



**ITEM ID:** 2026-156-0

**TRANSMITTAL DATE:** March 20, 2026

**MEETING DATE:** March 27, 2026

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Lisa Bahr, Chief Customer Experience Officer

**SUBJECT:** Bench Contract No. SP657-26 - Rideshare Alternative Transportation - Recommendation to Award - Uber Technologies, Inc. and Lyft, Inc.

### **Issue**

Metrolink's Board-approved Quality Service Pledge (QSP) commits the agency to help customers safely complete their trips during significant service disruptions. While bus bridges are the primary alternative, they cannot always be deployed quickly enough or accommodate all customers. Metrolink, therefore, relies on an on-demand rideshare voucher program to supplement bus bridges and prevent riders from being stranded. Metrolink currently uses Uber for this service, and Lyft now offers a comparable voucher program, so staff is seeking Board approval to award multi-year agreements with both providers to ensure continuity and backup capacity.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board authorize the Chief Executive Officer to award Contracts No. SP657A-26 with Uber Technologies, Inc. (Uber) and SP657B-26 with Lyft, Inc. (Lyft), in an aggregate amount for the bench not-to-exceed \$3,250,000 for as-needed rideshare voucher program services supporting Metrolink's Qualified Service Provider (QSP) transportation program, for a term of three years with one optional two-year renewal period, to be exercised at the CEO's discretion subject to annual budget appropriation. This award is subject to the resolution of any protest timely filed.

### **Strategic Commitment**

This report aligns with the Strategic Business Plan commitment of:

- **Customers Are Our Business:** We respect and value our customers, putting them at the heart of all we do, and work hard to attract and retain new customers by understanding their needs and finding new and innovative ways to bring them on board.

## **Background**

Metrolink's Quality Service Pledge (QSP) policy is a board-approved program that provides safe, timely, and customer-centered transportation alternatives when rail service is not available or when customers need assistance completing their trip. The Board first strengthened the QSP program following a February 26, 2016 motion directing staff to enhance customer protections and incident response during significant service disruptions. In June 2018, the Board approved revisions to clarify rider eligibility and to improve the program's customer-focused nature and in December 2018, further clarifying language was added to the QSP Policy.

The Quality Service Pledge program is used in situations such as:

- Service disruptions, cancellations, or extended delays
- Missed connections caused by operational incidents
- Customers stranded at stations or en route due to trespasser strikes, freight interference, or mechanical issues.
- Late-night, low-frequency, or safety-sensitive scenarios where waiting is not acceptable

Metrolink relies on rideshare vouchers as a critical safety and continuity tool to ensure customers can be transported safely when rail service is disrupted, when customers are stranded, or when alternate transportation is required to complete a trip. The rideshare voucher program is a core component of Metrolink's QSP program because it enables staff to issue and manage on-demand transportation in real time, with controls and reporting that support accountability and customer care.

Uber and Lyft are the only rideshare providers that offer an agency-ready voucher capability at the scale and coverage needed to support Metrolink operations and customers. Because there are no other comparable rideshare providers offering this specific voucher program service, a competitive solicitation is not required and would not yield additional qualified bidders. Approval of this item ensures continuity of service, customer safety, and operational readiness.

## **Discussion**

Rideshare vouchers are a supplement to Metrolink's bus bridge program and are used under circumstances when a bus bridge cannot be mobilized, or the buses available cannot accommodate all passengers. The voucher capability provides functions that are operationally

necessary to support QSP customer transportation, including:

- Staff can request a voucher immediately for eligible QSP situations, mainly when a bus bridge cannot arrive in time or is not available.
- Built-in limits keep costs in check, such as maximum voucher quantities, GPS-based service area boundaries, and approved hours and users. Trips are traceable, including pickup and drop-off locations and time details, which helps confirm the ride happened and supports misuse review.
- Staff can track and report usage by incident and by spend, and follow up when something looks outside the rules.

To avoid duplicative costs, Metrolink follows a bus bridge first approach. Rideshare vouchers are issued only when staff confirm that a bus bridge is not available within a reasonable time frame (for example, when a contracted provider cannot meet the requested response time) or when operational conditions make a bus bridge impractical.

Without this capability, Metrolink would have a reduced ability to safely clear stranded customers during disruptions when bus bridge service is delayed or infeasible, increasing the likelihood of preventable safety risks, extended station dwell times, and escalated customer complaints.

A competitive solicitation is not applicable as Uber and Lyft are the only rideshare providers that offer the specific voucher program service needed to operate the QSP transportation function at the required scale, coverage, and responsiveness. The market for this service is effectively limited to these providers, and an RFP would not be expected to produce additional responsive and responsible bidders.

The requested action is consistent with Section 6 - Non-Competitive Procurement of the Authority's Procurement and Contracting Policies that allow a non-competitive procurement approach when goods or services are available from one source on the basis that Uber and Lyft often overlap in their service, but their service is not always readily available in the totality of Metrolink's network.

Awarding to both providers increases reliability and resiliency, including:

- Coverage redundancy when one network is constrained by driver availability, special events, or localized surges
- Improved service outcomes across different geographies and times of day
- Operational flexibility to reduce customer wait times during major incidents
- Risk mitigation to avoid over-reliance on a single provider

### **Budget Impact**

Contract authority includes approximately \$500,000 planned for FY2026-27, contingent upon

adoption of the FY2026-27 operating budget. The remaining amount will be requested through subsequent annual operating budget approval processes.

**Next Steps**

Upon Board approval of the recommendation, Staff will negotiate and execute contracts with Uber and Lyft and issue a Notice to Proceed.

Prepared by:                      Sabrina Davis, Director, Customer Experience  
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Approved by:                      Lisa Bahr, Chief Customer Experience Officer

**Attachment(s)**

[Presentation - Rideshare Alternative Transportation for QSP](#)