
Sponsor: Public Works

Meeting Date: 3/17/2026

Title: Support for the METRO J Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit

File Number: 2026-091

Background and Rationale:

The METRO J Line is a 12.5-mile route that will connect downtown Saint Paul, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), and the Mall of America (MOA) - operating primarily along West 7th Street/State Highway 5. This corridor has been identified through Metro Transit's [Arterial Bus Rapid Transit \(ABRT\) Plan Update <https://www.metrotransit.org/arterial-brt-plan>](https://www.metrotransit.org/arterial-brt-plan) and is one of the top scoring corridors for future ABRT based on the technical evaluation criteria. ABRT is high-frequency, upgraded bus service that operates on roadways with general traffic while providing a faster, more reliable, and comfortable transit experience through enhanced station amenities, fewer stops, and transit signal priority along the route.

The West 7th Street corridor has long been identified as a priority for transit investment and remains one of the highest ridership corridors in the region without dedicated BRT service. Years of planning and engagement through the [Arterial Transitway Corridors Study <https://www.metrotransit.org/data/sites/1/media/pdfs/atcs/atcs%20final%20report.pdf>](https://www.metrotransit.org/data/sites/1/media/pdfs/atcs/atcs%20final%20report.pdf), the Saint Paul Streetcar Feasibility Study (attached) and the [Riverview Corridor Study <https://www.ramseycountymn.gov/residents/roads-transportation/transit-corridors-studies/riverview-corridor>](https://www.ramseycountymn.gov/residents/roads-transportation/transit-corridors-studies/riverview-corridor) have demonstrated strong community interest in improved transit connections along West 7th Street, underscoring the importance of advancing this project now.

West 7th Street is a critical link between downtown Saint Paul, MSP, and MOA serving thousands of daily transit riders and supporting economic vitality across the region. It is one of the oldest roads in Saint Paul with some of Saint Paul's oldest utilities lying beneath it. Despite its significance, the corridor has faced persistent challenges that have delayed transformative improvements. Ownership of the road resides with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), utilities with the city of Saint Paul, and intersecting streets with MnDOT, Ramsey County, and the city of Saint Paul. This complex relationship has historically made it challenging to make major improvements along this corridor. For the J Line to be successful, this will require multijurisdictional commitment to investing in significant infrastructure improvements along West 7th Street that will address safety, mobility, transit reliability, and long-term functionality of this corridor.

Ramsey County supports the J Line with the understanding that its implementation will occur in tandem with broader West 7th Street improvements to enhance mobility, safety, transit reliability, and address critical infrastructure needs. Coordinating the J Line with these once-in-a-generation upgrades ensures a comprehensive approach that benefits residents, businesses, and visitors alike. This project represents a pivotal step toward meeting regional transportation goals and creating a more connected, resilient, and accessible corridor for generations to come.

In addition to supporting the J Line, Ramsey County remains committed to advancing transit-friendly investments across the county and would like to see future ABRT projects and/or high-frequency transit along critical corridors to better serve the community. Priority corridors for the county include Larpenteur Avenue, an extension of the A Line into Rice Creek Commons, Lowry Avenue/County

Road B2, and County Road C to Little Canada. These corridors represent opportunities to improve safety, add pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and integrate transit advantages into roadway designs, ensuring that future ABRT routes are well supported by local infrastructure improvements

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority resolved to:

1. Support the METRO J Line Arterial Bus Rapid Transit, contingent upon:
 - a. Multi-jurisdictional commitment and collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Metro Transit, city of Saint Paul, and Ramsey County to invest in significant infrastructure improvements along West 7th Street that addresses safety, mobility, transit reliability, and long-term functionality of the corridor.

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