

Metropolitan Council

Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, 560 Sixth Avenue North, Minneapolis MN 55411

Meeting of the Transportation Committee

Monday, July 19, 2010

Members Present	Bob McFarlin, Chair	Craig Peterson, Vice Chair Natalie Haas Steffen	Richard Aguilar Georgie Hilker
Members Absent	Peggy Leppik Kirstin Sersland Beach	Annette Meeks	Roger Scherer
Staff Presiding	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services		

CALL TO ORDER

Chair McFarlin called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM.

The chair announced that there was one agenda item before the Committee, a review and comment on the updated Transportation Policy Plan. This meeting represented a continuation of the discussion from the July 12th meeting. He also indicated that this was an informational meeting, and that action on the Plan would come at a later date.

The chair called on Connie Kozlak, Manager Systems Planning, who began the presentation with an overview of the purpose and need for the updated Plan. Connie indicated that there had been an update in January, 2009, but the Highway and Aviation chapters of the plan were not ready at that time. Federal regulations require an update of a region’s overall transportation plan every four years. Completion of this plan resets the next scheduled due date for 2014.

The committee received several “handouts; the first was a list of comments received thus far in the process made by the TAC Funding & Programming Committee, TAC-Planning Committee, TAC Aviation Task Force, and the TAB Policy Committee. Kozlak indicated that any comments received by the TAB would be provided to the Transportation Committee at the next meeting. At that time there would also be a cover memo asking that the Plan be adopted, directing staff to address comments made in the review process. This would result in the Council adopting a version of the Transportation Plan for public hearing. After the public hearing process is complete, the comments would be compiled and a Final Draft would be made, accompanied by the Public Hearing comments. This is scheduled to take place around October to early November. Connie also noted that the “Overview” chapter has yet to come before the Committee.

The presentation was then turned over to Carl Ohrn, Planning Analyst, who introduced Scott McBride, MnDOT Metro District Engineer. Mr. McBride spoke briefly on the coordination that has taken place between MnDOT and the Metropolitan Council on this Plan update effort, indicating his pleasure at having both been involved and praising the excellent relationship that has come from this joint effort. He indicated that there have been a dozen meetings with the counties, communities and various special interest groups that have stake in the Plan update. As a result of this joint effort, MnDOT is reassessing 12 major projects cited in the previous plan. A Congestion Management Safety effort is underway, and MnPASS 2 study is looking at the next potential corridors for HOV management.

McBride commented that big ideas were coming out of the Plan update for MnDOT, such as a managed lanes system, low-cost/high-benefit solutions to address traffic concerns, and strategic capacity improvements in the

region. The question of what happens at the edges of the region on non-freeway roadways in areas such as Scott, Carver and Anoka counties continues to be an issue under discussion and MnDOT is committed to working with the Metro Council and local communities to address the concerns.

In response to Chair McFarlin's question, McBride responded that the draft TPP has MnDOT's support and input.

Ohrn, referring to page 10 through 13 of the PowerPoint handout, noted that revenue was NOT keeping up with highway improvement needs. This was one of the reasons for the reassessment of highway plans. The impetus now is to focus more on managing the system that is currently in place. This update is a multi-modal plan. There is a need to establish guidelines for locally initiated projects, e.g. those on the fringes of the system. Ohrn indicated that of the funds available to MnDOT for the region, about 75 percent are earmarked for "preservation", an additional amount is set aside for bridge replacement, which leaves a much-reduced amount for improvement projects.

Pointing out the map on page 11 of the handout, Ohrn noted that it shows a managed system that contains a sizeable transit component. The capacity expansion corridors from the 2004 Plan have been reassessed. In some cases a new project is proposed but at lower cost; in some cases, the project scope is changed; in others, the demand is yet to materialize, so those projects have been rescheduled for a later time frame. For the non-freeway trunk highways it is suggested that MnDOT would reassess these projects as well and work with local communities to determine lower-cost solutions. The Metro Council would develop guidelines to address this.

Chair McFarlin asked Kozlak about the other chapters in the Plan. Kozlak indicated that minor changes were made to the Transit chapter, but much of it encompassed updates to maps and language that needed to be modified for projects that were now complete. Transit guidelines were updated and changes were made to include the Southwest Transitway. The Council is familiar with the Aviation changes having adopted the long-term comprehensive plans.

The chair asked the committee for questions and comments.

Council member Steffen asked about passenger rail, believing it to be the purview of MnDOT. Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS, responded that some of the text relating to passenger rail was lifted directly from MnDOT and put in the plan. The Transitway map now includes gray arrows to recognize corridors identified in the MnDOT rail plan as Phase I projects.

Steffen also asked whether or not the Airport Plan could be changed before the year 2030 if the public wishes. The response was that the Plan is to be updated every 4 years, so there would be opportunity to change the plan.

Council member Peterson asked whether changes to the Transit chapter were in alignment with CTIB. Kozlak responded that only the maps were updated; there were no Transitway definition changes. Steffen directed a question to Ohrn concerning the definition of MUSA, indicating that the meaning of that term needs to be made clear. Ohrn indicated that it approximates the definition used by the Federal government for the urbanized boundary.

Concerns were raised by Steffen on past agreements between MnDOT and several communities in Anoka County that concerned the development of TH10 as a possible freeway. This concern was raised because the previous comments by Ohrn and McBride indicated there were no funds for large projects on TH10, and that raised the question as to what can be done by communities along that roadway that planned for right-of-way for a freeway that was not likely to be constructed. The big issue for TH10 is one of health and safety.

McBride responded that MnDOT plans to meet with these communities in an effort to identify a workable solution.

Steffen also commented on a planned sewer plan in Bethel, which identified an issue along Co Rd 22. A plan was cited to construct a Principal Arterial along that stretch of roadway, which complicates development, while the Plan update indicates there are no funds for such a project.

Mc Farlin asked McBride for information on existing MOUs MnDOT has with the local communities, such as those along TH 10 in Anoka.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Bob Paddock, Recording Secretary