
Sponsor: Parks & Recreation

Meeting Date: 7/2/2024

Title: Grant Agreement with the Metropolitan Council and Acceptance of Federal Funds for the Phase 1 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Project

File Number: 2024-234

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 the Phase 1 preliminary and final plan development project, an estimate was developed to identify the total cost of construction. More recently, as part of the Phase 1 construction plans and specification project, an updated construction estimate identified the total cost of the Phase 1 construction project in the amount of \$10,000,000.

To offset construction costs for the project, the Parks department sought out additional construction funding. In 2020, the Parks department applied for federal transportation funds through a regional solicitation process. The Phase 1 Bruce Vento Regional Trail Extension was approved for inclusion in the regions' 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which awarded federal funds in the amount of \$4,000,000. These funds will be distributed by Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

During the 2023 state legislative process, Ramsey County was awarded \$5,000,000 in state bonds for construction funding. The state of Minnesota has designated the Metropolitan Council as the grant administrator for state bonds funds and the Metropolitan Council has provided a grant agreement in the amount of \$5,000,000 to Ramsey County for approval. As a condition of the grant agreement, agencies are required to provide a land declaration with legal descriptions for the project area that will receive state financing for protection of land. Since the Phase 1 project is located entirely within public property, public road right-of-way, easements and/or permitted areas, a land declaration waiver was submitted to the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) Office. Upon further review by the MMB Office, the land declaration waiver request was approved and MMB requires Ramsey County to approve a land declaration waiver certification form in order to satisfy MMB requirements for general obligated bond financed property.

In February 2024, Ramsey County approved a local funding match in the amount of \$1,000,000 to satisfy state and federal local funding match requirements. The county local match funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 comprises 10% of the estimated funding that is needed to complete this phase of the project, in addition to fulfilling the total project budget of \$10,000,000. 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. Accept the grant award and approve the grant agreement with the Metropolitan Council for Phase 1 Bruce Vento Regional Trail project upon execution in the amount of \$5,000,000.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the grant agreement.
3. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute a Land Declaration Waiver Certification form as a component of the Metropolitan Council State Bond Grant Agreement for the Phase 1 Bruce Vento Regional Trail project.
4. Ratify the submittal of the grant application to the Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board Regional for Phase 1 Bruce Vento Trail Regional project.
5. Accept federal funds from Minnesota Department of Transportation for the Phase 1 Bruce Vento Regional Trail project in the amount of \$4,000,000.
6. Accept the amended budget project of 10,000,000 to account for both state and federal funding.
7. 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 grant funding.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Reinhardt, seconded by Commissioner Frethem. Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Reinhardt, and Xiong

Absent: - 1: Ortega

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board