

# Business Item

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: October 9, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: October 25, 2023

## Business Item: 2023-233

METRO E Line – Hennepin County Joint Powers and Cooperative Construction Agreement 231083

<b>District(s), Member(s):</b>	District 5 (Pacheco Jr.), District 6 (Lilligren), District 7 (Osman)
<b>Policy/Legal Reference:</b>	MN Statutes §§ 473.405 and 471.59; Council Policy FM 14-2 Procurement Policy; FM 15-1 Income/Grants
<b>Staff Prepared/Presented:</b>	Lesley Kandaras, General Manager, 612-349-7513 Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507 Katie Roth, Director, Arterial BRT, 612-349-7772 Adam Smith, Manager, BRT Projects, 612-349-7160
<b>Division/Department:</b>	Metro Transit / Arterial BRT

### Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Agreement 231083 (“Agreement”), a joint powers income agreement in an amount exceeding \$500,000, with Hennepin County funds for County-requested improvements along the METRO E Line corridor and for right-of-way management authority needed for construction of the E Line project.

### Background

Through this Agreement, Hennepin County will contribute approximately \$5,600,000 for design and construction of County-requested improvements along the E Line corridor.

The E Line project involves construction of BRT stations along a 13-mile corridor from the University of Minnesota to Southdale Transit Center, primarily along University Avenue/4th Street, Hennepin Avenue, and France Avenue. Since 2018, Metro Transit has coordinated E Line corridor planning and design with Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and the cities of Minneapolis, Edina, and Saint Paul.

Hennepin County has identified the need to construct pedestrian, signal, and pavement improvements along University Avenue, Hennepin Avenue, and France Avenue to improve safety and accessibility for roadway users. Council and Hennepin County staff have determined that constructing these improvements as part of an E Line construction contract held by the Council is most advantageous to both agencies and the public. The Council will lead construction of the E Line project, along with County-requested and County-funded improvements along the corridor.

Through this Agreement, the County will also grant permits and access to easements and rights-of-way owned or maintained by the County for E Line construction and exercise its right-of-way management powers necessary for the construction of the E Line, including but not limited to those powers pertaining to the relocation of utilities within County 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.

## **Thrive Lens Analysis**

The E Line will upgrade Route 6, one of Metro Transit's highest ridership bus routes. Investment in high-quality transit options in the Route 6 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 E Line project advances the Thrive outcome of Equity by improving transit access for communities of color and for workers at low wage jobs. Investment in the E Line will provide riders with faster service and a more comfortable waiting and riding experience.

The proposed action also advances the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by planning for E Line corridor improvements efficiently with regional partnership with Hennepin County.

## **Funding**

The proposed action will authorize an agreement to make funds in the amount of approximately \$5,600,000 available from Hennepin County for the County's locally requested improvements along the E Line corridor. The County's funding is separate from the E Line project, and budget authorization is not required.

## **Small Business Inclusion**

There is no contracting related to this action so no Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal was set. The construction work associated with this action will be delivered as part of a future Council contract and the Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity will review that project for a DBE goal.

