

(\$ in thousands)

Project Title	Priority Ranking	Funding Source	Project Requests for State Funds		
			2024	2026	2028
Busway Capital Improvement Program Bus Rapid Transit	1	GO	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
Regional Parks and Trails Grant Program	2	GO	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program	3	GO	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500
Total Project Requests			\$ 99,500	\$ 99,500	\$ 99,500
General Obligation Bonds (GO) Total			\$ 99,500	\$ 99,500	\$ 99,500

Busway Capital Improvement Program Bus Rapid Transit

AT A GLANCE

2024 Request Amount:	\$75,000
Priority Ranking:	1
Project Summary:	\$75 million in state funds is requested for development of busway capital improvement projects. Requested funding would accelerate arterial bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor development including, but not limited to, environmental analysis, engineering, design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

Project Description

Busway corridor projects like arterial BRT improve the speed and reliability of bus service along the Twin Cities’ busiest transit corridors. Project investments result in high-quality stations that enable faster and more reliable limited-stop transit service to major destinations. Busway corridors typically have stations every half-mile at major intersections. Constructing and integrating these stations into the existing roadway system is the focus of the proposed investment.

Multiple busway lines have been identified for implementation by 2030, and requested funding would advance the development of the F Line, G Line, and H Line corridors. These lines serve the Central Avenue (Minneapolis to Blaine), Rice/Robert (Little Canada to West Saint Paul), and Como/Maryland (Saint Paul to Minneapolis via the University of Minnesota) corridors, respectively. The request would also advance 2040 arterial BRT expansion corridors yet to be prioritized. Other busway projects may also become eligible for funding in the next two years, as described below.

If capital investment is proposed through a state bonding recommendation, corridor fleet improvements would be separately funded through other sources, including federal and regional funds.

Project Rationale

Busway projects have increased the attractiveness and usage of the transit system in multiple corridors. The A Line (2016) and C Line (2019) each improved travel time by 20 percent and yielded a 30 percent increase in corridor ridership. The D Line opened in 2022, and has attracted even stronger initial ridership growth.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, BRT has remained the most resilient mode in Metro Transit’s system and retained the greatest share of passengers compared to other modes. The Council is pursuing an increasing focus to support all-purpose, all-day trips in busy transit corridors. As traditional downtown office commutes have changed, BRT service aligns to these needs while also supporting peak commutes.

Prior to the pandemic, bus service in near-term BRT corridors (A through H Line corridors) carried nearly one third of Metro Transit bus riders. This share increased during the pandemic, and these corridors currently carry 40 percent of Metro Transit bus riders.

By concentrating improvements in the region's most heavily traveled bus corridors, BRT maximizes ongoing operating investment by reducing delay from passenger boarding, traffic signals, and merging in and out of traffic. Reduced stop times also smooths traffic flow and enables construction of robust transit stations without need for significant property acquisition or private property displacement or relocations.

Project Timeline

The H Line is currently partially funded from past state appropriations. Additional resources are needed to construct the project. Requested funds would leverage at least \$25 million in identified federal funding for the H Line. Early funding through this request could also leverage discretionary award through the federal Capital Investment Grant program, potentially leveraging up to \$100 million of additional federal funds to these projects.

The 2023 Legislative session provided funding for arterial BRT corridor planning. With these resources, Metro Transit will begin updating the region's arterial BRT system plan in late 2024 to identify the next corridors after H Line. It is expected that \$25 million in federal funding will be available for another candidate corridor after the H Line. Requested 2024 state funding will be used to match anticipated federal funds and advance the development of J, K, and L lines from corridors to be studied in the upcoming plan update. Candidate corridors to be studied include Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis and Richfield, Randolph/East 7th, Grand Avenue and West 7th in St. Paul, and 63rd/Zane in Brooklyn Park/Brooklyn Center, in addition to others to be identified through local stakeholder engagement.

Other Considerations

<https://www.metrotransit.org/brt>

Busway projects are an integral part of the 2040 METRO network of rail and bus lines. When fully implemented, this network will serve 77 percent of residents in Minneapolis and Saint Paul and 46 percent of the region's BIPOC residents. The completed system will provide significant access to jobs and destinations, linking residents to over 750,000 existing jobs. Improved transit enables workers to reach jobs, including 47 percent of low-income residents, 60 percent of the region's renter households, and 60 percent of the region's zero-car households.

Affordable and high-quality public transportation reduces reliance on private automobile ownership and resulting savings can be applied to housing, education, or other personal and family expenses that benefit the state and local economy.

Impact on Agency Operating Budgets

The impact on the agency operating budget can vary depending upon which transitway capital projects are funded. The Council has established a policy requiring anticipated operating funds to be identified before capital projects proceed. Most required resources for arterial BRT operations comes from replacement of existing local bus service with more attractive, faster arterial BRT. Reduced delays allow faster speed and more efficient use of existing operating resources. Service plans include

options with limited expansion of service as well as resource-neutral operating plans.

Description of Previous Appropriations

In 2020, the state capital investment bill allocated \$55 million of bonding to complete funding of the D Line and B Line corridors, and advance pre-construction of the E Line corridor.

In 2021, a state General Fund appropriation in the transportation omnibus bill allocated \$57.5 million to the arterial bus rapid transit program.

The Legislature appropriated \$72 million to arterial bus rapid transit in the 2023 bonding bill that will be used to complete the F and G Lines and advance the development of the H Line.

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Regional Parks and Trails Grant Program

AT A GLANCE**2024 Request Amount:** \$15,000**Priority Ranking:** 2**Project Summary:** The Metropolitan Council requests \$15 million in state bonds to match \$10 million of Metropolitan Council Regional Bonds to improve and expand the Metropolitan Regional Parks System.**Project Description**

The Metropolitan Regional Parks System is owned, operated, and maintained by the 10 Regional Park Implementing Agencies (Agencies) defined in Minnesota Statutes 473.341, Subd. 1(a). The Twin Cities region is home to a system of regional parks and trails that is nationally renowned for its beauty, size, and variety of features. The system provides an abundance of opportunities for recreation, exercise, mental and physical health, and, of course, just plain fun. It also preserves significant green space and wildlife habitat. The regional parks system draws more than 63 million visits every year — more than the Mall of America. Our parks and trails draw visitors from across the region, state, and United States.

The Council proposes to match \$15 million of state bonds with \$10 million in regional bonds for a total Regional Parks System capital investment of \$25 million. 100% of bond funds are allocated to implementing agencies. The Council keeps no state funding for administrative costs. Each agency is allocated a share of the combined state and regional bonds according to a formula set in Council policy: 70% is based on each agency's jurisdictional population, and 30% is based on the agency's relative share of non-local visits.

Project Rationale

The purpose of the Metropolitan Regional Parks program is to maintain, expand, and improve the Metropolitan Regional Parks System, which consists of more than 54,000 acres of parks and over 400 miles of interconnected trails. The program funds regional parks that provide recreational services similar to those provided in state parks that are located largely outside of the 7-county region.

This request invests critical funding directly into the regional park systems to both protect past public investments by extending the useful life of park and trail infrastructure and to expand the system. The Regional Parks System provides close-to-home opportunities for children and families in the 7-county metro area, fostering wellness and building strong communities. It also offers the opportunity for carbon free transportation and recreation, and preserves natural systems that serve as carbon sinks to greenhouse gases, to help manage stormwater, as well as serving to cool the region during extreme heat events. Lastly and importantly, it fosters health and wellness among residents, which has a mutually beneficial overlap with support for natural resource system health.

Project Timeline

The Council would award grants in the second half of 2024 and the agencies would complete funded projects in 2024 through 2026.

Other Considerations

None

Impact on Agency Operating Budgets

There is no direct impact on our operating budgets since the Met Council does not operate Metropolitan Regional Parks System units.

Description of Previous Appropriations

The state appropriated \$16.62 million of bonds to the Metropolitan Council for the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Budget in the 2023 bonding bill. This program also received \$5 million of bonds in the 2020 capital budget and \$10 million of bonds in the 2019 capital budget.

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Inflow and Infiltration Grant Program

AT A GLANCE

2024 Request Amount:	\$9,500
Priority Ranking:	3
Project Summary:	The Metropolitan Council requests \$9.5 million in state bonds to continue to provide grants to municipalities for eligible public infrastructure capital improvements to reduce inflow and infiltration (I/I) into wastewater collection systems.

Project Description

The Metropolitan Council requests \$9.5 million in state bonds to continue to provide grants to municipalities for eligible public infrastructure capital improvements to reduce inflow and infiltration (I/I) into wastewater collection systems. In cooperation with Metro Cities, similar requests have been made in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2022. The requested amount for 2024 represents a portion of the demonstrated need from communities for work completed under the previous programs. The program has been a successful incentive for communities to complete I/I mitigation work.

Inflow and Infiltration – or I/I – are terms that describe clear water that enters wastewater systems and consumes capacity that is intended for growth. Each has unique sources, methods of entry, and effects on the wastewater collection system. I/I from both public and private sources causes major challenges in the region.

Since 2005, the Metropolitan Council has intensified efforts to mitigate excessive I/I through partnership with regional communities. There is evidence of success through flow reduction and reduced system flow response to wet weather. However, the repairs needed to the local public wastewater collection system can be costly, and regional communities have expressed a need for consistent funding for I/I mitigation activities.

In 2010, Metro Cities championed inclusion of a \$3 million grant program in the 2010 bonding bill for providing grants to municipalities for capital improvements to public infrastructure to reduce I/I into the wastewater collection system. From 2010 through 2018, funding received by communities for I/I mitigation was \$14.2 million.

Project Rationale

The purpose of the project is to assist communities served by Metropolitan Council Environmental Services in undertaking public infrastructure projects that reduce I/I into the local and regional wastewater collection systems.

Project Timeline

Grants will be made under a grants application process once funding is secured, with local units of government performing work funded with the grants. Work typically extends into two construction seasons (about two years).

Other Considerations

This grant program is tied to the Metropolitan Council's stewardship, prosperity, equity, livability, and sustainability outcomes of *Thrive MSP 2040* and supports the Metropolitan Council's principles of collaboration and accountability. This grant program will support the I/I mitigation efforts of local communities. This program protects the environment and public health, supports construction jobs, promotes infrastructure investment, and is cost-effective.

Metropolitan Council proposes to utilize existing program guidelines which have been reviewed by local government partners in the region and have been agreed to by state agencies.

Impact on Agency Operating Budgets

There is no direct impact on state agency operating budgets since the State of Minnesota does not have a similar grant program.

Description of Previous Appropriations

As part of the 2023 bonding bill, the Council was appropriated \$12 million. This program also received \$5 million in the 2020 capital budget and \$5 million in the 2018 capital budget.

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