

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: July 27, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: August 12, 2026

Business Item: 2026-129

METRO Bronze Line Bus Rapid Transit – Engineering Phase Capital Grant Agreement with Ramsey County

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Capital Grant Agreement #26I016 (Funding Agreement) for Engineering with Ramsey County and the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (collectively, the County) for the METRO Bronze Line Bus Rapid Transit Project (Project) with a Maximum Grant Amount not to exceed \$22,245,000.

Summary of Transportation Committee discussion/questions

METRO Bronze Line Project Director Craig Lamothe presented this item. Vice Chair Obisakin asked whether the community's concerns regarding the Johnson Parkway bridge had been addressed. Lamothe stated that no additional work had advanced since the July 8 presentation because consultant resources are not yet on board. Lamothe explained that the agreement would allow the project to bring consultant resources on board to evaluate technical issues, including the bridge. Once those resources are available, project staff, particularly the engineering team, will reengage with community members.

Motion by Carter, Tyronne, seconded by Osman. Barber recused. Motion carried.

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District(s), Member(s): District 13 (Lee), District 14 (Carter)

Policy/Legal Reference: FM 15-1 – Income/Grants
Minn. Stat. § 473.405

Staff Prepared/Presented: Lesley Kandasas, General Manager, 612-349-7513
Nick Thompson, Deputy General Manager, 612-349-7507
Craig Lamothe, Bronze Line Project Director, 651-602-1978
Mike Ullmer, Agreements Specialist, 651-602-1957

Division/Department: Metro Transit / Capital Programs

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Background

This Funding Agreement with the County will fund consultant services, including design, environmental, and project management services, under Council Contract #26P018 (Council Design Contract), consultant services for real property acquisition under future master partnership contracts to be held by the Council, and partially fund Metro Transit staff assigned to the Project, including environmental, administration, community outreach, and agreements staff. The Council Design Contract is anticipated to be submitted for Metropolitan Council approval at its September 9, 2026 meeting. The Council will fund all other Metro Transit staff required to advance the Project during the term of this Funding Agreement, including project director, engineering, finance, contracts, agreements, real estate, and utility relocation staff.

Through close coordination over the past few years, the County and Council developed a revised scope and cost-sharing approach for joint funding and delivery of the Project. Metro Transit staff presented an update on the status of the Project, including this Funding Agreement and cost-sharing approach, to the Metropolitan Council at its July 8, 2026 Meeting. The funding provided by the County in this Funding Agreement is consistent with the cost-sharing approach negotiated between the County and Council presented at this meeting.

Rationale

The Metropolitan Council must approve this Funding Agreement because it exceeds \$2,000,000.

Thrive Lens Analysis

On February 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040 (Thrive). Investment in high-quality transportation options will advance the Prosperity outcome of Thrive by making the region more economically competitive through increased workers' access to employment, and support to employers by increasing available workforce with affordable and convenient transportation.

The Project advances the Equity outcome of Thrive by distributing transit resources throughout the region and improving access to jobs, educational opportunities, and health services to diverse communities. More than half of the corridor population identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC). 17 percent of the households along the corridor do not have access to a car and nearly 20 percent of households are living below the poverty level. Increased access to financial opportunities, educational opportunities, and health services are a key outcome of implementing the Project, advancing the Livability outcome of Thrive.

Funding

The proposed action will authorize the negotiation and execution of the Funding Agreement to make available up to \$22,245,000 in committed funding from the County for the Project. The Council is expending up to \$10,305,000 through 2029 to pay for dedicated Project staff and Council-funded scope items in the Council Design Contract. \$1,000,000 of this Council funding has already been authorized by a Council Budget Amendment (BI 2026-01) and remaining amounts needed will be brought to the Metropolitan Council for approval as part of future annual Budget Amendment Processes.

Small Business Inclusion

There are no direct impacts to Small Business Inclusion associated with the proposed actions.

