
Sponsor: Public Works

Meeting Date: 10/5/2021

Title: Capital Grant Agreement with Metropolitan Council and Ramsey County for the Project Development Phase of the METRO Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit Project

File Number: 2021-398

Background and Rationale:

The Rush Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project has been led by Ramsey County on behalf of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) in coordination with the Metropolitan Council, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and local municipalities. The Rush Line BRT Project is a planned 15-mile transit route with stops between Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul and downtown White Bear Lake. The Rush Line BRT Project is currently in the Environmental Analysis Phase (EAP). Upon completion of the EAP, with the receipt of the Environmental Decision and acceptance into the Project Development Phase of the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants Program (CIGP) as a New Starts project, the Rush Line BRT Project will transition to the Metropolitan Council and be rebranded as the METRO Purple Line BRT Project.

Project Development is the first phase of the CIGP New Starts Program which lasts up to two years. Project Development is followed by the Engineering and Construction Phases. The project must receive an overall medium rating to advance into the Engineering phase and to receive a Full Funding Grant Agreement for the federal share of the project. Once in the New Starts Program, project expenditures are eligible for a federal match, though no federal funding is provided until the Full Funding Grant Agreement is awarded upon entry to the Construction Phase. This results in non-federal funding covering 100% of project costs for the Project Development and Engineering phases with reimbursement for cost for these phases as well as construction, currently assumed at 49%, occurring as part of the Full Funding Grant Agreement.

To manage the agency roles and obligations during the Project Development Phase, anticipated to begin in October 2021, the Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County and the RCRRA developed the Capital Grant Agreement for the Project Development Phase of the METRO Purple Line BRT Project. Consistent with the approach utilized for the METRO Gold Line BRT Project's Project Development and Engineering agreements, the Capital Grant Agreement for the Project Development Phase of the METRO Purple Line BRT Project breaks funding for the two-year Project Development Phase into two 12-month grant activity periods.

The Project Development Phase for the METRO Purple Line BRT Project is estimated to cost \$39,900,000 and include the following tasks:

- Project Management
- Advanced Engineering/Design
- Environmental Reevaluated and Peer Review
- Right-of-way Acquisition
- Public Engagement

Funding for the Project Development Phase will be provided in accordance with the funding commitment resolutions approved by RCRRA through separate board actions. Funding

commitments are consistent with financial projections made for the Ramsey County Transit Portfolio Status and Financial Projection workshop held on November 3, 2020.

The Metropolitan Council will not seek entry into Project Development for the METRO Purple Line BRT Project without the execution of the Capital Grant Agreement for the Project Development Phase of the METRO Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit Project.

Additional information on the Rush Line BRT Project can be found on the County website:

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transit/transit-corridors-studies/rush-line-brt-project>

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the Capital Grant Agreement for the Project Development Phase by and among the Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority for the METRO Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit Project.
2. Authorize the Chair to execute the Agreement.
3. Authorize the County Manager to enter into agreements and contracts and execute amendments to agreements and contracts, in accordance with procurement policies and procedures, provided the amounts are within the limits of funding.

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

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By: 
Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board