



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: May 15, 2025

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Transportation Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Catherine Hernandez

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Ordinance approving the execution of an Interlocal Agreement between the City of San Antonio and VIA Metropolitan Transit establishing a cooperative partnership to deliver the “Silver Line” Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) East/West (E/W) Corridor Project.

SUMMARY:

Action executing an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between the City of San Antonio and VIA Metropolitan Transit establishing a cooperative partnership to deliver the VIA “Silver Line” Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) East/West Corridor Project.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The East/West ART Corridor Project connects high population/high-ridership neighborhoods with a strong job density and base of existing VIA ridership as well as directly intersecting with VIA’s North/South ART Corridor. The Project connects several key destinations along the corridor including Our Lady of the Lake University, VIA Centro Plaza, San Antonio Riverwalk, Alamodome, Freeman Coliseum, University of Texas Campuses at Downtown, and Hemisfair Park, the Frost Bank Center, and numerous high density commercial and residential areas. The Project is intended to provide highly reliable, frequent, direct transit service with enhanced

amenities, linking neighborhoods to key regional activity centers including Central Business District (Downtown).

ART vehicles run in dedicated and mixed-use lanes. The Project is part of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Small Starts Program. As part of the CIG Program, VIA is expected to execute cooperative agreements with key stakeholders. The Project ILA will establish the processes and mutually beneficial roles and responsibilities that will ensure the Project is completed within the anticipated schedule and budget. COSA and VIA agree to coordinate their actions in good faith and in the best interests of the Project. The Project ILA defines the scope of work as well as a process by which the City can request "betterments," or elements integrated with the Project but not necessary for the Project purpose and funded outside of the federal funds. In June 2023, City Council approved a similar Interlocal Agreement (ILA) for the Green Line Project that established the roles and responsibilities of COSA and VIA.

On March 18, 2025, the Transportation and Infrastructure Council Committee was briefed on the draft ILA agreement included key highlights, such as agreed upon roles and responsibilities, corrective action processes, and other agreed upon provisions to demonstrate to FTA that partnership framework exist to manage risk on the project.

ISSUE:

As with the previous ILA approved by City Council for the Green Line, the ILA focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the City and VIA for the capital portion of the Project. VIA is the Project sponsor and recipient of federal funding responsible for delivering the Project according to federal requirements; in that role, VIA is responsible for federal environmental approvals, grants, and funding. VIA, in collaboration with the City, will lead the design and construction of the Project, to the applicable local standards, inclusive of the letting of applicable contracts, method of delivery determination, and start-up and commissioning activities. VIA will procure the transit vehicles and set the transit schedule. The City will serve as the collaborator with VIA in support of VIA's efforts to complete the Project.

The ILA also sets out the processes by which City staff will review and comment on the Project design plans, issue applicable permits, and conduct inspections. The ILA also identifies the process for coordination concerning utilities, property acquisition, and transit signal priority. The ILA identifies individuals who will serve as the primary points of contact between the City and VIA for purposes of resolving issues at the lowest level, as well as a dispute escalation ladder to quickly and decisively resolve issues that require escalation.

The ILA is a precursor for future agreements that will more specifically outline the details of operations and maintenance once the Project design is completed. In general, VIA will be responsible for operating and maintaining all transit elements of the Project, such as all improvements within the station areas, and COSA will continue to operate and maintain the public right of way as it does today.

One difference with this ILA is that design milestones will align with the existing City process of 40%, 70%, and 95%.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose not to approve the Interlocal Agreement, however, the ILA is a critical steppingstone for VIA and City to deliver the Keep San Antonio Moving (KSAM) plan and to secure FTA funding. The ILA also establishes a framework for a partnership throughout the East/West ART Corridor Project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval.