

Metropolitan Council

Metropolitan Council Chambers, 390 No. Robert St., St. Paul, Mn. 55101

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, April 14, 2008**

Members Present	Annette Meeks, Vice Chair Georgie Hilker Daniel Wolter	Natalie Haas Steffen Kirstin Sersland Beach	Peggy Leppik Richard Aguilar
Members Absent	Roger Scherer	Mary Hill Smith, Chair	Brian McDaniel
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	
TAB Liaison	David Gepner		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Vice Chair Meeks called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 pm on April 14, 2008 at Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

It was moved by Hilker seconded by Beach to adopt the agenda for April 14, 2008 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Steffen seconded by Hilker to approve the minutes from the March 24, 2008 regular Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

DIRECTOR METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES REPORT and METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services, reported on the following:

1. When adopting the Capital Budget for 2008, a request from Suburban Providers was made on a few issues. Staff responded that a CIP process review is being conducted with all of the providers. The focus of the second meeting on 4/23 will be draft Fleet Policies. More information will follow.
2. Metro Mobility recently performed an upgrade on the Trapeze Software; there were some glitches that are being worked out. There was some disruption along with some improvements to routing.
3. The Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) is being worked on and an information item is scheduled to appear at a Transportation Committee meeting in May for feedback. This week, MnDOT will be announcing the bridge programs that will go out to 2018 with the new funding they will be receiving through the Transportation Funding Bill. This will have an impact on the highway side of the TPP.
4. Supplemental appropriation bills are now at conference committee at the Legislature. There have been improvements to the amount of cuts for Metropolitan Transit. They will begin meeting this week.

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

1. Ridership continues to grow. 11,500 rides were given for the Twins Opener. March ridership was 6.6 M, exceeding the March 2007 numbers by 6.4%. Regional route ridership grew by 7.4%. HLRT ridership grew 14.6%. The first quarter of 2008 looks even stronger.
2. Earth Day is next week (4/22). Metro Transit will be partnering with "Wishes for the Sky" for a free public art event on 4/20 at Harriet Park. Free rides will be provided to the event to people who are carrying a go-greener pass. On 4/22, the HLRT will be powered completely by wind power through Xcel Energy's windsources program, as last year.

Lamb answered questions from committee members regarding capacity issues with the growing ridership. Steffen requested that adequate resources be available for participants in the Mother's Day Walk for Breast Cancer to be held this year. Lamb will direct Metro Transit Marketing staff to work to understand the needs for the event on that day, and report back at the 4/28 Transportation Committee meeting.

BUSINESS – Non-Consent Items

2008-97 Authorization to Execute Agreements for the Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom FFY 2006-2007 Program Funding

Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Transportation Services, presented this item to the committee. There were no questions from committee members.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Wolter,

Action:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute subrecipient agreements with the specified agencies and for the specified amounts of federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) or New Freedom program funding identified in Attachment A.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Vice Chair Meeks stated that this item could move forward to the full Council as a consent item.

2008-107 Authorization to Award Contract for Hennepin County Dial-a-Ride Transit Service

Bruce Dreier, Metropolitan Transportation Services, presented this item to the committee. Member Hass Steffen had a question regarding Senior Community Services audit findings, answered by Arlene McCarthy.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Leppik,

Action:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a contract with Midwest Paratransit Services Inc. to provide Hennepin County Dial-a-Ride Transit Service from June 9, 2008 to June 1, 2010 in an amount not to exceed \$900,200.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Vice Chair Meeks stated that this item could move forward to the full Council as a consent item.

2008-109 Authorization to Acquire Fee Title and to File Condemnation Petition

Peter Hanf, Associate General Counsel, presented this item to the committee. He said that council staff was seeking the authority to condemn a small area that would be used as a drainage pond for the Cedar Grove Transit project. He said that the entire project would be built on what is currently MnDOT right of way and that state GO bonds will be used, in part, to pay for the project. He explained that state GO bonds cannot be used to improve trunk highway right of way. Therefore, he said, before the Council can use the GO bonds, MnDOT must convey their interest in the land to the Council. He stated that MnDOT owns most of the land in fee and intends to declare this property as excess and convey it to the Council. There is a small area where MnDOT holds an easement interest rather than fee title. And by statute, MnDOT must release the highway easements to the underlying fee title land owner. Therefore, he said, this puts the Council in a position that if it is going to use the GO bonds to pay for the project that it has to obtain fee title to the easement area. He said that Council staff was attempting to locate the heirs of the land owner who conveyed the easement to MnDOT. An appraisal of the fee title interest would be obtained and that the Council would make an offer to the heirs before they filed a petition in condemnation. He said that the reason why condemnation was necessary was because there may be some difficulty finding all the heirs. The condemnation would act to clear title. He stated that the value of the underlying fee interest should be nominal since the land has been encumbered with a highway easement for over 50 years. And there is not much, if anything, you can do with the land.

Motion by Wolter, seconded by Beach,

Action:

It is recommended that the Metropolitan Council pass the attached resolution, which authorizes the Council's attorney to initiate condemnation proceedings in order to obtain fee title to the land identified on Exhibit A for the construction of Cedar Grove Transit Station.

Motion passed.

2008-100 Northstar \$2.5 Million Local Match Use

Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager Metro Transit, presented this item to the committee. This item was amended since the initial mailing of the agenda. Fuhrmann went over the changes in the motion and made sure all members had the current Business Item. This item does not increase the scope or budget, it redirects funds. Councilmember Steffen made a friendly amendment to the motion that language be included that this would be contingent upon NCDA approval of the same at their 4/17 meeting. Staff agreed this would be an acceptable contingency.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Leppik,

Action:

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Authorize the Regional Administrator to make payment of \$2.5 million to the Northstar locomotive contractor MotivePower, Inc. for the purposes of making an upcoming milestone payment. The funds for this payment will come from closed debt service funds previously authorized (2004-287) for a grant to Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA) for the purchase of the Northstar right-of-way. This payment would be contingent upon NCDA Capital Committee approval at their April 17, 2008 meeting.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Vice Chair Meeks stated that this item could move forward to the full Council as a consent item.

2008-108 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit, Washington Avenue Bridge Design Contract Amendment with URS

Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager Metro Transit, presented this item to the committee. Wolter said ahead of time that he would abstain from the voting. Discussion/questions about timing of the analysis and the need for it to be available to compare with the results of the U of M Northern Alignment study was stated. Also discussion occurred whether the money should be spent if the Northern Alignment alternative becomes the preferred alternative. Staff indicated the Council's direction to date has been for the at-grade Washington Avenue alignment. This contract amendment authorizes further structural evaluation of the bridge and refinement of the cost estimate.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Hilker,

Action:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a contract amendment with URS in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 for conducting additional analysis of the Washington Avenue Bridge.

Motion passed, with Wolter abstaining and Steffen voting against.

2008-61 2008 Unified Operating Budget Amendment

Ed Petrie, Metro Transit, and Sean Pfeiffer, Metropolitan Transportation Services, presented their respective department's portions of this item and answered questions from committee members.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Steffen,

Action:

That the Council:

- Amend the 2007 Unified Operating Budget in accordance with the attached table.
- Amend the 2008 Unified Operating Budget in accordance with the attached table.

Motion passed.

2008-62 2008-2013 Capital Improvement Program and Capital Program and budget Amendment

Ed Petrie, Metro Transit, and Sean Pfeiffer, Metropolitan Transportation Services, presented their respective department's portions of this item and answered questions from committee members. The committee requested that the Business Item be revised to reflect that it be contingent upon Northstar Corridor Development Authority approval at their 4/17/08 meeting.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Leppik,

Action:

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Amend the 2008 Authorized Capital Program (Multi-year authorization) by adding spending authority to the Transportation Division as follows:
 - Metro Transit \$ 25,899,534
 - Amendments to ACP \$ 28,420,009
 - Deletions from ACP (\$ 2,520,475)
 - Metropolitan Transportation Services \$ 0
- Amend the 2008 Capital Budget (annual appropriation) by increasing spending authority to the Transportation Division as follows:
 - Metro Transit \$ 18,248,002
 - Metropolitan Transportation Services \$ 0
- Approve transfers between capital projects as detailed in Attachment 1.

Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA) Park-and-Ride at I-35W and 82nd Street in Bloomington
Tom Thorstenson, Metro Transit, presented this item to the committee. He stated that staff began by examining 10 sites; 3 sites were looked at further, two of which have unwilling sellers. The property in question is a site preferred by the City of Bloomington for a temporary surface parking facility. Thorstenson estimated about \$9 M to construct the facility, Meeks strongly disagreed with expending that cost for a temporary site. Thorstenson stated that the next step is a work session with the City of Bloomington on 4/28/08. This item is scheduled to come before the Transportation Committee as an action item on 5/12/08.

2. Police Information Management Systems (PIMS) Update and Events

Dave Indrehus and Robert Elmers, Metro Transit Police, gave a presentation on this subject. The PIMS links various sources such as CAD & Dispatch and produces neater/better electronic reports, allowing more time for the uniform officers to be on the streets. Elmers highlighted new equipment used by the Metro Transit Police to monitor various locations. Metro Transit Police have acquired a “boom” equipped with cameras that can rise above Park-and-Ride Lots to conduct surveillance, and also a “boom” with a “cab” that can accommodate an officer to do the same. Metro Transit Police is participating in the Safe Zone program again this summer. A substation is now available on Hennepin Avenue, close to the Safe Zone area. Community Services Officers – law enforcement students - will again be utilized for the program.

2. Demonstration and Status Update of the New NextTrip Real-Time Web Application

John Siqveland, Metro Transit and Gary Nyberg, Transit Control Center (TCC), gave a presentation on this subject. The NextTrip Real-time Web Application was rolled out to the public in April 2008. Readings from the vehicle GPS can compare with the schedule to give the customer a real time bus arrival over the Web. Customers are able to comment on the application through the website. The next stage is to provide mapping capability on the same site. Details are being worked on. Siqveland gave a demonstration of the site on the web.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeks adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m., April 14, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,
LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary