

## Metropolitan Council

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

### Meeting of the Transportation Committee

Monday, September 26, 2011

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

#### **INFORMATION**

1. Tour of Metro Transit Bus Control Center

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum was present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:25 p.m. on September 26, 2011 at Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, Minneapolis.

#### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commers, seconded by Munt to adopt the agenda for the September 26, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Schreiber, seconded by Munt to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2011 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion carried.

#### **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit**

John Levin, Director of Service Development, introduced Steve Legler, Assistant Director of Service Development. Mr. Legler is being recognized for his tireless work in leading the service reduction planning effort and also his ongoing skill and dedication to making sure that the schedules produced are accurate, efficient, and meet the needs of both customers and operators.

Michael Conlon, Director of Bus and Rail Safety, introduced light rail supervisor Amina Wolf. Ms. Wolf is being recognized for her initiative and commitment to safety after she was made aware of a recurring and potentially hazardous situation involving a school bus at an LRT grade crossing. Her extra efforts ultimately resulted in the bus route being changed to avoid the cause of the hazard.

Jim Perron, Assistant Transportation Manager at South garage, introduced bus operator John DeCarlo. Mr. DeCarlo is being recognized for his excellent service to Metro Transit and its customers. He has received 6 Outstanding Operator awards for safety, customer service, adherence and attendance, as well as 17 years of Safe Operator status, and he consistently receives commendations from customers including three in the last month alone.

Chair Elkins and General Manager Lamb offered their thanks and congratulations to all three employees and presented each with a plaque commemorating his or her achievement.

#### **METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT**

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

Metro Transit is set to launch its fall advertising campaign this week. The campaign uses humor to portray Metro Transit as the solution to the very real problems commuters face every day when they drive to work. Using the theme “Metro Transit, the cure for the common commute,” the campaign will use bus sides and skyway ads as well as radio spots on ten stations during morning and afternoon rush hours. There will also be a promotional component to encourage increased use of the Go-To Card. The campaign will run through the end of November, and staff will provide a more detailed presentation to the committee at its next meeting.

The Bus Roadeo competition will take place September 27 through September 29 in the parking lot across the street from the state fairgrounds, on Como Avenue. Committee members are invited to come drive the low-speed obstacle course or just to watch.

Federal officials toured the Southwest Corridor on September 21, in advance of two days of meetings on the \$1.2 billion light-rail project that will link Eden Prairie with downtown Minneapolis. The contingent included staff members from the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Railroad Administration along with their project management consultants. The Southwest project received federal approval to enter preliminary engineering on September 2.

Students used Metro Transit College Passes to board buses and trains 159,412 times in August, nearly 33 percent above August 2010. University of Minnesota students used U-Passes more than 217,000 times during the month, up 8.4 percent from last year. High school students used Student Passes nearly 42,000 times. This is four times the number of rides taken in August 2010, when that pass was first introduced in a limited number of Minneapolis high schools.

Thanks to the combined efforts of many Metro Transit departments, the Lake Street/Midtown light-rail station has undergone several enhancements to prevent loitering of young people at the highly-used station, which has been a concern for staff and neighbors. Working with the Corcoran Neighborhood Group, staff developed and implemented a plan to address the concerns by playing classical music in the elevator lobby, increasing police presence and upgrading cameras. Additional measures include using higher-powered lighting for extra security, assigning dedicated cleaning staff and installing retaining walls that discourage loitering and provide improvements to the landscape.

The Marketing department reports that on October 1 new tourism company *MSP Tours* will open a retail kiosk at MSP International Airport that will sell customized audio-guided tours via the Hiawatha light-rail line. The new business is marketed to air travelers on layovers as a quick and easy way to take in Twin Cities attractions along the line. Metro Transit has partnered with the company to promote the tours with the intent of generating ridership as well as repeat visits to the Twin Cities.

## **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT**

Amy Vennewitz, Deputy Director, MTS, reported the following:

Motor vehicle sales tax receipts for state fiscal year 2012, which began July 1, continue to lag at approximately 95.5 percent of forecasted revenues. However, receipts prior to July 1 had been coming in ahead – at one point approximately 108 percent – of forecast, which means that when combined with July’s and August’s performance levels are still averaging around 103.6 percent for the first eight months of calendar year 2011.

Congress passed a six-month extension of the SAFETEA-LU legislation, which keeps the act in force through March 31, 2012. The extension provides for spending authority at 2011 levels with no significant program or policy changes. There is still the expectation that a long-term, multiyear transportation reauthorization bill will be passed. However, legislators have not yet acted on a new appropriation bill for 2012, which will need to be accomplished before October. If no new bill is approved, there is a possibility that a continuing resolution through November will be passed.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Consent Items**

None.

### **Non-Consent Items**

2011-265: 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Authorization to File Grant Application (Resolution No. 2011-28)

MTS Senior Planner Elaine Koutsoukos presented the business item and responded to questions from committee members regarding specific aspects of the plan.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Đoàn to adopt the proposed 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with a budget of \$6,591,752. Motion passed.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Đoàn to Adopt the resolution authorizing the filing of an application with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for a planning grant under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – A Legacy for Users. Motion passed.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Commers to authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into agreement with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation, for distribution of FHWA and FTA planning funds. Motion passed.

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

## **INFORMATION (continued)**

### **2. Regional Service Improvement Plan Status**

John Levin, Metro Transit Director of Service Development, provided an update on the Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP). He outlined the plan's purpose, structure and process and summarized key elements and the next steps to be completed before making a recommendation to the Council.

### **3. Arterial Transitway Corridors Study Update**

Charles Carlson, Manager of Transitway Projects for Metro Transit, presented an overview of the study designed to determine options for improving transit service using existing arterial streets in the region for bus rapid transit. He explained the structure of the study team and listed its next steps, including presentations to stakeholders and public meetings.

### **4. Transit Police Update and Initiatives**

Metro Transit Deputy Police Chief A.J. Olson presented information about the department and its multiple daily activities on the transit system and in the community. Also highlighted were the annual Minneapolis SafeZone initiative and various counterterrorism efforts including intelligence sharing, education/outreach of front-line employees and explosives detection using K9 units.

### **5. Light Rail Transit/Bus Rapid Transit System Name Update**

Bruce Howard, Metro Transit Director of Marketing and Customer Services, and Michelle Fure, Met Council Outreach Coordinator, provided a status report on the development of the identity and branding of an integrated Transitway system. They explained the framework within which branding would be established, outlined the process and rationale for identifying preferred choices and listed next steps in finalizing a recommendation to the Council.

### **6. 2012-2017 Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Plan**

Brian Lamb and Amy Vennewitz presented the proposed capital improvement for Metro Transit and Metropolitan Transportation Services, respectively. They listed funding priorities and project categories as well as funding sources, projected unmet needs and next steps in approval process.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

None

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 7:05 p.m. September 26, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

September 26, 2011 Transportation Committee Meeting

Liz Maday, Recording Secretary