

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

October 28, 2019

LOCATION: Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, Reva Chamblis, Molly Cummings, Kris Fredson, Christopher Ferguson, Francisco Gonzalez, Phillip Sterner

Committee Members Absent: Raymond Zeran

TAB Liaison Present: Peter Dugan

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Barber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:00pm on Monday, October 28, 2019 in the Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Cummings to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Gonzalez to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2019 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

TAB LIAISON REPORT

Peter Dugan reported the following information from the October 16, 2019 TAB meeting:

Several TIP amendments were passed which are considered streamlined because even though they represent TAB money, there are scope changes involved and they don't affect scoring.

MPCA: will be starting on Phase II of the Volkswagen settlement spending \$23M.

MAC: both airport security lines are open and MSP expects to surpass 39M passengers in 2019.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Metro Mobility Fall Forum

Fall convening of Metro Mobility will be held Tuesday October 29th, at 6:00pm at the Minneapolis Public Library. The forum will include a short presentation about updates but will mostly be a time to listen to customers and hear how the service is impacting them, what issues exist and improvements that could be made.

Metro Mobility 101

Last week staff held two Metro Mobility 101 legislative briefings, which were attended by 8 different House and Senate legislators along with MMB staff who work on the Council budget. Attendees were given a Metro Mobility overview along with a bus garage and dispatch tour.

Suburban Transit Providers

Council members are invited to attend Wednesday's MVTA Board meeting. Staff has also extended an invitation to all suburban transit providers to come before this committee on November 25th.

Metropolitan Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

Electric Bus Update

Staff has been working with New Flyer to address some charging issues on the electric bus fleet and work will begin to start phasing the electric buses back onto the C Line this week. This couldn't have been done with the great work of New Flyer and Metro Transit's staff.

Orange Line Connecting Bus Study

With METRO Orange Line under construction, Metro Transit is ready to kick-off a study reviewing how bus routes in the area will interact with the Orange Lines stations. The Orange Line Connecting Bus Study will inform the bus service planning in the I-35W corridor area in south Minneapolis, Richfield, Bloomington, and Edina. The goal is to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of transit service in the area and to provide strong connections to the Orange Line. Once the initial engagement period ends after Thanksgiving, we will use the survey results and feedback to develop the concept plan, which will be presented to the Council and the focus of a public comment period next spring. During the summer of 2020 the concept plan will be modified based on the feedback we receive, and staff will ask the Council to approve the final plan in late 2020. Service changes will be implemented in late 2021 in conjunction with the opening of the Orange Line.

Transit Assistance Program

This Wednesday morning Metro Transit is holding an event to mark two years of the Transit Assistance Program—also known as TAP. The event will take place on Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 9 a.m. at Pillsbury United Communities, 3501 Chicago Avenue South in Minneapolis. The Transit Assistance Program (TAP) is designed to make public transit more affordable for lower income residents and allows customers to use a bus or train for just \$1 per ride. People qualify for TAP if they are at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines or 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI.) Metro Transit estimates that 624,000 residents are eligible but haven't yet applied. Staff will provide a fare policy overview at a future meeting, including information about TAP.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

Motion was made by Fredson, seconded by Gonzalez and carried, to approve the following consent items:

1. **2019-281:** Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Subordinate Funding Agreement No. 12 with Minnesota Department of Transportation for Staffing

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 12 to the Master Funding Agreement (MFA) with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for 2020 SWLRT staff support in a total amount not to exceed \$2,443,627.

2. **2019-289:** Gold Line BRT Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 03 for 2020 MnDOT Staffing

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (Gold Line) Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 03 to the Master Funding Agreement (MFA) with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) in the total amount not to exceed \$1,630,609.00 for calendar year 2020

3. **2019-300:** 2019-2022 / 2020-2023 TIP Amendment for Hennepin County: Traffic Management System

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve an amendment to the 2019-2022 and 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) to change the termini and the cost of Hennepin County's traffic management system project.

4. **2019-301:** 2019-2022 / 2020-2023 TIP Amendment for Minneapolis: Hennepin Avenue Reconstruction and Bus Stops

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve an amendment to the 2019-2022 and 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) to add enhanced bus stops (funded by Metro Transit) to Minneapolis's Hennepin Avenue reconstruction project.

5. **2019-302:** 2019-2022 TIP Amendment for St. Paul: Como Avenue Bikeway

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve an amendment to the 2019-2022 and 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) to add roadway mill and overlay work to the adjacent roadway along St. Paul's Como Avenue bikeway project.

6. **2019-301: 303:** 2019-2022 TIP Amendment for Burnsville: Lake Marion Greenway

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve an amendment to the 2019-2022 and 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) to add a sidewalk parallel to Burnsville's Lake Marion Greenway project.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2019-50:** HASTUS Scheduling Software Maintenance and Support Contract

Metro Transit Service Development Director Adam Harrington presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Chamblis:

Metropolitan Council authorizes contract **19M125** with GIRO Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$1,200,000 to provide maintenance and support service to Metro Transit scheduling software through May 2023.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

2. **2019-260:** Metro Transit Master Partnership Contract with Minnesota Department of Transportation
Metro Transit Transit System Development Assistant General Manager Jim Alexander presented this item. Atlas-Ingebretson commented how she really liked seeing work being done across government entities.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Gonzalez:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a Master Partnership Contract with MnDOT for various professional and technical services in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

3. **2019-290:** Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority Subrecipient Agreement for Beltline Boulevard Station Park and Ride
Metro Transit Transit System Development Assistant General Manager Jim Alexander presented this item. Sterner asked the cost difference between a surface lot and a parking structure. Alexander responded that a parking structure runs about \$25k a stall and would be more expensive than a surface lot. Atlas-Ingebretson commented that it's exciting to see the pedestrian access across Beltline but asked if the designs for the parking structure and area will make improvements to the area (capturing rainwater on site, safety for biking and walking in the area, etc.). Alexander responded that the area has yet to be designed but that the city is likely mindful of that when designing and that staff does take pedestrian safety into consideration.

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Atlas-Ingebretson:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Subrecipient Agreement with the St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority (EDA) related to funding and construction of a park and ride structure adjacent to Beltline Station as part of the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Project.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

4. **2019-305:** Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Amendment #1 to Master Utility Agreement with Sprint

Metro Transit Transit System Development Assistant General Manager Jim Alexander presented this item. Cummings asked if there are other areas along the corridor where agreements similar to this one might happen. Alexander answered that there are 10 or 11 utilities the project is working with and that staff is always looking at opportunities to streamline activities.

Motion by Atlas-Ingebretson, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute an amendment to the Master Utility Agreement (MUA) with Sprint to add \$2,875,000 for reimbursement of costs, for a new total not to exceed amount of \$3,025,000, associated with relocation of utilities that conflict with the Southwest LRT Project.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

5. **2019-268:** Amendment to Mall of America Transit Station Renovation Project, Contract 15P121

Metro Transit Principal Engineer Derek Berube presented this item. Several Council members expressed their excitement for this new station and desire to attend the grand opening. Berube confirmed invites to the Grand Opening will be sent to Council members. Atlas-Ingebretson asked what accessibility improvements were made. Berube answered that there is one new elevator that will lead directly into the first floor of the mall, while the two existing elevators will be refurbished and will be operational for customers to get to the existing parking level. Berube added that staff worked with the TAAC when the project was going through the design phase.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes an amendment to the design contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates in the amount of \$184,241 for a new total not to exceed amount of \$2,669,076. This contract amendment will provide additional design and construction support services of the new Transit Station at the Mall of America in Bloomington, MN.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

6. **2019-288:** Gold Line BRT Ramsey and Washington Counties Capital Grant Agreement for 2020 & 2021

Metro Transit Gold Line Project Manager Chris Beckwith presented this item. Gonzalez congratulated staff on their hard work and stated that Washington County is very excited about this project.

Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Sterner:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a METRO Gold line Bus Rapid Transit (Gold Line) Capital Grant Agreement with the Ramsey and Washington Counties' Joint Powers Board in the total amount not to exceed \$75,000,000.00 for calendar years 2020 & 2021.

Motion carried.

7. **2019-312:** Authorization to Negotiate an Amendment to the Snelling Ground Lease
Metro Transit Transit Oriented Development Director Lucy Galbraith presented this item. Chamblis asked if 99-year leases are common and what the advantages would be. Galbraith responded that the original lease was for 50 years, as there are very few 50-year-old stadiums. Galbraith continued that a longer lease term offers more security in terms of financing for developments and that 99-year leases are common in residential developments. Galbraith added that this discussion will be part of the negotiations and the Council has engaged a real estate advisor. Barber wanted confirmation that any amendments will come back to the Council for approval, to which Galbraith confirmed that is correct. Atlas-Ingebretson asked if there was any housing slated for this parcel. Galbraith replied that the Council did not specify what type of development would be on this parcel. Atlas-Ingebretson followed up that when the Council owns land that is available, consideration should be given as to how we can achieve the Council goals of affordable housing. Sterner asked what the liability would be with a 99-year lease. Galbraith stated the Council's risk management group is engaged and the Council wouldn't have any liability generated by the development and would not be responsible for any taxes or assessment fees.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Sterner:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator or her delegate(s) to negotiate one or more amendment(s) to the Net Ground Lease for 400 Snelling Avenue North with the City of St. Paul to accommodate its current or future tenant(s), with provisions that advance the Council's TOD Policy and comply with all applicable state and federal laws, regulations and rules.

Motion carried. Hearing no objection, Chair Barber stated this item could proceed as Consent to Council.

INFORMATION

1. December Service Changes and Operator Staffing Update

Metro Transit Service Development Director Adam Harrington and Metro Transit Deputy Chief Operations – Bus Brian Funk presented this item. Atlas-Ingebretson requested that information be provided in regard to attrition and the breakdown of reasons operators are leaving. Cummings asked how Metro Transit's pay and benefits compare to school bus operators. Funk answered that he didn't have the market research with comparison to school bus operators but that Metro Transit's benefits are tough to beat – health plan, pensions, deferred comp. Cummings wondered if we have lost some operators who want to go to the companies that are offering \$7k sign on bonuses. Funk replied that yes, some but that typically staff who are at Metro Transit for 6 months and longer are part of the culture and want to stay. Atlas-Ingebretson asked what opportunities we have to change practice for people who transfer in, to get benefits in the beginning. Funk responded that the biggest issue would be through the labor agreement – which has seniority laid out – but staff has been working with the union to find a quicker way for operators to move full-time (from part-time). Sterner asked why there is a such a high number of applications and only a small percentage of those being hired. Funk answered that there are various reasons: part of the total of applications are duplicates, people who select out, people who can't get a CDL or people who can't pass a physical or drug test. Funk continued that staff are looking at each of these areas to see what/if any outreach could be done. Chair Barber asked how missed service is communicated out to the customers. Funk replied that Metro Transit has a subscription service (Rider Alerts) that customers can sign up to receive an e-mail or text for specific routes. Funk continued that TCC staff would push these alerts out through the system, but that staff try their best to fill service right to the last minute which can create an issue when a notification is sent late. Funk committed to coming back to the Transportation Committee with a presentation as it relates to Rider Alerts. Chair Barber asked that Council members be invited to the *1 Day Hiring Event and Apprenticeship Graduation*.

2. B Line Update

Metro Transit Arterial BRT Manager Katie Roth introduced Metro Transit Senior Planner Adam Smith who presented this item. Chamblis asked that if it's found there is a pattern of customers using BRT line versus local bus service, could the local bus services move elsewhere. Metro Transit Service Development Director Adam Harrington confirmed that this is something staff look at. Gonzalez asked that staff keep issues of safety in mind. Smith replied that safety is certainly considered when station/platform locations and designs are created. Atlas-Ingebretson asked if there were efforts to engage high school students as there are schools along this route. Smith responded that staff is looking to do outreach at both high schools and higher education schools that are in the corridor and have already had an open house at South.

3. The Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Heidi Schallberg presented this item. Chamblis asked if the information about primary services barriers and limited awareness could be packaged to our elected officials. Metropolitan Transportation Service Director Nick Thompson replied that there are a lot of opportunities, including non-profits that this plan will bring together and can use that to build information. Chair Barber stated the TAAC has geographic representation and are great resources to get information back to. Atlas-Ingebretson asked that when we host public hearings offsite, that staff work to ensure the space is more accessible. Thompson responded that while TAAC was originally designed more for Metro Mobility, it has become much broader on information that is brought to them for decisions/suggestions. Chair Barber stated we could pose the questions to the TAAC on locations that would be ideal for future public outreach events. Gonzalez asked if the final report will propose solutions and the costs associated with those. Schallberg responded that there are not costs associated to solutions as this plan is broader and would be used by cities, regions, etc. where a solution's cost would vary but that the plan does identify solutions to tangible problems.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:01p.m.

Becky Davidson
Recording Secretary