

Metropolitan Council
Metropolitan Council Offices, 390 North Robert St., St. Paul 55101
Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, April 25 2011

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Jennifer Munt John Đoàn	Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair James Brimeyer Jon Commers	Adam Duininck Roxanne Smith Edward Reynoso
Members Absent			
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 4:03 pm on April 11, 2011 at Metro Council Chambers, St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Munt, seconded by Schreiber to adopt the agenda for the April 25, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Munt, seconded by Commers to approve the minutes from the April 11, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT and METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

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

FFGA Signing set for Tuesday

This Tuesday you are all invited to the Full Funding Grant Agreement signing event, which will take place at the Harold E. Stassen Office Building on the future light rail route at 600 North Robert Street near the state Capitol. The federal government will be making its official contractual commitment to pay half the cost of building the Central Corridor light rail transit line. This will be the largest federal grant commitment EVER made to a transportation project in our great state of Minnesota. Our Chair Susan Haigh will be among the honored speakers which will include Governor Dayton, Senator Franken, Representative McCollum, State Representative Alice Hausman, mayors of both Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and commissioners from Ramsey and Hennepin Counties.

Governor Dayton Held Transit Roundtable

Last Thursday, Governor Dayton lead a roundtable discussion group of transit customers, business representatives, advocates and others at the State Capitol. Council Chair Susan Haigh also spoke. The discussion focused on the importance of transit to the region and state, and allowed attendees to speak to the economic and social impact of the state Legislature's proposed budget cuts.

Northstar Anniversary Promo Trial Riders Still Riding

The Ridership and Marketing departments report that commuters who took advantage of a Northstar free-ride promotion last year continue to ride. The promotion offered free rides on all trips on November 16 and 17 in conjunction with the first anniversary of the line's opening. Prior to the promotion, the line provided about 1,900 rides per weekday; that number increased to 2,500 daily rides during the promotion. Average daily ridership is 2,200,

showing that about 150 of those who tried the service during free trial have continued to ride. Through the first quarter, Northstar ridership is up 6 percent over 2010.

Commuter Challenge Participation is Booming

As of last week, nearly 3,000 people have taken the Commuter Challenge pledge to reduce driving alone and instead try transit trips or carpool, walk, bike or telework. Since the Challenge began April 1st, Metro Transit staff and the four regional Transportation Management Organizations have held commuter fairs at more than 40 employers and organizations. Those who pledge are also invited to “extend their Challenge” by tracking trips in an online calendar. Since the start of this year’s Challenge, participants have tracked 12,000 trips totaling 150,000 miles.

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

In RA notes there was some information on the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and here also was an article in this morning’s paper. There was good discussion at the TAB meeting last week regarding some of the issues that have been raised, particularly on the processes. The TAB as a whole asked that the TAB Policy Committee look at changes that could be made to the processes. Commissioner Jon Ulrich proposed some changes at the TAB meeting. Former Chair Bell had indicated in past correspondence that the Metropolitan Council was receptive to some process changes, and the current MC leadership will work with the TAB as well. At the TAB meeting Mayor Hovland commented that the meeting between TAB members and MC leadership was much appreciated. Duinick reported that TAB Chair Hargis has asked he and Susan Haigh if someone from the MC would like to be on the TAB Executive Committee. This is a good step to move forward working on collaboration between the MC and TAB.

Brimeyer questioned the validity of the article in the paper and whether the issue is resolved. McCarthy commented that the legislature is discussing the make-up of the MPO. TAB does not have authority over the make-up of the MPO, but will be dealing with process issues between the TAB and MC.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Christy Bailly presented the recognition award to Ruter Bus Operator Scott Sternthal, who helped a fellow operator in medical distress.

BUSINESS

CONSENT ITEM:

2011-116 Authorization to Execute Grant Agreements with Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority, City of Minneapolis, and Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority

Motion by Reynoso, seconded by Duinick:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute pass-through agreements with Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority (DCRRA), the City of Minneapolis, and Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) for the following projects and amounts:

Agency:	Project:	Agreement Amount:
DCRRA	Robert Street Transitway - Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study	\$1,180,000
City of Minneapolis	Red Rock State Bonds – Nicollet-Central Urban Circulator AA Study	\$900,000
RCRRA	Newport Intermodal Bus Facility	\$475,000

Motion passed.

NON-CONSENT ITEMS

2011-112 Authorization to Purchase 26 Option Forty-Foot Gillig Buses

Jan Homan, MT Director Bus Maintenance presented this item.

Đoàn stated that he would like to see an overall presentation of the Metro Transit fleet and what goals are needed to fulfill what is in the work program. Lamb responded that there are complexities associated with fleet planning. There will be more information items coming in the next 1-2 months. The first information item on today's agenda focuses on the Go-Greener initiative and Hybrid Buses.

There were no questions from committee members regarding the business item.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise an existing contract option with Gillig Corporation to purchase 26 forty-foot, low-floor transit buses in an amount not to exceed \$10,838,836.

Motion passed.

2011-113 SW Authorization for Public Hearings on Potential Service and Fare Adjustments

John Levin, MT Director Service Development, presented this item.

