

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

May 24, 2021

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

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

Committee Members Absent: Christopher Ferguson, Francisco Gonzalez

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 4:02 p.m. on Monday, May 24, 2021.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Cummings to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2021 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 5 Chamblis, Cummings, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez

TAB REPORT

Dugan reported on the Unique Projects workgroup. Dugan also shared agency reports.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Metro Mobility

The downtown Minneapolis Farmers market is beginning, and this will close Nicollet Mall on Thursdays. This will impact some Metro Mobility trips and require changes for customers who have drop off or pick-ups on Nicollet Mall, which is a popular destination. We will be notifying customers in advance and working with customers to reschedule or modify their trips if it is impacted. Metro Mobility and Transit Link were moved to shared ride services on May 1st but with limits of capacity to 2 persons. Those limits will be removed on Friday May 28th. We do not expect much change to the operation though because the normal trip averages 2 passengers.

RBTN

We are undergoing an update to the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network. (RBTN) Cities, Counties, and Regional Parks Agencies have until Friday to submit their requested changes to the network. Changes can include new alignments or new routes. This is the first major opportunity to add to this network in several years. Routes that are on the RBTN are eligible for funding from the regional solicitations.

COVID

The Contractor workforce had 1 positive occurrence of COVID since we last met, and a total of 155 since the beginning. This 1 positive is the only positive in the past 4 weeks. For service, we are now seeing strong return of ridership to the Transit Link service. This service had plateaued for several month at 50% of pre-covid levels, but in the past two weeks ridership has jumped 65% of normal and now has caught up to the Metro Mobility trend.

Cummings asked about Nicollet Mall. Thompson said the Council is consulted in the decision-making process.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

COVID Cases at Metro Transit

Metro Transit has had a total of 438 employees who have tested positive for COVID since the start of the pandemic. Since the last Transportation Committee meeting on May 10, we’ve had 14 employees test positive for COVID. And we are not experiencing any operational impacts due to employees having COVID or needing to quarantine.

Lifting capacity limits on vehicles

As the Governor’s COVID restrictions loosen on Friday, Metro Transit will end capacity limits on vehicles this Friday. As mentioned at the last Transportation Committee meeting, the federal government has extended the mask mandate on transit through September 13, 2021. Metro Transit continues to make masks available to customers through our operators, supervisors, and transit police officers. Mask compliance checks last week showed over 90% compliance on buses and trains. Daily vehicle disinfecting will also continue. We are hiring bus operators again as we prepare to restore more service. Our first class of new bus operators in more than a year started on May 17. The first class of 6 are also the first operators to start with full-time status in recent memory. New hires are eligible for a \$1000 hiring bonus and current employees who make referrals can earn \$600 referral bonuses.

Mobile vaccination units

Metro Transit’s mobile vaccination unit partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health continues to bring vaccination opportunities to people across Minnesota. Last week’s vaccination bus trip to Todd County was featured in a New York Times article on innovative ways that different organizations are getting the vaccine to people in need. This week, we have 25 different clinics scheduled across the metro.

C Line Chargers Update

When we get to the electric bus master contracts business item later in the meeting, Carrie Desmond will also provide a status update on our C Line electric bus chargers as well as other steps we’ve taken since our March Committee of the Whole presentation to continue our electric bus efforts.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

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

Aye: 5 Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner

- 1. **2021-124 SW:** 2021-2024 TIP Amendments: Four MnDOT TIP Amendments

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2021-2024 TIP to amend three projects (#1-3) and add one project (#4), all sponsored by MnDOT:

1. Add a bridge to, and expand the scope of, MnDOT's MN 55 bridge rehabilitation project (SP # 1909-99);
2. Add a bridge to, and expand the scope of, MnDOT's MN 55 bridge re-decking project (SP # 2724-124);
3. Add the removal of a free right turn to MnDOT's I-694 / Silver Lake Road ramp signal replacement project (SP # 6285-160); and
4. add a traffic management system project on MN 610 (SP # 2771-177).

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2021-129 SW:** Master Contracts for Electric Bus Services – Contract 20P262
Metro Transit Principal Engineer Carrie Desmond presented this item.

Cummings asked about the DBE percentages. Desmond said this is a step to expand exposure to the DBE community.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute four master contracts for electric bus and charging infrastructure services to support Metro Transit Engineering & Facilities. A same week Council action is requested to ensure the timely development of a transition plan.

Contract 20P262A - Design Services – HDR Engineering, Inc. - \$550,000

Contract 20P262B - Construction Support – HDR Engineering, Inc. - \$400,000

Contract 20P262C - Commissioning Services – Stanley Consultants, Inc. - \$450,000

Contract 20P262D - Program Management – AECOM - \$700,000

Motion carried.

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

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Ferguson, Gonzalez

2. **2021-125:** Small Bus Procurement

Metropolitan Transportation Services Fleet Services Manager Paul Colton presented this item.

Cummings asked about the options for the vehicles being replaced. Colton said as vehicles are decommissioned the Council contacts a list of agencies who are interested in the vehicles, other vehicles are auctioned off.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Zeran:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute purchase agreements, with:

1. North Central Bus Sales (MnDOT Contract 192553) for up to 107 replacement buses and 36 expansion buses in an amount not to exceed \$12,259,000: and

2. Hoglund Bus (MnDOT Contract 192552) for up to 74 replacement buses and 25 expansion buses in an amount not to exceed \$8,722,500.

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

Aye: 5 Cummings, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Chamblis, Ferguson, Gonzalez

INFORMATION

1. Brooklyn Center Transit Center Updates

Metro Transit Principal Project Coordinator Alicia Vap presented this item.

Cummings asked when Council Members can attend in person. Council Members voiced appreciation for staff work on this project.

2. Pedestrian Safety Overview

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Heidi Schallberg presented this item.

Chamblis said she would like to see the disaggregated data. Chamblis also asked for information breaking down age groups.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Jenna Ernst
Recording Secretary