

Metropolitan Council

Metropolitan Council Chambers, 390 No. Robert St., St. Paul, Mn. 55101

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**Meeting of the Transportation Committee  
Monday, February 9, 2009**

Members Present	Annette Meeks, Chair	Bob McFarlin, Vice Chair	Peggy Leppik
	Georgie Hilker	Natalie Haas Steffen	Richard Aguilar
	Craig Peterson	Kirstin Sersland Beach	Roger Scherer

Members Absent

Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, GM, Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS
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TAB Liaison	David Gepner
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**CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum being present, Chair Meeks called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 pm on February 9, 2009 at Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Chair Meeks stated that information item number 2 from the agenda will be moved to follow action item number 6. It was moved by Leppik seconded by Hilker to adopt the amended agenda for February 9, 2009 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Hilker seconded by McFarlin to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2009 regular Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**DIRECTOR METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES REPORT and METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services, reported that a summary of the Economic Recovery action taken by the Senate was e-mailed out to members. Council staff continues to work on a list of projects for the Economic Recovery Bill, and continues to monitor progress on the bill.

Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit, reported:

1. TIC REPS HAVE SECOND BEST MONTH EVER  
Transit Information Center representatives handled more than 102,500 calls in January, the second highest total in call center history and the first time the 100,000 mark has been topped since August 2007. NexTrip, the automated service that gives real-time information and scheduled departure times, handled nearly 315,500 calls, also the second highest monthly total in history. Customers created more than half million itineraries on line in January, using the web-based trip planner, the fourth highest monthly total.

2. ROUTE 375 INCIDENT

Metro Transit is taking a proactive role in dealing with the publicized incident with the bus driver of Route 375 from the park and ride at Guardian Angels Church in Oakdale. Transit representatives have visited the location greeting and talking with the riders, and management is dealing with the bus driver.

3. INTEGRATED TESTING FOR HIAWATHA LIGHT RAIL AND NORTHSTAR CORRIDOR

Hiawatha light-rail staff members are working with their Northstar counterparts on a plan to test light-rail trains on the four-block Hiawatha extension to the Northstar's terminal near the new Twins ballpark. Work on the extension will conclude this summer in time for trains to test the overhead power system, track, and signal/communications network before the start of passenger service toward the end of the year.

#### 4. LIGHT RAIL CAR MANUFACTURERS TO MEET

Next Monday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, Central Project Office and Hiawatha Light Rail staff will be meeting with seven rail vehicle manufacturing companies to begin the process of gathering information for the 31 cars needed for Central Corridor opening as well as options for 17 cars for Hiawatha expansion.

#### 5. ECONOMIC RECOVERY BILL

Metro Transit also continues to monitor the bill.

### **BUSINESS – Non-Consent Items**

#### 2009-60 Approve 2009 Transportation Committee Work Plan

Arlene McCarthy and Brian Lamb presented the 2009 Transportation Committee Work Plan prepared by them and their respective staffs. There were few changes: Page 3, under Implementation - change economic “stimulus” to economic “recovery”, and Page 3, under Outreach to Key Constituency Groups – Add CTIB/Counties.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Steffen:

To approve the Transportation Committee 2009 Work Plan as attached to the business item, and with the additions noted above.

Motion passed. This item does not advance to the full Council.

#### 2009-62 Approval of Regional Dial-a-Ride Service Delivery Plan

Arlene McCarthy and Gerri Sutton, Asst. Director Contracted Transit Services, presented this item to the committee. Committee members discussed and requested additional information including how efficiency and coordination will be achieved, how this restructuring fits in with the current transit operating deficit, standing orders, makeup of the coordination advisory committee, and if reduced fares could be granted for people who are required to look for jobs and have children in daycare while on state programs. McCarthy and Sutton answered questions and advised that they would provide implementation updates and return to the Council regarding distance-based and group fare policy.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Steffen:

That the Metropolitan Council approve the Regional Dial-a-Ride Service Delivery Plan as attached to the business item.

Motion passed unanimously.

Steffen requested that details be relayed to committee members as they are known.

#### 2009-41 Authorize Public Hearing to consider elimination of Route 255

John Harper, Supervisor Contracted Transit Services introduced Becky McBride, MTS Project Administrator, who presented this item to the committee. Beach stated that perhaps the route location may lie in District 13-Aguilar, rather than 14-Beach. Staff will check and change the business item, if necessary. Meeks commented that it is an excellent idea to monitor high subsidy routes, and make adjustments when necessary.

Motion by Aguilar, seconded by Beach:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize a public hearing, to be held at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14, at Wells Fargo Operations Center in Shoreview, on the proposed elimination of Route 255, which operates between downtown St. Paul and the operations center.

Motion passed unanimously.

#### 2009-38 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: MnDOT, Include 18 Vehicle Purchases through the Section 5310 Program for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities (TAB Action 2009-01)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item to the committee.

There were no further questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Beach:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include Section 5310 Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program projects.

Motion passed with Steffen abstaining.

Hearing no objection, Chair Meeks stated that this item could move to the full Council as a consent item.

2009-39 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: MnDOT, Include SP#TRF-0018-09, Continue Promotion Activities for Van-Go Program (TAB Action 2009-02)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item to the committee.

There were no further questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Hilker:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program to fund the Van-Go van pool program.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair Meeks stated that this item could move to the full Council as a consent item.

2009-40 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: MnDOT, Include SP#90-060-067 Minneapolis Grand Rounds Mississippi Gorge Picnic/Observation Area (TAB Action 2009-03)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item to the committee.

Meeks questioned where the local match is coming from, it is believed that it will come from the Minneapolis Park Board. There were no further questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Beach:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include SP#91-060-067, Minneapolis Grand Rounds Mississippi Gorge Picnic/Observation Area.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair Meeks stated that this item could move to the full Council as a consent item.

**INFORMATION ITEM:** Northstar Commuter Rail Operations & Maintenance Quarterly Update  
Mark Fuhrmann and Ed Beyers, Metro Transit, presented an update on the Northstar Commuter Rail Operations and Maintenance. The presentation included staffing/hiring update, activities such a safety and security plans and training(s), status of arrival of locomotives and passenger cars, and the projected operating budget and fare revenues. There was discussion regarding status of contingency money and potential uses for that money. McFarlin stated that the contingency money should be treated carefully and as just that – contingency. There was discussion about the rest facility required by the BNSF service agreement, used vs remanufactured 6<sup>th</sup> locomotive, switch heaters in VMF yard.

2009-54 Northstar Commuter Rail Fares Public Review

Adam Harrington, Sr. Mgr. Operations Planning Metro Transit, presented this item to the committee.

Additional modeling has been performed. Meeks stated that the proposed fare from Big Lake is still a good deal, and suggested looking into more fair distanced-based fares. Steffen stated that subsidizing fares, to a certain degree, can help to bring business downtown and keep the downtown healthy. Harrington answered questions from Beach regarding night time, and special events operating hours.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Scherer:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes proposed Northstar Commuter Rail Fares as set forth in the business item for public comment.

Motion passed.

2009-55 Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail Subordinate Funding Agreement No. 10 with Minnesota Department of Transportation for East Platform Interlocking

Chris Weyer, Dir. Transit Systems Design & Construction Metro Transit, presented this item to the committee. Weyer highlighted the risks of hand operated switches, and the safety and operational advantages to an automated switch.

Motion by Aguilar, seconded by Scherer:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator:

- To negotiate and execute a subordinate funding agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), in an amount not to exceed \$611,000, for reimbursement of costs incurred by the Metropolitan Council for construction services related to the Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail East Platform Interlocking project.

Motion passed.

## **INFORMATION**

1. Hiawatha Light Rail Transit Projects (Platforms Extension, American Boulevard, Grade Crossings) MarySue Abel, Metro Transit, presented this item to the committee and reported on the status, bids being reviewed and forthcoming approval to award contract. These items are upgrades to the system since the system has been in operation since 2004, and to prepare for 3-car train operation. The items will appear as business items at later Transportation Committee/Council meetings.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by McFarlin, seconded by Beach, and passed to adjourn the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:10 p.m. February 9, 2009.

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary