

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

November 23, 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, Francisco Gonzalez, Phillip Sterner, Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent:

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 4:01p.m. on Monday, November 23, 2020.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Gonzalez to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2020 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 8 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran, Barber
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

TAB REPORT

Peter Dugan relayed the following from the November 18, 2020 meeting:

At the December 9th Council meeting, Council members will hear a full report from Metro Transit regarding the Arterial BRT study. This study is an outreach by Metro Transit on the potential 11 ABRT routes, to be paired down to 10 and then prioritized.

Great progress was made on Regional Solicitation at the November meeting; December meeting will be final approval. There was a total of 6 funding scenarios, which TAB dwindled to 2 and then chosen a final 1 scenario last week. The final 2 scenarios were the historical model and Hybrid 1B – which was the chosen scenario. The Hybrid 1B model has the advantages of funding a project in all counties, mobile balance and funds all pedestrian safe route to school projects. Metro Transit returned \$4.5M from a project from several years ago; TAB had decided to not include that in the current Regional Solicitation but wait until after to determine what to do with that money.

Agency Reports:

MPCA: Using \$170K from the VW settlement to add 22 Level 2 charging stations. Level 2 stations have enhanced capacity for mobile application and networking.

MnDOT: Scott Peterson retiring. Representative also cautioned TAB on relying on MnDOT for funding larger strategic capacity projects. MnDOT projects only \$10M per year in ability to fund those projects.

MAC: MSP was named the best airport in America for the 4th consecutive year in the 24 – 40M passenger class. MSP also received the Director General Award for service, quality and customer satisfaction. COVID testing site is now open in the Blue Ramp, Level 2 – which is free to all Minnesotans, and has a capacity of 1,000 tests a day. Total flights are

down 68%; TSA predicts 6.9M passengers to use airport during Thanksgiving holiday, compared to 12 – 15M in years past.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee

The Committee today discussed a draft report based on the presentations, discussions, and recommendations that have come forward. The draft report was the entire focus of the meeting and several changes and points were added. The timeline is that the Committee will receive a new draft to comment on early next week and it will be finalized next Friday for their last meeting on December 5th.

Legislative Committee on Metropolitan Government

Today there was a hearing that covered Met Council Budget, Administrative Citations, and the Red Line. This committee typically meets in advance of the Council adopting the budget. The Red Line is on schedule to switch from and MTS division function to Metro Transit on December 5th and the committee asked for information. There were no actions taken today by this committee.

COVID Update

After several weeks of no positive tests, there were 6 positives last week among our drivers, prior report to this committee had noted 4 positives. To date there has been 75 positive tests among contracted staff and now 62 have returned to work. MTS is working to increase testing of the employees to try and find more asymptomatic staff to help slow the spread.

Metro Mobility

Ridership is still about what it has been for the past month, though it's expected to see some declines with the holidays and the rapid rise in COVID cases. Last week, 20% of the rides given were for essential Health Care workers, reaching a new high for a week.

Chamblis asked what the temperature of the Blue Ribbon Committee meeting was. Thompson stated the committee summarized that the report will be evolutionary, not revolutionary and don't think Council members should be elected but there will be recommendations around the appointing committees. Chamblis asked when the new electronic signs along Marquette Ave would be running. Metro Transit Customer Service and Marketing Director Bruce Howard stated later in the meeting that the signs should be operational in the next couple weeks.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government

Earlier today, the Metropolitan Council presented at the Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government. Staff walked through the proposed 2021 budget and Kooistra provided a brief update on transit security and the administrative citations for fare evasion proposal. It was shared that while key indicators of crimes and other problematic behavior are lower than pre-pandemic – including fewer Text for Safety Conversation, Calls for Service, Part 1 Crimes, and Operator Assaults – it's not interpreted that this is a trend, given that ridership is down over 60% during the pandemic. An update was provided on the status of security improvements that have been made in recent months including installing real-time cameras on light rail vehicles (cameras are installed in about 60 light rail vehicles; there are 91 LRVs total, over 65% towards full implementation). Additionally, MTPD officers are about 10 weeks into using body-worn cameras. Together, both real-time cameras and body-worn cameras have been instrumental in supporting MTPD's work, including the identification of suspects.

COVID Update

A total of 230 employees tested positive for COVID from the start of the pandemic through this weekend. Since the last Transportation Committee meeting on November 9, there has been an additional 65 cases. Prior to November, October was the highest month of cases, with 53 cases total. Before October, August was the highest month with 27 cases.

Ridership

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

Bus - down 65%

Blue Line- down 69%

Green Line - down 65%

December Pick

Minor schedule and route changes will go into effect on Saturday, December 5. Bus and rail service levels remain about 15% below where they were pre-pandemic. Metro Transit provided nearly 2.5 million rides in October, about 65% less than the same month last year. The next round of scheduled service changes will take effect on Saturday, March 13, 2021.

Cummings asked how the light rail vehicles cameras are being allocating between Blue and Green line. Kooistra responded that the installation isn't being specially allocated as vehicles can move from line to line. Kooistra added that hopefully all cameras will be complete by end of December/early January; work is a bit delayed due to other pandemic work. Cummings stated she's been asked by constituents about operator's not wearing masks and asked about mask compliance. Metro Transit Deputy Chief Operating Officer-Bus Brian Funk replied that staff has been doing observations in the field and the numbers show close to 90% mask compliance among operators. Funk continued that a mask isn't required when there is nobody else on board and that within the Executive Order there is a little flexibility for safety consideration, so staff also track whether or not an operator is wearing glasses; the Executive Order also allows for industry specific allowance for what might constitute as an enclosed workspace, so the Plexiglas partitions could function in that manner but as a last resort. Funk added face shields are available should there need to be contact outside of the workspace and customer compliance is about 75-80%, which Metro Transit is aiming for 95%.

Sterner asked how often the filtration systems on bus get changed out. Funk responded we have investigated with the vehicle manufactures on the levels of filtrations we are able to provide and assuring we are engaging in best practices but didn't have the preventative maintenance schedule on hand but would get back to Sterner. Funk added that Metro Transit has invested in a pilot program to evaluate a hydroperoxide dispensing unit that actively disinfects the air circulating through vehicle, with levels that are safe based on OSHA levels for continuous exposure and staff is currently field testing gaining experience.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

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

Aye: 8 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

1. 2020-261: Approval of Metropolitan Area 5310 Grant Awards

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve the following:

Metropolitan Area Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA 5310) grant awards for 2021:

Organization	Project	Federal Award Amount
Anoka County	Transportation Coordination Assistance Project	\$120,000.00

Metropolitan Area Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA 5310) grant awards for 2022:

Organization	Project	Federal Award Amount
Lifeworks Services, Inc.	1 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$74,400.00
Midwest Special Services, Inc.	2 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$148,800.00
Newtrax, Inc.	6 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$446,400.00
	2 (Class 400) Vehicle Expansion	\$148,800.00
Pro-Act, Inc. - Eagan	1 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$74,400.00
Rise, Inc.	2 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$148,800.00
TOTAL		\$1,041,600.00

Metropolitan Area Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA 5310) grant awards for 2023:

Organization	Project	Federal Award Amount
Midwest Special Services, Inc.	1 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$76,800.00
	1 (Class 500) Vehicle Replacement	132,000.00
Newtrax, Inc.	6 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$460,800.00
	2 (Class 400) Vehicle Expansion	\$153,600.00
Rise, Inc.	3 (Class 400) Vehicle Replacement	\$230,400.00
TOTAL		\$1,053,600.00

2. 2020-323: 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Administrative Amendment

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council adopt an administrative amendment to the 2020 Unified Planning Work Program budget that more accurately reflects projected end-of-year spending. This action is requested by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

3. 2020-324: 2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Administrative Amendment

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into a sole source contract with Trapeze, Inc. to provide the Council with the replacement of up to 150 Transit Master Systems for MTS fixed route fleet, in an amount not to exceed \$896,757.

Non-Consent Items:

1. 2020-284: Authorization of Public Hearing for Orange Line Connecting Bus Study Concept Plan Metro Transit Route Planning Manager Cyndi Harper and Metro Transit Service Development Director Adam Harrington presented this item. Cummings expressed excitement that this project has restarted as the METRO Orange Line is a critical route to the robust transit system and commented that the pause in the project has provided an opportunity to review goals and resources, and thanked staff for their work. No questions from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize a public hearing to accept comments on proposed service changes outlined in the Orange Line Connecting Bus Study Concept Plan.

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

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

2. **2020-316:** METRO Orange Line- Amended MnDOT Construction Authorization

Metro Transit BRT/Small Starts Director Charles Carlson presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Gonzalez:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes additional expenditure within agreement 171009 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation not to exceed \$7,574,848, for a revised total authorization not to exceed \$54,446,598.

Motion carried.

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

3. **2020-295:** 2021 Operating Grant Agreements with the Funding Transitway Counties

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Fredson to **TABLE** item to future meeting.

Chamblis asked what changes needed to be made to the item. Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie responded that staff is still working with the counties on the final grant agreements and there might be slight adjustments with blue and green line.

Motion carried.

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

4. **2020-310:** Amendment #4 to Intersection LLC, Contract #14R038 – Transit Advertising Sales

Metro Transit Customer Service and Marketing Director Bruce Howard presented this item. Cummings commented that this amendment makes sense as everything trickles down and companies are having issues with resources. Ferguson questioned why we would extend the contract a year, when it really did not provide anything to the Council in return. Howard stated the contract was up in April 2022 and typically staff would be bidding the contract in late summer or early fall of 2021 and the thinking behind the request for a year extension is to allow the economy to improve and prospective vendors to feel more confident about their bids; a competitive bidding process for the contract would then be conducted in 2022. Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra added that this was a judgement call that we might get a more favorable contract and better bids by waiting another year. Cummings asked how many bids would normally be received for this type of contract. Howard responded that typically 3 -6 bids. Ferguson and Zeran questioned why the contract extension is needed right now and why couldn't it wait 6 months. Howard answered that it was included right now for simplicity, since another amendment to the contract was already being requested but that the extension amendment could certainly wait.

Motion by Ferguson, seconded by Zeran to amend the motion to remove the extension amendment:
(2) extend the term of the Intersection contract to April 30, 2023.)

Motion carried.

Aye: 8 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran, Barber
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion by Ferguson, seconded by Zeran to approve the motion as amended:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to:

1) negotiate and execute an amendment to the Intersection LLC., contract based on the attached term sheet that continues to provide relief from the minimum annual guarantee (MAG) payments owed the Council.

Chair Barber asked when the contract extension or re-bidding would be brought back to Committee, to which Howard responded the current contract ends April 2022 so would probably be late summer/early fall 2021.

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

Aye: 8 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran, Barber
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

5. **2020-311:** Gold Line Real Estate Acquisition and Condemnation Authority, Resolution 2020-30
Metro Transit BRT/Small Starts Director Charles Carlson presented this item. Cummings asked if there have been conversations with private properties owners about acquiring their properties. Carlson answered that the action in the business item begins that process with authorization to issue offers. Fredson asked how the thresholds proposed compare to other projects. Carlson responded that there are some differences; the recommended thresholds relate to existing Council policy; previous LRT projects have had authorizations for higher cost thresholds than proposed for Gold Line BRT. Chamblis asked how the scale of 159 properties for purchase or demolition compare to other projects and in terms of the Thrive lens, what does the demographics look like. Carlson answered that of planned acquisitions, the vast majority relate to minor impacts such as small sidewalk reconfigurations. Carlson continued that the project aims to increase the availability of high-frequency rapid transportation in the corridor and while this requires reconstruction, property owners are not expected to share in the financial burden of construction. Carlson added that the community engagement team has been working in the corridor and working with property owners that have larger acquisitions, to keep them up to date on the progress toward purchase offers.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Gonzalez:

That the Metropolitan Council pass Resolution 2020-30 declaring a public purpose and authorizing Council staff to commence acquisition of all temporary and permanent easements and fee acquisitions ("Property") necessary for the METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project and associated locally requested scope; authorize the Regional Administrator to approve expenditures at the appraised or settlement amount of up to \$1 million for any parcel; and authorize the Regional Administrator to initiate condemnation proceedings on behalf of the Council and local agency partners, for parcels that cannot be acquired by direct purchase.

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

Aye: 8 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran, Barber
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

INFORMATION

1. Mobile App Update

Metro Transit Revenue Collections Senior Manager Nick Eull and Metro Transit Senior Marketing Development Specialist Adam Mehl presented this item. Sterner asked if the current vendor is still in play, to which Eull responded that the current vendor (Moovel) is a bidder for the new contract. Chair Barber commented how the app has been such a success and how great it is that staff is working with the regional providers.

2. Metro Transit Mask Compliance Update

Metro Transit Customer Service and Marketing Director Bruce Howard and Metro Transit Chief of Police Eddie Frizell presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:57p.m.

Becky Davidson
Recording Secretary