

Transportation Advisory Board
of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities

ACTION TRANSMITTAL

No. 2011-17

DATE: February 9, 2011
TO: Transportation Advisory Board
FROM: Technical Advisory Committee
SUBJECT: Sunset Date Extension for Metro Transit SP#TRS-TCMT-10B: Purchase of Six Articulated Buses

MOTION: That the TAB approve a one year sunset date extension from March 31, 2011 to March 31, 2012 for Metro Transit SP#TRS-TCMT-10B: Purchase of Six Articulated Buses.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: Metro Transit was awarded this CMAQ grant in 2005. These buses were to serve the County Road 73 Park and Ride lot on I-394 for express service to Downtown Minneapolis. Since that time, the market for express peak hour bus service to Downtown Minneapolis has changed considerably due to the recession that began in 2008. Metro Transit would like to continue its marketing and TDM efforts to increase peak hour bus service demand and wait to begin new service until the market has improved. This extension to the sunset date will allow Metro Transit more time to assess the market for this bus service as well as allow more time to see if the overall market for peak hour bus service shows increased demand in the next two years. The TAC Funding & Programming Committee heard a presentation from Metro Transit staff on the request and recommended approval of the sunset date extension. Background material is attached.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
TAC Funding & Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	January 20, 2011
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	February 2, 2011
TAB Programming Committee	Review & Recommend	
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Approve	



January 13, 2011

Karl Keel, Chair
TAC Funding & Programming Committee
390 North Robert Street
St. Paul MN 55101

Re: Sunset Extension for CMAQ Project TRS-TCMT-10B Co Rd 73 Articulated Buses

Dear Mr. Keel:

Please consider this formal request from Metro Transit to extend the sunset date for this CMAQ funded project to use \$2,722,080 Federal to purchase six articulated transit buses serving Co Rd 73 Park and Ride on I-394 to downtown Minneapolis from March 31, 2011 to March 31, 2012 (one year).

The project sponsor is required to submit the following materials to the Funding and Programming Committee so it can determine if a sunset date extension is reasonable:

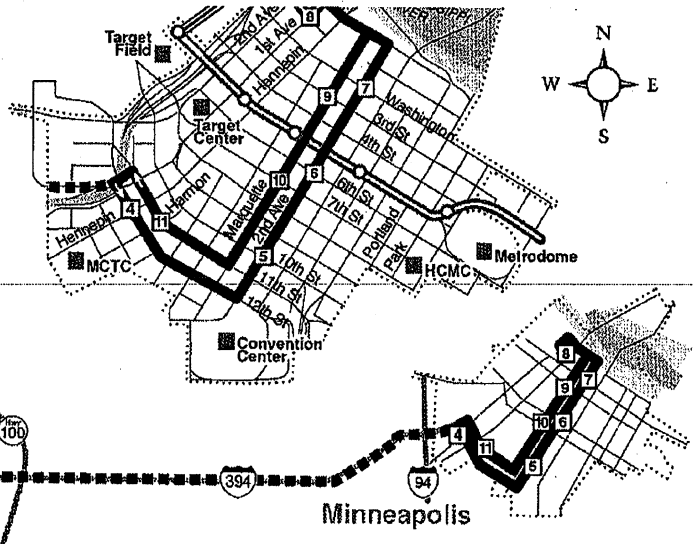
1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- a. Name: TRS-TCMT-10B Co Rd 73 Articulated Buses (six)
- b. Location Map:

▲ Park & Ride Lot Location

Park free at this lot while you commute.
No overnight parking.

Minnetonka
County Road 73 and I-394 -
on south side of I-394.



c. Sponsoring Agency: Metro Transit

A service of the Metropolitan Council

d. Other Participating Agencies: none

e. Project Description: In 2005, Metro Transit was awarded a CMAQ Grant for the purchase of six articulated buses to support a growing express service from the County Road 73/I-394 park-ride. This service was planned to support the additional customer demand projected to use the 500 additional park-ride spaces which were built in 2007.

f. Funding Category: CMAQ

g. Federal Funds Allocated: \$2,722,080

h. Local Share and Source: \$680,520 Regional Transit Capital (RTC)

i. Fiscal Year Programmed: 2010

2. Project Progress

a. Complete attached progress schedule with actual dates. N/A This is not a facility construction project.

b. Right of way acquisition - provide map showing status of individual parcels. N/A

c. Plans - provide a copy of current plans. New Flyer 60' articulated transit bus

d. Permits - provide a list of permitting agencies, permits needed and status. None

e. Approvals - provide a list of agencies with approval authority and approval status. Programming purchase of these buses is included in the Metro Transit Fleet Plan under authority of the Metropolitan Council.

f. Identify funds and other resources spent to date on project. None

3. Justification for Extension Request

a. What is unique about this project that requires an extension of the sunset? At the time of the application, employment in downtown Minneapolis was growing and it was anticipated that park-ride usage at Co 73 would grow from 972 in 2000 to 1,622 in 2030. It was also determined that the existing level of service on express route 673, the principal route serving the Co. 73 park-ride, had, at the time of the application, little to no surplus capacity to handle the anticipated growth and thus needed additional buses to support additional service.

Unfortunately, since 2008 downtown Minneapolis employment has decreased and is reflected by a decrease in park-ride usage at County Road 73. Based on the decline in employment and subsequent stagnation

of ridership from Co Rd 73 & I-394, Metro Transit requests to defer this project one year while the I-394 to downtown Minneapolis commuter market recovers.

- b. What are the financial impacts if this project does not meet its sunset date?** Metro Transit's ability to respond to commuter demand and grow transit ridership will be diminished in the I-394 Corridor.
- c. How does this project implement regional policies?** Purchase of these vehicles allow Metro Transit to demonstrate a growth in the transit commuter market, enhance mobility options and
- d. What are the implications if the project does not obtain the requested extension?** Metro Transit will not purchase the buses and have the opportunity to respond to commuter demand in 2012 and grow transit ridership in concert with Metropolitan Council regional policy.
- e. What actions will the agency take to resolve the problems facing the project in the next 3 to 6 months?** Continue to support economic development initiatives in downtown Minneapolis; monitor and adjust transit operations in the I-394 corridor to maximize service reliability and travel time competitiveness; and continue to work with the Downtown Minneapolis TMO and stakeholders in the I-394 corridor to promote Metro Transit service as the economy recovers.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please call me at (612) 349-7797. Metro Transit staff will be available for questions at the January meeting.

Sincerely,



Adam Harrington
Assistant Director Route & System Planning

cc: Coleen VanWagner, Mn/DOT
Dan Erickson, Mn/DOT
Sherry Narusiewicz, Mn/DOT
Brian Lamb, Metro Transit
Mary Gustafson, Metro Transit
John Levin, Metro Transit
Arlene McCarthy, Metropolitan Council
Tom Weaver, Metropolitan Council