

From the Director, Department of Transportation and Interim Director, Milwaukee County Transit System, requesting authorization to apply for and accept RAISE grant funds for transit capital enhancements along the PurpleLine (North-South 27th Street), by recommending adoption of the following:

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) is requesting retroactive authorization to apply for and accept Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant funds for transit capital enhancements along the PurpleLine (North-South 27th Street); and

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity for RAISE grant funding on November 1, 2024, with a deadline for submissions of January 30, 2025, which was met by MCTS; and

WHEREAS, under Section 59.52(19), Wisconsin State Statutes, and Section 56.06, Milwaukee County (the County) Code of General Ordinances, the County Board of Supervisors may accept donations and grants for any public governmental purpose within the powers of the County; and

WHEREAS, RAISE is a Federal grant program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which focuses on Areas of Persistent Poverty and Historically Disadvantaged Communities, and provides an option to fully fund capital projects up to \$25 million with Federal dollars, requiring no local financial commitment; and

WHEREAS, MCTS has identified RAISE as an opportunity to improve transit infrastructure for the PurpleLine; and

WHEREAS, as one of MCTS's busiest routes, the PurpleLine spans 18 miles across 5 cities, provides equitable access to transit for 118,000 residents, 73 percent of whom are people of color and 26 percent of whom are families in poverty, and connects riders to 2,500 businesses and over 50,000 jobs; and

WHEREAS, MCTS would continue to provide high-frequency service on the PurpleLine, with buses arriving every 12 minutes during daytime; and

WHEREAS, under a successful RAISE grant, PurpleLine corridor improvements (the Improvements) would include new transit shelters to improve the customer experience prior to boarding, traffic-signal optimization to improve transit travel times, and traffic-calming measures to increase safety for not only transit riders, but for all transit modes, including pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles; and

WHEREAS, the culmination of the Improvements is a unified-corridor upgrade to benefit existing transit users, attract new ones, and improve safety for all; and

WHEREAS, RAISE awards are anticipated to be announced in the second quarter of 2025, and if approved, MCTS would implement the Improvements between 2026 and 2027; and

WHEREAS, it should be stated that RAISE funding would not restart the former CONNECT 2 Bus Rapid Transit project that was paused at the 30 percent design phase, but MCTS is committed to improving the quality of service for riders via investments in infrastructure in this important corridor; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Transportation and Transit, at its meeting of January 22, 2025, recommended adoption of File No. 25-116 (vote 5-0); and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Finance, at its meeting of January 30, 2025, recommended adoption of File No. 25-116 (vote 7-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby authorizes the Director, Department of Transportation, to retroactively apply for and accept Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant funds for transit capital enhancements along the PurpleLine (North-South 27th Street).

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