
Sponsor: Public Works

Meeting Date: 2/27/2024

Title: 2024 - 2028 Transportation Improvement Program

File Number: 2024-044

Background and Rationale:

To qualify for state and federal funding and to proceed with construction projects, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners must approve the Public Works 5-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a planning document, and funding estimates identified in the TIP are reflected in the county's Capital Improvements Program budget. Similar programs have been developed each year since 1988.

The Public Works Department annually prepares the TIP using a collaborative process whereby the county solicits projects and input from area municipalities. Project inclusion in the TIP is based on a cooperative dialogue with municipal and state partners, along with technical analysis and consideration of funding opportunities. Communication and engagement ensure that projects are informed by a dialogue with a broad representation of residents. In addition, close coordination with municipal partners also ensures local needs and priorities are examined and addressed to the extent possible.

Projects included in the TIP are also viewed through the lens of the Ramsey County All Abilities Transportation Network (AATN) policy, which prioritizes the most vulnerable users (i.e. pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, etc.) first.

The design, construction, and right-of-way costs identified in the TIP are estimates based on best practices in the industry. The funding landscape for transportation projects can be volatile, and the ultimate delivery of the TIP is dependent on continued collaborative approaches and partnerships. Partnering on projects with area communities, bordering counties, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, federal funds, and other state agencies will continue to be a critical way for Ramsey County to get the most from our available funds.

The 2024-2028 TIP reflects an ongoing funding increase resulting from the 2023 legislation enacting a metropolitan regionwide sales tax. This additional funding will result in a substantial increase in the capital program, as well as in the overall maintenance and operations needs of Public Works. There is a need to increase staffing by up to 18 Full Time Equivalents (16 in Public Works, two in EGCI Administration - Finance) to execute on the increased program.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Adopt the 2024-2028 Public Works Transportation Improvement Program.
2. Authorize the County Engineer to prepare plans and agreements for all projects identified in the Transportation Improvement Program and to issue solicitations in accordance with County policies and procedures and the Minnesota Department of Transportation's list of "Pre-Qualified Vendors by Work Type."
3. Authorize the County Surveyor to execute Right of Way Plats and Certificate of Surveys for Highway projects that require the determination of existing right of way for the delineation and /or acquisition of property for planning studies or disposition of excess County property.
4. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and execute change orders and amendments to agreements, supplemental agreements, and agreements related to the expenditure of Transportation Improvement Program Project Funds utilizing County State Aid, Federal, State, and participating funding associated with the construction of the approved projects in the 2024-2028 or a previously approved Transportation Improvement Program in accordance with the county's procurement policies and procedures.
5. Authorize the County Engineer and County Attorney to acquire temporary easements, permanent easements, fee title, and enter into Limited Use Permits with the state of Minnesota for projects in the 2024-2028 Public Works Transportation Improvement Program, or previously approved Transportation Improvement Program, by negotiation or condemnation.
6. Authorize the County Engineer to approve negotiated settlements for up to \$100,000 over the Ramsey County's appraised value per parcel for temporary and permanent easements and fee title.
7. Authorize the County Manager to approve and execute purchase agreements, settlements, closing documents, Limited Use Permits, and other related real estate documentation associated with Ramsey County Board approved acquisitions of real property.
8. Authorize the County Manager to approve and execute cooperative agreements and maintenance agreements with cities, counties, the state, and other governmental agencies for their participation in projects listed in the 2024-2028 Public Works Transportation Improvement Program or previously approved Transportation Improvement Program.
9. Authorize temporary cash loans from the County General Fund to the Road and Bridge Capital Improvement Program fund and the Wheelage Tax fund for costs of projects listed in the 2024-2028 Public Works Transportation Improvement Program, or previously approved Transportation Improvement Program, and for maintenance project expenditures occurring before bond or wheelage tax proceeds are received pending receipt of Federal, County State Aid Highway, state, participating funds.
10. Authorize the County Engineer to submit grant applications for state and federal funding for projects listed in the 2024-2028 Public Works Transportation Improvement Program.
11. Authorize the County Manager to accept grants and execute grant agreements agreeing to the grant terms and conditions for grant award. For grants that so require, Ramsey County agrees to be responsible for any additional amount by which the cost exceeds the county's construction cost estimate and will return to the grantor any grant amount appropriated for the project but not utilized for the project under the terms of the grant agreement.
12. Authorize the County Manager or designee to provide statements of support to county constituent cities for grant applications being pursued by the cities.
13. Authorize an increase of up to 16 Full Time Equivalent staff to Public Works staff and 2 Full Time Equivalent staff to EGCI Administration - Finance's complement to support the increase in the Public Works program.

14. Authorize the County Manager to set up a new fund to account for the Transportation Advancement Account funds and any new projects needed to implement the 2024-2028 Public Works Transportation Improvement Program.
15. Adjust the Public Works 2024 Operating Budget to reflect the receipt of \$11,000,000 from the Transportation Advancement Account taxes, including the auto parts tax, regional sales tax, and delivery fee.
16. Adjust the Public Works 2024 Operating Budget to reflect the receipt of one-time funds in the amount of \$3,554,539.
17. Authorize the County Manager to make budget transfers between the Operating Budget and Capital Budget for the amounts in #15 and #16 to support the 2024-2028 Public Works Transportation Improvement Program.

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

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

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board