

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: September 8, 2014

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 24, 2014

Subject: Authorize a public comment period, including a public hearing and several public meetings, to receive feedback on the draft Service Improvement Plan

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: 1-3b Public Involvement in the Planning Process; 2-1 Public Accountability Policy; 2-1b Public Hearings Procedure

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Division/Department: Metro Transit

Proposed Action

That, for the purposes of holding a public hearing and receiving public comment, the Metropolitan Council authorize a public comment period from November 1, 2014 to November 30, 2014. This comment period will include several public meetings and an official public hearing on November 18, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. in St. Paul.

Background

Metro Transit is developing a long-term (10-15 years) service improvement plan (SIP) to guide the expansion of the local and express bus route network. The recommended SIP will reflect the transit policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040 and the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan. It combines these elements of the regional vision with public engagement and fundamental transit planning principles to identify the various service improvements that best achieve regional goals. It will identify a specific and prioritized list of transit service improvements that could be implemented if increased transit funding is available.

The Metro Transit service planning process is designed around the needs of the communities we serve, and includes ongoing opportunities for public and policymaker engagement and discussion about transit needs and potential solutions. To date, staff held three workshops for elected officials and community-based organizations in November 2013. In addition to the workshops, we received nearly 4,000 responses to a survey conducted in early 2014 regarding transit values and service improvements.

Metro Transit will host five public meetings and one public hearing to gather input on the draft plan. The content and format of the public meetings and official public hearing will be the same and comments submitted at the public meetings will be considered the same as those made at the official public meeting.

Public Meeting	November 5, 2014	Hennepin County Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis	11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Public Meeting	November 8, 2014	North Community YMCA, 1711 W. Broadway Ave., Minneapolis	1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
Public Meeting	November 13, 2014	Hennepin County Southdale Library, 7001 York Ave S., Edina	6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
Public Meeting	November 15, 2014	Conway Recreation Center, 2090 Conway Ave., St. Paul	1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
Public Meeting	November 17, 2014	Anoka County Northtown Central Library, 711 County 10 NE, Blaine	6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
Public Hearing	November 18, 2014	Metropolitan Council, 390 N. Robert St., St. Paul	11:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m.

In addition to providing comments at the meetings and hearing, the public will be invited to submit comments via telephone, fax, mail, e-mail and the Council website. Also, staff will specifically reach out to community-based organizations to meet with them, review the SIP and hear their comments and concerns.

Following the public comment period, Metro Transit will summarize public comments, and recommend adjustments to the SIP. This public comment report will be presented along with the final SIP for Council acceptance and approval in early 2015.

Rationale

Council policy requires public hearing authorization at least 45 days before the hearing. State law requires notice of the public hearings at least 30 days before the hearing. Staff recommends that six public meetings and one official public hearing be held on a variety of dates and times.

Funding

The outreach, public meetings, and public hearing will be funded through existing operating budgets. The service improvements recommended in the SIP will require additional operating resources to be identified before implementation.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to releasing the draft SIP and hosting a public comment period.