
Sponsor: Parks & Recreation

Meeting Date: 7/9/2024

Title: Acceptance of Federal Congressionally Directed funding under the Highway Infrastructure Program for the Phase 2 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Project.

File Number: 2024-286

Background and Rationale:

The Bruce Vento Regional Trail corridor is 13 miles in length and extends from the east side of downtown Saint Paul to the north county line at County Road J in Ramsey County. The southern seven-mile segment of the regional trail was completed in 2005 from downtown Saint Paul to Buerkle Road in Ramsey County on former Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway. The remaining six miles of the trail north of Buerkle Road to County Road J is still undeveloped due to active rail use.

During 2021-2022, the Parks & Recreation department launched a project for the Phase 2 Bruce Vento Regional Trail section to develop a Preliminary Design Report to further explore the preferred regional trail route identified within the Bruce Vento Long Range Plan. The goal for this project was to identify corridor site impacts for the preferred trail alignment, easement and acquisition needs, develop design scenario's, preliminary design to a 20% level, conceptual cost estimation for potential trail improvements and engage the community through multiple engagement sessions.

In efforts to continue design for the Phase 2 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Project, Ramsey County submitted a Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD) application in 2021 for Federal Highway Infrastructure funds to complete preliminary and final design for the Phase 2 section and was awarded federal funds in the amount \$1,300,000 to full fill 80% of the estimated project budget. Federal funding awarded for the Phase 2 Bruce Vento Project is considered earmark funding designated under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 within Division L, Title I, Highway Infrastructure Program. Federal funds flow through the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) State Aid for funded projects. As a condition of receiving federal earmark funds, the Minnesota Department of Transportation requires a Federal Participation in Preliminary Engineering Agreement to be executed by Ramsey County. Another condition of federal funds requires Ramsey Count to provide a local match in the amount of \$325,000 to full fill the remaining 20% of the estimated project budget.

In February 2024, Ramsey County approved a Parks and Trails Amendment grant in the amount of \$325,000 to satisfy federal local funding match requirements for a total estimated project budget of \$1,625,000. This project will provide several benefits to Ramsey County residents and aligns with county strategic priorities for Residents First, Climate Mitigation and Resiliency, Intergenerational Prosperity, and Racial and Economic Inclusion.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Ratify the federal Transportation and Housing and Urban Development application for funding for the Phase 2 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Project.
2. Accept an award of Federal funding for the Phase 2 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Project in the amount of \$1,300,000, as designated and awarded under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 within Division L, Title I, Highway Infrastructure Program, and as administered by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.
3. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute an agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for Federal Participation in Preliminary Engineering as a funding requirement for the Phase 2 Bruce Vento Regional Trail project for a period of five years or until all obligations set forth have been satisfactorily fulfilled, whichever occurs first.
4. Accept the amended Phase 2 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Project Budget to \$1,625,000 to account for federal funding.
5. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and amendments to agreements, in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of the project budget.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Xiong, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board