

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Transportation Committee Monday, November 14, 2011

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

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:02 p.m. on November 14, 2011 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Smith, seconded by Schreiber to adopt the agenda for the November 14, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Đoàn, seconded by Duininck to approve the minutes from the October 24, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metropolitan Transportation Services

MTS Deputy Director Amy Vennewitz presented the following employees for recognition.

Rachel Wiken, GIS Technician, has received a Peer Recognition Award for Community Service. Ms. Wiken organized a staff sandwich-making event this fall to provide food for those in need. She encouraged staff and managers to donate time and supplies with a goal of making 100 sandwiches for homeless people at the Simpson Housing Service overnight shelter. In the end over 200 sandwiches were provided, creating a community connection between Council staff and those the organization serves.

Senior Planner Mary Karlsson and Planner Cole Hiniker received Employee Recognition Awards for their work as co-managers of the Regional Transitway Guidelines project. Over the last two years they have demonstrated great technical and political skill in facilitating communication among many different groups with different opinions and interests and moving them toward consensus on the guidelines. Their work involved staffing and organizing ten technical committees as well as a high-level advisory committee consisting of representatives from MnDOT, CTIB, TAB and the Suburban Transit Association in addition to the Council.

Chair Elkins and Director McCarthy offered their thanks and congratulations to all three individuals and presented each with a plaque commemorating his or her achievement.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Last week the US Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee unanimously voted to approve the highway portion of the surface transportation reauthorization bill. This will fund projects at current levels plus

inflation over the next two years. While the preference would be a six-year reauthorization, funding of even a two-year bill will be a challenge and won't allow for planning beyond 2014. Features of the bill include:

- Providing states with at least 95% of what they pay in transportation taxes
- Reducing core highway programs from seven to five
- Providing states with more flexibility in how they use funds
- Consolidating surface transportation programs to around 30, down from around 90
- Keeping the Transportation Enhancements program, largely devoted to bike and pedestrian projects, and expanding eligibility criteria
- Creating a National Freight Network Program
- Streamlining project review and approval processes in order to expedite projects
- Emphasizing performance measurements and accountability for states
- Continuing the Projects of National and Regional Significance program

The Met Council's Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) voted in October to resume the 2011 regional solicitation process, after suspending it in August due to the lack of a long-term federal funding bill. Applicants have been advised that, although projects will be scored and ranked, no selection will be made. However, by scoring the projects now, the TAB will be ready to consider funding options when reauthorization is approved. The current round of applications is for 2015-2016, which is not addressed in the recently approved two-year bill.

On December 12 MnDOT is holding a statewide workshop called a Corridor Coalition. The goal of the initiative is to lay out how they see their process moving ahead in identifying needs in corridors and how that work will roll out over the next year. The workshop will be held from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center. Committee members should soon receive their invitations from MnDOT if they haven't already.

The Met Council recently received its Certification of Conformity from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) adopted in November, 2010. The Council is required to adopt a new TPP by February 23, 2015, four years from the date of the certification.

Council staff submitted some comments to MnDOT on the Minnesota GO 50-Year Vision. The draft was revised in response to public comment and has now been adopted by Commissioner Sorel. The next step of the project will be the multi-modal plan, and a kickoff session is scheduled for December 1 at the Minneapolis Central Library.

Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (MVST) receipts for September 2011 came in at 97 percent of projections and October 2011 receipts were 94.4 percent of projections, based on the February 2011 state forecast. For the first four months of state fiscal year 2012, actual receipts are at 96.5 percent of projections.

Following the discussion at the last Transportation Committee regarding the \$2.8 million funding gap for Metro Mobility in 2012, Council Finance and Transportation staff have determined that the most prudent next step is to wait for the upcoming state forecast, due in early December. This will allow staff to analyze the funding situation for all the regional transit services and address the Metro Mobility situation in that context, and then make recommendations to the Council. As a result, staff have not acted on the Transportation Committee's recommendation to reach out to the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC).

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

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

On November 16 Northstar will celebrate two years of revenue service. Also on this day, a kickoff event will be held at the Ramsey station site to celebrate securing all funding for the project. Northstar will provide service for invited guests from Target Field station, departing at 11:00 am. After remarks and a light lunch, a return train will depart the Ramsey site at 1:15 pm, arriving at Target Field station by 1:45 pm.

Metro Transit and the region's Transportation Management Organizations (TMOs) recently sponsored the 21st annual Commuter Choice Awards. The November 9 ceremony honored organizations, employers and individuals for exceptional and innovative efforts to promote transit, ridesharing, walking and bicycling in their workplace, school or community. One example of these awards is the "Change Agent" award given to Jodie Zurn of the USDA in Minneapolis who led the effort to convert a cumbersome transit voucher system to the Metropass program by working with various levels of her organization – making transit a convenient choice for USDA employees, plus saving the

agency over \$100,000 a year. A complete list and description of the winners is on the Council website. Thank you to Councilmember Commers who spoke at the event and also handed out the awards – 11 in all – to various companies and individuals.

The Engineering and Facilities division reports that new bus shelters have begun to be placed on University Avenue. Twenty-four shelters in the new blue-and-white style are to be added along the north and south sides of the avenue by the end of the year, replacing those that have been removed due to Central (Green Line) light-rail construction. A number of positive comments have already been received about the new shelter design.

Metro Transit received a letter from the Minnesota State Fire Marshal expressing his gratitude for partnering with them to place advertisements on buses to educate citizens about the “Protect Your Family from Fire” campaign that his office launched in October. A Metro Transit bus and driver were also furnished for the campaign’s press conference.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

Motion by Commers, seconded by Duininck to approve item 2011-319 as a consent item. Motion passed.

2011-319: 2012-2015 TIP Amendment Request from MnDOT for Rail Crossing Safety Projects (TAB Action 2011-62)

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include three rail safety projects selected by MnDOT to receive SAFETEA-LU Section 1103(f)(2)(E) High Speed Rail(HSR) funds in Cottage Grove and near Hastings.

Non-Consent Items

2011-303: Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line): Subordinate Funding Agreement No. 7 with Minnesota Department of Transportation for 2012 Staffing

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann presented the item and responded to questions from committee members about progress of private utility work on the construction and the role of MnDOT in initiating eminent domain, which includes responsibility for condemnation hearings and any legal support for the hearings.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Commers:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 7 to the Master Funding Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) in the total amount of \$2,204,939 for calendar year 2012.

Motion passed.

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

2011-316: Northstar Commuter Rail Supplemental Subordinate Funding Agreement with Sherburne County Regional Rail Authority, SFY 2012

Ed Petrie, Metro Transit Director of Finance, presented the item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Doan:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a SFY2012 Supplemental Subordinate Funding Agreement with the Sherburne County Regional Railroad Authority for commuter rail operating costs for an amount up to \$1,121,773.

Motion passed.

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

2011-317: Authorization to Purchase Light Rail Vehicle Power Truck Brake Caliper Modification and Overhaul
Ed Toomey, Director of Hiawatha Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance, presented the item. In response to questions from committee members, staff clarified that the brake system fails in an applied mode to safeguard the LRV and passengers. With regard to the sole source procurement, they explained that the vendor does not sell to any rebuilder other than transit agencies due to the complex integration of the brake system with other components.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to purchase Knorr Brake Caliper Modification and Overhaul replacement parts for the Hiawatha Rail Line on a sole source basis in an amount not to exceed \$390,000 over a two-year period.

Motion passed.

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

INFORMATION

1. MTS Quarterly Ridership Report

MTS Director Arlene McCarthy reported on ridership levels for the third quarter of 2011. She provided comparisons to 2010 numbers by provider, service type and month and also showed ridership trends by year from 2006 to the present.

2. Central Corridor (Green Line) Station Area Identity and Outreach

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann and Community Outreach Coordinator Jill Hentges provided an update on the naming process for the Central Corridor (Green Line) light-rail stations and the outreach efforts to the surrounding neighborhoods.

3. Maplewood Mall Park and Ride Construction

Lindsay Sheppard, Metro Transit Facilities and Engineering, outlined the project plan, including purpose, design, funding and construction schedule.

4. Ride to Rewards

Bruce Howard, Metro Transit Director of Marketing and Customer Services, and Transit Marketing Specialist Kelci Stones provided an overview of the customer loyalty program launched in November 2010. They explained how the program works, cited statistics on participants and merchant partners and outlined current marketing efforts and future initiatives.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:46 p.m. November 14, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Maday, Recording Secretary