

## Minutes of the

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

September 14, 2020

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

**Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Molly Cummings, Christopher Ferguson, Kris Fredson, Francisco Gonzalez, Raymond Zeran**

**Committee Members Absent: Reva Chamblis, Phillip Sterner**

**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 4:03p.m. on Monday, September 14, 2020.

### AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Gonzalez to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2020 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

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

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Chamblis, Ferguson, Sterner

### TAAC REPORT

David Fenley reported that TAAC members plan on submitting feedback on the Network Next projects. TAAC members are happy with Metro Mobility and how it has adapted services but do still have some concerns with regular route service as it relates to masks and bus capacity. Fenley also expressed his excitement with advancement of Green Line extension.

### METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

#### Operations Update

The demand for the services from Food Shelves delivered by Transit Link and Health Care essential work trips remains stable and it's anticipated these services should be able to continue at least through the end of 2020. Growth in ridership on Metro Mobility has continued but slowly. Last Wednesday was the highest ridership day on Metro Mobility since COVID restrictions started in mid-March. Since early August MTS has been operating a contract with taxi providers called the AWARE service. This service is to provide trips for passengers who have tested positive for COVID or are showing symptoms. The taxi provider, Transportation Plus, provides vehicles, equipment for drivers and protocols that are specifically designed for safe transport of passengers when they must make an essential trip. The Council received federal money to establish this service and to date it has not had to be used very often but is a protective service that both protects riders of our regular transit services but also continues to provide those with COVID an

option to travel if necessary. Last week there was one positive COVID test among contractor employees. Contractors are reporting no issues with staffing levels needed to meet service demands.

Gonzalez asked if the service for COVID symptomatic customers or those with another diagnosis is a long-term trend we might offer. Thompson responded that the contract for this service is through next year and it will be kept place as deemed necessary to keep our riders safe. Thompson continued that MTS is using little of the federal funds now, so hopefully with have those funds available beyond this year to pay for this service.

Chair Barber asked if the Council is planning to review an update the continuity of operations plan, as this is probably the first time we've had to use it to this extent. Thompson replied that a pandemic is not something that was in the plan but once staff is able to take a break from daily COVID work, the plan will be looked at updating as needed.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

#### Full Funding Grant Agreement

SWLRT received signed federal funding grant agreement on Saturday. The FFGA will free up \$928.8 million in federal funds to cover nearly half the cost of the Green Line Extension. The \$2.003 billion project will be the largest infrastructure project in the state's history, creating nearly 7,500 jobs with a nearly \$350 million payroll. Many thanks and congratulations to our project office staff for reaching this critical milestone.

#### Quarterly Service Changes

Quarterly service changes went into effect on Saturday. System-wide, these changes bring us up to about 80 percent of pre-COVID service. On core local routes and other routes that have seen relatively less ridership decline, service will be closer to 90 percent or more of pre-COVID service, while some will be closer to 100 percent. Metro Transit regularly monitors ridership to see if changes such as extra trips or larger vehicles are needed to help customers maintain social distancing onboard.

Ridership for the week of August 21 to September 6:

System wide – down 67%

Bus – down 63% (varies by type of route)

Blue Line – down 76%

Green line – down 72%

Northstar – down 96%

#### Xcel Partnership

On the agenda for Wednesday's Committee of the Whole, Metro Transit will provide an update on the partnership with Xcel Energy. This summer, a Minnesota PUC announced that they would explore opportunities for relief and recovery. In response, regulated utilities submitted project ideas and As part of Xcel Energy's response, they proposed \$100M for transit bus and school bus electrification. Xcel Energy will submit further detail to the Minnesota PUC, tomorrow September 15 and this funding would be available to all transit agencies and school bus providers in Xcel Energy's Minnesota territory. Metro Transit is well positioned to receive this funding based on the existing electric bus pilot. Staff is collaborating with Xcel to identify a program of projects that represent a vision for advancing Metro Transit's electrification of our bus fleet.

Cummings expressed her excitement about the partnership with Xcel and stated this and the FFGA show what partnership can do. Cummings thanked staff on both projects for the continued work. Fredson concurred and commented how impactful the Xcel partnership would be to vehicle emissions and the climate crisis.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Consent Items:**

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

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

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Ferguson, Chamblis, Sterner

1. **2020- 234:** Award Contract 20P045 to Modem Express, Inc. for Replacement of MTS Bus Modems

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into a contract with Modem Express, Inc. to provide the Council with the replacement of up to 630 Sierra Wireless MG90 mobile data modems for Metro Mobility, Transit Link and MTS fixed route fleet in an amount not to exceed \$1,034,544.

2. **2020- 236:** Amend 5311 Formula Grant with MnDOT

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to amend grant number 1035608 with MnDOT, to receive CARES Act funds. This amendment increases the grant total by \$737,765, for a new total of \$2,331,265.

**Non-Consent Items:**

1. **2020-237:** 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Joe Barbeau and Metropolitan Council Outreach Coordinator Sara Maaske presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Adopt the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
2. Certify that the Twin Cities Metropolitan Planning Process is addressing major issues facing the metropolitan planning area and is being carried on in conformance with all applicable federal requirements of:
  - a. 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303, and this subpart;
  - b. Sections 174 and 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act as amended (42 U.S.C. 7504, 7506 (c) and (d)) and 40 CFR part 93;
  - c. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (42 USC 2000d-1) and 49 CFR part 21;
  - d. 49 USC 5332, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age in employment or business opportunity;
  - e. Section 1101(b) of Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub L. 114-357) and 49 CFR Part 26 regarding the involvement of disadvantaged business enterprises in US DOT funded projects;
  - f. 23 CFR part 230, regarding the implementation of an equal employment opportunity program on Federal and Federal-aid highway construction contracts;
  - g. The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and 49 CFR Parts 27, 37, and 38;
  - h. The Older Americans Act, as amended (42 U.S.C 6101), prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance;

- i. Section 324 of title 23, U.S.C regarding the prohibition of discrimination based on gender; and;
  - j. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) and 49 CFR 27 regarding discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
3. Certify the TIP conforms to the provisions of 49 CFR part 20 regarding lobbying restrictions on influencing certain federal activities.
  4. Find that the TIP is consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan, which is in conformance with applicable federal transportation and air quality regulations.
  5. Find that the TIP meets all applicable federal requirements.
  6. Find that the TAB provided adequate opportunity for involvement from the public, agency and transit operators through its regular process and public comment period.
  7. Transmit the 2021-2024 TIP along with these comments to the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

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

Aye: 6 Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Chamblis, Sterner

**2. 2020-210 JT: September 2020 Budget Amendment**

Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie and Metropolitan Transportation Services Finance Director Heather Agesen-Huebner presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Ferguson, seconded by Zeran:

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

Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Chamblis, Sterner

**3. 2020-217: SWLRT (Green Line Extension) Civil Construction Change Order – Retaining Walls**

Metro Transit SWLRT Project Director Jim Alexander presented this item. Ferguson asked what size of change order requires Council approval. Alexander responded that the threshold is \$2.5M, so anything over that gets brought to Transportation Committee/Council. Alexander added that this additional cost is within the project budget.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Fredson:

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 \$9,310,000 for retaining wall work in the BNSF Railway corridor.

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

Aye: 6 Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Chamblis, Sterner

### **INFORMATION**

1. There are no information items on the agenda.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 4:54p.m.

Becky Davidson  
Recording Secretary