

Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: February 27, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: March 8, 2023

Business Item: 2023-17

METRO B Line – Ramsey County Cooperative Construction Agreement

District(s), Member(s):	District 14 (Fredson)
Policy/Legal Reference:	FM 15-1 Income / Grants Policy
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Lesley Kandaras, Interim General Manager, 612-349-7517 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 22I053 with Ramsey County to receive approximately \$900,000 of funds for County-requested improvements along the METRO B Line corridor.

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.

Ramsey County has identified the need to construct signal improvements and implement lane restriping along Marshall Avenue to improve safety, transit operations, and signal operations. Council and Ramsey County staff have determined that constructing these improvements as part of a B Line construction contract 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 Marshall Avenue. Through this agreement, Ramsey County will contribute funds for design and construction of the County-requested improvements along Marshall Avenue.

Rationale

Council policy requires that interagency agreements valued at greater than \$500,000 be approved by the Council.

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 Ramsey 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 Ramsey County-funded improvements along the corridor will improve safety and transit operations.

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 \$900,000 available from Ramsey County for the County's locally requested improvements along Marshall Avenue. The County's funding is separate from the B Line project, and budget authorization is not required.

Small Business Inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small businesses with this action.

