

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, March 14, 2011**

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Adam Duinick	Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair Jennifer Munt Edward Reynoso	James Brimeyer John Đoàn Roxanne Smith
Members Absent	Jon Commers		
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager MT	Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS	
TAB Liaison	David Gepner		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 pm on March 14, 2011 at Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Elkins stated that Item IV-Employee Recognition will be moved to a future meeting. A motion was made by Smith, seconded by Schreiber to adopt the amended agenda for March 14, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Reynoso, seconded by Duinick to accept the minutes from the February 14, 2011 regular Transportation Committee meeting. Motion passed.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT and METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS reported the following:
Following the overview given by Chief Financial Officer Wes Kooistra last week, McCarthy stated that staff watches the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) revenue source closely. For the month ending February 2011, the actual receipts were 109% of forecast. For the first 8 months of the state fiscal year, receipts were at 98% of forecast. This indicates an upward trend. At the federal level, President Obama signed a bill extending the base level of the Federal Surface Transportation spending program through September 2011. The last Federal Transportation Reauthorization (SAFETEA-LU) expired in 2009. Another continuing resolution will be needed from Congress in March in order to avoid a government shutdown on March 18.

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

Free Ride Promotion for St. Patrick's Day

For the past 14 years, Metro Transit has partnered with MillerCoors Brewing Company to promote taking transit as an alternative to driving on St. Patrick's Day, this Thursday, March 17th. Free rides will be available on our buses and light rail from 6:00 pm through the last scheduled trip on St. Patrick's Day. In this past, this has resulted in approximately another 25,000-30,000 rides. This promotion also will be available on regional routes as well as buses by Minnesota Valley Transit Authority and Plymouth Metrolink. Our staff will be participating in both Minneapolis and St. Paul parades to remind customers of the free-ride offer.

Please contact Lamb's office or Kelci Stones at Metro Transit's Marketing if you would like to join staff in the parade.

The St. Paul parade starts at 12 Noon—A bus will leave the FTheywood yard at 11:15 a.m. All who wish to walk in this parade are welcome to take the bus or meet us at the parade site. Parade line-up is on 4th Street

downtown St. Paul.

The Minneapolis parade starts at 6:30 pm. The parade bus will leave FTHeywood at 5:30. All who wish to walk in this parade are welcome to take the bus or meet at the parade site. Parade line-up is on Nicollet Mall between 11th and 12th Streets.

February Rail Fare Compliance Exceeds 99%

Metro Transit Police report that fare inspections by officers yielded 99.1 percent compliance by Hiawatha light-rail customers and 99.9 percent compliance by Northstar customers in February. The 2011 goal for fare compliance on rail is 98 percent. The penalty for not paying a transit fare is \$180. First-time offenders are typically warned and asked to exit trains and not board again until they have paid or validated their fare card. Metro Transit police wrote 2,170 citations for this offense in 2010.

TMOs Host Transportation Summits

Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) serving Saint Paul and downtown Minneapolis recently kicked off their 2011 employer outreach at transportation summits. More than 80 to 90 representatives from companies and organizations attended each event. The summits provide an opportunity for attendees - such as benefits coordinators - to learn about transportation projects and options to driving alone. Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin keynoted the respective events which also featured presentations by Central Corridor Project Office and Metro Transit staff. TMOs serving Anoka county and the cities in the 494 travel corridor will also host similar summits in the weeks ahead.

Lamb also mentioned the packet of materials from Metro Transit that is provided to all council members in their mail slots containing additional information about Metro Transit programs.

Chair Elkins welcomed members, and gave each member an opportunity to introduce themselves and state their experience, interests, and how they came to want to serve on the Transportation Committee. McCarthy also introduced David Gepner, liaison from the TAB and informed the committee that Gepner and Robert Lilligren share the duties of representing the TAB at Transportation Committee meetings.

PRESENTATION – Role of the Metropolitan Council in Transportation

Brian Lamb, Metro Transit General Manager, and Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services, gave a presentation of the role of the Metropolitan Council in transportation. The presentation included an organizational chart of the transportation portion of the Council, information on the MPO functions, planning activities, Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), suburban transit providers (opt outs), park-and-ride facilities, Metro Transit and Metro Mobility operation functions and ridership statistics and funding sources, and many other subjects. A similar presentation will be given to the Metro Council Committee of the Whole on 3/16.

Munt asked how the Metro Council can align the policy priorities of the Council with the funding recommendations made by TAB. McCarthy responded that discussions are taking place. The Regional Solicitation process takes place every 2 years and the TAB is getting ready to release the new solicitation by mid-year. Discussions will continue between the Council and TAB; McCarthy asked that Gepner help relay the message to TAB. Elkins suggested that members visit the Council website to familiarize themselves with the various reports and information on the TAB functions and a copy of the Regional Solicitation.

Doàn asked that copies of the Legislative Auditor's report on Transit Governance be provided to members. McCarthy will bring some copies of the report to the Committee of the Whole meeting on 3/16. The report is also available on the website and Elkins stated it would be advisable for the members to read the report for background. Elkins also suggested that staff prepare and send an e-mail to members with links to some of the reports being discussed.

BUSINESS – Non-Consent Items

2011-35 2011 Transportation Committee Work Plan

Brian Lamb, Metro Transit GM and Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS, presented this item to the committee. Lamb and McCarthy stated that this Work Plan is meant to be a guide for the Transportation Committee; some items are routine each year (budget items, procurements), some are not routine (example: the Travel Behavior Inventory is conducted every 10 years). Corridor study status reports will also be given as the projects reach milestones. At any time, the committee is welcome to suggest topics that are not part of the work program list. Chair Elkins suggested the committee read over the item and act on it at the next Transportation Committee (3/28/11).

2011-8 Authorization to Exercise Contract Options with Gillig Corporation

Alex Curtiss, MTS Manager Fleet Services, presented this item to the committee. Munt stated that she is aware that New Flyer is a Minnesota-manufactured product and asked why the contract is being awarded to Gillig. Curtiss responded that the 40' bus contract is competitively procured. New Flyer was able to bid on the contract; Gillig was awarded the contract. MTS utilizes the option on the Gillig contract. Lamb added that there is a Buy America clause in our contracts, requiring that more than 50% of the manufacture must be within the U.S. Both New Flyer and Gillig comply with the Buy America requirements. State preferential treatment cannot be given when using federal funds. He added that all of the articulated buses are from New Flyer. Doan asked how this purchase fits into the plan for transitioning the fleet to more 60' articulated buses. Lamb responded that staff tries to match the right type of vehicle with the service needs that are presented. There will always be a need for the 40' standard bus on routes without the highest ridership – the demand for a larger bus is not there. McCarthy added that articulated buses cost more, both from the initial purchase and to operate. Lamb stated that the 2010 versions of all buses have the highest EPA standards; the emissions from 2008 for either hybrid or diesel buses is cleaner than the air on Nicollet Mall. The difference in cost from a 40' diesel to a 40' hybrid is \$180,000. Each year Metro Transit looks at how many hybrid buses can be purchased.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise an existing contract option with Gillig Corporation to purchase five forty-foot buses in an amount not to exceed \$2,100,000.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, that this item could move to the full Council as a Consent Item.

2011-9 Authorization to exercise Contract Options with Motor Coach Industries

Alex Curtiss, MTS Manager Fleet Services, presented this item to the committee.

There were no questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise an existing contract option on contract 08P114 with Motor Coach Industries to purchase one coach bus in an amount not to exceed \$540,000.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, that this item could move to the full Council as a Consent Item.

Prior to Business Items 2011-58 through 2011-61, Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, gave a brief presentation on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and amendments to same. The Transportation Committee/Council reviews the TIP and TIP amendments based on 1) consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan, 2) fiscal balance, and 3) air quality conformance. The business items on today's agenda are a good example of the variety of TIP amendments that will come before the Transportation Committee for concurrence with Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action.

Đoàn asked how the TIP, and the prioritization of projects relates to air quality non-attainment issues. Ohrn stated that the TIP is in attainment at this time for CO. The TIP must maintain the conformity. An air quality budget is laid out for the projects in the TIP, if new pollutants are considered by the FTA, then the way federal funds are spent may change (examples: more on transit, lane pricing, etc).

2011-58 2011-2014 TIP Amendment Metro Transit: TIGGER II Section 5309 Funds to Install Geothermal Heating/Cooling system in O&M and Support Facility

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item to the committee. This project was awarded as part of a national competition involving new funds.

Motion by Schrieber, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program to include Metro Transit: TIGGER II Section 5309 funds to install geothermal heating/cooling system in O&M and support facility.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, that this item could move to the full Council as a Consent Item.

2011-59 2011-2014 TIP Amendment: City of Saint Paul SP#164-030-009: Planning for Saint Paul Complete Streets Policy

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item to the committee. Planning studies have no air quality issues and are somewhat unusual to appear in the TIP.

Motion by Munt, seconded Đoàn:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program to include City of Saint Paul SP#164-030-009: planning for Saint Paul Complete Streets Policy.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, that this item could move to the full Council as a Consent Item.

2011-60 2011-2014 TIP Amendment MnDOT SP#2750-75: Convert Existing Intersection to a Folded Diamond Half Interchange at TH 169 and 93rd Ave.

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item to the committee. Ohrn explained that Mn DOT is asking for this project to be put in the TIP so they can begin the cultural resource review. The project will still need to go through the conformity analysis and Council's controlled access approval processes.

Schrieber stated that this project is in her district and although she believes that it is a very necessary project, it is not without some local controversy - mainly from the City of Osseo. The action being taken by the committee today is intended to allow the cultural review of the project to be conducted.

Motion by Schrieber, seconded by Reynoso:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program to include MnDOT SP#2750-75: convert existing intersection to a folded diamond half interchange at TH 169 and 93rd Ave.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, that this item could move to the full Council as a Consent Item.

2011-61 2011-2014 TIP Amendment MnDOT SP#2750-73: Install Cable Median Barrier on TH 169 north of 63rd Ave to South of CSAH 81 in Brooklyn Park

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

There were no questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Duininck:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program to include MnDOT SP#2750-73: Install Cable Median Barrier on TH 169 north of 63rd Ave to South of CSAH 81 in Brooklyn Park.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, that this item could move to the full Council as a Consent Item.

2011-63 Authorization to Award Contract for Armored Car Service

Tom Randall, Metro Transit Sr. Manager Revenue Operations, presented this item to the committee.

Randall answered questions from members regarding the amount of cash transferred and that Metro Transit monitors the routes and specifies to the contractor what services are to be provided (example: location and time of pick-ups). Reynoso noted the difference in bid amounts, the bids were sealed and services specified in the contract.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a contract with Garda to provide armored car transport service for bus farebox and ticket vending machine cash revenue at a cost of \$481,572 over 36 months.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, that this item could move to the full Council as a Consent Item.

Doàn stated that the general public is not aware of everything that the Council does. There would be advantages to take opportunities to educate the public and highlight projects with events, particularly the “go-green” initiative projects. Duininck expressed an interest in helping with this effort.

INFORMATION

1. 2010 Ridership Summary

Ed Petrie, Metro Transit Director of Finance, and Maria Cone, Metro Transit Market Development Supervisor, gave presentations on Metro Transit ridership and Metro Transit Marketing plans. Members discussed, and staff clarified, the differences in the metro pass programs. A suggestion came from member Schrieber that Metro Transit considers extending the College Pass coverage to St. Cloud. There was also discussion about the mobile website capabilities and information available.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Elkins stated that the TAB has two openings in the area of City Council/Mayor/municipally-elected members. The Association of Metropolitan Municipalities appoints these members. There are also four at-large positions open, based on districts; and the Council appointed transit position is also open. There are also other committees that need council member appointments (TAB is one example); Chair Haigh will appoint members to these committees.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Duininck and passed, to adjourn the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:40 p.m. March 14, 2011.

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary