

Request for Board Action Details

File #: 2024-234

Type: Administrative Item **Status:** Passed

In control: Board of Commissioners

On agenda: 7/2/2024 **Final action:** 7/2/2024

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

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Metropolitan Council Grant Agreement with Exhibits, 2. Land Declaration Waiver Request Letter to Minnesota Management and Budget, 3. Minnesota Management and Budget Land Certification form with Exhibits, 4. 2022 Regional Solicitation Notice of Award Letter for Federal Funds, 5. Resolution

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/2/2024	1	Board of Commissioners	approved	Pass

Sponsor: Parks & Recreation

Title

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

Recommendation

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.

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.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

Well-being

Prosperity

Opportunity

Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

An equity analysis was completed as part of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail Long-range Plan amendment. Engagement activities were developed and prioritized for equity, inclusivity, maximizing voices heard, and geographic representation. Equity analysis outcomes provided a direct benefit to significant populations for people of color in Saint Paul south of Larpenteur Avenue, connects two communities with diverse demographics and income between Maplewood and White Bear Lake, in addition to substantial concentrations of youth, elderly, and residents with disabilities.

In addition, the trail will connect populations south of the trail project for the southern Saint Paul segment of the existing Bruce Vento Trail which extends through highly urban and concentrated areas of poverty making it a regionally important connection that will directly benefit diverse populations more distant than those directly adjacent to the corridor area.

The following engagements listed below were completed in 2019 in coordination with the Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit project. Specific engagement activities designed to reach underrepresented communities included:

- Tuesdays on the Trail pop-up informational meetings targeting trail users.
- Four pop-up meetings were held at four locations in Saint Paul and Maplewood including Hmong Village Area, Larpenteur Avenue, Frost Avenue, Harvest Park.
- Pop-up meetings at Hmong Village Shopping Center targeting the Hmong community.
- Input from the Rush Line Community Advisory Committee whose members reflect the diverse communities along the corridor.

- Participation at the Dragon Festival at Phalen Regional Park.
- Participation at the Fiesta Latina hosted by Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES).
- Directed informational and invitational mailings to property owners with Hmong surnames.
- Information provided in multiple languages.

Community Participation Level and Impact

Although community engagement was not conducted regarding securing project funds, engagement was completed through a multi-year effort by the Parks department and Purple Line BRT activities. Public engagement activities were completed at different intervals depending on project location throughout the regional trail corridor. Principal planning engagement completed by the Parks department primarily focus on areas north of Buerkle Road while the Purple Line BRT Group focused primarily between Larpenteur Avenue and Buerkle Road.

To achieve the public engagement goals, diverse communities were identified including people of color, Hmong people living in Saint Paul and Maplewood, Latino people living in Saint Paul, Public Housing residents, trail users, and residents and business throughout the project corridor. Input received as a part of the engagement activities is reflected throughout the long-range plan amendment.

- Parks department engagement - Five public engagement meetings were conducted through 2014 to 2020 consisting of two public meetings in 2016, two in 2018, and one meeting in 2019 totaling approximately 185 people, 200 plus comments, approximately 50 surveys, over 3000 flyers/direct mailings, and multiple website/social media postings. Additionally, there was a 30-day public review of the master plan in September 2020.
- Purple Line Engagement - During the summer of 2019, the Rush Line BRT Group and the Parks department completed engagement activities for the development of the Ramsey County Rail Right-of-way Design Guide. A total of ten dedicated events were held throughout 2019 totaling approximately 730 people, and 75 plus survey responses. Outcomes provided feedback for site and infrastructure design elements, and site amenities for the regional trail within the Rush Line BRT corridor.

Engagement activities and notifications were completed through various methods consisting of website updates, public open houses, pop-up events, direct mailings, direct meetings with homeowners and business, flyers and social media. The Parks department received letters of support for the principal plan amendment from the cities of Gem Lake, Maplewood, Vadnais Heights, White Bear Lake; White Bear Township Hills, and the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission.

Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Fiscal Impact

The overall project budget for the Phase 1 construction project is estimated at \$10,000,000. The project budget is comprised of \$4,000,000 in federal funding administered by MnDOT federal aid, \$5,000,000 in state funding administered through a Metropolitan Council grant agreement, and \$1,000,000 in local county funding. Overall, 90% of the estimated construction funding needed is being provided with federal and state funds. Ramsey 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. Ramsey County is responsible for ongoing maintenance costs for new development after the projects are completed. The \$9,000,000 of grant revenue is new and was not included in the 2024-2025 Parks and Recreation budget.

Last Previous Action

On February 2, 2024, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved a local match in the amount of \$1,000,000 for state and federal funds awarded for the Phase 1 Bruce Vento Regional Trail project (Resolution B2024-025).

On December 12, 2023, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approved the acquisition of permanent

and temporary easements at 1755 Buerkle Road, White Bear Lake (Resolution B2023-232).

Attachments

1. Metropolitan Council Grant Agreement with Exhibits
2. Land Declaration Waiver Request Letter to Minnesota Management and Budget
3. Minnesota Management and Budget Land Certification form with Exhibits
4. 2022 Regional Solicitation Notice of Award Letter for Federal Funds