

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee
Monday, August 9, 2010**

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

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was not present when Committee Chair McFarlin called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 pm on August 9, 2010 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis. Chair McFarlin began with the Director's and General Manager's reports while awaiting a quorum.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

With the draft Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) going out soon for comment, it is expected that Washington County will submit a request that the Council officially change the name of what has been referred to as the I-94 East Corridor to the Gateway Corridor.

Metropolitan Council will be submitting before the end of the year a request for competitive solicitation for Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds. The same criteria will be used as in previous years. Staff will be formally requesting approval for the application from this committee at a future meeting.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

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

The 2030 Transportation Policy Plan recommends a scoping study of Arterial Bus Rapid Transit to identify possible improvements to customer experience, travel speed, and reliability along high ridership urban bus routes. A Request for Proposals has been issued for this study, which will develop concepts for ten corridors. Staff will evaluate proposals in September and will return to the committee with a recommendation to select a consultant.

Over the weekend of August 6-8 Metro Transit offered free bus service linking three art fairs. The route served the Uptown Art Fair, Loring Park Art Festival and Powderhorn Art Fair, as well as Lake Street/Midtown Station on the Hiawatha Line. The service was very well received on some very hot days and operated without any issues.

Schedule adjustments, including additional running time, will be made to four core urban local routes effective with September 11 pick. Trips on routes 4, 10, 19 and 22 will have running time improvements to increase reliability for customers and to improve conditions for operators. These changes were based on input from Operating Conditions Reports filed by operators on these routes as well as from recommendations made by the On-Time Performance Committee. Automatic Vehicle Location data were analyzed to determine actual operating conditions and guide schedule adjustments.

By the end of September only hybrid electric buses will operate on Nicollet Mall, fulfilling another Metro Transit commitment to the Access Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan. The all-hybrid service is made possible with the arrival of more new hybrid buses and occurs a year ahead of the initial commitment.

Go-To cards now are available at 44 locations throughout the metro area. Customers can get their initial card and add value to existing cards at sales outlets from – alphabetically – Anoka to West St. Paul. To highlight the sales outlet network, brochures will be placed on buses at the end of August. Customers also can add value to their Go-To cards at any rail ticket vending machine, by phone and online.

Transit police officers rode buses for 1,909 hours last month. For the first seven months of the year, officers have been on buses for more than 12,000 hours. This has had a very positive impact on the number of serious incidents on buses.

There are now 240 employers enrolled in the Metropass program, and more than 32,000 of their employees have cards. The program, now in its 12th year, accounted for 10.4 percent of all rides through the first six months of this year. Employees at Target Corporation are the most active with more than 4,300 holding Metropasses.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Once a quorum was established, Chair McFarlin stated that the agenda was being revised to exclude Business Item No. 9: Approval of the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) Bylaws (TAB Action 2010-50). A motion was made by Scherer, seconded by Leppik to adopt the amended agenda for the August 9, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Scherer, seconded by Peterson to approve the minutes from July 26, 2010 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

BUSINESS

2010-269 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment: SP#62-678-12, County Road B2 between Snelling Avenue and Prior Avenue (TAB Action 2010-43)

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

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for SP#62-678-12: County Road B2 between Snelling Avenue and Prior Avenue showing a change in scope to reconfigure the major intersections rather than expand to a six-lane facility and reflecting a new total project cost of \$4,945,730.

Motion passed.

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

2010-270 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Revision: Vehicle Mode Reassignment Request for Metropolitan Council CMAQ Award SP#TRS-TCMT-10C and SouthWest Transit CMAQ Award SP#TRS-SMTC-10A, Bus Purchases to Provide Four LRT Vehicles (TAB Action 2010-44)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item. Committee members noted that the TAB will develop policies to address similar issues in the future.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to revise the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to reflect the vehicle mode reassignment request from the Metropolitan Council that MTS CMAQ award SP#TRS-TCMT-10C: Purchase 15 buses for fleet expansion and SouthWest Transit CMAQ award SP#TRS-SMTC-10A: Purchase 10 buses for fleet expansion both be used to purchase four LRT vehicles, with the stipulation that the TAB develop new regional policy on the reallocation of federal funds from local projects that are dropped from the TIP, by October 2010.

Motion passed.

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

2010-271 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment: Minneapolis SP#141-020-107, Cedar and Franklin Avenues Pedestrian Access and Safety Improvements (TAB Action 2010-46)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item. There were no questions from Committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board action to amend the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Minneapolis SP#141-020-107: Cedar and Franklin Avenues Pedestrian Access and Safety Improvements adding the TIPEDD portion of SP#141-020-108 that was originally part of a STP project that is being withdrawn by the City.

Motion passed.

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

2010-272 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment: Mn/DOT SP#6280-308RW1, I-94 through Maryland Avenue, including Cayuga Bridge Right-of-Way Purchase (TAB Action 2010-47)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item. In response to Committee member questions, staff clarified that the larger project to replace three bridges and reconstruct I-35E has been included in the 2011-2014 TIP. The \$6 million for right-of-way is subtracted for the remaining cost of the project.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Scherer:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Mn/DOT SP#6280-308RW1: I-35 E from I-94 through Maryland Avenue including Cayuga Bridge Right of Way Purchase.

Motion passed.

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

2010-273 Acceptance of TDM Evaluation and Implementation Study (TAB Action 2010-48)

Cole Hiniker, MTS Planner, presented the item and summarized the recommendations of the TDM study. Chair McFarlin asked for clarification of the requested action by the Committee. Hiniker responded that since it was a study requested by TAB, the action is to concur with TAB's recommendation to accept the study and begin implementation of its findings.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Leppik:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) recommendation to accept the Travel Demand Management (TDM) Evaluation and Implementation Study.

Motion passed.

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

2010-276 Adopt Regional Policies and Procedures for Vehicle Fleet, Procurement and Facilities Ownership

Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS, presented this item. McCarthy and Metro Transit Chief Operating Officer Vince Pellegrin responded to committee members' questions concerning the projected lifespan of coach buses in our region as compared with other metropolitan areas in North America.

Councilmember Peterson voiced a concern that this might be a case of setting policy before doing adequate research.

Councilmember Steffen asked whether the increased oversight required by the FTA means that the Council will be reviewing the vehicle maintenance performed by the suburban providers. McCarthy responded that there is a standard maintenance checklist to be followed but that we won't be monitoring their maintenance costs.

Chair McFarlin asked whether the recent fleet transfers had the consent of all parties involved. McCarthy replied that yes, all parties had agreed.

Councilmember Peterson asked whether suburban providers are able to do procurements that "piggyback" on other contracts. Staff replied that FTA regulations for piggybacking are more stringent and unusual so the proposal is that these are either joint procurements or led by the Council.

Councilmember Steffen inquired about the number of buses that are kept on standby for special event service such as the Minnesota State Fair. GM Lamb explained that every effort is made to time the delivery of new vehicles so that the life of the retiring buses may be extended by one month to cover special service such as the State Fair.

Chair McFarlin asked whether FTA has offered any comment on the proposed new policies. McCarthy replied that she has not received any feedback so far.

Testimony was offered by James Clark of Messerli & Kramer, representing the Suburban Transit Association; Will Branning, Chair of the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority's Board of Directors; and Michael Leek, Community Development Director for the City of Shakopee. All spoke in protest of the proposed regional vehicle fleet and procurement policies. Sources of particular concern included the addition of two years to the life of coach buses

before replacement, increased oversight by Met Council and perceived loss of autonomy, potential for more complex and laborious procedures for procurement and maintenance and a possible deterioration in the relationship between the Council and providers. Mr. Clark subsequently noted that the STA had no issues with the proposed facilities ownership policy.

Chair McFarlin stated that he felt a very comprehensive document had been put forward in the proposed policies but that clearly there was not sufficient consensus to take action on the business item at this time. With the concurrence of the other committee members, Business Item 2010-276 was tabled until the September 13 meeting. Chair McFarlin asked that the suburban providers prepare a consolidated response to the Council speaking to specific language in the policies and proposing specific resolutions. They agreed to do so within two weeks. Council staff will then prepare a response before September 13, when the item will be brought back before the committee.

2010-277 2011 Capital and Operating Grant Applications to Counties Transit Improvement board (CTIB)

Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS, presented this item. Councilmember Steffen asked whether CTIB was expecting this application and McCarthy responded that it was.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Peterson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to apply for 2011 grants from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) for the following capital and operating projects:

1. Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Capital for Final Design, Right of Way Acquisition, Light Rail Vehicles and Construction: Est. \$107 million
2. Cedar Avenue BRT Operating to continue Lakeville, Apple Valley and Eagan (Cedar Grove) express bus service: Est. \$350,000
3. Hiawatha LRT Operating: Est. \$7.3 million
4. Northstar Commuter Rail Operating: Est. \$5.7 million
5. Southwest Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Capital for a portion of the Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) phases: Est. \$12.2 million
6. I-35W BRT Operating to continue Express Service to Kenrick Park & Ride in Lakeville (Route 467): Est. \$150,000

Motion passed.

2010-278 Resolution of Support for Draft 2010 Cedar Avenue Transitway Implementation Plan Update

This item was deferred to the August 23, 2010, meeting of the Transportation Committee.

2010-274 I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Final Plan Approval

Cyndi Harper, Metro Transit Manager of Route Planning, and John Dillery, Metro Transit Senior Planner, presented this item and provided results of the public comment process and changes to the service plan based on public input. Councilmember Steffen asked that in the future the committee be provided with more detail concerning the routes involved in order to better understand rider comments. She also requested clarification of the phrase “a large minority”; Harper replied that a better term would be “a significant portion.” Brian Lamb added that future service adjustments will include baseline ridership information by corridor and by route. Councilmember Scherer asked if transfers at the I-35W and 46th Street Station would be coordinated. Lamb replied that the Service Restructuring Final Plan is based on timed transfers to eliminate delays caused by lengthy waits for transfers. Riders arriving at the station will find their connecting bus waiting or arriving very soon. Timed transfers are the main reason that these types of facilities are important. Councilmember Steffen noted that she objected to the wording of a reference to bus routes serving a particular station as she feels that we serve people not facilities. Lamb agreed and replied that staff will make sure always to emphasize that as our primary mission.

Motion by Leppik, seconded by Scherer:

That the Metropolitan Council approve the I-35W and 46th Street Station Service Restructuring Final Plan for implementation on December 4, 2010.

Motion passed.

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

2010-275 Light Rail Vehicle Procurement

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, presented this item. Councilmember Steffen asked whether

there was more competition in the bidding than there was for Hiawatha. Fuhrmann stated that there were five vehicle proposals for Hiawatha LRT and four proposals for Central Corridor. Four proposals is considered a competitive field. Councilmember Steffen also asked whether any LRV would work on our system. Fuhrmann responded yes, they are interoperable due to the way we designed our track and systems. However, only cars of the same type can be coupled/married because of the differences in electrical and computer systems.

Motion by Peterson, seconded by Hilker:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to:

- Award and execute a contract with Siemens Industry Inc. (Siemens), which provides the best value to the Council for production and delivery of 41 low floor light rail vehicles at a total cost not to exceed \$153,211,516, contingent on satisfactory results from the Pre-Award Buy America Audit.
- Issue a Limited Notice to Proceed to initiate design and engineering in an amount of \$4,000,000.

Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Civil West Construction Contract

Mark Fuhrmann, Metro Transit Deputy General Manager, presented the item. In the interest of time, Chair McFarlin asked that Fuhrmann provide a brief report only on the bids received in the last day. Fuhrmann noted that three of the five bids appear to be below budget estimates. He will forward his electronic presentation to committee members for their review and questions or comments and will bring the item to the August 23 meeting with a formal request for committee approval.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair McFarlin adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:32 p.m. August 9, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Maday, Recording Secretary