

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

November 9, 2020

LOCATION: Due to COVID-19 this meeting was held electronically.

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Reva Chamblis, Molly Cummings, Christopher Ferguson, Kris Fredson, Phillip Sterner, Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent: Francisco Gonzalez

TAAC Liaison Present: David Fenley

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Barber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:01p.m. on Monday, November 9, 2020.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Zeran to approve the minutes of the October 26, 2020 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

TAAC REPORT

David Fenley reported that at the November 4th meeting TAAC received an update on the SWLRT project. Fenley expressed gratitude for the work that staff is doing and appreciation for their engagement, listening and implementation of many items that have been suggested by TAAC members and that this should be an example on engagement for other projects at the Metropolitan Council. Fenley asked Council members to inform him if there are items they'd like to hear about – in addition to a TAAC meeting report. Cummings thanked Fenley for his reports and stated how TAAC input on all projects is extremely important.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee

The Committee heard presentations today from the Metropolitan Council's office updating the committee about the law and status of the Metropolitan Council as the region's MPO. This was a follow-up to clarify some issues that were raised by presenters in last meeting. The presentation documented the legislative history and official status reviews that do show the Metropolitan Council as MPO. The committee had requested a presentation about the differences between the Metro Mobility Service and similar service in greater MN. Metro Mobility is 10x the size (budget and ridership) and has significant differences, in part because of state law. The committee members then each offered their individual positions and they

reviewed the questions the committee was asked to make, in terms of official make-up, responsibilities, and transit governance.

Chair Barber asked how the changes the committee is discussing compare to those of the Metro Mobility Task Force. Thompson responded the committee's focus has been slightly different and mainly focused on budgeting and comparing how the state's requirements (which are in addition to federal) add to the budget. Thompson added that there was nothing contradictory to the Metro Mobility Task Force.

COVID update

After several weeks of no positive tests, there were 4 positives last week among our drivers. This is not surprising considering trends in Minnesota of late.

Zeran asked about the process when an employee has tested positive for COVID. Thompson responded that with contractors we would do contract tracing, following CDC and MDH guidelines in regard to how far back we need to review videos to examine interactions and will notify customer(s) if needed. Thompson added there are protocols around cleaning (including between customer trips) and minimizing close proximity of customers on bus. Zeran questioned how we can assure customers that there is no risk using transit. Thompson said the Council is not doing a study, but we are monitoring other studies and sharing information across a network of transit agencies at a national level. Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra added that Transit's process is similar and involves lots of detailed steps in regard to contract tracing, quarantine, cleaning, etc. Kooistra added that there are studies showing COVID isn't widely spread on the bus but also why we have been using the message about using transit only as necessary. Chair Barber asked that the articles regarding COVID transmission on transit be sent out to the Committee members.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

COVID Update

A total of 166 employees tested positive for COVID from the start of the pandemic through yesterday (Sunday, 11/8). October was the highest month with 53 cases. Before October, August was the highest month with 27 cases. Since the last Transportation Committee meeting on October 26 (through Sunday, 11/8), there has been an additional 19 cases. 5 of these days are in October and thus the 19 cases is not on top of the 53 October cases.

- Those 19 cases by location are:
 - Big Lake – 1
 - East Metro Garage – 4
 - Green Line – 1
 - Heywood Garage – 3
 - Heywood Office – 2
 - MTPD – 1
 - Nicollet Garage – 1
 - Overhaul Base – 2
 - Ruter Garage – 2
 - South Garage – 1
 - Transfer Road – 1

Mask Compliance

Metro Transit started encouraging customers to wear facial coverings in April and started requiring facial coverings in May. As we are seeing across Minnesota cases continue to rise and Metro Transit is continuously working to make sure decisions are based on the latest public health guidance. The Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention advises that riders and employees wear masks in public transportation settings. While most riders and employees are complying with Governor Walz's

executive order requiring masks in public spaces, it's important to continue to employ new ways to further improve compliance. Survey on buses has shown an 85 - 87% compliance but when MTPD looked at videos on light rail it showed only 60% compliance. Metro Transit is taking additional steps to remind everyone that masks must be worn inside public indoor spaces, including our work sites, buses and trains with refreshed communications. In addition to new messages on vehicles and at busy boarding areas, MTPD will spend time on bus and rail routes, thanking those wearing masks and providing education and masks for those who don't have them. People who repeatedly disregard the state's mask requirement may be asked to leave the bus or train. Inside our workspaces, managers and supervisors are also being asked to regularly remind and require staff to wear masks.

Ridership

System ridership is down 66% total compared to pre-pandemic ridership:

Bus - down 65%

Blue Line- down 69%

Green Line - down 65%

Northstar – down 95%

David Fenley asked if there is any consideration yet to start requiring all riders to wear masks, noting it's a sticky situation but people are claiming disability in order to not wear masks. Kooistra said the policy is align with the Governor's mandate and exceptions but will take that question to the Incident Command structure.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

1. There were no consent items on the agenda.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2020-287:** Adopt 2020 Update of the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan* and Accept Public Comment Report

Metropolitan Transportation Services Planning & Finance Deputy Director Amy Vennewitz presented this item. Chamblis expressed gratitude for the comprehensive TPP and the ongoing studies on how we provide transportation services and how those results can provide more equity throughout the system. Fredson asked about the industrial mapping tool. Vennewitz stated this will be led by the Community Development division but that three years ago staff mapped available industrial land and the possibilities of freight/rail. Vennewitz continued that we'd want to keep that interactive tool up to date – asking cities and counties to help edit data as land gets developed for freight/rail and making the tool available to our partners to identify parcels that have good access to rail/freight. Chair Barber thanked Vennewitz and staff for their work on this.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Sterner:

That the Metropolitan Council:

- Accept the Public Comment Report on the 2020 Update to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*, and
- Adopt the revised final 2020 update to the *2040 Transportation Policy Plan*.

Motion carried.

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

2. **2020-277:** SWLRT (Green Line Extension) Civil Construction Changer Order – Earthwork for a Corridor Protection Barrier

Metro Transit SWLRT Project Director Jim Alexander presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Zeran:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator through the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Council Authorized Representative to negotiate and execute a change order for Contract 15P307A with Lunda McCrossan Joint Venture (LMJV) in an amount not to exceed \$10,045,134.47 for earthwork related to the construction of a Corridor Protection Barrier.

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

3. **2020-290:** TransitMaster Sole Source Equipment and Software Maintenance and Support Services 20P218

Metropolitan Council IS Finance and Budget Assistant Director Theresa Nistler presented this item. Chamblis asked if given our current financial constraints is this was the right time to move this item forward. Nistler responded that this application is critical to the day to day operational support of the overall transit delivery of services to our customers and is the real-time interaction between our fleet and our Transit Control Center (TCC).

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator to award, negotiation and execution of sole source contract with Trapeze Software Group Inc. not to exceed \$10,341,807 for ongoing support and maintenance services for the TransitMaster transportation system.

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

4. **2020-291:** Ubisense Sole Source Software Maintenance and Support Agreement 20P296

Metropolitan Council IS Finance and Budget Assistant Director Theresa Nistler presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Zeran, seconded by Sterner:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award, negotiation and execution of sole source contract with Ubisense America LLC not to exceed \$682,285 for ongoing support and maintenance services for the Ubisense Smart Space propriety software platform.

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber
 Nay: 0
 Absent: 1 Gonzalez

5. **2020-292:** 2021 Operating Grant Applications to the Funding Transitway Counties
 Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Zeran:
 That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to apply for calendar 2021 grants from the counties of Anoka, Hennepin, Dakota and Ramsey.

Operating (Base and Non-Annual Share)

- METRO Blue Line LRT Est. \$14.4M
 - Hennepin County - Est. \$14.4M
- METRO Green Line LRT Est. \$14.0M
 - Hennepin County – Est. \$8.4M
 - Ramsey County – Est. \$5.6M
- Northstar Commuter Rail Est. \$3.8M
 - Anoka County – Est. \$3.1M
 - Hennepin County – Est. \$0.7M
- METRO Orange Line BRT Est. \$250K
 - Hennepin County – Est. \$200K
 - Dakota County – Est. \$50K

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber
 Nay: 0
 Absent: 1 Gonzalez

6. **2020-294:** Northstar and Sherburne County 2021 Subordinate Funding Agreement
 Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Zeran, seconded by Fredson:
 That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate a Subordinate Funding Agreement with the Sherburne County Regional Railroad Authority for subsidy funding of Northstar Commuter Rail 2021 operations.

Operating

- Northstar Commuter Rail \$0.7M

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

7. **2020-304 JT:** 2020 Budget Amendment – November Capital Budget Amendment
Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the 2020 Unified Budget as indicated and in accordance with the attached tables and transfers ownership of METRO Red Line fixed assets from Metropolitan Transportation Services to Metro Transit.

Motion carried.

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

8. **2020-305 JT:** 2020 December Operating Budget Amendment
Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Zeran, seconded by Sterner:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the 2020 Unified Budget as indicated and in accordance with the attached tables.

Motion carried.

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gonzalez

INFORMATION

1. Metro Transit Technician (MTT) Update

Metropolitan Council Workforce Development Senior Manager Aaron Koski and Metro Transit Bus Maintenance Director Matt Dake presented this item. Chamblis commented how inspirational it is that the program has had such an impact on the lives of participants and asked if there were certain things that were done differently to attribute to the success of recruiting and graduating more female students. Koski answered that it was a commitment from the start to ensure there was a representative pool of applications and staff was able to build on trust and partnerships with value organizations. Dake added that there wasn't anything that stood out but there was focus on open communication and honest feedback with students to be able to allow them to improve. Cummings thanked staff for their creativity and innovation to put this program together and hoped that this model could be used by other

departments. Zeran asked if ATU was a part of molding the program. Koski responded that ATU was an essential partner in the creation and development of the program. Dake added that ATU helped make this a success and was at the table to help with evaluations and problem solving.

2. Regional Solicitation Funding Scenarios

Metropolitan Transportation Services Transportation Planning Manager Steve Peterson presented this item. Chamblis asked for what items were discussed or debate most among TAB members. Peterson responded that the main topics were geographic balance and roadway projects and the fact that some applications have strong multimodal projects. Chair Barber added that there was a lot of thought and work put forward by the big workgroup to outline priorities, so this will help TAB align projects back to priorities.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:58p.m.

Becky Davidson
Recording Secretary