

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, June 28, 2010**

Members Present	Bob McFarlin, Chair Kirstin Sersland Beach	Craig Peterson, Vice Chair Georgie Hilker	Richard Aguilar Annette Meeks
Members Absent	Natalie Haas Steffen	Peggy Leppik	Roger Scherer
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager MT	Amy Vennewitz, Dep. Director MTS Finance & Planning	
TAB Liaison	David Gepner		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was not present when Chair McFarlin called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:05 pm on June 28, 2010 at Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul. McFarlin began the meeting with the Employee Recognition award and the Metro Transit General Manager report while waiting for a quorum.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Brian Lamb introduced Assistant Transportation Manager, Donathan Brown, who presented the employee recognition to bus operator Darin Pavik. Brown stated that Pavik has received the Outstanding Operator Award 10 times and has achieved the Safe Driving Award 16 times, and has many commendations in his record. Mr. Pavik currently operates that route 5 on the owl shift by choice, working from 1:15 am to 9:10 am.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit, reminded members that beginning with the first meeting in July, meetings will be held at Metro Transit through the end of the year.

Lamb reported that the accident rate for May 2010 was 2.53/100,000 miles compared to annual goal of 3.8/100,000 miles. This is significantly better than what the rate has been. Continual improvement has been shown over the last 5 years. Metro Transit’s accident rate is ¼ of the national average for large transit systems.

A ridership report from the American Public Transit Association showed that Metro Transit is one of two large bus systems posting a ridership increase in the first quarter of 2010. LRT ridership has also increased and Hiawatha LRT is one of ten LRT systems in the nation to record a first quarter ridership increase. The new GoTo feature, where customers use the telephone to add value or check on their GoTo balance, is increasing in use.

HLRT was shut down last weekend for 15 maintenance activities; the shut down was required by MnDOT work. Bus bridges were used over the weekend to replace LRT trips. In answer to Peterson’s question whether ridership numbers changed using the bus instead of LRT, Lamb will e-mail ridership numbers to the T.C. members in a few days when they are available.

A quorum now present, the meeting continued.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Aguilar, seconded by Hilker to adopt the agenda for June 28, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Peterson, seconded by Hilker to approve the minutes from June 14, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director MTS Finance & Planning, stated there is no report from MTS for this meeting.

BUSINESS

2010-237 Authorization to Purchase Passenger Waiting Shelters

Pat Jones, Metro Transit Assistant Director Engineering and Facilities, and Engineering & Facilities Intern, Lucas Miller presented this item.

Beach asked for clarification of what are the “priority sites” where these shelters are needed –Jones explained they are replacement shelters, due to condition of the shelters that exist, and that there were not shelters replaced last year. Peterson asked how many (total) bus shelters there are, Jones answered and said that these 85 replacement shelters represent approx 10% of the total.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Aguilar:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a purchase order with Brasco International, Inc. for 85 passenger waiting shelters in an amount of \$366,225.

Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no objection, Chair McFarlin stated that this item could proceed to the Council as a Consent Item.

2010-244 Initiate Eminent Domain Proceedings for the Acquisition of Parcel 5D (former Bremer Building) for Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Civil East Construction

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, presented this item.

McFarlin asked about the status of the other parcels noted on the map (parcels 10, 11 & 12).

Fuhrmann responded that the title work has been done, they are vacant properties, appraisals and offers will follow the Bremer action. Fuhrmann believes they will be under the offer threshold offer of \$500,000 and the eminent domain threshold of \$250,000.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Beach:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the initiation of eminent domain proceedings for the acquisition of the property rights for Parcel 5D (Former Bremer Building) in downtown St. Paul for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (CCLRT) Civil East Construction.

Motion passed unanimously.

2010-245 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit: Independent Testing Services During Construction

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, presented this item.

McFarlin asked how what percentage of the DBE goal is participation and how much is good faith effort.

Fuhrmann did not have figures at this time, but stated he would have them for the Council meeting at which this item will appear.

Motion by Hilker, seconded by Beach:

Authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a contract with Stork Twin City Testing Corporation to conduct independent testing services during construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (CCLRT) Project for an amount not to exceed \$435,000.

Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no objection, Chair McFarlin stated that this item could proceed to the Council as a Consent Item.

2010-247 Central Corridor Light Rail Transit: Construction Change Order Greater than 5% for the Advanced Traffic Improvements Contract with Graham Construction Services to Cover costs of University of Minnesota Betterments

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Aguilar, seconded by Beach:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize an additional \$360,000 above the standard 5% allowable contract change order contingency to acknowledge University requested betterments under the Advanced Traffic Improvements contract.

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a subordinate funding agreement with the University of Minnesota in an amount not to exceed \$360,000 for University requested betterments under the Advanced Traffic Improvements contract.

Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no objection, Chair McFarlin stated that this item could proceed to the Council as a Consent Item.

INFORMATION

The Interchange Project

Craig Lamothe, Metro Transit Senior Project Manager, and Chuck Ballentine, HCRRA, gave a presentation on this project as background to Business Item 2010-246. This project is being explored based on the need for additional platform and queuing space and the many proposed trains that may be served by this location (SW, Central, Bottineau, etc.) The consultant will report in July on heavier rail needs.

Meeks asked what the total cost of the Interchange project will be. Ballentine stated the total cost is estimated to be between \$60-80 M. Meeks asked what percent of the funding is State, and what is Federal. Ballentine stated that those figures are not known at this time, applications for funding and different funding strategies are in the works. McFarlin asked whether these costs apply to individual project budgets (or whether they can they be applied) i.e. SW, HLRT, CCLRT, Northstar. Ballentine stated he thinks a mix of some can be applied. There will be additional expenditures in the future should heavy rail be one of the modes. Hennepin County is in the midst of public process, then there can be more hard figures on the construction costs. There are some known and unknown costs, Hennepin County is looking for assistance and trying to engage other partners. McFarlin suggested working with private investors as well.

Meeks asked what would happen if LRT's are not decided as the preferred mode and other corridors end up being BRT or something else. Ballentine stated that this proposal is needed now based on existing HLRT, CCLRT and SW (Stage 1). Stage II will be looked at in July after the consultant work is done.

Meeks stated she will vote against this action because of the fiscal situation, and spending these dollars just to provide access to attend a baseball game is something that is not needed. Meeks stated that she finds it offensive to spend these dollars unnecessarily. There is already a hotel that may lose a (ball team) contract because of MARQ 2, and this plan is talking about another hotel.

Hilker expressed concern for what this plan will do to the Union Depot. Ballentine stated that both sites have a utility in serving the needs of the region and he does not consider them competing.

Lamb stated that this action is important now; last year HLRT went through some painful times when switching to 3-car platforms and inconveniencing people and safety concerns. Metro Transit has been working with HCRRA in order to be in the position to handle the amount of commuters in the future. McFarlin said he respects the cost concerns brought up by members, but nevertheless sees the need for this. He does not see this is a blanket approval to spend \$80-90M without seeing financing plans, but considers this incremental spending on needed projects.

All committee members felt that there is a need for these incremental spending items to be part of the scope of the original individual projects and there is a need for project costs to be more transparent to the public. There should be better discussions of total costs when projects are scoped.

2010-246 Subrecipient Grant Agreement with Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority for the Interchange

Craig Lamothe, Metro Transit Senior Project Manager, presented the business item for action following the discussion above.

Motion by Aguilar, seconded by Peterson :

Authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a subrecipient grant agreement (SGA) with the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority (HCRRA) passing through a \$500,000 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities grant for project management/administration and engineering and design activities associated with the Interchange project.

Motion passed with Meeks and Beach voting against.

2010-241 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment: Include SP#27-753-13, Lowry Avenue Bridge #2723 Replacement Phase II (TAB Action 2010-40)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item. There were no questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Aguilar:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include SP#27-753-13, Lowry Avenue Bridge Replacement Phase II.

Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no objection, Chair McFarlin stated that this item could proceed to the Council as a Consent Item.

2010-242 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment: Include Cedar Avenue Project Changes (TAB Action 2010-41)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item. There were no questions or comments from committee members.

Motion by Aguilar, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to make the following changes to these Cedar Avenue BRT related projects:

- add local funds for project #190623-25 (roadwork from 164th St. to 181st St. in Lakeville),
- add project #19-623-28 to the TIP in SFY 2011 with local funds used to advance construct a SFY2013 Enhancements funded project (lighting, landscaping and amenities in Lakeville and Apple Valley),
- show new costs for project #19-623-24 (roadwork between CSAH 42 and north of 138th St.),

- reflect a change in scope and revise project costs for project #19-623-23 (roadwork from 147th St., Apple Valley to 181st St., Lakeville).

Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no objection, Chair McFarlin stated that this item could proceed to the Council as a Consent Item.

INFORMATION

There were no information items other than “The Interchange Project” above.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Aguilar and passed, to adjourn the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:15 p.m. June 28, 2010.

Respectfully submitted, LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary