

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, October 11, 2010**

Members Present	Bob McFarlin, Chair Craig Peterson, Vice Chair Georgie Hilker	Natalie Haas Steffen Kirstin Sersland Beach	Roger Scherer Richard Aguilar
Members Absent	Peggy Leppik	Annette Meeks	
Staff Presiding	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	
Others Present	Robert Lilligren, City of Minneapolis		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair McFarlin called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 pm on October 11, 2010 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair McFarlin noted that the agenda had been amended to include an additional information item. A motion was then made by Scherer and seconded by Hilker to adopt the amended agenda for the October 11, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Beach, seconded by Hilker to approve the minutes from September 27, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metropolitan Transportation Services

MTS Assistant Director Gerri Sutton introduced key members of the transition team that developed the TransitLink program, which replaced the previous dial-a-ride service available in the region. Recognized at the meeting were John Harper, Sheila Williams, Bruce Dreier and Becky McBride of MTS’s Contracted Services Division; and Michelle Fure of the Council’s Public Affairs Division. Ms. Sutton highlighted contributions of each of the team members and their roles in bringing this enhanced service to its customers. Chair McFarlin and MTS Director McCarthy thanked the team members for their dedication and commended them on their success. Ms. McCarthy also added that Ms. Sutton played a major role in the success of the project, even though she had not included any reference to herself in her presentation.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) revenues continue to come in under forecasted levels. September’s MVST receipts were at approximately 90 percent of forecast.

A report has been published by the organization CEOs for Cities which challenges the approach to congestion mitigation established by the Texas Transportation Institute’s annual Urban Mobility Report (URM). McCarthy will provide an executive summary for inclusion in the next edition of RA Notes.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

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

Metro Transit was notified last week that a grant application for \$1.6 million in federal funding was approved under a new FTA program called State of Good Repair. The funds will be used to enlarge and modernize the paint booth at the bus overhaul base on Cleveland Avenue in Saint Paul. Each bus is stripped and repainted when it reaches six years of age. The expansion will provide enough space to work on two articulated buses at once. It will also improve ventilation and provide additional heat to help the paint cure properly.

The Central Corridor utility construction is progressing west across the Mississippi with the start of private utility relocation under Washington Avenue this month prior to Civil West construction beginning next spring. Washington Avenue westbound on the West Bank was closed the week of October 4, and eastbound was closed the week of October 11. Lane restrictions will continue throughout the month.

Metro Transit set up a Twitter page in August and since then has been testing the types of messages being sent out with a small number of followers. There are now over 450 people following Metro Transit. As a result, the Twitter logo has been added to the bottom of the website's home page, and more aggressive marketing efforts have begun to promote the communications vehicle to customers who want to use it. There is also now a link on the website to Metro Transit's YouTube page, where several "How to Ride"-type videos are available that have already been viewed over 25,000 times.

Transit Police promoted ten of its officers to the rank of Sergeant effective October 2, 2010. This is the first time the department has had sergeants, who will serve as first-line supervisors on the street as an immediate resource to manage patrol officers. This is a major component of the department's restructuring and will enhance all officers' ability to serve Transit customers and staff.

The Bus Operations and Bus Safety departments launched a campaign at the bus garages last week called "Rock & Roll" to remind operators to rock forward and backward in their seats as well as roll side to side when they check for pedestrians. The goal is to reduce the number of bus-pedestrian accidents. Promotional materials, including life-sized cutouts of Elvis Presley, will be used to bring more attention to these safety messages.

Two more ticket vending machines (TVM) have been installed at the Big Lake Northstar commuter rail station. Big Lake is the busiest stop on Northstar on an average day, and boardings skyrocket on special event trains. Big Lake now has five TVMs.

BUSINESS

2010-334 Unified Capital Program Amendment

Metro Transit Finance Senior Manager Steve True and MTS Deputy Director Amy Vennewitz presented this item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Scherer, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Amend the 2010 Authorized Capital Program (multi-year authorization) by adding spending authority as follows:

Metro Transit	\$ 8,784,000
Metropolitan Transportation Services	\$ 500,000
- Amend the 2010 Capital Budget (annual appropriation) by increasing appropriation as follows:

Metro Transit	\$ 8,334,000
Metropolitan Transportation Services	\$ 500,000

Motion passed.

2010-346 Authorization to Execute Grant Agreements with SouthWest Transit and MVTA

MTS Planner Cole Hiniker presented this item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Beach:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a grant agreements with SouthWest Transit and MVTA for the following projects and amounts:

Agency:	Project:	Grant Amount:
SouthWest Transit	SW Station Debt (Principal Only)	\$275,307
MVTA	Burnsville Bus Garage COP Payoff	\$330,000
MVTA	Eagan Bus Garage Expansion	\$1,000,000

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair McFarlin stated that this item could proceed to the Council as a Consent Item.

2010-345 Authorization to Purchase 25 Sixty-foot Articulated Transit Buses

Chuck Wurzinger, Assistant Director, Metro Transit Bus Maintenance, presented this item. In response to committee member questions, Wurzinger explained that the buses being replaced are sold at auction. Staff also clarified the difference between the planned lifespan of articulated buses and that of coach buses. Chair McFarlin asked who else was able to make bus purchases off the state contract. Wurzinger responded that other, smaller transit properties could also do so as the contract was not for articulated buses exclusively.

Motion by Scherer, seconded by Hilker:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a purchase agreement with New Flyer of America using State of Minnesota Contract No. 442668 for the purchase of 25 replacement articulated buses in an amount not to exceed \$17,059,622.25, contingent on satisfactory results from the Pre-Award Buy America Audit.

Motion passed.

2010-350 Arterial Transitway Corridors Study

Metro Transit Manager of Transitway Projects Charles Carlson presented this item. Councilmember Haas Steffen asked whether the transitways in the study were included in the 2010 Transportation Policy Plan. Staff responded that most of them were part of the 2009 TPP.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a professional services contract for planning, concept design, and forecasting relative to the Arterial Transitway Corridors Study, at a cost of \$324,363.

Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Transitways Identity and Branding Update

Metro Transit Director of Marketing Bruce Howard and MTS Planner Cole Hiniker presented a proposed framework for creating a distinct identity for transitway service within current regional transit service. They outlined the purpose and benefits of a branding strategy and offered recommended approaches. Also included were examples of identity and branding of stations, vehicles and routes from other transit properties around the country.

2. Fall Marketing Campaign

Maria Cone, Supervisor, Market Development, and Sharon Feiner, Supervisor, Creative Services, presented an overview of Metro Transit's fall 2010 marketing campaign, focused on building ridership on key underutilized routes. They outlined the overall strategy and showed examples of different tactics, including direct mail, billboards, bus advertisements and website banner ads.

3. Hiawatha Rail Overhaul Shop Progress Report

Gene Sheldon, Manager of Rail Vehicle Maintenance for Hiawatha Light Rail, provided an update on the progress of the overhaul program for Hiawatha light rail vehicles (LRV). He displayed photos of the various system components and briefly described the overhaul process for each. The overhaul of all LRVs began in September, 2009, and is expected to be completed in early 2012.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McFarlin adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:32 p.m. October 11, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Maday, Recording Secretary