

Metropolitan Council

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

**Meeting of the Transportation Committee**

**Monday, August 8, 2011**

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair	James Brimeyer Roxanne Smith	Jennifer Munt Adam Duinink
Members Absent	John Doan	Edward Reynoso	Jon Commers
Staff Presiding	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	
TAB Liaison	Robert Lilligren		

**CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum was present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:04 p.m. on August 8, 2011 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Schreiber, seconded by Smith to adopt the agenda for the August 8, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Duinink, seconded by Smith to approve the minutes from the July 25, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

**METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT**

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Working with the Office of Minnesota Management and Budget, we have finalized FY 2011 MVST receipts. Revenues came in at 98.7% of the February 2010 forecast, on which the 2011 budget was based. MVST was budgeted at 95%, so receipts were higher than budgeted but less than forecast. We also receive interim MVST forecasts which provide information but don't affect the budget. The recent numbers indicate that forecasting has become more accurate and in line with actual receipts.

A public hearing was recently held on the City of Crystal's comprehensive plan and its conformance with the regional aviation plan. Met Council and City of Crystal staff have since worked on revisions to the wording, and the resulting plan document is in conformance with the regional TPP. The plan has gone to the Community Development Committee and will go before the full Council in the near future.

At the federal level, with a debt ceiling agreement reached, the Congressional Super Committee is now at work on other ways to address the federal deficit. If no agreement is reached and adopted by December 23 there will be across-the-board cuts in discretionary spending. While there has been no indication yet as to the nature of any cuts, we will continue to monitor developments to see how our funding might be affected.

The 18.4-cent federal gas tax is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2011. Normally it could be presumed that the tax would be extended; however, due to some current situations such as the FAA standoff nothing can be taken for granted, and Congress is in recess until September 7. It has been recommended by many in Congress that the gas tax be reapproved, and it is hoped that that will in fact happen with little fanfare.

## **METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT**

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

On Friday, August 5, Hiawatha Light Rail experienced an unplanned service disruption when power was lost on a northbound train crossing the LRT flyover bridge at Highway 62. It was discovered that an insulator had somehow snapped while the previous train crossed the bridge, causing a section of the catenary wire to become detached. When the next train went through there was no wire for the pantograph to connect with for electrical power, causing each subsequent pantograph to fly straight up and break. When the train lost the pantographs it stopped. With no connection between pantograph and wire, there was a huge surge of electricity that traveled through the rail until it got to the Target Field single track crossover. The surge was so large it passed through multiple layers of protection and ended up melting many of the wires that enter into the signal communications bungalow at Target Field. This signal bungalow provides critical communications to the switches, rail signals, pedestrian crossing protection and several other critical component items at the Target Field station platform area and storage tracks on the other side of the platform. As a result of the damage we were not able to operate the switches into the storage tracks. All of the wiring was repaired and all communications restored within 2 ½ days. Consultants are reviewing the incident and will provide Metro Transit with an analysis of the events.

There are a number of transit promotion activities around the region currently. Metro Transit sponsored the “Art Pass” promotion over the weekend which provided for free rides between three art fairs in Minneapolis. Customers downloaded a transit pass to ride free on regular-route buses and light rail to Uptown, Loring Park and Powderhorn Park. Continuing through the end of the year is the free ride offer on the second Saturday of each month to the Children’s Museum in St. Paul which also includes a discount on admission provided by the Museum. And on August 6 Metro Transit partnered with the Urban Wildland Half-Marathon to benefit Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield by offering runners free rides to the event in exchange for sponsorship value and advertising. Promotions for State Fair service have begun and will continue to build in the coming weeks.

In 2010, Metro Transit led or supported several Urban Partnership Agreement (UPA) projects, including express bus lanes on Marquette and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenues; Park & Ride enhancements in Blaine, Roseville and Lakeville; and promotion of teleworking options through its Travel Demand Management area. Last week MnDOT won America’s Transportation Award for Innovative Management from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials for the UPA initiative. The award honors the partnerships between MnDOT and transportation agencies like Metro Transit to build a safe, reliable and modern transportation system that improves safety and mobility through innovation.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Consent Items**

None.

### **Non-Consent Items**

2011-212: 2012 Capital and Operating Grant Applications to Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB)  
MTS Planning Intern Andrew Owen presented this item. In response to committee member questions, staff explained that the difference in numbers reflects the one-time increase in CTIB contributions from 50 percent to 75 percent to help cover funding shortfalls. Staff also noted that FTA has indicated its intent to issue approval.

Motion by Duininck, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to apply for 2012 grants from the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) for the following projects:

#### **Capital**

1. Southwest LRT Capital for Preliminary Engineering (PE) / Final Environmental Impact Analysis (FEIS): Est. \$16.9 million
2. Central Corridor LRT Right of Way Acquisition, Light Rail Vehicles and Construction: Est. \$97.9 million

#### **Operating**

1. Hiawatha Light Rail Operations: Est. \$12.5 million
2. Northstar Commuter Rail Operations: Est. \$8.8 million

3. I-35W BRT Lakeville Express Service: Est. \$170,000
4. Cedar Avenue BRT Express Service: Est. \$460,000
5. Cedar Avenue BRT Station-to-Station Service: Est. \$280,000

Motion passed.

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

#### 2011-213: \$20 Million 2011 Transit Capital Improvement State G.O. Bonds Allocation

MTS Director Arlene McCarthy presented the item. The staff recommendation is the result of the Governor's recommendations, legislative negotiations and input from CTIB as well as individual counties. Pat Jones, Assistant Director of Metro Transit Engineering and Facilities, answered a question from CM Schreiber about the Maplewood Mall project, explaining these bond funds would close the final funding gap for that project.

Motion by Duininck, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Allocate \$20 million in 2011 Transit Capital Improvement Program state G.O. bonds as follows, conditional upon CTIB providing a \$3.0M capital grant to the Cedar Avenue BRT in 2012:
 

\$11.0 M	Minneapolis Interchange
\$4.0 M	Northstar Ramsey Station
\$0.5 M	Newport Park-and-Ride
\$1.0 M	Cedar Avenue BRT
\$1.25 M	Gateway (I-94 East) Corridor
\$0.25 M	Robert Street Corridor
\$2.0 M	Rush Line Corridor Maplewood Mall Park-and-Ride Expansion
2. Approve, if requested by Washington County, the reallocation of \$1.25 M in Gateway (I-94 East) Corridor funds to the Newport Park-and-Ride conditional upon the county concurrently allocating \$1.25 M in its CTIB funding to the Gateway (I-94 East) Corridor.

Motion passed.

#### 2011-214 SW: Defer Regional Transit Capital Local Match Commitment to Potential CMAQ Projects

MTS Director Arlene McCarthy presented this item. Minneapolis Councilmember Robert Lilligren, TAB Liaison to the Transportation Committee, asked how the CMAQ projects' timeline differed from the Council's normal six-year capital process. McCarthy explained that the Capital Improvement Plan does not make funding commitments for six years but rather identifies needs and expected funding sources, and in some cases does not list specific projects for anticipated funding. A project cannot proceed until it has funding committed and is adopted into the Council's Authorized Capital Program which is different than the CIP. CM Munt noted that this action will allow the Council to ensure funding decisions align with Council policy and priorities. McCarthy also noted that the TAB's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is recommending that the TAB delay the evaluation and ranking of Regional Solicitation projects for at least 60 days due to the uncertainty of federal funding levels. TAB is expected to act on that recommendation at its August 17 meeting.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council not commit to providing regional transit capital (RTC) bonds as local match for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) projects in advance of submittal to the 2011 Regional Solicitation process for funding in 2015 and 2016.

Motion passed.

#### 2011-207: Hiawatha Corridor Vehicular Traffic Improvements

Sheri Gingerich, Deputy Chief of Light Rail Operations, presented this item. CM Brimeyer asked if FTA approval was needed. Staff responded that it is not as the improvements are within the scope of the grant. CM Duinick noted that he was looking forward to the improvements and felt they were long overdue. Chair Elkins asked if there is better technology available, and staff stated the latest technology was going to be used for this upgrade.

Motion by Duininck, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a subrecipient agreement with the City of Minneapolis to pass through funds from the Hiawatha Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) and local match

funds for project management/administration, engineering, materials and design activities associated with upgrading and improving the traffic management system in the Hiawatha corridor.

Motion passed.

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

2011-210: Maple Plain Park and Ride Interagency Agreement with the City of Maple Plain

Pat Jones, Metro Transit Assistant Director of Engineering and Facilities, introduced the business item and Claudius Toussaint, Metro Transit Project Manager, presented the details. CM Smith asked whether the proposed service to Maple Plain will be an express service, and Jones responded that it will. CM Lilligren asked if a community has to be in the Metropolitan Transit Taxing District (TTD) in order to receive Regional Transit Capital (RTC) funds. Staff responded that it was a requirement and explained that a portion of property tax revenues levied on communities within the TTD is used to repay RTC bonds. In response to a question from CM Brimeyer about daily usage levels for the park-and-ride, staff reported that the existing demand is 91 rides, the 2016 projection is 128 rides, and the 2020 projection is 147 rides.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Schreiber:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into an interagency agreement with the City of Maple Plain for the design, construction and operation of a park and ride near US Highway 12 and County Road 29 (Baker Park Road).

Motion passed.

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

## **INFORMATION**

### 1. Draft Regional Transitway Guidelines – Part 2

MTS Planners Mary Karlsson and Cole Hiniker presented the item and answered questions from committee members about vehicle types and branding, language accessibility of the fare collection system and timing of public hearings. Committee members commended staff and CM Wulff for their extensive work on the guidelines document. The item will come back to the Transportation Committee at its next meeting as a business item for approval.

### 2. Draft Transportation Improvement Program

MTS Planning Analyst Carl Ohrn and Transportation Coordinator Kevin Roggenbuck provided an overview of the draft 2012 – 2015 TIP. They outlined the purpose and requirements for preparing the plan and explained the breakdown of the funding process, levels and sources. Staff also listed the projects included in the 2012-2015 TIP and noted the dates of presentation to this committee, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) and the full Council.

### 3. Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) and FTA Grant Applications

Charles Carlson, Metro Transit Manager of Transitway Projects, presented the item and outlined the process for submitting federal grant applications and the types of projects for which grants are awarded. He then listed specific projects with applications already submitted and additional projects for upcoming CMAQ funding requests.

### 4. Transportation Division 2012 Operating Budget

Brian Lamb and Arlene McCarthy presented the 2012 operating budget for Metro Transit and Metropolitan Transportation Services, respectively, and responded to questions from committee members.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:32 p.m. August 8, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Maday, Recording Secretary