Levin explained that the budget for the 2012-2013 biennium is uncertain, there is a potential that the Council could be facing a significant shortfall in the transit operating budget. In order to meet the requirements of the timing of potential service and fare adjustments in regard to public hearing notice requirements, the draft public hearing schedule is being proposed. The content for the public hearings will be brought forward to the Transportation Committee and Council at future meetings. Elkins noted the action does not pre-determine whether there will be fare or service adjustment, but is needed for advance notice requirements. Munt questioned whether an hour for a proposed public meeting is enough time. Lamb stated that people will also be able to comment by e-mail and telephone during the public comment period. Members discussed whether there will be a need for the public hearings regardless of the outcome at the legislature. Fares have not been increased since 2008 and Metro Transit is facing increased fuel costs and budget deficit concerns.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize a series of public hearings on potential fare and service adjustments for transit and paratransit services operated and/or funded by the Metropolitan Council.

Motion passed.

Đoàn suggested that the "background" paragraph on the business item be amended and committee members agreed. Staff will work on this prior to the 4/27/11 Council meeting.

2011-115 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit: Fabrication and Installation of Public Artwork for 15 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Stations

Alicia Vapp, CCPO Station and Streetscape Design, presented this item.

Schreiber questioned whether the artwork is a requirement from the FTA. The answer is that artwork is strongly encouraged by the FTA.

Munt noted that public involvement in the design of a station creates a feeling of neighborhood ownership, discouraging vandalism, littering, etc. Elkins added that this is an important part of placemaking around the stations, giving each station area an identity and sense of community.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Reynoso:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to issue notices to proceed to five public artists for fabrication and installation work in an amount not to exceed \$392,000 per artist. The cumulative amount of the notices to proceed is not to exceed \$1.96 million.

Motion passed with Đoàn recusing himself from the vote.

2011-117 Authorization to Execute Grant Agreements with Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (relative to Union Depot)

Pat Jones, Metro Transit Assistant Director Engineering & Facilities, presented this item.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Commers:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute sub-recipient grant agreements with the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA) for the Union Depot Project in the amounts of \$1,542,760 and \$781,994.

Motion passed.

2011-114 2011 Regional Solicitation Approval

Kevin Roggenbuck, MTS Transportation Coordinator, and James Andrew, MTS Senior Planner, presented this item. Roggenbuck stated that the TAB adopted the solicitation package on 4/20/11. Andrew stated that the package will be released to the public on 5/12/11 and applications due 7/18/11. Ranking of projects will begin after 7/18, and the TAB will take action on selecting projects Jan. 2011 or Feb. 2012. The selected projects will be programmed into years 2015 and 2016. There was lengthy discussion at the TAB about public comment period the TAB and has recommended opening public comment immediately following this solicitation, this would be well before the next solicitation and will give staff time to address issues.

Elkins stated he would like to see better information about the scoring methodologies used to apply the criteria set by the TAB. Roggenbuck stated that more information could be added to the Regional Solicitation page of the website regarding how projects are scored.

Andrew answered question from Brimeyer regarding some criteria changes between the years 2009 and 2011.

Elkins stated that there could be more changes before the next solicitation depending on road classification, or Congress enacting a new act streamlining the programs, categories, funding, appropriations.

Motion by Duinick, seconded by Reynoso:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to adopt the 2011 Regional Solicitation Package, including the schedule of events, for release to solicit project applications.

Motion passed.

Motion by Duinick, seconded by Reynoso to move items 1 (2011-116), 2 (2011-112), and 5 (2011-117) to the full Council as Consent items. Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Hiawatha Light Rail Vehicle Overhaul Program Update

Gene Sheldon, MT Rail Vehicle Maintenance Manager, presented this item. He explained that the projected yearly mileage on the HLRT vehicles has been higher than expected, making the overhaul necessary earlier than planned. Rust and corrosion have been found and became a significant factor, adding approximately 1 week to the overhaul process. Staff has been innovative in using spare component floats. This enables the HLRT vehicles to be out of service for only one week of the overhaul. Staff has also been innovative in locating local suppliers for some components, designing and machining special tools in-house for some tasks; some of the work extends the lifecycles of the parts and extends the mileage between overhauls. Committee members complimented management for enlisting input from staff for solutions.

2. Go Greener Overview

John Siqveland, MT Interim Media & Community Relations Manager, presented this item. He presented statistics about the bus fleet, emission reduction figures, energy savings at facilities. Doan suggested that the committee look for ways to work with staff to promote these great accomplishments to the public. In answer to a committee question, Siqveland stated that the payback on investments is about 3-4 years, and Metro Transit is on track to meet that payback on investments.

3. Hybrid Bus Grant (Super Bus Program)

Chuck Wurzinger, MT Assistant Director Bus Maintenance, presented this item. Metro Transit is purchasing two advance hybrid buses with the TIGGER II grant. The accessories on these buses are all electrified, saving on fuel and reducing emissions. These two buses will be the first of their kind in service in the country. The vendor has not been chosen yet; the "Buy America" stipulation will be included and will be fulfilled in any contract awarded.

OTHER BUSINESS

Duinick reminded committee members that there are vacancies on the TAB for TAB Districts D, E, G and H as well

as a modal representative. Although the deadline has passed for application, McCarthy speculated that the Regional Administrator's office would accept more applications if Council members have suggested recruits.

Brimeyer commented on the proficiency of Metro Transit operations in handling the crowds for the Twins baseball games. This was especially evident when the Twins game was rained out and crowds of fans left the stadium early.

Lamb reminded the committee of the CCLRT FFGA signing celebration on Tuesday 4/26.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:40 p.m. April 25 2011.

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary