

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

January 28, 2019

LOCATION: Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Jon Commers, Cara Letofsky, Marie McCarthy, Jennifer Munt, Edward Reynoso, Lona Schreiber

Committee Members Absent: Gail Dorfman

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 4:03 p.m. on Monday, January 28, 2019 in the Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Motion by Munt, seconded by Letofsky to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Commers to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2019 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Employee Recognition – Metro Transit:

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra introduced the following, who presented a recognition award:

Metro Transit Deputy Chief Operating Officer – Rail John Humphrey who presented to Metro Transit Light Rail Operator James Peach.

TAB LIAISON REPORT

Peter Dugan reported the following information from the last TAB meeting:

Various personnel changes at MPCA, on TAB Executive Committee, and TAB. A Program Year Change came before TAB to coordinate construction efforts to minimize impacts. There has been a change in HSIP program funding – reactive projects tend to get 70% of the funding and proactive projects tend to get 30% of the funding. In this funding cycle of about \$23 million, because of the number of proactive applications received, reactive projects will get 56% and proactive projects will get 44%.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Legislation

We made it through the federal shutdown and are hoping things regain normal operations, but will be prepared should it come to another federal shutdown in the next few weeks. Chair Nora Slawik, Governmental Affairs Director Judd Schetnan, Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra, and I presented a broad overview of Council Transit Services last week to the House Finance Committee – the presentation provided an in-depth look at the services, general Council authorities, and plans for the future – it served as a grounding for Legislators as they consider bills this session. Among bills introduced recently are ones that lead to expansion of Metro

Mobility to Lakeville, Data sharing for Metro Mobility with DHS – both of which passed last year but were part of larger bill that was vetoed.

Weather Impacts

This week we had planned with MnDOT a Policy Maker workshop on Connected Automated Vehicles – but with the weather on Wednesday we have decided to cancel. There will be another workshop in March/April timeframe.

Metro Mobility operators have implemented plans for the snow and cold weather to ensure safe operations for customers. On days like today and what is expected the next few days is that many customers cancel their trips unless they must travel. But operators will still be going for those who need safe and reliable service.

Transportation Policy Plan

Comments for the Riverview Amendment closed at 5:00 p.m. on January 21, 2019 with a total of 82 comments received. Once all comments and responses have been compiled it will then come before the Council Members.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

Cold Weather Preparations

Staff will be taking some extra precautions and doing their part to look out for our customers during this week's extreme cold. Staff who work outdoors have been asked to focus on projects that can be done inside. Operators and other staff who interact with customers have also been asked to be on the lookout for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Police continue to do their part to ensure people who need a safe, warm place to stay are directed to appropriate resources. To minimize their exposure, customers are being encouraged to use NexTrip, which provides predicted real-time departure information.

NexTrip via Text

While it might be a little harder to use our fingers this week, a growing number of customers are using text message to receive real-time departure information. More than 3.6 million NexTrip requests were submitted through text message last year – a 75 percent increase from 2017. To use the free service, customers simply text “mt” and their stop number to the number 27299. There were more than 62.4 million NexTrip requests last year. This information is also available through Metro Transit's website and app.

New Shelter Installed at Busy Downtown St. Paul Stop

A new waiting shelter was recently installed outside the old Pioneer Press Building, part of a continued effort to improve waiting facilities in downtown St. Paul. The shelter is located on 5th Street between Cedar and Wabasha. The busy boarding area had been without a shelter because it's located on a hill with a narrow sidewalk. Bus stop improvements were incorporated into the redevelopment of the St. Paul newspaper's former headquarters into nearly 150 apartments for low- and middle-income earners. New and replacement shelters will be installed at six other downtown St. Paul locations through 2022.

Legislation

There was interest from both sides of the aisle in aBRT, especially expanding bus investment.

Commerz said the bus shelter involved multiple divisions of the Council and Marilyn Porter and Berry Farrington and the grade was challenging there with the steep hill and the width of the stop was difficult as well – this will improve the lives of many. Munt said last Thursday Chair Slawik, Reynoso and herself did a count with the homeless on the trains and the hope is to use the count to get the legislature to set aside more money for the homeless to have more shelter beds. Munt said what they observed was a huge rush at about 2:00 a.m. for the homeless to get on the trains and there are people who then take

advantage of the homeless. McCarthy added that this was brought up in the House Committee and the House Committee acknowledged that this needs to be addressed through partnerships. McCarthy agreed that there was a consensus for further aBRT development.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

Motion was made by Munt, seconded by Commers and carried, to approve the following consent items:

1. **2019-16:** Controlled Access Approval: US 212 at County Road 44, Carver County

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve a request by the City of Chaska, Carver County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to add ramps to and from the north at an existing overpass to create a partial interchange on US 212 at County Road 44, subject to further review and approval by the Metropolitan Council if there are any significant changes in the design of the proposed project.

2. **2019-25:** 2019-2022 TIP Amendment: MnDOT Rail Road Signal System Upgrade in Eden Prairie

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to change the description and cost for MnDOT's Valley View Road railroad crossing in Eden Prairie.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2019-1:** METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit – Master Funding Agreements

Metro Transit Gold Line BRT Senior Project Manager Chris Beckwith presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Letofsky, seconded by McCarthy:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (GBRT) Master Funding Agreements with the communities of St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale, and Woodbury, as well as Ramsey County and Washington County.

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

2. **2019-5:** Approval of the Orange Line BRT Small Starts Grant Agreement

Metro Transit BRT/Small Starts Project Manager Christina Morrison presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Letosky:

That the Metropolitan Council approve the METRO Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Small Starts Grant Agreement in the amount of \$74,078,782.

Motion carried.

3. **2019-8 Revised:** Ratification of Emergency Declaration to Increase Txbase Purchase Order 242447

Metro Transit Materials Management Manager Chris Haefner presented this item.

Chair Barber thanked staff for following up on this item.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council ratify the Justification for and Declaration of Emergency to increase purchase order 242447 from Siemens so that Metro Transit can purchase 248 Light Rail Vehicle (LRV) tires instead of 64.

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

4. **2019-26:** Review of Metropolitan Airports Commission 2019-2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Russ Owen presented this item.

McCarthy asked about public interest with this project. Owen said there is a community around the airport who has opposed the project and will speak at tonight's meeting, there has been interest for and against the project. Reynoso asked for clarification if this has been an ongoing conversation the last couple years. Owen said yes, and this was the preferred alternative coming out of the long term comprehensive plan that was reviewed by the Council in 2016 and adopted by the MAC. Owen said the MAC has had multiple meeting with people expressing views both for and against this project. Dave Schultz, supervisor from West Lakeland Township stated that 40 acres were taken by eminent domain so moving 30th Street is based on that and that it is forced annexation. Schultz added that it does not meet MnDOT design standards. Schultz said MAC does not have MnDOT aviation safety zones even though they said this would be added. Schultz commented that surrounding plans have no airport expansion written so West Lakeland Township asks why this MAC plan keeps getting moved forward when it is not in agreement with the surrounding plans. Schultz said there are three other airports within 16 miles that serve the needs of the 12,500 pound category so their understanding is that moving this forward would require legislative action.

Barber let Council Members know that staff and Council Member Melander, whose district this is in, will meet with West Lakeland Township prior to this item going to Council.

Motion by Reynoso seconded by McCarthy:

That the Metropolitan Council:

- 1) Find that the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) had an adequate public participation process for the development and review of its 2019-2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), including preparation of an assessment of environmental effects (AOEE) for 2019 projects with potential environmental effects.
- 2) Approve the Lake Elmo airport runway replacement project since it meets both the funding level and "significant effects" criteria specified in state statute.
- 3) Find that the 2019 CIP projects are in conformance with the region's Aviation System Plan and consistent with Council policy.

Motion carried.

5. **2019-27:** 2018 Regional Solicitation Funding Decision

Metropolitan Transportation Services Highway Planning & TAB/TAC Process Manager Steve Peterson presented this item.

Munt commented that watching TAB's democracy arriving at the Base Plus Scenario was a strong multi-modal solution. TAB Liaison Dugan shared his experience attending the various technical meetings that led up to the funding decision. McCarthy asked for the maps of all of the districts not just her own.

Motion by Munt, seconded by McCarthy:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to include \$200 million in federal funding to 57 projects evaluated through the Regional Solicitation in the Draft Transportation Improvement Program.

Motion carried.

INFORMATION

1. Phase I Re-Thinking I-94 Project

Metropolitan Transportation Services Deputy Director Amy Vennewitz and MnDOT Metro District Rethinking I-94 Project Director Gloria Jeff and Engagement & Strategy Director Brenda Thomas presented this item.

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson said this is a rethinking of not just I-94 but how to do transportation projects as a whole, and it is in-line with the TPP, and Thrive. Thompson added that there is a lot invested in the corridor and it is a different approach than has been seen in the past. Munt said she grew up watching the original I-94 project being built in 1960s, and now a lot of folks have said they think they are going to get lids with this new project, she asked Jeff and Thomas if they have any information about lids. Jeff said there are several proposals that include lids but feasibility studies have not been done yet, there is nothing decided yet as funding sources are being explored as well. Reynoso asked about the long-term impact of freight not being confined to the first two lanes and the impact to the rest of the system like it is done in other areas of the nation. Jeff said that our bridges today 80% are in good or satisfactory condition along this corridor but most of our long-distance trucks are not using this corridor, where they are operating along this corridor there are specific destinations so it is mapped out and will need to have alternatives. Jeff added that platooning is a good thing and is in place today but it is not often seen in place in most urban environments, it is mostly seen in rural environments. McCarthy expressed her appreciation for the engagement process and asked if the Segmentation Survey is unique to the nation or just MnDOT. McCathy asked how many responded to the surveys and for more information on the engagement process. Thomas answered that the Segmentation Survey does not appear to have been used to this degree in other states. Thomas said over a couple thousand were reached and some surveys were online, some were in person, some were landlines, some were cell phones, and demographic targets were hit. Chair Barber asked how this information is being used to build a blueprint for future MnDOT projects. Jeff said the toolkit has already been shared with Ramsey County to use with a project along Rice Street, and it has been shared at the Transportation Research Board and with other organizations.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Jenna Ernst
Recording Secretary