

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Transportation Committee Monday, October 24, 2011

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

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was not present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. on October 24, 2011 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis. Chair Elkins requested that staff proceed with employee recognition.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Rob Milleson, Deputy Director of Bus Maintenance, introduced Tracy McMann and David Haas, both Mechanic Technicians at Metro Transit's Overhaul Base. These employees are being recognized for their exceptional ability to troubleshoot especially challenging operational problems with buses, both individually and as a team.

Chair Elkins and General Manager Lamb offered their thanks and congratulations to Mr. McMann and Mr. Haas and presented each with a plaque commemorating his achievement.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

The region is evaluating its "A" minor arterial system, and Metropolitan Council is leading the study. The region's roads are classified as principal arterial, minor arterial, collector road or local road, depending on their function – providing either access or mobility. Mobility is the emphasis on principal arterials, while access is the emphasis on local roads. Because minor arterials balance providing both access and mobility, the region further classifies minor arterials into "A" and "B." "A" minor arterials are intended to provide a higher level of mobility than "B" minors. The "A" minor arterial classification system has been in place for more than 20 years. This study will fulfill one part of the TPP's work plan by evaluating whether the nearly 2,000-mile "A" minor system has been successful in supplementing mobility on the roughly 700-mile principal arterial system. The study will also evaluate how this original, supplementary purpose fits with existing regional policies and identify needed changes, if any, to make the system, its purpose, regional policies and funding more consistent. The TAC Planning Committee provided input to Council staff during development of the study's work program. Ongoing technical input for the study will be provided by a 14-person Technical Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the TAB's TAC, MnDOT Metro District, the seven counties (Anoka, Carver Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington) and five of the ten cities on the TAC (Maplewood, Minneapolis, Plymouth, Rosemount and St. Paul.) The study's consultant team will be led by SRF Consulting Group and include Cambridge Systematics. Staff anticipate bringing policy questions to the Transportation Committee and the TAB as they are identified through the study. Carl Ohrn and Mary Karlsson will be managing the study.

For several years Hennepin County has been studying a transitway in the northwest part of the region called the Bottineau corridor. The corridor connects Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, Maple Grove and

Brooklyn Park. Earlier this year Hennepin County kicked off the next phase of the Bottineau corridor study: preparation of the environmental document and identification of the locally preferred alternative (LPA). The county and FTA will be preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the corridor with help from a consultant team led by Kimley-Horn Associates. Over the years Hennepin County has studied commuter rail, light rail (LRT) and bus rapid transit (BRT) on over 25 different routes in the Bottineau corridor. This effort has narrowed study to LRT or BRT serving either Maple Grove (Alternative A) or Brooklyn Park (Alternative B) on the north end. On the south end the project team is studying alternatives located in the BNSF Railway right of way (Alternative D1, in Theodore Wirth Park) or on North Minneapolis arterial streets (Alternative D2). The Bottineau Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) is preparing to select one of three D2 options for further study in the DEIS at its November 14 meeting (1:30 p.m. at Brooklyn Park City Hall). The D2 selection will be made based on input gathered from the Bottineau technical staff committee, neighborhood groups and the general public. Any of the options would significantly impact the neighborhood, and the study team feels it should identify a D2 alternative for comparison against the D1/BNSF alternative in the DEIS. Once the decision is made on the D2 option the PAC will begin working on the north-end and south-end decisions and will also finalize the preferred mode. Hennepin County has indicated it would like the LPA to be identified by the PAC early in 2012. The County will be invited to present to the Met Council before that decision is made.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

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

On October 21 Metro Transit issued a news release on 2011 ridership for the first three quarters. Customers boarded buses and trains more than 60 million times through 9/30/11 – a 3.6 percent increase over the same period in 2010, putting totals to date at 2.1 million rides ahead of last year.

On October 12 Metro Transit received two awards during the 2011 annual meeting of the Minnesota Public Transit Association (MPTA). The first was MPTA's Management Innovation award recognizing the use of technology to improve the transit customer's experience. Examples included website and phone tools for customer and transit information, the Go-To card and related fare tools and multi-camera video systems on buses and trains. The second award was presented to Bob Gibbons, who recently retired as Metro Transit's Director of Customer Services and Public Relations. Bob received MPTA's Distinguished Career award for his contributions to Metro Transit and the transit industry during his 17-year career at the agency.

Metro Transit has been awarded two grants by the Federal Transit Administration for projects to be completed by 2014. A \$600,000 grant is for the Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis, a study of the south Minneapolis corridor for two possible alignments of Lake Street and Midtown Greenway, using modes such as light-rail, streetcar or bus rapid transit. A \$2.6 million grant is for improving pedestrian transit connections and facilities at heavily used bus stops and customer waiting facilities in downtown St. Paul, between 5th and 6th streets and Cedar and Minnesota, with access to the Central Corridor light-rail (Green Line).

There is now another Go-To card option available at Metro Transit stores – a disposable, ten-ride card priced at \$18. Value cannot be added to the card, although the balance can be checked online. The new card is intended for the customer who usually pays cash or currently uses a SuperSaver card. In September, more than 41 percent of Metro Transit fares were paid with Go-To cards.

Public meetings were held over the past two weeks on a study of 11 urban corridors for Bus Rapid Transit service. Attendance levels at the meetings show that interest has grown in the concept of Arterial Transitways Corridors and the Rapid Bus (Arterial BRT) service. The corridors being studied have high-ridership bus routes that connect major destinations and are candidates for implementation of "rapid bus" service. The aim in implementing this type of service is to improve travel speed, increase reliability, enhance the ride and create faster connections by reducing or eliminating delays such as boarding time and wait times at traffic lights and in traffic congestion.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A quorum now present, Chair Elkins stated that if there were no objections information item #1 would be moved up in the agenda to immediately precede the business items. A motion was then made by Schreiber, seconded by Smith to adopt the amended agenda for the October 24, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commers, seconded by Schreiber to approve the minutes from the October 10, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

INFORMATION

1. Interchange Project Update

Phil Eckhart, Director of Housing, Community Works and Transit for Hennepin County presented a report on the status of the Interchange project development. Topics included design concept, rail line configuration, infrastructure improvements, projected costs and funding status and overall project schedule.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

Motion by Smith, seconded by Schreiber to approve items 2011-284, 2011-293 and 2011-294 as consent items. Motion passed.

2011-284: Approval for Council Supplied Radio Equipment for New Light Rail Vehicles

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and award a contract to E. F. Johnson Technologies for 128 sets of Radio Equipment to be installed in light rail vehicles in an amount not to exceed \$314,380.80.

2011-293: Authorization to Contract for Design and Construction Support Services for Highway 610 and Noble Parkway Park-and-Ride

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a professional services contract for architectural and engineering design and construction support services for Highway 610 and Noble Parkway Park-and-Ride at a contract amount of \$898,047 to Julie Snow Architects, Inc.

2011-294: Interagency Agreement with Minnesota Department of Transportation to Fund Highway 36 and Rice Street Park-and-Ride Construction

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute an Interagency Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for funding of the construction of the Highway 36 and Rice Street Park and Ride.

Non-Consent Items

2011-285: Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line): Initiate Eminent Domain Proceedings for the Acquisition of Parcel 7E for Civil East Construction

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann presented the business item and responded to questions from CM Commers about placement of traction power stations.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the initiation of eminent domain proceedings for the acquisition of the property rights for Parcel 7E in St. Paul for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (CCLRT) Civil East Construction. Motion passed.

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

2011-258: 2011 Unified Operating Budget Amendment

MTS Financial Analyst Sean Pfeiffer presented the business item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Đoàn, seconded by Commers:

That the Council amend the 2011 Unified Operating Budget in accordance with table attached to the original business item.

Motion passed.

2011-286: 2011 Unified Capital Program Amendment

MTS Financial Analyst Sean Pfeiffer presented the business item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Đoàn:

That the Metropolitan Council:

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

Metropolitan Transportation Services	\$ 13,764,800
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- Amend the 2011 Capital Budget (annual appropriation) by increasing appropriation as follows:

Metropolitan Transportation Services	\$ 0
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Motion passed.

2011-283: ADA and Transit Link Service Agreements with Scott and Anoka Counties

Sheila Williams, Project Administrator for MTS Contracted Services, presented the business item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Đoàn:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute intergovernmental agreements for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Transit Link dial-a-ride services with two transit providers not to exceed the following amounts:

Anoka County Traveler	\$4,511,274
Smart Link (Scott/Carver County)	\$3,463,222

The agreements shall be effective for the period January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2013.

Motion passed.

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

INFORMATION (continued)

2. Metro Mobility Budget Projections

Paul Colton, Senior Manager, Metro Mobility, provided an update on Metro Mobility service and budget. He explained customer and service types and ridership and revenue trends and projections, and outlined potential strategies for balancing the 2012 budget.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:50 p.m. October 24, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Maday, Recording Secretary