

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Transportation Committee Monday, June 27, 2011

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Lona Schreiber Vice Chair	James Brimeyer Roxanne Smith	John Đoàn Adam Duinick
Members Absent	Jennifer Munt	Jon Commers	Edward Reynoso
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	
Others Present	TAB Representative – David Gepner		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 6:05 p.m. on June 27, 2011 at Metro Council Chambers, St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Elkins amended the agenda to delete Information Item number 2. This item will appear at a future Transportation Committee meeting. A motion was made by Duinick, seconded by Đoàn to adopt the amended agenda for the June 27, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Schreiber, seconded by Duinick to approve the minutes from the June 13, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Brian Lamb, Metro Transit General Manager stated that Metro Transit has is recognizing two employees this month. Bruce Howard, Metro Transit Director of Marketing, introduced Sharon Feiner, Marketing Creative Services Supervisor, who is being recognized for her creative work and also her work coordinating and keeping the public and transit employees up-to-date with information during the North Minneapolis tornado. Brian Funk, Metro Transit Assistant Director Field Operations, introduced Curtiss Carr, Metro Transit Operator and Relief Instructor, who is being recognized for his overall performance as well as his work partnering with neighboring community outreach at the Nicollet Garage,

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT and METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

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

Hiawatha Light Rail Quietly Celebrates Seven Years of Service

Yesterday was the seventh anniversary of the Hiawatha Light Rail line opening for revenue service between Hennepin Ave/Warehouse district and Fort Snelling stations. Full service to Mall of America began in December 2004 – 27 days ahead of schedule. Ground was broken for the project in January of 2001.

Last year, “Route 55” carried 13.4% of all Metro Transit customers - 10.5 million - the highest ridership ever for the line. Since opening, customers have boarded the Hiawatha Line more than 63 million times.

May was Big Month for Phone, Web Go-To Transactions

May showed continued growth for sales and reloads of Go-To Cards over the phone and online. On the phone, people called our transit number nearly 12,500 times to add value to their Go-To Cards or check their balances – the highest

number ever. This option has steadily grown in popularity since launching a year ago. Also in May, customers purchased or added value to Go-To Cards totaling more than \$474,000 dollars on our webstore – the second-highest monthly total ever.

National “Dump the Pump” Transit Campaign W/Twitter & Commuter Challenge

The American Public Transportation Association sponsored a nationwide promotion last Thursday calling for people to “Dump the Pump” and try transit. The campaign focused on increased gas prices. Metro Transit promoted the effort online by encouraging Twin Citians to “dump the pump” by taking the Commuter Challenge.

Sharon Feiner and the Creative Services department used Twitter to promote the campaign – and gained a number of followers in the process which put us over the milestone of 2,000 Twitter followers. An average of six people join Twitter per day, which will turn a year old in August.

There was an uptick in Commuter Challenge pledges, too. That annual campaign ends on Friday – we’re now very close to our goal of 15,000 people pledging to leave the car behind and try new trips. We’ll report on the campaign results and retention statistics at a future Transportation Committee meeting.

Arrests made in 94% of 2010 Felony-Level Operator Assaults

Metro Transit Police report that with the arrest of a man last week, all 2010 felony-level operator assault cases have been closed. Transit Police have made arrests and brought charges in 16 of the 17 cases. In 2011, there have been only five felony-level operator assaults and to date MTPD has made arrests and brought charges in four of those. Just five years ago, there were 44 felony-level operator assaults. Transit police attribute the reduction to better ongoing communication between them, garage managers and operators; a significant increase in police on-board hours; and steadfast investigators, who make use of evidence taken from video recording devices - which are on all Metro Transit buses - to identify assailants and deter future incidents.

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Information Item No. 2 from today’s agenda – Transitway Guidelines – will appear at a future Transportation Committee meeting. Staff is working on revisions to the guidelines based on advisory committee comments and will bring the most up-to-date document to the Transportation Committee.

Federal Transportation Authorization Update

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Barbara Boxer announced a framework for a six-year bill to reauthorize federal surface transportation programs. They have named their legislation “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, MAP-21”. The framework funds programs at current levels and accommodates for inflation, providing \$339.2B over six years and averaging \$56.5B annually. Highlights include eliminating earmarks, consolidating programs, expediting project delivery. Although the framework represents a six-year bill, Sen. Boxer has not ruled out a two-year measure to maintain current funding. Revenues to the Highway Trust Fund have not kept up with disbursements. Sen. Boxer intends to finish the bill over the next couple of weeks and bring it up for Committee action before the July 4 recess. House Transportation and Infrastructure committee Chair John Mica, who is currently drafting the House bill, announced that he will unveil his proposal July 7 and hold a committee markup July 12.

Nice Ride Bicycles and Stations

Council member Munt asked that McCarthy share information on the Nice Ride event that took place today. Mayors Coleman and Rybak joined a bike ride from Minneapolis to St. Paul celebrating the expansion of Nice Ride bike stations into St. Paul and the addition of stations in Minneapolis. The expansion of Nice Ride into St. Paul isn’t just a new opportunity to connect our two cities, but provides and promotes a convenient way to get to the businesses along Central Corridor. The partnerships with Blue Cross and Blue Shield and Transit for Livable Communities made this expansion possible.

APTA Peer Review

An APTA Peer Review on MCI coach bus life was conducted here last week. The panel consisted of Paul Finnerty-GO Transit Ontario, Michael Perry – Sound Transit Washington, Mike Hubbel – Dallas Area Rapid Transit Texas and Jeff Hoitt – APTA staff. The group visited SouthWest Transit, MVTA and Metro Transit garages and commented that

all providers were very cooperative and have very good maintenance operations. They found that buses are in good condition based on age and operating environment, and that a 14-year service life is reasonable. They will submit a written report in about 4-6 weeks.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

Motion by Duininck, seconded by Smith to approve items 2011-176, 2011-177, 2011-178, 2011-181 and 2011-185 as consent items.

Motion passed.

2011-176: 2011-2014 TIP Amendment Request from MnDOT for TH 55 Full Depth Reclamation Project (TAB Action 2010-50)

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include MnDOT SP# 2722-81: TH 55 Full Depth Reclamation extending from the Wright/Hennepin County border to west of Hennepin CR 116 (Pinto Drive) in Medina.

2011-177: Scope Change Request and 2011-2014 TIP Amendment for SouthWest Transit CR 10/TH 212 Park and Ride in Chaska (TAB Action 2011-51)

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to approve the scope change request and adopt the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment for SP#090-610-001: SouthWest Transit CR 10/TH 212 Park and Ride in Chaska.

2011-178: Scope Change Request and 2011-2014 TIP Amendment from MnDOT for TH 120/Hudson Road Intersection Improvement (TAB Action 2011-52)

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to approve the scope change request and adopt the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment for MnDOT SP#6227: redesign of the TH 120/Hudson Road intersection.

2011-181: Authorization to Execute a Grant with MVTA

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to execute a grant agreement with MVTA for up to \$1,487,500 for expansion of the Apple Valley Transit Station on Cedar Avenue BRT.

2011-185: Authorization to Execute Grant Agreement with SouthWest Transit

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a grant agreement with SouthWest Transit (SWT) for up to \$350,000 for the mid-life rehabilitation of twenty large transit buses.

Non-Consent items

2011-179: 2011-2014 TIP Amendment from MnDOT for a Pre-Implementation Study for a Priced Managed Lane on I-94 between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul (TAB Action 2011-53)

Carl Ohrn, MTS Planning Analyst, presented this item and answered a question from Brimeyer regarding the feasibility of the project. The study will determine the feasibility of an I-94 managed lane.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Duininck:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to adopt an amendment to the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include SP#8816-1438: Pre-Implementation Study for a Priced Managed Lane on I-94.

Motion passed.

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

2011-180: Authorization to Execute Contract with Egan Company

Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transit Services, presented this. In response to Schreiber's question on how these costs compared to past costs for the same work, McCarthy explained that the cameras were just recently installed on MTS buses. Lamb verified that this camera system is the same as on Metro Transit buses.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Duinink:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to negotiate a contract with Egan Company in an amount not to exceed \$600,000 for the service, maintenance and installation of Verint Camera systems and Siemens AVL systems over a three year period.

Motion passed.

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

2011-149: Transitway Identity and Branding Framework Line Color Recommendations

Bruce Howard, Metro Transit Director Marketing, presented this item and noted the amendments to the original Business Item that appeared at the 5/23 Transportation Committee and 6/08 Council meeting. The committee members were pleased with the new designation of the Northstar Commuter Rail line on the draft map, and Schreiber commented that she looks forward to viewing the final map that will go to the public.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Đoàn to reconsider Business Item 2011-149. Motion passed.

Motion by Đoàn, seconded by Brimeyer to amend Business Item 2011-149 to include highlighted Item 2 in the proposed action. Motion passed.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Smith to approve the amended Business Item 2011-149. Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) Representative – Ron Biss

Paul Colton, Metro Mobility Senior Manager, introduced Andy Streasick, Metro Mobility Customer Services Manager, who in turn introduced Ron Biss, Chairman of the TAAC. Mr. Biss has been with the TAAC for approximately 15 years and has served as the Chair for 4 years. The TAAC consists of voluntary positions appointed by the Council (Biss handed out a summary of the committee and positions and requirements). The TAAC provides input during the planning stages of transportation services in the metro area. Biss gave examples of the projects that and type of input that the TAAC has had over the years. Đoàn noted that the TAAC member terms are all the same and asked whether the TAAC is comfortable with that. Biss responded that the continuity has been good through the years and there is a broad spectrum of disabilities in the membership to provide input.

The committee thanked Biss for his dedication and service.

2. Draft Regional Transitway Guidelines – Part 1

This item was deferred to a later Transportation Committee meeting.

3. Planning for Potential Transit Budget Reductions

John Levin, Metro Transit Director of Service Development, gave a presentation with this item. He stated that this item is separate from discussions about a possible government shutdown. Staff is looking for input on ways to address the proposed \$109M cut in general fund for the biennium. There is a limit to the amount of budget shortfall could be made up with a fare increase, service will also need to be reduced. The changes will affect thousands of riders. There will be two public meetings (July 6 & 7) to present the guiding principles and a summary of the expected impacts and receive public comment on the overall approach. Elkins encouraged Council members to attend these meetings.

Smith also suggested that legislators be encouraged to attend the public meetings. Following the public meetings, staff will finalize service reduction plans in preparation for the public hearings scheduled between August 8 – 18, where the fare and service change proposal details will be given and formal public comments will be received. Brimeyer stated that the information needs to be out to the public as soon as possible prior to the 7/06 & 07 public meetings. Levin said the power point presentation could be put on the website.

Elkins asked that staff send the Transportation Committee members the link to this T.C. meeting so that, if needed, they can refer the public to watch the meeting. Lamb stated that staff can prepare "rules of engagement" for committee members prior to the public meetings.

Doan commented that this situation puts us back about 20 years, and that we need to put a human face on this and need to think about what this does to the region and its growth and the impact on people and businesses.

OTHER BUSINESS

Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) member David Gepner reminded the committee of the annual TAB Bicycle outing to take place Thursday 6/30. The ride will take place out of Hugo in Washington County and will give members an opportunity to see bicycle projects that have been funded.

Chair Elkins reminded members that Transportation Committee meetings are held at Robert Street for the first six months of the year, then at F.T. Heywood the second half of the year. The July 11 Transportation Committee meeting marks the beginning of the Transportation Committees being held at Heywood in Minneapolis.

Lamb handed out an example of the weekly packets of information that are sent to various e-mail groups regarding the Central Corridor. Committee members asked if they could receive all of the various packets in one e-mailing; Mark Fuhrmann will check with the CCLRT Outreach staff to do this.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:55 p.m. June 27, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary