

## Minutes of the

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

July 12, 2021

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

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

**Committee Members Absent: Christopher Ferguson, Francisco Gonzalez**

#### 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, July 12, 2021.

#### AGENDA

Chair Barber proposed to move Information Item 4 to be the second Information Item presented.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Chamblis to approve the amended agenda.

Aye: 4 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson

Nay: 0

Absent: 4 Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Cummings to approve the minutes of the June 28, 2021 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 4 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson

Nay: 0

Absent: 4 Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran

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

Metropolitan Transportation Services Acting Director Amy Vennewitz reported:

#### INFRA

There was an article in Star Tribune and an in-person interview (airing on WCCO tonight/tomorrow) regarding the \$60M federal INFRA grant the region received for the I494 MN Pass corridor project. The Council was a co-applicant with MnDOT for this grant to build a MnPass lane from 169 to 35W. The project will be built in three phases over several years and will eventually extend all the way to the airport. This project was a priority that was identified in the Transportation Policy Plan several years ago.

#### Travel Trends

Staff's work on tracking travel trends is getting attention. Ashely Asmus (lead data scientist) recently interviewed with Fox 9 and had provided a graphic that is on the Council's website that tracks regional travel trends. The graphic currently shows that regional travel is close to being back to pre-pandemic levels overall. Data also shows traffic is much more distributed throughout the afternoon peak, but morning peak continues to be significantly down below pre-pandemic levels. Staff will continue to track and update the graphic as needed.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

One Day Hiring Event

Staff continues to work hard to recruit operators and will hold another 1-day hiring event this weekend (Saturday, July 17th from 9:00 – 12:00pm). Council members are encouraged to share this information with people and organizations who might help get the word out. A flyer for Saturday’s event was attached to today’s Daily Report.

**BUSINESS**

**Consent Items:**

There were no items on the consent agenda.

**Non-Consent Items:**

1. **2021-172:** Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) SEH Contract Amendment No. 3 for Construction Monitoring for Contaminated Materials, Contract 16P298  
Metro Transit SWLRT Project Director Jim Alexander presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Amendment No. 3 to Contract 16P298 with Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc. (SEH) for Construction Monitoring for Contaminated Materials to add \$3,116,522 for a total contract amount of \$6,115,508.

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

Aye: 4 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson

Nay: 0

Absent: 4 Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner, Zeran

**INFORMATION**

1. Transportation Equity Working Definition

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Heidi Schallberg introduced Abdullahi Abdulle and Hally Tuner from MnDOT who presented this item. Chair Barber wanted to know what the Council’s EAC feedback was. Tuner responded that the following were mentioned: the word fair seems out of place, what does the word burden mean, we don’t always talk about how we serve our communities once projects are built and support on acknowledging historical harms. Chamblis agreed with the EAC feedback and suggested replacing ‘burden’ with ‘investments’ and making ‘fair’ more specific to the goal you are trying to achieve as fair is often subjective and difficult to measure. Tuner and Abdulle asked that Council members provide any additional feedback to them.

2. Emerging from the Pandemic a Stronger & Better Transit System Part 1

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra, Analytics and Research Manager Eric Lind, Acting Deputy General Manager/Chief Operating Officer Brian Funk and Service Development Director Adam Harrington presented this item. Fredson questioned if we asked customers why they haven’t returned to transit and what period of time might be needed before making any drastic changes to service. Lind responded that the survey did ask about safety and responses included dimensions of COVID and safety/security and that Metro Transit if focused on a safe trip for customers, but the focus of the data dive was more specific to structural. Lind continued that we know we will get a bump in ridership after Labor Day due to college related travel and high school service, but we know a lot of people are

changing travel patterns so ridership will be a slow climb. Harrington added that we will be watching trends over the next 6-9 months before making any significant changes. Kooistra added that the next part of the presentation will be about things we will be doing by putting a focus on safety and marketing we would introduce in September. Fredson asked what the timeline was for study of express routes and Northstar that is required by the Legislature. Kooistra stated he would confirm what the timeline is.

Cummings asked how competitive Metro Transit is compared to school districts as it relates to operators. Funk answered that we are always evaluating where we stand in the marketplace and while our pay scale might be level with other organizations, we have a good benefits package and progression of wages. Kooistra added that we are currently only hiring for full-time operators, as opposed to the past when we hired part-time with the opportunity for full-time in the future. Chamblis appreciated the detailed update on how service has changed and how it's going to be monitored in the future.

### 3. Regional Solicitation Unique Projects Update

Metropolitan Transportation Services Transportation Planning Manager Cole Hiniker presented this item. Chamblis stated the building partnership and collaboration criteria is important and asked how we strengthen accountability for that. Hiniker responded that something that we want emphasized in the project is the ability to self-report/evaluate and it is left up to the applicants to propose that. Chamblis questioned whether the innovative category needed to be redefined because if the focus is always on who is creating the most innovative, new projects it may not provide incentives for projects that are utilizing best practices. Chair Barber stated that we have the overall Regional Solicitation which really focuses on best project for best practice, but we wanted the ability to innovate to be leaders. Chair Barber continued that's why a smaller amount of funding was set aside for this category and that the group discussed wanting innovative projects but also projects that could be able to be scaled and applied in other places. Chair Barber stated that some of this work itself out when we see what applications come in. Hiniker added that within this category we can bring best practices to the region for the first time.

### 4. Regional Solicitation Before & After Study

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Dave Burns presented this item. Chair Barber stated the importance of this work to ensure investments are getting directed in the right places.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:11p.m.

Becky Gorell  
Recording Secretary