

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: September 22, 2008

Council meeting October 8, 2008

ADVISORY INFORMATION	
Date:	September 15, 2008
Subject:	AVL Contract for Regional Fleet
District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	NA
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS (651-602-1754) Chris Gran, Metro Transit Director of Purchasing (612-349-5060) Gerri Sutton, Asst. Dir. Contracted Transit Services (651-602-1672) John Harper, Supervisor of Contracted Services (651-602-1744) Clay Stenback, Operations Manager Metro Mobility (651-602-1664)
Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a contract with Continental Corporation (formerly Siemens) to purchase Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) systems to be utilized by Metropolitan Transportation Service and Suburban Transit providers in an amount not to exceed \$6,654,100.

Background

The Continental AVL system was installed in Metro Transit’s fleet beginning in 2001. The system is fully functioning and allows Metro Transit to monitor all revenue vehicles as they move throughout the metro area. This technology facilitates timed connections, service quality monitoring, bus security, and route scheduling. It also maximizes the efficiency of fare collection equipment and provides real time customer information. By expanding the existing Metro Transit system, the Council can most efficiently and effectively provide these same AVL enabled benefits to all fixed route customers in the region.

Rationale

Staff is proposing a sole source contract, with Continental Corporation, to expand the current AVL system used by Metro Transit. Continental currently provides installation, technical support, and warranties for the system in place at Metro Transit and would provide the same support to all fixed-route regional fleet vehicles.

Expanding the current system instead of procuring a separate system for regional providers will have several distinct advantages. First, expansion of the current system will allow all regional providers to use the same infrastructure. Because they have been using Continental AVL since 2001, Metro Transit has developed significant expertise related to the system. Ongoing system support can be efficiently and effectively accomplished by using existing resources at Metro Transit, which should result in lower operating costs. Also, using the same components will allow for seamless connectivity of all transit buses in the region, regardless of operator. Utilizing a single system will significantly increase the responsiveness and capacity of transit in the event of a large scale emergency.

In addition, Metro Transit has a number of projects complete or in development that will provide real-time transit information using data gathered by the Continental system. NexTrip, which provides real time departure information, is currently available on the Metro Transit web page and by telephone. Also, Metro Transit is working with the city of Minneapolis to provide the same information on signs, which will be placed at bus stops throughout downtown and at other hub locations. Finally, the Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA)

requires signage along I-35W and at nearby park and ride lots showing real time information for routes operated by Metro Transit and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority. Installing the Continental system will allow a comprehensive set of transit information to be provided through a single source. If we installed another vendor's system, providing this same single source of real time information system would require significant integration costs and would present substantial technological hurdles.

Funding

The regional AVL system was included in the adopted 2008 Transportation Improvement Plan and the Council's Authorized Capital Plan. The project will be funded with \$4,523,280 in federal Section 5307 funds and \$2,130,820 in Regional Transit Capital bonds.

Known Support / Opposition

Regional transit providers that include Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, Southwest Transit, City of Maple Grove, City of Plymouth, City of Shakopee, and the City of Prior Lake have been involved in developing the scope and technical specifications of this project.

There is no known opposition.