

Metropolitan Council

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

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**Meeting of the Transportation Committee  
Monday, November 23, 2009**

Members Present	Annette Meeks, Chair Robert McFarlin, Vice Chair Craig Peterson	Georgie Hilker Natalie Haas Steffen Kirstin Sersland Beach	Richard Aguilar Peggy Leppik
Members Absent	Roger Scherer		
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	
Others Present	David Gepner, TAB Liaison		

**CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum being present, Chair Meeks called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. November 23, 2009, at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers in Minneapolis.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by Steffen seconded by Aguilar to adopt the agenda for the November 23, 2009, Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Hilker seconded by Steffen to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2009, regular Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit**

Bruce Howard, Director of Marketing, introduced Marketing Specialist Kelci Stones. Stones is being recognized for her work on the Northstar Commuter Rail Grand Opening weekend. Howard cited her tireless efforts in planning and organizing the many details required to hold this large-scale event and her success in working with a number of different parties to ensure all was in place.

Sheri Gingerich, Deputy Chief of Rail Operations, introduced three members of the Hiawatha light rail operations staff: Dan Suggs, Manager of Signal Communications; Mike Erickson, Manager of Traction Power; and John Humphrey, Manager of Rail Transportation. These employees are being recognized for their efforts and leadership in the three-car platform extension construction project. Their planning and extra time worked for the scheduled weekend shutdowns and coordination with the contractor ensured the work was done efficiently and safely.

Chair Meeks and GM Lamb offered their thanks and congratulations to the four individuals and presented each with a certificate of achievement.

**METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER’S REPORT and  
DIRECTOR METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES REPORT**

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

Early ridership reports show that more than 80 percent of Northstar fares are being paid with Go-To cards, Metro Transit’s smartcard fare payment system. These cards are used by employees of Metropass companies, college programs and by regular riders. Their use vastly increases boarding speed and limits lines at ticketing machines on the Northstar platforms. An audited report of November Northstar ridership will be provided soon but will cover only the first two weeks of service, one of which includes the Thanksgiving holiday when all transit ridership is

down. A clearer picture of ridership will emerge after the holiday season.

On November 16 the Metro Transit Police Department hired officers to replace the six officers who have been assigned to patrol the new North Star commuter rail. These new officers will now go through 16 weeks of field training before receiving their assignments.

Members of Bonding Committee of the Minnesota Senate visited Heywood November 19. They received briefings about Met Council/Metro Transit capital funding needs for the next biennium. They toured a Northstar train at Target Field Station.

Some 325 Metro Transit bus operators have received training so far on service patterns that will be implemented December 14 on Second and Marquette Avenues (“MARQ2”) when double bus lanes open on the two streets. Routes will stop every other block and buses will pass one another, resulting in faster trips through downtown Minneapolis for express bus customers. More than 500 drivers are expected to be certified on MARQ2 operations by the time service begins.

A park-and-ride lot built by Metro Transit and served by Minnesota Valley Transit Authority opened on November 16 near Cedar Avenue and 181st Street in Lakeville. MVTA’s Route 477V will operate five morning and five afternoon trips to downtown Minneapolis from the lot. The service actually began in late September from a temporary church lot nearby while the new park-and-ride lot was completed.

A Subway sandwich shop is now open at the 28th Avenue Hiawatha light rail station. They are currently planning hours of 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. to coincide with downtown events. They have signed a five-year lease plus options for extending.

In response to a question from a committee member, Lamb provided a breakdown of morning passenger boardings at the six Northstar commuter rail stations. Over half (56%) of the boardings were split evenly between the Elk River and Coon Rapids stations, followed by Anoka with 22%, Big Lake with 17%, Fridley with 4% and Target Field with 3%.

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

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) is working on an expansion of MSP International Airport, currently estimated at \$1 billion. Council staff is in contact with MAC and has been monitoring activity on the project. An action on the project will ultimately come to the Council’s Transportation Committee. Denny Probst of MAC will make an informational presentation to the committee in January 2010, in advance of any required action.

An advisory committee is being formed to help oversee the development of Transitway guidelines in 2010. Councilmember Meeks will chair the committee, which will also include Councilmember Wendy Wulff and representatives from other entities such as CTIB and Mn/DOT. The committee will establish guidelines for different components of Transitway development such as facilities, fare collection and governance.

After conferring with GM Lamb about upcoming business items and timelines it was decided that the December 28 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee would be canceled. The next meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2010.

## **BUSINESS – Non-Consent Items**

2009-423 Authorization to Purchase Bus Batteries

Jan Homan, Metro Transit Director of Bus Maintenance, presented the item to the committee. There were no questions and no further discussion.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Hilker:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to purchase bus batteries from Batteries Plus in accordance with Council specifications and Batteries Plus’ bid price, for a two-year term with an option to extend up to an additional two years.

Motion passed.

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

2009-433 Authorization to Purchase 11 Sixty-foot Articulated Transit Buses

Jan Homan, Metro Transit Director of Bus Maintenance, presented the item to the committee. In response to questions from the committee, Homan stated that the base price of the 11 King County buses is very close to that of the 29 buses on the Council's current contract. The final negotiated price after any required modifications to the buses is also expected to be very close.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute an agreement for the assignment of eleven (11) articulated buses from King County Metro Transit and with New Flyer of America for the purchase of eleven articulated buses in an amount not to exceed \$7,000,000.

Motion passed.

2009-402 Maple Grove Opt-Out Service Agreement

Ed Petrie, Metro Transit Director of Finance, presented the item. In response to questions from committee members, he clarified the pricing structure in the agreement.

Motion by McFarlin, seconded by Leppik:

That the Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a three-year service agreement with the City of Maple Grove for the service period January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2012.

Motion passed.

2009-435 Authorization to Execute Agreements with the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) for Transit and Rail Operations/Capital Funding

Ed Petrie, Director of Finance, Metro Transit, presented the item. He responded to a question from Chair Meeks regarding rail operating costs and net subsidy.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by McFarlin:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute agreements with the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) to receive operating and capital funds for CY10 for the following projects:

Operating:

Hiawatha LRT - \$7,295,352

Northstar Commuter Rail - \$5,726,553

I-35W BRT - \$106,017

Cedar Ave. BRT - \$165,881

Capital:

I-35W BRT \$1,773,000

Motion passed.

2009-427 Subordinate Funding Agreement No. 5 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for the Central Corridor Light Rail Project

This item was presented by Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager, Metro Transit. In response to committee member questions, he clarified that the item before the Council is for staff services and third party contracts to prepare for acquisition, and the CCLRT Project is not engaged in acquisition at this time. The Project will approach the Council for specific authorization to acquire property. Councilmember McFarlin asked about the purpose of the professional service expense. Fuhrmann responded that the expense is for third party contracts for appraisals and for appraisal reviews, which FTA and Mn/DOT each require.

Motion by McFarlin, seconded by Hilker:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 5 to the Master Funding Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) in the total amount of \$4,100,676 for the Central Corridor Light Rail Project for CY 2010.

Motion passed.

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

2009-429            CY2010 Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) for Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project

The item was presented by Mark Fuhrmann. Chair Meeks asked how much CTIB takes in annually, and whether it can be carried over. Fuhrmann responded that CTIB is taking in approximately \$84 million per year, which is consistent with its projections. Mark Fuhrmann responded that CTIB has developed a Transit Investment Framework (TIF) which prioritizes projects and guides CTIB's funding decisions. CTIB's approvals last week were guided by the TIF and will spend down the full \$84 million. Arlene McCarthy added that CTIB is required to report its financial performance annually to the legislature. Councilmember Steffen asked if CTIB will be repaid once the federal funding is awarded. Mark Fuhrmann responded that the \$66 million grant will not be repaid to CTIB because it is part of CTIB's commitment to contribute 30% of the total project cost. Councilmember McFarlin asked if the FFGA is not awarded as expected in 2010, will all of the CTIB grant be available to the Project or is some of the CTIB grant contingent on the FFGA. Mark Fuhrmann responded that generally, the CTIB grant can be used for preliminary engineering, final design and property acquisition prior to the FFGA award, and that an FFGA award is required to incur expenses for heavy construction or LRVs. In the hypothetical situation in which an FFGA is not awarded in 2010, the budget for the \$66 million would change and would be dependent on the scope of additional LONP approvals from the FTA.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Steffen:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a CY2010 grant agreement for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) capital project for Preliminary Engineering, Final Design, right-of-way acquisition, construction and purchase of Light Rail Vehicles in the amount of \$66,026,475.

Motion passed.

2009-388            Authorization to Exercise Contract Options with Gillig Corporation

Alex Curtiss, MTS Fleet Manager, presented this item. There were no questions and no further discussion.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Beach:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise existing options on contract #07P162 with Gillig Corporation to purchase two forty-foot low-floor replacement buses in an amount not to exceed \$810,000.

Motion passed.

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

2009-430            ADA and Transit Link Dial-a-Ride Transit Assistance Agreement

The item was presented by Dana Rude and Gerri Sutton of MTS. Along with Arlene McCarthy they answered questions from the committee regarding funding, service areas and various terms of the different agreements.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute intergovernmental agreements for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service and Transit Link Dial-a-Ride service with two transit providers not to exceed the following amounts:

Anoka County Traveler	\$2,745,100
Smart Link (Carver/Scott County)	\$2,561,900

The agreements shall be effective for the period January 1, 2010 through July 31, 2011.

Motion passed, with Steffen opposed.

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

2009-431            Authorization for Maple Plain Transit Service Expansion Agreement

MTS Director Arlene McCarthy presented the item. George Bentley, consultant to Maple Plain, was also available to answer questions. Councilmember Haas Steffen spoke to the need for a Council policy discussion regarding expectations and conditions for communities joining the transit taxing district. Councilmember

Peterson expressed concern that demonstration service should be operated from a temporary location prior to committing a capital investment in a permanent park-and-ride facility. McCarthy and GM Lamb explained that a park-and-ride facility in this general location was supported by the park-and-ride facility planning analysis conducted by Council staff and recently updated. Lamb noted that staff will present to the Transportation Committee in January explaining the park-and-ride facility planning methodology and results. In response to questions, McCarthy explained that Maple Plain was aware that with the exception of the CMAQ grant being awarded, there is no service guarantee for Maple Plain and the agreement will clearly state that. Mr. Bentley affirmed that Maple Plain has this same understanding. Councilmember McFarlin noted that Maple Plain is in Councilmember Scherer's district, not his as noted on the business item. Staff advised that the correction would be made.

Motion by Steffen, seconded by McFarlin:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute an agreement with the City of Maple Plain for potential transit service and the extension of the Council's transit levy to the City of Maple Plain.

Motion passed, with Peterson opposed.

## **INFORMATION**

### **1. 2009 Annual Regional Park and Ride System Survey**

Charles Carlson, Facilities Planner for Metro Transit, presented the results of the annual park-and-ride system survey which was conducted in late September/early October. He highlighted growth trends in system usage and provided data showing how that usage relates to gas prices and employment levels.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Steffen, seconded by Hilker to adjourn the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:50 p.m. on November 23, 2009. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Maday, Recording Secretary