

Metropolitan Council
Metropolitan Council Offices, 390 North Robert St., St. Paul 55101
Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, April 11 2011

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Jennifer Munt	Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair James Brimeyer	Adam Duininck Roxanne Smith
Members Absent	John Doan	Jon Commers	Edward Reynoso
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, GM, Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Dir., Metropolitan Transportation Services	
Others Present	David Gepner, TAB Liaison		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present, Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 pm on April 11, 2011 at Metro Council Chambers, St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Smith, seconded by Munt to adopt the agenda for the April 11, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Munt, seconded by Schreiber to approve the minutes from the March 28, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT and METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services, reported the following:

Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

MnDOT Office of Passenger Rail was the lead in the developing a Minnesota Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan last year. The State of Florida returned \$2.4 B in federal passenger rail money from ARRA funds. Transportation Secretary LaHood solicited applications for that money. Ninety Applications were received from 24 states totaling \$10B. Minnesota submitted three applications: 1) Northern Lights Express Passenger Rail (Duluth to Twin Cities) for preliminary engineering funds – estimate \$9M, 2) Third Main BNSF project located in the NW Metro - \$115M, and 3) East Metro Warner Road Bridge – estimate of \$22M. The timeline for decisions is uncertain, but it is anticipated that Metro Council has the potential to receive some funds.

MVST Receipts

MVST receipts for March exceeded the forecast by 13%, marking the 5th straight month of exceeding forecasts. However, earlier in the state fiscal year the receipts were below forecasts, resulting in receipts through the first nine months of the state fiscal year to be at 100% of forecasts.

System Statements

System statements, typically brought through the Community Development Committee will soon be issued. Once plans such as the Transportation Policy Plan and the Parks System Plan are adopted, communities must be informed and they must comply and update their comprehensive plans, if necessary. Staff does not expect that this will require significant changes to local comprehensive plans. Letters to communities will go out the second half of April.

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

METROTRANSIT.ORG use highest ever in March

In March, nearly 205,000 separate individuals visited metrotransit.org for a total of nearly 650,000 times. This is the highest regular use of the site since it launched about a decade ago. The site was re-launched a year ago this month and includes a number of popular new features including an interactive regional transit map, Go-To Card balance lookup, online videos and predicted real-time departures for the early 15,000 bus stops throughout the region.

Annual Bus and Train Operator Awards

Metro Transit saluted its top 61 bus and train operators this past Thursday, April 7th, at the Ramada Plaza in Minneapolis. Among those honored were seven operators who each have logged 25 years of accident-free driving. Another 54 employees were recognized for top-notch customer service, safe driving and attendance over 5-, 10-, 15-, 20- and 25-year intervals. Metropolitan Council Chair Susan Haigh addressed the honorees. Regional Administrator Pat Born and Council member John Doan also attended.

Twins Service by Bus, Light Rail and Commuter Rail

Metro Transit bus, light rail, and Northstar service all performed without errors during the Twins opener. Northstar will serve all 81 home games this year, and we averaged about 1,300 riders (2,600 rides) over the three games. Our Twins express service from the Western suburbs – Route 679 - picked up where it left off last year carrying between 450 and 650 riders (900 to 1,300 rides) and our Hiawatha LRT service was packed as usual. Last year we carried 17% of all fans to Target Field and we hope to do even better this year.

7-Day Pass Ridership on the Rise

Customers took more than 26,300 rides last month using 7-Day Passes, a new fare tool that debuted last November. The February total represents a 34 percent increase over the 19,600 rides taken on 7-Day Passes in January. The all-you-can-ride pass was introduced as an alternative to 31-Day Passes for customers looking for a lower initial price. The 7-Day Pass is available for \$22 and covers fares up to \$2.25.

Police Exceed February Goal in Onboard Hours

Metro Transit uniformed and plainclothes officers were on board buses for 1,307 hours in February versus a Metro Transit Police goal of 1,250 hours for the month. The actual result exceeds the goal by 4.6 percent. In addition, members of the MAD DADS organization, which focuses on promoting civility and good riding behavior, rode buses for 180 hours in February.

Extra Help for Blind Customers During CCLRT Construction

Route 16 and 50 bus operators are giving extra help to blind and deaf-blind customers navigating Central Corridor light-rail construction near the University Avenue office of State Services for the Blind. Operators are advising these customers to use the Hampden Avenue bus stop rather than the Vandalia stop. In addition, a flagger positioned at the Hampden stop weekdays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. will help blind and deaf-blind customers cross the intersection. All University Avenue customers can keep up to date on Central Corridor detours and stop closings at metrotransit.org/construction.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Leslie Davis from Earth Protectors appeared before the committee. Because the committee did not have ample time to read the hard copies of information that Mr. Davis provided, Mr. Davis asked for a two hour period with the committee in the future to explain the information. Elkins stated that staff and the committee does need time to review the information provided, and that he would be in contact with Mr. Davis to arrange another time to meet with committee members.

BUSINESS

CONSENT ITEMS:

Before voting on Consent Item list, Chair Elkins pointed out that item 2011-97 should read: for “up to \$2.0 million” (not “for \$2.3 million”) in both the motion and the body of the document.

Following the acceptance of the revision to 2011-97, Consent Items 2011-93, 2011-94, 2011-96 and 2011-97 all passed unanimously in one motion by Munt, seconded by Duininck.

2011-93 Rejection of Bids, Storage Tank Additions, Project 62710

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council Authorize the Regional Administrator to reject all bids for the construction of Storage Tank Additions at the F. T. Heywood and Nicollet Garages in Minneapolis and the MJ Ruter Garage in Brooklyn Center.

2011-94 Purchase of Passenger Waiting Shelters

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council Authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a purchase order with Brasco International, Inc. for 120 passenger waiting shelters in the amount of \$494,400.

2011-96 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit: Amendment to the Cooperative Construction and Utility

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute an amendment to the Cooperative Construction and Relocation Agreement for 4th Street with the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of St. Paul in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 for a total amended agreement value in an amount not to exceed \$921,000.

22011-97 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit: Subordinate Funding Agreements with the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of St. Paul

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) for up to \$2.0 million under the existing Master Funding Agreement with the Board of Water Commissioners of the City of St. Paul.

NON-CONSENT ITEMS

2011-64 2011 Unified Operating Budget Amendment

Sean Pfeiffer MTS Financial Analyst and Ed Petrie, Metro Transit Director of Finance presented their respective department’s amendments to the capital operating budget.

Brimeyer had questions regarding where the funds come from and where the number for the reserve targets comes from. Petrie answered that the number was established by the previous MC Controller. Some members thought that the amount for reserve targets might be a bit low.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Schreiber:

That the Council amend the 2011 Unified Operating Budget in accordance with the table attached to Business Item 2011-64.

Motion passed.

2011-65 2011 Unified Capital Program Amendment

Sean Pfeiffer MTS Financial Analyst and Ed Petrie, Metro Transit Director of Finance presented their respective department’s amendments to the capital program.

The committee discussed the electric bus grant and how the electric bus is projected to improve fuel efficiency between 2.5 & 5%. There were questions from Brimeyer about whether projects were being added to the budget that were not planned. Petrie explained that the projects were in the long-term CIP and the funds are now being placed in current project specific categories. Brimeyer suggested that in the future, staff point out any projects that were not in the long-term CIP so members are aware of them.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Brimeyer:

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Amend the 2011 Authorized Capital Program (multi-year authorization) by adding spending authority as follows:

Metro Transit	\$ 57,569,080
Metropolitan Transportation Services	\$ 5,904,760

- Amend the 2011 Capital Budget (annual appropriation) by increasing appropriation as follows:

Metro Transit	\$ 24,005,000
Metropolitan Transportation Services	\$ 5,904,760

Motion passed.

2011-95 Hiawatha Light Rail Facility Expansion

MarySue Abel, Metro Transit Project Manager in Facilities and Engineering, presented this item.

Members Smith and Duininck had concerns that the contractor did not meet the disadvantage business target. Lamb and Abel explained good faith efforts and that the contractor is monitored throughout the contract. Lamb suggested that Wanda Kirkpatrick (ODEO) appear with an information item at a future meeting to explain DBE targets and process.

Motion by Duininck, seconded by Brimeyer:

That the Metropolitan Council Authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Shaw-Lundquist Associates, for the construction of the Hiawatha Light Rail Transit Operations and Maintenance (HLRT O&M) Facility Expansion at a cost of \$13,653,828.

Motion passed.

2011-99 SW Central Corridor Light Rail Transit: Approval of Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, presented this item and gave a background of the project to date.

Fuhrmann reminded the committee to save the date of 4/26/11 at 11:00 am for the anticipated FFGA signing.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Chair and the Regional Administrator to execute the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Full Funding Grant Agreement with the Federal Transit Administration in an amount of \$956.9 million.

Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Central Corridor LRT Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Construction-Related Potential Impacts on Business Revenues

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, presented this item. He stated that staff is in the process of finalizing the Supplemental EA, since the public comment period has closed. Fuhrmann presented the improvements that have been made to support businesses, and the funding sources for those improvements. In answer to questions and comments from committee member Duininck, Fuhrmann stated that there will be presentations on contingency fund releases as the project progresses and those items will need to come before the Transportation Committee for action.

2. Regional Solicitation Process

Bill Hargis, TAB Chair, and Kevin Roggenbuck, Transportation Coordinator, presented this item. The item included an overview of the TAB membership and make-up, purpose and expectations, and the Regional Solicitation process, procedure and timeline. Roggenbuck answered questions from members regarding possible changes in the Federal Act as it may relate to the Regional Solicitation, non-attainment status and possible consequences of same.

3. Background Issues, Fare and Service Adjustments to Address Budget Shortfall

John Levin, Metro Transit Director of Service Development, presented this item. Metro Transit and MTS are preparing for possible adjustments to fares and service, in answer to the state budget deficit. Guiding principles have been determined and various scenarios are being examined. This item is information only to the committee at this time. Any changes will go through the public hearing process. Members were informed that their presence at the public meetings will be important, when these meetings are scheduled.

4. 2010 Customer Survey Results

Bruce Howard, Metro Transit Marketing Director, presented this item and stated that the customer survey is conducted every two years. The survey includes statistics about ridership gender, race, purpose for trip, family income, method of payment and more. Metro Transit had the highest satisfaction rating compared to other similar transit agencies in the country.

In regard to information items 3 and 4, committee members noted that the legislature should be made aware of the survey satisfaction results, and how that may relate to potential service and fare adjustments.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Smith, seconded by Duininck and passed, to adjourn the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:45 p.m. April 11, 2011.

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary