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**Sponsor:** Public Works

**Meeting Date:** 3/17/2026

**Title:** Support for the Revised Locally Preferred Alternative for the METRO Bronze Line Bus Rapid Transit Project

**File Number:** 2026-094

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**Background and Rationale:**

The METRO Bronze Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project (formerly known as the METRO Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit Project) is a regional transit investment led jointly by the Metropolitan Council and Ramsey County in partnership with Metro Transit, the city of Saint Paul, the city of Maplewood, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

The project has evolved over time:

- 2017 - The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority supported the original Rush Line Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).
- 2021 - The project advanced as the METRO Purple Line BRT and entered the Federal Transit Administration Project Development phase under the Capital Investment Grant program.
- 2022 - Following the city of White Bear Lake withdrawing support, the Metropolitan Council initiated a Route Modification Phase I study to identify a new northern terminus.
- 2023-2024 - A Route Modification Phase II study evaluated alternative alignments north of Maryland Avenue, including White Bear Avenue and Bruce Vento Trail options, with technical analysis and corridor-wide community engagement.
- 2023-2025 - Ramsey County worked closely with the city of Maplewood and other partners to address municipal concerns and refine the project definition north of Maryland Avenue.
- September 2025 - The Ramsey County Board received a workshop update on the Bronze Line (formerly known as Purple Line) and anticipated recommendation.
- December 11, 2025 - The Bronze Line Corridor Management Committee recommended a revised LPA.

The METRO Bronze Line represents the continuation of the previously approved Rush Line / METRO Purple Line corridor, with modifications to the northern alignment resulting from Route Modification Phase I and Phase II. The project's purpose, corridor limits, and regional mobility objectives remain consistent with prior board actions.

The revised LPA redefines the project as the METRO Bronze Line and consists of a 10-mile corridor between Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul and the Maplewood Mall Transit Center with 22 stations and associated corridor improvements.

In Saint Paul, the revised LPA includes reconstructed and new stations; roadway reconstruction on Pennsylvania Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and White Bear Avenue up to Larpenteur; semi-exclusive, side-running bus lanes; improvements to Phalen Boulevard; reconstruction of the Bruce Vento Regional Trail to accommodate dedicated bus lanes; and new busway bridges at Arcade Street and Johnson Parkway. Reconstruction of Pennsylvania Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and White Bear Avenue is consistent with Ramsey County's All-Abilities Transportation Network and includes lane conversion to support transit priority.

In Maplewood, the revised LPA includes six stations, improvements to the Maplewood Mall Transit Center, and pavement replant between Frost Avenue and Beam Avenue. In Maplewood, buses will operate in existing lanes without conversion to dedicated bus lanes.

The current planning-level capital cost estimate for the METRO Bronze Line is approximately \$375 million in year-of-expenditure dollars. Ramsey County is anticipated to provide approximately 90 percent of the total project cost (approximately \$340 million), with final funding commitments to be established through a future Capital Grant Agreement (CGA).

Because the Bronze Line Corridor Management Committee has recommended a revised LPA, impacted partner agencies are required to take formal action indicating support. The Metropolitan Council will use these actions as justification to adopt the revised LPA into the region's Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan. Upon adoption, Ramsey County and Metro Transit will continue advancing final design, environmental review, and preparation of a CGA to define funding commitments and delivery responsibilities.

**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority resolved to:

1. Support the revised Locally Preferred Alternative for the METRO Bronze Line Bus Rapid Transit Project.
2. Support amendment of the Metropolitan Council's Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan to incorporate the revised METRO Bronze Line project definition.
3. Authorize Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority Chair to transmit the resolution to the Metropolitan Council to amend the Metropolitan Council's Imagine 2050 Transportation Policy Plan to incorporate the revised project definition, and direct that this action be transmitted to the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Xiong. Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Moran, Ortega, and Xiong

By:   
Jason Yang, Chief Clerk - County Board