

T Transportation Committee
For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 26,
2012

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date Prepared: September 11, 2012
Subject: Designate Red Line (Cedar Avenue BRT) and Orange Line (I-35W South BRT) Service Providers

Proposed Action:

That the Metropolitan Council designate:

- 1) the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) as the service provider for the Red Line (Cedar Avenue BRT station-to-station service) contingent upon an Operating and Maintenance agreement with the Council, and
- 2) Metro Transit as the service provider for the Orange Line (I-35W South BRT station-to-station service).

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:

Arlene McCarthy, MTS Director, presented this item. She reviewed the basis for the staff recommendation, noting that these service designations were what project stakeholders had been anticipating.

McCarthy noted that regional compatibility between MVTA's systems and the Council's regional systems, which is a condition for MVTA to be the provider of the Red Line, has not yet been achieved. MVTA's separate AVL/APC (automatic vehicle locator/automatic passenger counters) system is the primary system of concern. MVTA continues to work toward achieving that compatibility. The Transportation Committee will receive status updates on regional compatibility progress.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Munt and passed

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

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: September 10, 2012

Council Meeting: September 26, 2012

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	September 5, 2012
Subject:	Designate Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (Red Line) and I-35W South Bus Rapid Transit (Orange Line) Service Providers
District(s), Member(s):	5-Steve Elkins, 7-Gary Cunningham, 8-Adam Duininck, 15-Steven T. Chávez, 16-Wendy Wulff
Policy/Legal Reference:	Regional Transitway Guidelines
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Arlene McCarthy, MTS Director (651-602-1754)
Division/Department:	Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS)

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council designate:

- 1) the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) as the service provider for the Red Line (Cedar Avenue BRT station-to-station service) contingent upon an Operating & Maintenance agreement with the Council, and
- 2) Metro Transit as the service provider for the Orange Line (I-35W South BRT station-to-station service).

Background

The Red Line will be the first BRT transitway in the Twin Cities region with service anticipated to start in early 2013. The Orange Line start-up is tied to implementation of improvements at I-35W and Lake Street.

Both lines are regional transitways with the Council having responsibility for the operations. The Regional Transitway Guidelines call for the Council to determine the transit operator for BRT station-to-station services with input from funding partners. The Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) will be a funding partner to these station-to-station services. A federal CMAQ grant has been awarded to MVTA to partially fund Red Line operating costs for the first three years of operations.

The Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority (DCRRA), the MVTA and the Council recently approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) pertaining to Cedar Avenue Transitway Stage 1 roles and responsibilities. The MOU anticipates the Council designating MVTA as the service provider for the Red Line station-to-station service.

These designations do not impact express services in the Cedar Avenue and I-35W corridors.

Rationale

The cases for designating MVTA as the Red Line service provider and Metro Transit as the Orange Line service provider are similar and based on the following factors:

- High Quality Providers: Both MVTA and Metro Transit are well-established regional transit providers with proven track records in delivering high quality

regular route transit service with high customer satisfaction. It is important that the first BRT operations in the region make good first impressions and offer high quality service.

- Corridor Geography: Both the Red Line and Orange Line corridors begin and end in Metro Transit's service area and travel through MVTA's service area (see attached map). However, the majority of corridor length and location of station stops and the primary customer base being served are weighted more to MVTA for the Red Line and more to Metro Transit for the Orange Line.

The 16-mile Red Line corridor travels through Bloomington, Eagan and Apple Valley and, in the future, Lakeville. The regular-route transit provider for Bloomington and Lakeville is Metro Transit while MVTA is the provider for Eagan and Apple Valley. The majority of the corridor length and station stops are located in Eagan and Apple Valley although the regional connection at the Mall of America in Bloomington will have the largest passenger volumes of all Red Line station-to-station service stops.

The 22-mile Orange Line corridor will initially travel through Minneapolis, Richfield, Bloomington, Burnsville and, in future phases, Lakeville. Metro Transit is the regular route provider for all of the corridor's length except Burnsville where MVTA is the service provider. Of the seven initial station stations, including downtown Minneapolis as a single station, only one (Burnsville Transit Station) is in MVTA's service area.

- Project Implementation Roles: MVTA and Metro Transit have invested significant efforts into establishing the Red Line and Orange Line corridors to date, respectively. For example, MVTA was the lead on the Apple Valley Transit Station and Cedar Grove Transit Station projects on the Red Line. Metro Transit led the 46th Street Station and Lakeville Kenrick Park-and-Ride projects and is leading the development and implementation of the Orange Line including the Lake Street, 66th Street, 98th Street and American Boulevard facilities. Similar commitments are needed to successfully deliver future phases of these BRT corridors which are being implemented incrementally.
- CMAQ Grant: MVTA was awarded a federal CMAQ grant to partially fund Red Line operating costs for the first three years of service. The Council supported MVTA's scope change request to TAB to move funds from the I-35W corridor to Cedar Avenue.

Given both the Red Line and Orange Line are regional transitways, the multiple established regional systems and procedures (fare collection, fare enforcement, customer information, ridership reporting, automatic vehicle locator/automatic passenger counter (AVL/APC), etc.) are applicable to each corridor. MVTA has committed that its separate AVL/APC system, currently being implemented, will be fully compatible with the regional AVL/APC system. MVTA's designation as Red Line operator is contingent upon its service delivery being compatible with all regional systems.

Given that the regional facilities on each corridor are owned by a combination of both MVTA and the Council/Metro Transit, each provider has acknowledged and agreed that the other providers will be allowed to use facilities it owns to deliver these regional BRT

services. For example, in providing the Red Line service, MVTA will use the Cedar Grove, Mall of America and 28th Avenue facilities owned by the Council/Metro Transit. Similarly, in providing the Orange Line service, Metro Transit will use the Burnsville Transit Station owned by MVTA.

Council and MVTA staff have started negotiating the Red Line operating and maintenance agreement. Prior to start-up of the service in 2013, a request to authorization the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute the agreement will come before the Transportation Committee and Council.

Funding

The Red Line annual operating cost is estimated at approximately \$3.2M in its first full year of operations in 2014. The Red Line operating cost is estimated at \$2.3M in 2013. Funding for the Red Line service is included in the Council's proposed 2013 Operating Budget. The net cost of the service (after fares) will be covered in part for the first three years with a CMAQ grant awarded to MVTA for I-35W service and subsequently transferred to Cedar Avenue through TAB and Council action. The remaining subsidy will be covered by the Council and CTIB. The Council has submitted a 2013 operating grant request to CTIB.

The Orange Line will not have operating funding needs until pre-start-up activities are initiated.

Known Support / Opposition

CTIB provided general concurrence with the recommend service provider designations at its August 15, 2012 meeting. The Dakota County Regional Rail Authority and MVTA support the designation of MVTA as the Red Line provider through their adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding.