

Metropolitan Council

Summary of the 2007 Legislative Session

A. Regional Funding Issues

Regional Transit Funding – A “lights on” transportation finance bill was passed on the final day of the legislative session. This bill appropriates \$98.753 million in FY 08 and \$78.753 million in FY 09 for transit operations. The additional \$20 million in FY 08 is a one-time appropriation and does not add to the base. Of this amount, \$5.3 million each year is for rail operations. Budget rider language states that these funds are for paying 50% of the operating costs for light rail operations, with the remaining costs (up to 50%) to be paid by the Hennepin County Regional Rail Authority. This bill also stipulates how revenue generated from the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax is expended based on the 2006 constitutional amendment. Transit programs in the metro area will receive 24 percent in FY 08, 27.75% in FY 09, 30% in FY 10, 33.75% in FY 11, and 36% when fully transferred in FY 12 and beyond.

2007 Agency Deficiency Funding - This bill provides supplemental appropriations of \$7.857 million from the state’s general fund to the Metropolitan Council to make up a projected shortfall in FY 07, based on the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax revenue collections performing under projections. This legislation also stipulates that to receive this funding the Metro Council must re-bid a recent bus procurement award to purchase new buses. It also requires that any future Metro Council procurement contracts exceeding \$125 million be reviewed by the Legislative Advisory Commission.

Regional Park Funding - An appropriation to the Metro Council for the operation and maintenance of regional parks from general fund appropriations of \$4.05 million in both years of the biennium was provided in the omnibus environment, energy and natural resources bill. This bill also provided funding for regional parks operation and maintenance from the lottery in lieu of sales tax proceeds to the amount of \$4.57 million per year. Another bill that appropriated funds from the Environmental Trust Fund based on recommendations of the Legislative and Citizens Committee on Minnesota’s Resources provides \$2.5 million for regional parks capital improvements on the condition that these funds receive a 40% local match (regional park bonds).

B. Regional Policy Issues

Here is a list of the Council’s initiatives pursued this legislative session and the final results of legislative action.

Land Planning Act amendments - Passed and awaiting the governor’s signature as part of S.F. 1302.

Local government planning grants (allowing the one-time transfer of up to \$1 million from the Livable Communities Demonstration Account for this purpose – Passed and awaiting the governor’s signature as part of S.F. 1302.

Regional Parks non-profit foundation – Passed and awaiting the governor’s signature as part of S.F. 1302.

Changing the regional transportation performance evaluation process – Part of the omnibus transportation policy bill. This language was included in the conference committee report, which was one of two conference committee reports awaiting action as time ran out as the session adjourned.

Housekeeping changes to Metro Mobility statutes - Part of the omnibus transportation policy bill.

Metro Transit Police jurisdictional and forfeiture changes - Part of the omnibus transportation policy bill.

LRT governance changes to allow Council or Mn/DOT to build LRT - Part of the omnibus transportation policy bill.

Regional bonding authorization of \$33.2 million for regional transit capital needs – Passed as part of the omnibus tax bill. This bill is expected to be vetoed by the governor this week.

C. Other pending legislation that did NOT happen

State capital bonding bill – One bill was passed and vetoed that included \$40 million for Central Corridor. The last day of session another bonding bill was brought forth that passed the Senate, but did not get considered for a vote in the House before time ran out on the session. This bill also included \$40 million for Central Corridor.

Constitutional Amendment for environment and cultural programs – This bill had reached agreement in conference committee and, like the transportation policy bill, was not acted on as session adjourned. This amendment, if approved in 2008, would provide additional funding for regional parks and for the Clean Water Legacy program, along with several other programs.

Elected Metro Council legislation – Early in the session the Senate failed to pass this bill on the floor and no further action on the bill in the House or Senate occurred.

May 23, 2007