




Metro Mobility Radio Communications Plan

Transportation Committee
June 25, 2012




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Background

- A regional 800 MHz public safety radio system was established in 1998
- Metropolitan Council was an original participant including both Metro Transit and Metro Mobility
- 9/11 events changed focus and scope of the system
 - from public safety to emergency response
 - from regional to state-wide interoperable communications




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Background

- The manner in which Metro Mobility delivers service has not changed since 1998
- Voice communication is a critical component of Metro Mobility service delivery – state requirement
- Metro Mobility is a large user of air-time typically ranking as one of the top three each month
- Other non-emergency users on the 800 MHz system
- Metro Mobility service is fluid and uses the system differently than other users




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Issues

- Many users added since 1998 and capacity has become a problem
- Since 2006 Metro Mobility has responded to periodic MESB requests regarding driver/dispatcher system and air-time use
- January 2012 the MESB formally requested that the Council develop a plan to reduce Metro Mobility airtime usage





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Issues

- Metro Mo submitted a plan in March 2012 that included radio reprogramming, training and purchasing AVL directional devices
- March 2012 MESB's Technical Operations Committee recommended that the MESB restrict Metro Mobility's access from 23 to 3 channels
- Council staff advised MESB that the proposed action "would compromise Metro Mobility's ability to deliver service in a manner that meets all state and federal requirements".

Council Staff Action

- Short-term:
 - Radio reprogramming (complete)
 - Implementing a driver training program (complete by end of June)
 - Purchased onboard GPS navigation units to assist drivers (complete)
 - 2012 vs. 2010 airtime usage by month:
 - January – down 12.9%
 - February – down 16.9%
 - March – down 20.1%
 - April – down 11.8%
 - May – down 24.8%
- Moderate and Long-Term:
 - Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) Inc studying options and their costs, benefits and risks





Project Time-Line and Next Steps

- Council entered into agreement with SEH on May 2, 2012
- Report to Transportation Committee on July 9, 2012
- Report to MESB on July 11, 2012
- Changes in system use will likely involve capital investments and increased annual operating costs
- Council staff will evaluate options and recommend next steps

