

Metropolitan Council

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

Meeting of the Transportation Committee

Monday, September 12, 2011

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair John Đoàn	James Brimeyer Roxanne Smith Edward Reynoso	Jennifer Munt Adam Duininck Jon Commers
Members Absent	(None)		
Staff Presiding	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:03 p.m. on September 12, 2011 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Reynoso, seconded by Commers to adopt the agenda for the September 12, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Reynoso, seconded by Smith to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

There are several members of the Transportation Advisory Board whose terms are due to expire at the end of 2011. Council members are encouraged to consider and forward nominations for individuals to fill these vacancies. The full Council is scheduled to approve new appointments at its December 14 meeting.

At the federal level, it appears the House and Senate have reached an agreement for a six-month extension of SAFETEA-LU. This will allow US DOT to spend half of the annual \$39.9 billion authorization. A vote is expected by the end of the week in both the House and the Senate. While this is good news, there is still the potential that the authorization could be reduced for fiscal year 2012. The hope is that the next federal surface transportation bill will provide a new, multi-year funding authorization.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

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

The Revenue and Ridership department has reported that customers boarded Metro Transit State Fair buses more than 544,000 times this year, a 15.9 percent increase over 2010. The goal for 2011 State Fair ridership was 500,000 rides. Express bus ridership from 11 sites was up almost 17 percent, while ridership on regular routes that serve the fairgrounds was up 8 percent. Nearly one in six fairgoers chose Metro Transit for travel to the fair.

The FTA has granted approval to begin preliminary engineering on the Council's third light-rail transit project, the Southwest Corridor. This is a significant step toward winning federal matching funds and building the 15-mile light rail line between Eden Prairie and downtown Minneapolis, with continuation to downtown St. Paul or connection to

bus service or the Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail). By 2030, projected ridership is estimated to be nearly 30,000 riders each weekday, which is comparable to the current ridership today on Hiawatha Light Rail.

In preparation for the 10th anniversary of 9/11/01 attacks, mass transit properties across the country began an unprecedented increase of uniformed officers as a protective measure. Metro Transit utilized all of its Transit Police officers, as well as law enforcement partners from nine additional police departments, three sheriff's offices and federal partners from Transportation Security Administration and the Federal Air Marshals. Transit Police also worked with Council employees to remind them to stay extra vigilant and aware of security measures.

The 2011 Bus Roadeo is scheduled for September 27, 28 and 29 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. This is an annual safety and skills competition for Metro Transit bus operators, held in a parking lot off Como Avenue, adjacent to the state fairgrounds. Transportation Committee members are, as always, invited to come watch the competition and even drive the low-speed obstacle course themselves on any of the Roadeo dates.

The Student Pass, offered as a demonstration program to four high schools last year, is now available this fall semester to any high school served by Metro Transit. Sixteen schools in Minneapolis, St. Paul and other cities have enrolled in the program to date with the requirement of at least five student riders per school. The card uses Go-To technology and provides unlimited rides, similar to the College Pass. When students sign up for the program, they agree to Metro Transit's code of conduct. The participating high schools pay \$87.50 per student per quarter.

In August, the online Trip Planner at metrotransit.org experienced record use. Four days from the past month are now among the top ten highest-use days in the tool's ten-year history. Customers planned nearly 30,000 trips on August 22, the highest use day of 2011. Overall, customers planned more than 600,000 trips during August – a 29 percent increase over August 2010. The number of unique visitors to metrotransit.org in August – 252,616 – is a new monthly record. On August 23 the site had 29,227 visits, the highest number of daily visits in its history.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Doan to approve items 2011-243, 2011-247, 2011-224 and 2011-239 as consent items. Motion passed.

2011-243: Authorization to Apply for Section 5311 Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program Funds (Resolution 2011-26)

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council approve Resolution 2011-26 authorizing the Regional Administrator to apply for Section 5311 Non-urbanized Area Formula Program funding from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT).

2011-247: Authorization to Execute Agreements for Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom FFY 2010-2011 Program Funding

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute subrecipient agreements with the specified agencies and for the specified amounts of federal Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) or New Freedom program funding identified in Attachment A.

2011-224: Authorization to Purchase Two Advance Hybrid Drive Buses

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute agreements with Snohomish County Public Transportation Benefit Area Corporation, in Everett, Washington (D.B.A. Community Transit) and New Flyer of America for the purchase of two forty-foot, advanced hybrid buses in an amount not to exceed \$1,289,200. The agreement with Community Transit will allow the Council to piggy-back on their contract with New Flyer for the purchase of these buses. The agreement with New Flyer details the Council's legal and financial protection relative to this piggy-back bus purchase.

2011-239: Contract Award for Pocket Schedule Printing and Warehousing

Motion:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into a five-year contract with American Financial Printing to print and warehouse pocket schedules as specified per the bid rates through December 31, 2016.

Non-Consent Items

2011-246: Adopt 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

MTS Senior Planner James Andrew presented the item. Chair Elkins asked whether the TIP included placeholders for 2015-2016 grant awards. Andrew responded that it did, using estimates based on past funding levels. CM Đoàn asked if the region was in danger of nonattainment status for various air pollutants. Staff explained that the region is currently in attainment but that the Environmental Protection Agency sometimes revises its thresholds for air quality attainment. It does not appear that the region is in immediate danger of nonattainment for other pollutants, but that Met Council staff keeps track of developments that may impact the region's air quality status. CM Đoàn also asked whether the TIP can be modified at any other point during the year. Andrew responded that the TAB frequently forwards TIP amendment authorization requests to the Council throughout the year and that those requests go through the same process as the TIP but without a public hearing.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Duininck:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Adopt the 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program.
2. Certify that the Twin Cities Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process is being carried on in conformance with all applicable federal requirements of:
 - Section 134 of Title 23, U.S.C., Section 8 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app. 1607);
 - Sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506 (c) and (d)).
 - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of the 1964 and Title VI assurance executed by each state under 23 U.S.C. 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794;
 - Section 1101 (g) of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (Pub. L. 105-178) regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in FHWA and FTA funded planning projects (Pub. L. 97-424, Section 105 (f); 49 CFR part 23); and
 - The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Pub. L. 101-336, 104 Stat. 327, as amended) and U.S. DOT regulations (Transportation for Individuals with Disabilities (40 CFR parts 27, 37 and 38).
3. Certify the TIP conforms with the provisions of 49 CFR part 20 regarding lobbying restrictions on influencing certain federal activities.
4. Find that the TIP is consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan, which is in conformance with applicable federal transportation and air quality regulations.
5. Find that the TIP meets all applicable federal requirements.
6. Find that the TAB provided adequate opportunity for public, agency and transit operator involvement through its regular process and special public meetings and hearing.
7. Transmit the 2012-2015 TIP along with these comments to the Minnesota Department of Transportation and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Motion passed.

2011-236: Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line): Siemens Contract Amendment to the Light Rail Vehicle Contract to Allow 100% Performance Guarantee

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann presented the item. Fuhrmann responded to questions from committee members with assistance from Met Council Chief Financial Officer Mary Bogie and other staff.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to direct staff to amend the Siemens Light-Rail Vehicle Contract to allow for 100% Performance Guarantee by Siemens Industry Inc. (Siemens), for purchase of 16 Central Corridor (Green Line) and up to seven Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail) option rail vehicles.

Motion passed.

2011-237: Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line): Contingency Commitment

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann presented the item. CM Schreiber asked whether there might be an opportunity to invest contingency funds on a short-term basis prior to expenditure. Fuhrmann explained that the funds are not actually in place currently and that G.O. bonds will be issued on the basis of anticipated federal grant funding. CM Commers asked whether the proposed purchase of the 16 light-rail vehicles would result in Green Line operations being fully equipped. Fuhrmann responded that it would. CM Đoàn requested that the committee be provided with a list of the \$129 million in project enhancements being proposed for utilizing contingency funds. Fuhrmann responded that he would provide the information to Council members.

Motion by Smith, seconded by Đoàn:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to

- 1) Exercise the contract option with Siemens to purchase 16 additional Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Green Line (CCLRT) Light Rail Vehicles, and
- 2) Authorize the use of \$58.1 million in CCLRT Project Contingency and Bid Underrun funds towards the purchase of 16 CCLRT light-rail vehicle options, other 2011 time sensitive Project Enhancements and Pre-Revenue Operations start-up costs.

Motion passed.

2011-238: Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail Transit): Siemens Light Rail Vehicle Options

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann presented the item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Đoàn:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise the contract option with Siemens Industry Inc. to purchase two light rail vehicles for use on the Blue (Hiawatha) Line for a total cost of \$6,710,134.

Motion passed.

2011-242: Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line): Initiate Eminent Domain Proceedings for the Acquisition of Parcel 64 (Prospect Park Properties Inc.) for Civil West Construction

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann presented the item. Chair Elkins asked whether there had been concerns expressed by the other businesses about the construction. Fuhrmann noted that the action would affect access but not functionality of the businesses. CM Đoàn asked whether the costs to initiate eminent domain were accounted for. Fuhrmann responded that they were. CM Reynoso asked whether there were other options available that would lessen the impact on the businesses on the property. Fuhrmann explained that the other side of the property contained an eight-story building and a parking ramp, making this approach far more feasible. CM Munt expressed the opinion that this action shouldn't impede any of the businesses' operation and that they likely were aware that they ultimately would benefit from the light-rail line. CM Duininck asked whether staff had a sense of the state of the purchase negotiations. Fuhrmann responded that he would characterize the situation as there being significant distance between the parties currently.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Duininck:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the initiation of eminent domain proceedings to acquire the property rights for Parcel 64 (Prospect Park Properties Inc.) in Minneapolis for the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Civil West Construction of the Green Line.

Motion passed.

2011-241: Northstar Corridor, Ramsey Station – Authorization to Negotiate and Execute a Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement

MarySue Abel, Lead Project Manager for Metro Transit Facilities Engineering, presented the item. CM Duininck asked about the cost of operating the station and revenue generated from the station. Staff responded that the operating costs for the station, primarily consisting of maintenance costs, are expected to be about \$100,000 per year, while the anticipated revenue from passenger fares at the station is expected to be about \$150,000 per year. In addition, property tax revenue that will be generated when the City of Ramsey joins the capital levy district will be about \$300,000 per year. This capital will offset the Council's capital contribution of \$1.3 million for the station construction in just over four years. CM Duininck then asked what agency will administer the construction contract. Staff responded that it will be administered by the Anoka County Regional Rail Authority. CM Schreiber asked about Sherburne County's request earlier in the day to have a statement previously sent on behalf of Stearns and Sherburne County Commissioners entered into the record as the position of Sherburne County. This position expressed concern over the

addition of the Ramsey Station. GM Lamb responded that he had talked with Commissioner Schmiesing from Sherburne County early in the afternoon. Lamb suggested to Commissioner Schmiesing that he would amend the business item language to summarize the Sherburne county concerns more explicitly. In addition, the business item would refer to a letter that was sent to Council Member Elkins and Chair Haigh. Commissioner Schmiesing stated this would be acceptable, and these changes were made to the business item now before the committee.

Motion by Reynoso, seconded by Schreiber:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Master Cooperation, Funding and Delegation Agreement with the Anoka County Regional Railroad Authority (ACRRA) and the City of Ramsey for the development of the Northstar Ramsey Station Project.

Motion passed.

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

2011-245: Authorization for City of Ramsey Transit Service Expansion Agreement

MarySue Abel, Lead Project Manager for Metro Transit Facilities Engineering, presented the item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Reynoso, seconded by Schreiber:

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

Motion passed.

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

2011-244: Northstar Corridor Commuter Rail Subordinate Funding Agreement with Sherburne County Regional Railroad Authority

Metro Transit Director of Finance Ed Petrie presented the item. There were no questions from committee members and no further discussion.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Supplemental Subordinate Funding Agreement with the Sherburne County Regional Railroad Authority for commuter rail operating costs for an amount up to \$2,024,930.

Motion passed.

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

INFORMATION

1. Metro Council/MnDOT/DHS Pilot Project with Scott/Carver County Smart Link

MTS Assistant Director Gerri Sutton and Beth Hatch of Concord Consulting Group presented information on a joint project to develop a Unified Transit Data Warehouse tool to improve coordination of transit services among multiple agencies. They provided background and an overview of the project concept, benefits, technology and timeline.

2. MTS Quarterly Ridership Report

MTS Director Arlene McCarthy provided a review of ridership numbers for the region through June, 2011. Data was broken down by provider and type of service, and historical levels for overall ridership were compared by month and year back to 2006.

3. Midtown Corridor Update

Michael Mechtenberg, Transit Planner for Metro Transit Service Development, presented an overview of the study of transit improvement options for the Midtown Corridor in Minneapolis. He provided background for the project and outlined opportunities and challenges as well as the process and timeline for the required alternatives analysis.

4. Tour: Bus Transit Control Center

In the interest of time, this item was postponed. It will be rescheduled for Monday, September 26, 2011, immediately preceding the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:25 p.m. September 12, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Maday, Recording Secretary