

T Transportation Committee

For Metropolitan Council meeting October 28, 2009

Item: 2009-357

ADVISORY INFORMATION**Date****Prepared: October 19, 2009****Subject: ABC Ramps Flexible Parking Pricing Demonstration****Proposed Action:**

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the regional administrator to enter into a joint powers agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) to participate in a Flexible Parking Pricing Demonstration program during 2009-2011.

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:

Council member Steffen asked questions regarding the design and objectives of the demonstration program including whether the goal is to move people from SOV driving to transit, how many participants would be in each of the three test groups, whether or not Metro Transit would be providing the transit passes used for the demonstration for free and what are the short and long-term ramifications to both parking ramp revenues and transit revenues.

Metro Transit marketing director Bruce Howard responded that Mn/DOT and the U of M Humphrey Institute are managing the program with the idea of trying to determine how a new product that offers choices for commuters to use either transit or parking on any given day could be created and priced effectively. He said three test groups and one control group of up to 200 participants each will be set up. Each of the three test groups will receive a different level of incentive to see how much it might influence their willingness to use transit. For the demonstration program Mn/DOT has received federal funding to test the concept and Metro Transit will get paid for the transit passes it provides, however, the demonstration should also help determine if an ongoing parking/transit pass program could be set up to be a sustainable and viable program without federal funding, Howard said.

Council member Leppik asked how long the demonstration will last, and if part of the demonstration is to test the concept of "double booking" parking spaces in the ABC ramps so that a ramp might benefit from knowing how to estimate what space is needed for monthly parkers each day and which space could be re-rented to short term parking. Howard, said each group would be offered the transit incentive to use over a four month period and that the idea of reusing or recycling parking spaces was something that would be considered with the design of the demonstration project. Leppik commented that she felt the three incentive groups should be run at the same time of the year or it might be difficult to compare the success of each without know how seasonality affected the commuters choice to use transit on any given day.

The item was unanimously approved.

T Transportation Committee
Meeting date: October 12, 2009

Metropolitan Council Meeting: October 28, 2009

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	October 5, 2009
Subject:	ABC Ramps Flexible Parking Pricing Demonstration Program
District(s), Member(s):	District 7, Annette Meeks
Policy/Legal Reference:	Policy 3: Strategies 3e, Parking Pricing Availability and 3f, Promoting Alternatives
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit (612-349-7510) Bruce Howard, Director of Marketing, Metro Transit (612-349-7694)
Division/Department:	Metro Transit, Marketing Division

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the regional administrator to enter into a joint powers agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) to participate in a Flexible Parking Pricing Demonstration program during 2009-2011.

Background

The primary goal of the research and demonstration program is to investigate whether monthly parking contracts prevent downtown Minneapolis commuters from using transit and to test an innovative parking- transit pass pricing strategy to encourage monthly parkers to use transit when it fits their schedule.

The demonstration will be managed by the University of Minnesota Humphrey Institute and consist of offering one of three incentives to groups of monthly parkers from the ABC Ramps:

- 1) Buying Flexibility - a deeply discounted monthly transit pass (estimated at about \$20) may be purchased with a monthly parking contract
- 2) Disincentive Removal – a free transit pass is provided in addition to a monthly parking contract
- 3) Marginal Rebate – a free transit pass is provided and monthly parkers are refunded the difference of the marginal parking cost and transit fare on days when they use transit

Rationale

Metro Transit will benefit immediately from the increased revenue and ridership gained during the demonstration. Metro Transit is selling transit passes to Mn/DOT for use in the demonstration. Long term there is potential to develop a flexible parking-transit pass that encourage commuters who might otherwise never use transit to do so on days when it fits into their schedule.

Funding

Mn/DOT has received federal funding for the Flexible Parking Pricing Demonstration and will pay Metro Transit for the peak-period transit rides taken during the demonstration. (This is estimated to be about \$60,000.) Metro Transit will not contribute any funds to the demonstration, but will contribute the value of any off-peak rides taken during the demonstration and staff time to analyze the transit pass usage.

Known Support / Opposition

The research and demonstration pricing project is also supported by the FHWA and the City of Minneapolis.