

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, June 13, 2011**

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Lona Schreiber Vice Chair Edward Reynoso	James Brimeyer Jon Commers	Jennifer Munt Adam Duinick
Members Absent	John Đoàn	Roxanne Smith	
Staff Presiding	Ed Petrie, filling in for Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	
Others Present	TAB Representative – David Gepner		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:05 p.m. on June 13, 2011 at Metro Council Chambers, St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Schreiber and seconded by Commers to adopt the agenda for the June 13, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Reynoso, seconded by Commers to approve the minutes from the May 23, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metropolitan Transportation Services

Paul Colton introduced Andrew Streasick, Metro Mobility Customer Services Manager. Andy was recognized for his willingness to perform two jobs after he began his position as Customer Services Manager, and his previous position as ADA Paratransit Evaluator while it was being filled. There are federal regulations that dictate certain time frames as part of the ADA Paratransit Evaluation and Andy stepped in to complete those tasks, while learning his new job.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT and METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Minnesota Association of Government Communicators Awards. This organization recently awarded two honors to Michelle Fure, Communications staff, related to Transit Link dial-a-ride service – an Award of Merit for the promotional brochure and an Award of Merit for the outreach plan used to communicate the changes to the communities throughout the metro area. Both products were a collaborative effort among MTS and Communications staff. However, the outreach plan in particular required a team effort – from the public hearings about the fare structure, to the dozens of informational meetings where staff presented information about the service and answered questions. Many of these meetings were planned in conjunction with organizations serving immigrants and senior citizens. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from these events, including specific thanks for MTS Project Administrator Sheila Williams, who staffed most of the meetings and stepped in during the initial transition period to deal with the customer concerns – she personally took the calls from concerned customers and provided them the information they needed to use the service. The following staff who worked on Transit Link restructuring project were recognized: Michelle Fure, Gerri Sutton, Sheila Williams and John Harper.

Ed Petrie, Metro Transit Director of Finance – filling in for Brian Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit - reported the following:

Annual Marketing and Communications Awards Program

Two Metro Transit projects won top awards from the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators at their annual marketing and communications awards program last month. Metro Transit's web site redesign project won an award of excellence for the redesigned metrotransit.org site which was launch in April of 2010. And the agency's fall 2010 marketing campaign, which targeted six underperforming bus routes, also won an award of excellence. This year's contest drew 143 entries from across the state.

Tornado Relief Efforts

Metro Transit had shuttle service this past week between 14 locations offering tornado recovery resources. Transit supervisors worked closely with the Transit Control Center to monitor and manage the operation. Metro Transit also provided buses to assist with the transport of hundreds of volunteers from Brookdale Shopping Center for storm cleanup efforts in north Minneapolis.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

Motion by Reynoso, seconded by Munt to approve items 2011-158, 2011-159 and 2011-165 as consent items.
Motion passed.

2011-158: 2011-2014 TIP Amendment and Program Year Change: City of Maplewood SP#138-010-018: TH36 and English Street Interchange Construction (TAB Action 2011-46)

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to approve a scope change to SP#138-010-018: TH36 and English Street Interchange to a full diamond interchange at English Street rather than the original split diamond interchange with TH61 and English; adopt an amendment to the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to reflect the new scope and cost; and change the program year for SP#138-010-012, Keller Lake Water Quality Improvement Project, from 2012 to 2014 so that the two projects can be coordinated.

2011-159: 2011-2014 TIP Amendment: MnDOT SP#6386-56: Unbonded Concrete Overlay, Reconstruction of Ramps and loops and new Acceleration Lanes on I-694 at TH36 Interchange (TAB Action 2011-44)

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include MnDOT SP#6286-56: unbonded concrete overlay, reconstruction of ramps and loops and new acceleration lanes on I-694 at TH 36 interchange.

2011-165: Authorization to enter into a Grant Agreement with Minnesota Valley Transit Association

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to amend Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) grant agreement (SG-2010-118) with Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) in the amount of \$400,000 for a revised total of \$600,000.

Non-Consent items

2010-136: 2011 Unified Capital Program Amendment

Ed Petrie, Metro Transit Finance Director, and Sean Pfeiffer, MTS Financial Analyst, presented their respective department's amendments to the 2011 Unified Capital Program.

Petrie answered questions from Brimeyer about the CCLRT station platform safety enhancements – whether they were in the original scope of work, how it was determined which stations need the enhancements, and whether they could be considered in the future for the use of contingency dollars.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Duininck:

That the Metropolitan Council:

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

Metro Transit	\$ 442,245,368
Metropolitan Transportation Services	(\$ 9,388,586)

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

Metro Transit	\$ 81,563,902
Metropolitan Transportation Services	\$ 681,800

Motion passed.

2010-166: Construction of Storage Tank Additions at FTHeywood and Nicollet Garages, Project 62710
Pat Jones, Metro Transit Asst. Dir. Facilities Engineering, presented this item. Jones gave background about the project, the rejections of bids in April, and answered questions as to why this bid was now favorable (the scope of the project was revised to save costs).

Motion by Commers, seconded by Schreiber:

Authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute a contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Sheehy Construction Company, for the construction of Storage Tank Additions at the F. T. Heywood and Nicollet Garages in Minneapolis at a cost of \$3,311,537.

Motion passed.

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

2010-163: Authorization for Public Hearings on Potential Service and Fare Adjustments

John Levin, Metro Transit Director Service Development, presented this item.

Brimeyer stated that there are two ways to look at the situation: 1) Business approach. Every so often staff should look at the pricing structure and the “tipping” points where the cost affects ridership. The last fare increase was in 2008. Costs have increased since then regardless of what is happening at the legislature. He said that he would rather take the stance that increases were anticipated prior to the legislature outcome, we just need to do more; and 2) the political approach where the legislature is brought into the picture more.

Petrie responded that the Finance Division performs 4-6 multi-year forecasting models to look at the fares. When the farebox recovery ratio gets to 28.5%, then look at fare increase, the farebox recovery ratio usually averages 30%.

Munt, speaking as the president of Transit for Livable Communities, stated that riders believe they can’t afford to lose their rides, they have made life choices based on transit being available. People are perceiving the depth of loss that this could cause. Commers stated that this is an opportunity to effectively communicate the value of the transit system.

Members also talked about the possible state government shutdown. Elkins stated that members are getting questions about what will happen in the event of a state shutdown and asked what the council members can tell the public.

McCarthy stated that Chair Haigh, Regional Administrator Born and the MC Communications Department are working on this. There is no definitive answer, yet.

Motion by Commers, 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; and
- Authorize the Chair to reschedule the public hearings in the event that a final state budget agreement makes different timing more appropriate.

Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Transitway Guidelines Overview

Cole Hiniker, MTS Planner, presented an overview of the transitway guidelines. Two more detailed presentations will follow at upcoming Transportation Committees. He gave details of the ten committees working on the transitway guidelines - their purpose, topics, status and timelines. Elkins suggested including members from FHWA and FTA in the committees. Schreiber noted that these are guidelines and not mandates. She also stated that Henn. Co. Commissioner McLaughlin pointed out that commuter rail is not prevalent in the guidelines. Schreiber asked for a map depicting the transitways and line colors that would be used by the public. Such a detailed map is not available at this time. Elkins noted that there are no municipal elected officials on the Station & Facilities Committee, and had concern that there might be input from cities on land use issues. Hiniker responded that the committee membership is made up of staff level positions and not elected. There was discussion about the depiction of Northstar Commuter Rail on the map and the difference in the level of service between Northstar and BRT, LRT, buses.

2. Arterial Transitway Corridor Study Update

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit Manager of Transitway Projects, presented this item. This is a conceptual study of eleven urban corridors to develop a service and facilities plan to improve travel speeds, increase reliability, saving money and increasing ridership. Brimeyer noted that arterial transitway branding will also be important to distinguish Arterial BRT from regular route buses. Carlson stated that an Arterial Transitway Workshop will be held on June 30, 2011. Contact Charles Carlson for information.

OTHER BUSINESS

TAB Representative David Gepner stated that the TAB will be holding its annual bicycle outing on June 30th. This is an opportunity to visit bike/ped. projects that have been funded through TAB through the years. The 2011 outing will take place in the northern metro area departing from Forest Lake. Information is available from Kevin Roggenbuck 651-602-1728. Kevin.roggenbuck@metc.state.mn.us

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:05 p.m. June 13, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary