

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, June 8, 2009**

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

Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager MT	Amy Vennewitz, Dep. Director Finance & Planning, MTS
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TAB Liaison David Gepner

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Meeks called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 pm on June 8, 2009 at Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Peterson seconded by Scherer to adopt the agenda for June 8, 2009 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Leppik seconded by Scherer to approve the minutes from the May 11, 2009 regular Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

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

Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director Finance & Planning, Metropolitan Transportation Services, reported: Councilmembers should have received an invitation to the upcoming Symposium on Transportation Long-Range Funding Solutions on June 24 at the Earl Brown continuing Education Center, St. Paul Campus. The symposium is by invitation only and is specifically aimed at policy makers, and is in response to legislation passed in 2008. The symposium will foster discussion and get feedback on:

- (1) how long range transportation needs for highways and transit might be affected by changes in travel behavior and revenue generation due to improved vehicle fuel economy, increased availability of non-driving travel alternatives and/or sharply increased gas prices, and
- (2) whether road pricing and other alternative funding mechanisms used in other state and countries show promise for use in MN and for public acceptance and alleviation of congestion with consideration given to the effects the mechanism might also have on air and water quality, greenhouse gas emissions and costs of implementation.

Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit, reported the following:

Hiawatha LRT 3-car platforms

He toured the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit to observe progress on the 3-car platforms being constructed. Construction is well underway and making very good progress.

Northstar

The first two Northstar passenger rail cars are expected to arrive this afternoon at Northstar's Big Lake maintenance base after passing through Toronto last Tuesday (June 2) and Chicago this past weekend from Bombardier's Plattsburgh, N.Y., manufacturing plant.

Starlite Transit Center Construction

Construction of the new Starlite Transit Center, in Brooklyn Park, started today, Monday, June 8th. We will be using a temporary passenger waiting location nearby during construction which is expected to take about 6 weeks. The new transit center will have room for more buses and more passenger waiting shelter space.

Phase II Northwest Restructuring Plan

Implementation of Phase II of the Northwest Metro Transit Restructuring plan started on Saturday May 30th. So far the service is going well and response from customers has been generally positive.

Bus Maintenance

Seven of the eleven new articulated buses arrived at the Overhaul Base last week from New Flyer's plant in St. Cloud. In addition, the program to retrofit 178 buses with new on-board camera systems will begin later this week. The new multi-camera system records digitally in color, replacing the first generation VCR models.

Construction Mixer

More than 250 people attended a construction mixer last month hosted by the Council's Diversity Office. The goal was to bring together job seekers with trainers and with construction companies and trade organizations as the Council prepares to build the Central Corridor light-rail line and other construction projects.

Awards for Metro Transit

Several awards have been issued to Metro Transit in the last week:

-- Metro Transit's Safety Department under Mike Conlon, Director of Bus and Rail Safety, was awarded by The American Public Transportation Association –APTA –the Gold Award in their Bus Awards competition by recognizing our Bus Safety Program Excellence for bus transit systems providing 30 million or more passenger trips.

-- Metro Transit Marketing Division took home five awards at the annual Minnesota Association of Government Communicators (MAGC) awards program. MAGC includes cities, counties, universities, state and other related government agencies with similar departments of peers. Many marketing staff contributed to these projects.

Metro Transit entered five categories and won awards in all five. Here is a list of the winning entries.

- 2008 State Fair illustration - award of excellence in visual design/illustration category
- Biking as Transportation brochure - award of excellence in promotional brochure category
- Commuter Choice Awards graphics identity - award of merit in visual design/themes category
- Welcome to Metro Transit Travel Options brochure - award of merit in promotional brochure category
- Bike2Benefits website - award of merit in website category

Also given by MAGC was an Award of Excellence for a photograph taken by Central Corridor Project Communications Manager Laura Baenen. The picture was of construction workers finishing the last weld on the Hiawatha Line's extension in downtown Minneapolis.

BUSINESS – Non-Consent Items

2009-181 Approval to Execute a Contract with Ramsey County for Red Rock Bond Funds

Cole Hiniker, MTS Project Administrator, presented this item. Council member Scherer inquired about what would happen to the funds if the proposed action did not pass. Staff indicated that the use of funds would need to be reevaluated or the funding would be returned to the FTA. Staff also indicated that these are essentially pass-through funds requested by Ramsey County.

Council member Leppik asked how an economic analysis of Union Depot related to the preliminary engineering process and Council member McFarlin expressed a similar question about the need for an economic analysis in relation to the Red Rock and Rush Line corridors. Staff responded that the economic analysis is a separate task from preliminary engineering. The analysis is intended to gauge the future effects of the updating the Union Depot, which is currently identified as the terminus of the Red Rock, Rush Line, and Central corridors.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Aguilar:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute agreements with Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority (RCRRA) for:

- \$3,195,000 for alternative analysis work related to Red Rock and Rush Line corridor transit ways and;
- \$1,000,000 for Union Depot preliminary engineering

Motion passed.

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

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented the next five TIP amendments, and gave an overview of them prior to addressing each item separately.

2009-182 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: Include Funding for Southwest Corridor Alternatives Analysis, TAB Action 2009-31

There were no questions from committee members.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Steffen:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include a total of \$667,969 for the Southwest Corridor Alternatives Analysis.

Motion passed.

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

SW 2009-183 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: include 32 Tier III Regional ARRA Projects, TAB Action 2009-33

There were no questions from committee members.

Councilmember McFarlin recused himself from the vote.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include 32 projects to be funded with regional ARRA funding.

Motion passed.

SW 2009-184 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: Include 10 Transportation Enhancements ARRA Projects, TAB Action 2009-37

There were no questions from committee members.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Hilker:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include 10 projects with a total federal amount of \$7,791,806 to receive Transportation Enhancements ARRA funds.

Motion passed.

SW 2009-185 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: STP Eligible Projects Funded with MnDOT/State ARRA Funds, TAB Action 2009-35

There were no questions from committee members.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include projects as shown on attached tables that will be funded with MnDOT ARRA funding.

Motion passed.

2009-186 2009-2012 TIP Amendment: MnDOT Metro District, include SP#90-080-34, Funding for Erosion Control Project, TAB Action 2009-36

There were no questions from committee members.

Motion by Scherer, seconded by Steffen:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include SP#90-080-34, Newport North Ravine – Sterling to Hastings Avenue; erosion and rate control.

Motion passed.

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

2009-206 Authorization for Forest Lake and Columbus Transit Service Expansion Agreement

Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director Finance & Planning MTS, presented this item to the committee and answered committee member questions regarding the Transit Taxing District.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute an agreement with the City of Forest Lake and with the City of Columbus providing for transit service and the extension of the Council's transit levy to the City of Forest Lake and the City of Columbus.

Motion passed.

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

2009-178 Northstar Commuter Rail Fare Approval

Adam Harrington, Asst. Dir. Route System & Planning Metro Transit, presented this item to the committee.

The committee discussed the proposed fare structure and average subsidies. Meeks questioned the weekend fare amount and whether the commuter rail should make trips on weekends. Harrington explained that it is a balancing act when starting a new service, to draw riders, yet compete during times of fluctuating gas/parking prices and congestion levels.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council approves the recommended Northstar Commuter Rail Fares as set forth in the business item.

Motion passed.

2009-195 Northstar Commuter Rail Fridley Station Ground Lease

Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager and Northstar Project Director, presented this item to the committee. There were no questions from committee members.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute the Northstar Fridley Station Ground Lease with the Fridley Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Anoka County Regional Railroad Authority to set forth the responsibilities for the design, construction, ownership, operation and maintenance of the Fridley Station eastside park and ride and headhouse facilities in support of the Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail Project.

Motion passed.

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

INFORMATION

1. 2030 Regional Park-and-Ride Plan Update.

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit Facilities Planner, presented an update to the 2030 Regional Park and Ride Plan.

2. New Metro Transit Website Feature: Online Schedules

Sharon Feiner, Supervisor-Creative Services, Metro Transit Marketing, gave a presentation/demonstration of the Online Schedules feature on the Metro Transit Website.

3. Central Corridor Station Design and Public Art Update

Robin Caufman, Manager of Public Involvement CCLRT, introduced Alicia Vap, Project Manager for Station Design CCLRT. Vap gave an update on the CC Station Design and Public Art.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Scherer, seconded by Hilker to adjourn the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:55 p.m. June 8, 2009. Motion passed

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary