transit's second-highest ridership bus route. Investment in high-quality transportation options in the Route 21 corridor 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 B Line project and County-funded improvements along the corridor advance the Thrive outcome of Equity by investing in a transit corridor serving communities of color. More than half of Route 21 riders identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). Investment in the B Line will provide riders with faster service and a more comfortable waiting and riding experience, and County-funded along the corridor will make it safer and more accessible for users.

The proposed action also advances the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by planning for METRO B Line corridor improvements efficiently with regional partnership from Hennepin County, Ramsey County, the City of Minneapolis, and the City of Saint Paul.

Funding

The proposed action will authorize an agreement to make funds in the amount of approximately \$9,000,000 available from Hennepin County for the County's locally requested improvements along Lake Street. The County's funding is separate from the B Line project, and budget authorization is not required.

Small Business Inclusion

There is no contracting, and therefore no small business inclusion, associated with this action.

