

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, November 8, 2010**

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

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was not present when Committee Chair McFarlin called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:02 pm on November 8, 2010 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis. Chair McFarlin asked that the meeting proceed with staff reports and information items.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Revenue levels from the motor vehicle sales tax (MVST) continue to be disappointing. Receipts since the July 1 start of the state fiscal year have averaged 89 percent of forecast, with October at only 87 percent. McCarthy noted that the Council bases its budget on a rate of 95 percent of forecast. A new state forecast, known as the “November forecast,” is expected the first week of December.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

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

Metro Transit will be holding flag-raising ceremonies the week of November 8 at each of its bus and rail facilities to honor its current and past veterans. Metro Transit has 161 veterans with three currently on active duty. When a Metro Transit employee is deployed to a war zone, support is offered to his or her family, and plans are underway for 2011 to start to focus on family recognition as well as deployed vet support. The agency is also involved in a program called Soldiers’ Angels, which has lists of items and ideas of support that are needed.

Met Council Chair Peter Bell will be among those making remarks on Saturday, November 13, at a ceremony marking completion of Crosstown Commons construction project. Bell will highlight the speed advantage available to buses using the MnPASS toll lane and will describe bus operations at the new transit station on I-35W at 46th Street, which will open in early December and will be served by nearly 300 bus trips each business day. The Crosstown dedication ceremony is from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Pearl Park on 54th Street and Portland Avenue South/Diamond Lake Road.

The annual Commuter Choice Awards sponsored by Metro Transit and the region’s four Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) will be held on Wednesday, November 10, in downtown Minneapolis. The awards recognize employers, individuals, and organizations that provide and support innovative solutions that get more cars off the road. There were 45 nominations this year, and an independent group of judges selected 11 winners that will be announced at the event.

Metro Transit’s Twinkle Bus will once again be part of the annual Holidazzle parade on Thursdays through Sundays. The Marketing department is looking for volunteer guests to ride the bus in the parade. The parade begins the day

after Thanksgiving and continues through Sunday, December 19. Guests need to be at the Heywood garage at 5:30 p.m. and will be returned by 7:30 p.m. Anyone interested should contact Kelci Stones at extension 7686. There is a limit of bringing four guests per individual.

The Customer Relations department forwarded 740 contacts to garage transportation managers in October for investigation and response. Commendations comprised the largest category of contacts, with 120 customers expressing appreciation for their bus operators.

Transit Police officers logged 1,408 on-bus patrol hours last month, a 6 percent increase over September. For the first 10 months of the year officers have ridden buses for more than 16,600 hours, including 11,000 hours by officers who ride for their entire shifts.

INFORMATION

3. Ride to Rewards Loyalty Program

Marketing Director Bruce Howard presented an overview of Metro Transit's new, points-based customer loyalty program, Ride to Rewards. He demonstrated use of the ridetorewards.com website for customers to enroll in the program, search for merchant partners and track their points. The program was launched the week of October 25 and so far has more than 2,000 riders enrolled. In response to committee member questions, Howard provided background on the company administering the program and explained how information gathered from customers is used.

A quorum now present, the meeting continued.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair McFarlin noted that business item number 7 would be deleted from the agenda for this meeting. A motion was then made by Aguilar and seconded by Hilker to adopt the amended agenda for the November 8, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Hilker, seconded by Leppik to approve the minutes from October 25, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

BUSINESS

2010-366 SW Adoption of 2030 Transportation Policy Plan and Public Comment Report

Amy Vennewitz, MTS Deputy Director Finance & Planning, presented a summary of additional text changes to the TPP that were incorporated based upon discussions by the Transportation Committee on October 25 and the full Council on October 27. One of the changes relates to identifying CR 8 from I-35W to TH169 in Scott County as the location of the future east-west principal arterial. Councilmember Wulff indicated that this description was not accurate as CR 8 becomes Dakota CR70 prior to intersecting with I-35 (not I-35W). Staff indicated the description would be changed in the final TPP. Councilmember Hilker questioned whether Anoka County supported the plan. Staff indicated a number of changes have been made to the TPP text particularly relating to interchange criteria based upon Anoka's County's comment. Chair McFarlin asked whether any members of the public present would like to address the committee. No public testimony was offered.

Motion by Aguilar, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council accept the attached Public Comment Report on the Draft *2030 Transportation Policy Plan* and adopt the revised final version of the *2030 Transportation Policy Plan*.

Motion passed unanimously.

2010-374 Authorization to Execute Subrecipient Grant Agreement with Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority
Steve Elmer, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Aguilar:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a sub-recipient grant agreement with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority for \$250,000 in Federal Transit Administration funds to extend the ongoing I-94 Corridor Alternatives Analysis Study to Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Motion passed unanimously.

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

2010-384 Authorization to Amend Contract for Cedar Avenue BRT Service

MTS Director Arlene McCarthy presented this item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to execute a contract amendment in the amount of \$400,000 with Minnesota Valley Transit Authority for additional service and facility maintenance costs for a new total contract amount not to exceed \$1,050,000.

Motion passed unanimously.

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

2010-373 Approval of Station-to-Station Transitway Identity and Branding and Framework

MTS Senior Planner Mary Karlsson provided an overview of the Transitway Guidelines development process and timeline. Metro Transit Marketing Director Bruce Howard then outlined the proposed framework for the identity and branding of the combined “premium” system of light rail and station-to-station bus rapid transit (BRT). Staff responded to questions from committee members regarding the nature of BRT and how service is integrated with existing regular route and express service. Howard also outlined the planned next steps in the process of establishing the guidelines. Chair McFarlin asked whether any members of the public present would like to address the committee. No public testimony was offered.

Motion by Aguilar, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council approve four recommendations that form a Station-to-Station Transitway Identity and Branding Framework:

1. Position, brand, and identify Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) station-to-station services in the region as one system.
2. Name LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station lines using a color-coded scheme.
3. Unify the LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services brand using a distinct system name.
4. Apply regional transit color scheme to the LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services in a consistent manner across the region.

Motion passed unanimously.

2010-333 SW 2010 Unified Operating Budget Amendment

Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented the item and answered a question about how the proposed amendment relates to motor vehicle sales tax (MVST) revenue performance.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Aguilar:

That the Metropolitan Council amend the 2010 Unified Operating Budget by:

1. Eliminating the transfer of \$3,468,415 from Livable Communities fund balances to Metro Transit operations, and
2. Authorizing the transfer of \$9,412,321 from MVST Reserves to Metro Transit Bus and Northstar Reserves.

Motion passed unanimously.

2010-371 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit: Project Contract Underruns

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann presented the item. Chair McFarlin asked whether expenditure of underruns would require FTA approval and whether the current level of underruns was likely to grow. Fuhrmann responded that FTA concurrence would be required, though not formal approval, provided the project scope did not change. He stated that further underruns were unlikely as the contracts left to be awarded were relatively small and not likely to contribute significantly to budget deviations. Fuhrmann also noted that a change control board was being established, consisting of senior staff of the project partners, to provide a process for partners to suggest possible expenditures of the underruns.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council preserve the construction contract budget under run for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project for the Civil East, Civil West, Systems, Operation and Maintenance Facility and Light Rail

Vehicles contract awards in the aggregate amount of \$34 million separate and apart from the project base contingency amount of \$152 million. Furthermore, expenditure of any of the \$34 million will require approval of project lead funding partners Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB), Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA), Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRA) and the Metropolitan Council. Motion passed unanimously.

INFORMATION (continued)

1. Central Corridor Full Funding Grant Agreement, Letter of No Prejudice

Mark Fuhrmann provided a status report on the Full Funding Grant Agreement progress and answered a question about the potential impact on the project of the upcoming changes in Congress.

2. Highway Bus Rapid Transit Station-to-Station Service Fare Collection System Recommendation

Tom Randall, Senior Manager of Revenue Operations for Metro Transit, presented the item. He answered questions about ensuring fare compliance, potential technology developments and how the recommended system would impact the customer experience. Randall noted that this information item would be submitted for formal approval to the committee at its November 22 meeting and to the full Council on December 8.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McFarlin adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:55 p.m. November 8, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Maday, Recording Secretary