

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 1, 2013

Committee Members Present: Ron Biss, Heidi Myhre, Darrell Paulsen, John Lund, Chad McGuire, Kim Kang, and Nichole Villavicencio.

Committee Members Absent: James Williams and Jerolyn Pofahl.

Committee Members Excused: John Schatzlein, Kjensmo Walker, Margot Imdieke Cross and Wayne Wittman.

Council Staff Present: Mike Kuehn, Libby Starling, Paul Colton, Robin Kaufman, Pam Steffen and Alison Coleman.

Public Present: Ken Rodgers, Claudia Fuglie, Jay Haapala from AARP and Patty Thorsen from AARP.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Biss called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1, 2013.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by McGuire, seconded by Paulsen to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Kang, seconded by McGuire to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2013 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

INFORMATION

a. Legislative Update

Mike Kuehn spoke to the TAAC committee. The House did pass their Transportation Finance Bill. It got 101 votes. Largely because it doesn't have any tax increases in it. It has \$130 million for transit for the next biennium (\$65 million per year). That is the base amount that was put in two years ago for this biennium. It continues to leave us with an operation shortfall of \$18 million. A little more of half of that is the second year of the biennium, which is the start up and operations of the Central Corridor rail system. Part of that are just general operating increases and inflationary factors that bring that into play.

The Senate bill is much different. It is right now being heard in the Senate Tax Committee. It hasn't been to the floor so there is no floor vote. This is the last committee. Currently in that bill is a half cent metro sales tax increase, making it three quarters percent and they extend that to all seven counties. That generates approximately \$335 million annually in increased transit revenue. The Senate bill also has in it less general fund money, approximately \$83 million over the biennium. This is largely for the Metro Mobility operations. Everything else beyond that would come out of the sales tax revenue. There is some language of how that money would be distributed. That would include capital costs, which would include the capital for corridor development. It would accelerate the corridor development. All the things that have been talked about over the last year in a positive way of how we could move transit development in the region forward. This is somewhat consistent although not entirely consistent with the Governor's recommendation, which is a half cent metro area sales tax increase.

The difference between the Senate bill and the Governor's is that the Senate bill also invokes a 7½ percent increase for a gas tax. The gas tax increase would be at the wholesale level. The argument being used at the capitol is this would actually decrease the sales tax you pay at the pump by six cents per gallon. Then

it is up to the wholesalers to pass any of the charges on to you. The Governor has consistently and adamantly been opposed to a gasoline tax increase.

The reason the House bill is very basic is that if they put any tax increase in the Transportation bill it would lose Republican support. The DFL support would lose a lot of rural members because the Governor's proposal did not include money for highways. If Representative Hornstein would have put in the metro sales tax he wasn't going to get any support unless there was increased funding for roads. That means a gas tax increase and the Governor opposes a gas tax increase. The Senate goes in a different direction than that.

The Council needs to make up the operating shortfall that is in the next two year budget. They need at a minimum in capital funds, an additional \$37 million to continue on the current federal funding cycle.

The House and the Governor both released a bonding bill. The Governor's bonding bill is about \$750 million for various projects. It does not include anything for Southwest Metro because the Governor supports a half cent sales tax of which the capital needs for transit development including Southwest would come out of that additional half cent metro sales tax. So the Governor's recommendation doesn't include anything for any transit projects. The House came out with a bonding bill of about \$800 million that included \$50 million for transitway development. It identifies about eight or nine corridors where the money can be spent, one of which is Southwest. The vast majority of that money in the House bill would be used to fund the minimum requirements and needs of the Southwest corridor. The Senate is yet to move on the bonding bill and seems opposed to putting it forward this year because they feel the second year of the legislative cycle is much more important.

The only thing the Senate has agreed to in any kind of capital funding is to continue the project of renovating the state capitol. They put about \$40 million in the Senate Tax Bill. There is money in there to continue that project. The Senate wouldn't need a bonding bill. The tax bill in the House raises about \$2.6 billion in new revenue. The tax bill in the Senate raises about \$1.8 billion in new revenue.

In the House bill that has no tax increases there is over \$800 million in trunk highway funding that comes out of the gas tax accounts to continue to work on roads. Most of the gas tax money goes to the state for state highways. There is a distribution formula: 62 percent of the gas tax money goes to the state, 29 percent goes to the counties for their road systems and nine percent goes to local governments for their maintenance of the state aid roads that exist in their cities.

Tomorrow, in the House, on the floor, they will be taking up the bus driver transit vehicle operator assault bill that increases the criminal penalties for those that physically assault drivers of transit vehicles. Then it will go to the Senate.

The Regional Bonding authorization, which is part of the local bus replacement, including the Metro Mobility vehicles are tied to the Transit Capital Plan. That is a \$35.8 million request. That language has been included in the House in the tax bill and in the Senate in the Transportation Finance Bill.

In the Senate Finance Bill one of the things that they do in the future is part of the new sales tax revenue which is \$335 million a year. Part of that proposes to pay off the regional debt service. It would no longer be put on the property tax. If that doesn't happen the Council is seeking the bonding authorization, which they still need to do, from the legislature.

The Data Practices language that protects information on data collected on transit riders was an issue that was raised by Metro Transit. The Data Practices Bill in both the House and Senate has passed their bills. The bill has now gone to a conference committee. The language is in both bills.

In the House, a bill was introduced last week for better maintenance for bus shelters and standardized bus shelters with heat to make them more accessible for the disability committee.

Regarding redistricting. The House has a map called Map 4. It is now on the floor. It would create two districts that have two current Metro Council members in two different districts and two vacant districts. It has the lowest population deviation from one district to another. The map that is in the Senate bill is Map 1A. It has a slightly higher deviation between districts. Every district continues to have one incumbent, though the deviation is slightly larger. Once the bill is signed into law the Governor has 60 days to make the Met Council appointments. Once the process starts, the Governor appoints a nominating committee to advise him on this.

Once the Met Council members are appointed then they can move into making the appointments for TAB, TAAC, Metro Parks and Open Space, Land Use Advisory Committee and various advisory committees that utilize the Met Council districts to create some of the seats on all the various advisory commissions of the Council. The Council appointments should be completed by early July. By the end of August the vacancies for the advisory committees should be filled.

b. Thrive MSP 2040 Update

Libby Starling spoke to the TAAC committee. She is the project manager for Thrive MSP 2040. Thrive MSP 2040 is in part the Council's long range plan. This fulfills a statutory responsibility for the Council to put together what is known in statute as a metropolitan development guide. Thrive then provides the overall policy direction for the Council's additional systems and policy plans including the Transportation Policy Plan, the Water Resources Policy Plan, the Regional Parks Policy Plan and then the first time since 1985, a Housing Policy Plan under the overall umbrella of Thrive. This information is then rolled out to local governments in the form of system statements in 2015. That provides the overall direction to local governments for the preparation of their local comprehensive plans which then come back to the Council in 2018. So Thrive is the first part of a very long policy conversation that influences the growth and development patterns of the overall seven county area.

In addition to simply fulfilling the statutory responsibility they really want Thrive to be a visionary plan that really sets out a plan and a strategy for how they get the region to be as prosperous, livable and sustainable as it can be both today and for the decades to come.

In putting together the Thrive plan in this round they really made it a priority to ground the policy development work that is inside Thrive with an ongoing series of outreach and engagement conversations. When she came to the TAAC in September that was one of over 50 separate conversations and events that the Council hosted to ask questions about Thrive. What kind of policies does our region need to thrive? What kind of region do we want to leave for our children and our children's children out to the year 2040? In that process they talked with over 1,200 people in these conversations both in person and online and heard a series of key themes including the importance of connecting jobs, housing, transit, infrastructure and amenities. The importance of setting priorities for regional investments, particularly around infrastructure such as transit and transportation. Then interest in the Council serving as a convener for some of the big regional discussions that clearly are on issues that affect everyone as a region but no single entity has authority over.

On the website they do have more detail about all of the ideas that was heard in this first round. These are some of the ideas that rose to the top across all of the different conversations that they had last summer and fall. Since that time the Council has been culling through the information that was heard and is taking Thrive to the next step of proposing a series of outcomes, principles and goals for work on Thrive.

The things they want to achieve in the Thrive process are prosperity, livability and sustainability. These are the big outcomes.

The principles that will govern how they do the policy work and how they do the implementation are collaboration, equity, stewardship, integration and accountability. The equity principle is one that the Council has spent a lot of time talking about and working out some of the key concepts that are being proposed inside the equity principle. Connecting all residents to opportunities such as good jobs, transportation choices, safe and stable housing, a range of parks and natural areas, and vibrant public spaces. The opportunities and challenges of growth and change are equitably shared across the

communities, both geographic and cultural. All residents and communities are involved as full and equal partners in public decision-making. Some residents and communities may require different approaches to ensure full participation and benefit from access to opportunity.

There is a set of six goals for Thrive.

1. Preservation protects natural areas and resources for use and enjoyment today and into the future.
2. A vibrant and globally competitive economy creates opportunities for residents and employers.
3. Land use, development patterns and infrastructure align to make the best use of public and private investment.
4. Housing options give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable and affordable homes.
5. A multi-modal transportation system safely and reliably connects people and freight with destinations in the region and beyond.
6. A resilient region minimizes its contributions to climate change and is prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a changing climate.

They are in the phase two of the outreach and engagement work. In addition to the outcomes, the principles and the goals they are taking out for discussion four very specific issue areas:

1. Regionally Significant Economic Places
2. Water Supply and a Thriving Region
3. Land Use and Transit
4. Affordable Housing Priority, Location and Need.

They are trying to focus on policies that are resilient so that they work regardless of how the future plays out. She will come back to the TAAC in the fall with specific policies and overall direction.

c. Southwest LRT Update

Robin Cauffman spoke to the TAAC committee. She showed a map of the 2030 Regional Transitway System. The Southwest line will be extending the Green Line. The trains that will be running on Central will actually continue on to the Southwest line. If someone lived in Hopkins and wanted to go to the U of M, they could get on the train at one of the Hopkins stations and take the train all the way to the U of M. They would not have to get off the train and transfer.

It starts at highway 212 and Mitchell Road in Eden Prairie. That is where the last station would be. It moves east. The next station would be the Southwest Transit Station nearby the existing bus park and ride facility is today. The next station is just south of 494 and highway 5 in Eden Prairie. Then the train proceeds north and east and the next station is in the Golden Triangle area which is south of Shady Oak Road and east of highway 5. It would then proceed north. The next station is called City West Station. It is where United Health Group is building their new campus. That is at Shady Oak and highway 62. It moves north to the first station in Minnetonka, which is Opus Station. Continuing north on Shady Oak Road the next station would be south and east of the Shady Oak and Excelsior Blvd. interchange at the Hopkins and Minnetonka boarder. It would run along the existing former rail line that is currently a trail. It would follow that into Minneapolis. The next station moving north and east would be the Hopkins Station. It continues northeast would be Blake Station, which is Blake and Excelsior Blvd. It continues northeast to Louisiana Station, which is south of highway 7 in St. Louis Park. Then it moves to the next station at Wooddale, which is south of highway 7 at Wooddale, west of highway 100. It crosses over highway 100 by bridge. The next station would be by Beltline Station in St. Louis Park. It continues east to West Lake Station, which is north and west of Lake Calhoun. It continues to the 21st Street Station, near Cedar Lake. It continues to Penn Station, just south of I-394 at Penn. Then at that point it crosses under I-394 and the next station would be the Van White Station, which is the new roadway and bridge is being built. It continues north and east and goes under I-94. The next station will be over by Royalston. It is east of the farmers market. At that point it will connect into the new interchange that is being built over by Target Field.

They anticipate about 30,000 average weekday riders in 2030. It will provide a single seat ride to downtown Minneapolis, U of M and St. Paul. Passengers can connect to the Hiawatha (Blue Line) and get to the Mall of America and the airport.

Currently there are 210,000 jobs in the corridor. By 2030 there should be 270,000 jobs.

The president just recommended \$2.1 billion for New Starts program. That is where they get half of their funding for projects. As far as funding the current project budget is \$1.25 billion. They are forecasting \$625 million from the FTA, \$375 million from CTIB (County Transit Improvement Board), \$125 million from HCRRA (Hennepin County Railroad Authority) and \$125 million from the state.

The CTIB is five of the seven counties. Legislation allowed for cities to opt in and elect whether or not they wanted to have the ¼ cent sales tax. The counties of Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota and Washington all opted to collect that ¼ cent sales tax. Scott and Carver did not.

It is currently in the preliminary engineering phase (2013). In 2014 the environmental documentation will be complete. The final design should be 2014 to 2015. The full funding grant agreement should be 2015. Heavy construction should be from 2015 to 2017. Passenger operations should begin in 2018.

The engineers have identified 25 key technical issues. She listed all the stations and locations of the issues. She listed the preliminary engineering project elements. They meet with various advisory committees and various groups and open houses. They have Community Outreach Coordinators who can be contacted if anyone has any questions.

They have a website www.SWLRT.org , they have email SWLRT@metrotransit.org they have a twitter account www.twitter.com/southwestlrt

d. Discussion on Bus Exhibit

Paul Colton spoke to the TAAC committee. He showed three different floor plans of Hoglund Bus. They are cut away low floor buses. Some have more plusses than others. It is a 24½ foot length cut away chassis with a modified rear chassis to make it a low floor bus. It has a 34 by 62 inch ramp. The door opening is 34 inches. The slope is one to six. It is at ground level. There are grab handles on the doors that open out. There are grab handles on each side of the ramp. There is a grab handle on the left when you enter the vehicle. It is a power ramp with a manual override option. He discussed the layout of the three different vehicles.

Colton announced that this would be his last TAAC meeting as Senior Manager of Metro Mobility. He has taken another position in MTS as the Fleet Manager for all of the vehicles on the MTS side. That is Metro Mobility, fixed route contracts and the suburban transit services (Southwest Metro, MVTA, Plymouth, Maple Grove, etc.)

Member Comment

None.

Public Comment

Pam Steffen spoke to the TAAC committee. There will be service changes on May 18 for the next pick. Check out the Metro Transit website to see if you have the most current schedule.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary