

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

April 12, 2021

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

Committee Members Absent: Francisco Gonzalez, Raymond Zeran

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 4:01 p.m. on Monday, April 12, 2021.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Fredson to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2021 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Zeran

TAAC REPORT

Fenley reported on new routes and input the disability community will be able to give on them.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Metro Mobility

Last week we sent out our quarterly newsletter to Metro Mobility Customers. In this newsletter we announced two important changes. First was the availability of on-line booking of trips by customers or care givers. This ability to book a trip without having to make a call has been our and customers top priority for a long time. After a successful pilot, with members of TAAC and the customer base, we felt it was ready for all customers. It will be a major improvement that will save significant time in trip setting and reduce call volume. So far, we are seeing very strong customer response to this in just the first few days of availability. The second major update is we let customers know we will be returning to shared rides on May 1st. Since the beginning of COVID we have had now shared rides, which for customers meant more direct trips. But now that demand is growing, and we feel we can safely provide the service, we are moving to rides with up to two passengers. For service, Metro Mobility ridership is now at about 60% of pre-covid levels, and Health Care essential worker trips are at about 50% of peak levels. Along with Metro Transit, we will be offering free rides to Metro Mobility customers who are signed up to receive the COVID vaccine at the new Mn State Fair FEMA vaccine that opens this week.

We are also adding a contracted shuttle bus to the state fair site to give rides from the nearest bus stop (A line and Route 84) to and from the vaccine stop to improve the convenience of getting the vaccine. We are working with Metro Counties to provide on-request service for groups of individuals who need transportation to vaccine sites. So far these requests, which are a few per week, are for transportation to and from senior living facilities. Lastly, we are adjusting the Metro Mobility service to respond to curfews that were issued this afternoon. We are not providing same day requests after 7 PM and confirming with all book rides that they meet criteria for essential work or other trips per the curfew restrictions.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

COVID Update

Metro Transit has had a total of 401 employees who have tested positive for COVID since the start of the pandemic. Since the last Transportation Committee meeting on March 22, we've had seven employees test positive for COVID. And we are not experiencing any operational impacts due to employees having COVID or needing to quarantine.

Vehicle Capacity

On March 25, we met with Minnesota Department of Health to discuss the capacity limits on vehicles and our "essential trips only" messaging. Based on current health guidance, MDH supported us increasing capacity on vehicles to approximately 50% of vehicle capacity. Previously we were at approximately 25% of vehicle capacity. We increased capacity last Monday, April 7.

- 40 foot buses can carry up to 20 passengers
- 60 foot buses can carry up to 30 passengers
- LRV cars can carry up to 33 passengers

As part of this change, though, MDH also emphasized the importance of continued mask wearing and social distancing onboard vehicles. In line with the Governor's turning of the dial, we have shifted away from the message that transit is for essential trips only. Instead, we are reminding riders to travel responsibly. These changes are important for us to accommodate the potential for increased ridership during this stage in the pandemic. Efforts to vaccinate our employees. We continue to encourage Metro Transit employees to get vaccinated, and we continue to connect them with opportunities to do so.

Planning continues for possible on-site clinics during the week of April 19 to help employees who have not already been vaccinated. We are also partnering with Minnesota Department of Health to connect more people in our community with vaccines. The pilot mobile vaccination bus is ready for the first test runs this week with MDH and Blue Cross/Blue Shield staff. The clinics will be in the metro and aim to help residents currently experiencing homelessness access vaccines. Additionally, Metro Transit and MTS have been helping with the transportation planning for the new State of Minnesota & FEMA mass vaccination site on Como Avenue across from the Fairgrounds Coliseum. The site is served directly by local bus route 3 and A Line is about 4 blocks to the east. Metro Transit is finalizing an agreement with the State to provide free downloadable passes to people who register for appointments at the site. The state fair clinic launches on Wednesday, April 14.

Trial Update

Finally, I want to provide an update on the Chauvin trial and our participation in Operation Safety Net. The Chauvin Trial is moving into Week 3, and there have been no significant impacts to service from the trial. However, on Sunday, Daunte Wright was fatally shot by law enforcement in Brooklyn Center. The resulting demonstrations caused Metro Transit buses to detour in several areas of Brooklyn Center and service from the Brooklyn Center Transit Center was relocated starting at about 10 PM. We restarted service at BCTC this morning. MTPD responded to the Operation Safety Net Multi-agency command center as multiple agencies responded to assist Brooklyn Center PD and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

There were no items on the consent agenda.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2021-66:** Amendment for Contract of Leased Spaced for the St. Paul Transit Service Center Metro Transit Revenue Collection Senior Manager Nick Eull and Revenue Operations Supervisor Kevin Davis presented this item.

Sterner asked about revenue. Davis said 2020 was about 29% of what 2019 saw.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute the 6th amendment to continue CAA-13P075 with US Bank Center LLC for a 3-year lease extension of skyway-level storefront space at 505 E 5th Street, St. Paul MN 55144 in an amount not to exceed \$97,100, to include rent and supplementary cleaning and maintenance costs. The total cost with this amendment exceeds \$500,000 over the life of the lease.

Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Zeran

2. **2021-80:** Purchase Farebox Transfer Tickets

Metro Transit Revenue Operations Manager Dennis Dworshak and Revenue Collection Supervisor Abdul Ahmed presented this item.

Cummings asked about the discrepancies between the two bids. Dworshak said the number of contracts per vendor, profit margin, and material cost varies widely these days. Chamblis mentioned that there would be more costs for an organization who had not done this before. Contracts and Procurement Director Jody Jacoby said that bid security is part of a responsiveness check.

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute contract 20P305 with Electronic Data Magnetics, Inc., to supply transfer tickets for use by Metro Transit customers in an amount not to exceed \$568,620.

Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Zeran

3. **2021-81:** Robbinsdale Transit Center Lease Agreement #201088

Metro Transit Real Estate and Asset Program Manager Claudius Toussaint presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from Council Members.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Sterner:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a lease agreement (Council #20I088) with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority for the Robbinsdale Transit Center in the amount of \$688,857.12.

Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Zeran

4. **2021-85 SW:** METRO D Line – Station Shelter Contract Award

Metro Transit BRT Project Manager Shahin Khazrajafari presented this item.

Chamblis asked about the enhanced bus stop amenities for Hennepin Avenue. BRT Projects Assistant Director Katie Roth said these stops are being upgraded through coordination with the City of Minneapolis, with a lot of the same features as BRT until they are upgraded to BRT.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute contract 19P385B with Duo-Gard Industries, Inc. for the fabrication and delivery of station shelters for bus rapid transit (BRT) and enhanced bus stops at a cost not to exceed \$2,225,987, with options for future purchases. A same week Council action is requested to ensure timely fabrication and delivery of the shelters for the D Line construction in 2021.

Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Sterner, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Zeran

INFORMATION

1. Shared Mobility Program and Pilot Update

Metro Transit Shared Mobility Program Manager Meredith Klekotka presented this item.

Sterner asked about partnerships. Klekotka said she hasn't received outreach from Dakota or Anoka but they are quite welcome to join. Sterner asked about personal and property safety. Klekotka said there will be cameras like regular transit vehicles. Chamblis asked about a place for water or refreshments. Klekotka said there is an importance for the social spaces to be active spaces. Chamblis asked about vehicle availability and fund transferring. Klekotka said the app won't collect money but there will be an on-board farebox or they will show their electronic ticket. Barber said this is a great opportunity to help get people where they need to be.

2. Regional Solicitation - Unique Projects Development Process

Metropolitan Council Multimodal Planning Manager Cole Hiniker presented this item.

Cummings asked for information about project funding. Hiniker said there haven't been enough projects funded to have a framework, in the past applicants have been asked for their own framework. Hiniker said there are 9-10 metrics for every category as projects are evaluated. Sterner asked about studies around technology, laws, etc. regarding driverless vehicles. Chamblis voiced her support. Ferguson brought up policy choices. Chamblis asked about the funding. Hiniker said there is a limited amount of money and TAB set aside the amount identified solely for unique projects but if there is not a project they want to fund they will not fund it. Chamblis stated the importance of being intentional with the use

of dollars. Fredson said it will be important to decide which objective to focus on, and to consider multi-county/city support.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Jenna Ernst
Recording Secretary