

Metropolitan Council

Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, 560 Sixth Avenue North, Minneapolis MN 55411

Meeting of the Transportation Committee Monday, June 25, 2012

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Adam Duininck	Roxanne Smith Jon Commers	James Brimeyer Jennifer Munt
Members Absent	Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair	John Đoàn	Edward Reynoso
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	
TAB Liaison	Robert Lilligren		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was not present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:05 p.m. on June 25, 2012 at Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul. The committee heard employee recognition awards while waiting for a quorum. Following the employee recognition awards, a quorum was present and the committee proceeded with the committee business.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Doyne Parsons, Manager of Transportation, at the M. J. Ruter Garage presented the operator of the month award to Kent Lawrence. Mr. Lawrence is being recognized for his dependability and dedication. He has had no accidents, no late instances, and no absences in 4+ years; and has also received several commendations from the public.

Bill Beck, Manager of Maintenance, at FTHeywood Garage presented the cleaner of the month award to Anthony Payne. Mr. Payne is a 14-year employee at Metro Transit. He takes pride in his work – and it shows. Anthony does a great job cleaning buses and goes about it with a great attitude – making sure the bus looks its best when it leaves his hands. On occasion, a police vehicle will require an unscheduled interior cleaning – which also ends up in the hands of our cleaning crew. Recently, Metro Transit Police Officer Dominic Cotroneo required Anthony’s cleaning expertise for his squad car – and found his customer service skills to be very commendable. Officer Cotroneo commented, “What a pleasurable experience it was dealing with Anthony.” He said Anthony was very pleasant, that he approached the job and officers very professionally, and did a fabulous job cleaning the squad car.

Whether it is a bus or a squad car, Anthony knows how important his job is – and the important role he plays in Metro Transit’s “Mission”. Anthony’s approach to his job is an example of “teamwork” – one of Metro Transit’s core values: “As employees, we seek shared success, treat one another with respect and consider each other as customers”. Anthony is very deserving of recognition for the job he does.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Smith, seconded by Commers to adopt the agenda for the June 25, 2012 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Munt, seconded by Commers, to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2012 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion passed.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Brian Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit, reported the following:

Hiawatha (Blue Line) 8th Anniversary

Tomorrow, June 26th, the Hiawatha Line will celebrate the eighth anniversary of the beginning of revenue operations. The tremendous success of the line has changed the landscape of the Twin Cities in many ways and has set the groundwork for broad regional support of a light-rail network. Since opening day, customers have taken nearly 75 million rides on Hiawatha. The line now provides more than 12 percent of all rides in our system.

Construction work over the weekend at the junction of the Blue/Hiawatha and Central/Green Lines was successful, and the first track connection between the lines was made. We are planning a ceremonial media event to celebrate the full joining of the lines which will be done in late July.

Council Collecting Comments on Central Corridor Transit Service Study Concept Plan

Metro Transit staff recently released the concept plan for bus service restructuring associated with the Central Corridor project. It's available online at metrotransit.org/centralstudy. A total of five public meetings will be held in June – three have been conducted and two are scheduled for this week. The public is encouraged to comment on the plan at the meetings, by email, voicemail or postage-paid comment cards which are being distributed on buses and elsewhere. Certain areas where increased outreach is needed will receive direct mailing. As a reminder, Council members who receive direct input on any issue related to the bus service concept plan may forward the email to the website CentralCorridorStudy@metrotransit.org. Staff will log the comment and respond that the comment has been received and will be considered as we work to revise the plan. Council members who prefer to respond directly to the input should be sure to send a copy of the comment also to the website CentralCorridorStudy@metrotransit.org so the comment can be included in the official record. The public comment period ends on July 9th. Information about the plan in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali and a version for low-vision and blind stakeholders is available at metrotransit.org/centralstudy.

Juneteenth Celebration Kicked Off Northside Outreach

Metro Transit hosted a table on June 16 at the Juneteenth celebration in north Minneapolis. Our booth was staffed by representatives from marketing, transit information, customer advocacy and community outreach as well as Metro Transit Police and partner community organization MAD DADS. This is the start of a summer-long initiative in which Metro Transit will expand its outreach in this core service area through events, the addition of transit schedule outlets, and distribution of a brochure that focuses on the agency's service to north Minneapolis.

Information Session at Patrick Henry High School

Metro Transit trip planning experts, community outreach, customer advocates and police presented a session to students and their parents from Patrick Henry High School in north Minneapolis last week about the benefits of Go-To Card Student Passes that will be used by high schoolers beginning in late August. The session included information on expanded service, safety, and bus etiquette as well as a "rehearsal" bus ride. Similar open house sessions will take place later at the other four high schools where students will transition from yellow buses to public transportation this fall.

Northstar Emergency Preparedness Exercise

After 18 months of preparation, Metro Transit participated in a major emergency preparedness exercise Saturday simulating a Northstar and freight train rescue scenario. There were more than 500 participants including citizen volunteers and personnel from BNSF, Anoka County Emergency Management, and several Anoka County fire departments and law enforcement agencies at the Federal Cartridge facility in Anoka. About 50 Metro Transit staff participated including rail operations, safety, transit control center and Metro Transit Police. Evaluators monitored the exercise and a full debriefing will be conducted this week with a final report in the weeks to come. Federal Railroad Administration regulations require preparedness exercises every two years.

Transit Transition at Target

Metro Transit is responding the Target Corporation's move of 1,500 workers to their North Campus in Brooklyn Park with expanded service on Route 765 that provides express service from downtown Minneapolis. So far more than 900 employees have moved and we are seeing the results of this in growing ridership on Route 765. Before the move, Route 765 averaged about 80 rides a day. The route is now carrying over 190 rides a day and continues to grow. Staff in Service Development have added two new trips to the route and will continue to monitor the service along with the

“on-the-ground” efforts of the Street Operations department as more Target workers move to the new facility over the next month.

Elkins asked where the ridership to Target is coming from and Lamb stated that an analysis could be performed to answer. He agreed with Elkins that most likely, the ridership is coming from the west, and riders have a need to transfer in downtown Minneapolis in order to get to Brooklyn Park.

Munt questioned transit service interruption during the Pride Parade last weekend. Lamb stated that there are five need weekend closures of the HLRT for work on the lines. The summer event calendar is very busy and the HLRT shutdown is difficult to schedule. This is the second year in a row that HLRT was closed for work during the Pride weekend and Lamb stated that this will not happen a third year in a row. A bus bridge was provided as a link in place of HLRT last weekend.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Federal Certification Review for MPO Planning Process

This certification takes place every four years, as required by the Safe, Accountable, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU requires that the transportation planning process in urbanized areas over 200,000 in population must be certified by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). The objective of the certification effort is to formalize and document an evaluation of the transportation planning process, as well as to highlight good practices and identify opportunities for improvement. The following persons are present tonight observing the Transportation Committee: FHWA - Susan Moe, Ralph Rizzo and Alex Norris; and FTA – Bill Wheeler.

Federal SAFETEA-LU

SAFETEA-LU expires at the end of June. The replacement bill was on the brink of death, with a six-month extension of the current law in the wings. Then early last week, Congressional leaders threw a life preserver and jump-started intense, marathon negotiations. By the end of the week, Senate Majority Leader Reid and House Speaker Boehner were optimistic that a bill could be passed before July 1. Senator Boxer and Representative Mica issued this statement: “The conferees have moved forward toward a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on a highway reauthorization bill. Both House and Senate conferees will continue work with a goal of completing a package” before July 1. Leadership seems motivated to get the bill done. House rules require that members have three days to review conference reports before consideration on the House floor. If the House were to pass the conference report on Thursday, it would leave the Senate two days to pass it and send it to the President. The Speaker can waive the three-day review rule. However, the Senate would need to clear the conference report by unanimous consent. One Senator could object and trigger a more lengthy process by which to pass the conference report. Under that scenario, a short term extension would be needed to give the Senate more time.

Program of Projects (PoP) Workshop

Many of you attended the PoP workshop that was held on July 20, 2012. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled.

Governor’s Transportation Finance Advisory Committee (TFAC)

A TFAC meeting was held on Friday 6/22. Metropolitan Council had 2 hours on the agenda to present on the MPO, Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), Transportation Planning and Funding, and Transit Operations and Strategies.

Administrative/Housekeeping Item – Anoka County Contract

In June 2010 a contract was awarded to Anoka County for regular route service. The business item authorized a 2-year contract with funding for 5 years. Staff is administratively extending the contract for three more years.

TAB LIAISON REPORT

TAB Liaison Robert Lilligren reported the following from the 6/20 TAB meeting:

1. MnDOT presented the Multi Modal Plan to the TAB.
2. 2011 Regional Solicitation and grant awards.

In response to TAB direction, the TAC prepared a report regarding funding targets, contingency plans and funding options. Page 5 of the 6/14/12 report presents Contingency Plan #1 – reduce funding; and Contingency Plan #2 – defer funding, reducing the amount of funding able to program in 2015-2016. Contingency Plan #2 is favored by the TAC. TAB passed a motion to approve Contingency Option #2 with the following change: take out the last CMAQ Transit Expansion project (CMT-11-07), and replace the funds for the next two Bike/Walk projects on the list (BW-11-08 and BW-11-06).

The Regional Solicitation was based on 2009 funding levels; lower funding recommendations have been made to the TAB in contingency recommendations (in the event that the funding awarded is lower) but TAB has not taken action on that yet.

TAB is bringing in a consultant to re-evaluate the solicitation process for future solicitations.

Elkins requested that the minutes from the TAB meeting be provided to TC members.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

There were no consent items on the agenda.

Non-Consent Items

2012-204: Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis

Metro Transit Project Manager Michael Mechtenberg presented this item.

Brimeyer asked what the six modes are and Mechtenberg answered – no build, Transportation System Management (TSM), busway-dedicated right-of-way and not dedicated right-of-way, streetcar, and light rail.

Munt stated she is glad that the streetcar alternative is being looked at. TAB Liaison (and City Mpls. Council member) Robert Lilligren added that the City of Mpls. is also conducting an alternatives analysis looking at the same modes along Nicollet Ave from South Minneapolis to the city limits in Northeast Minneapolis at Central Avenue, also there is considerable transit planning being done on 35W at Lake Street in this area to complete the BRT, and will be working closely with Metro Transit. The position of the Midtown Community Works Partnership is that streetcar as preferred mode and the Midtown Greenway Coalition (resident's group) is also doing some station area planning around the streetcar mode. Also, the City's station area planning for SWLRT for the Midtown Greenway Station is including a combination for the streetcar line so that it could be integrated easily.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a professional services contract for planning, concept design, and forecasting relative to the Midtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis, at a cost of \$740,125.

Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no objection, Chair Elkins stated that this item could proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

2012- 205: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension): Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Responsible Government Unit (RGU) Transfer

Metro Transit SWLRT Assistant Director Nani Jacobson presented this item.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to accept Responsible Government Unit (RGU) status from the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRRRA) for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (SWLRT) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) upon completion of the Draft EIS (DEIS) public comment period.

Motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no objection, Chair Elkins stated that this item could proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

INFORMATION

1. MnDOT Multi Modal Plan

MTS Deputy Director Finance & Planning Amy Vennewitz introduced Lynn Bly from MnDOT, who presented this item. The full draft report was given to the committee members. Vennewitz stated that comments on the report will

be prepared and brought to the Transportation Committee in a few weeks. She suggested that the committee members concentrate on Chapter 4 of the report relating to the objectives and strategies that will help achieve the vision.

2. State of the Commute Survey Results

Metro Transit Marketing Director Bruce Howard presented this item. This is a survey of commuters going to work. Once complete, the results of the survey will be available on the Council Intranet.

3. Metro Mobility MESB Update

Metro Mobility Senior Manager Paul Colton presented this item, including short-term actions in response to MESB recommendations. A consultant has been hired to look at moderate/long-term solutions, as well. A report will follow at the Transportation Committee on July 9, 2012.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Elkins reminded members that the Transportation Committees will be held at the Metro Transit offices in the F.T. Heywood building in Minneapolis for the second half of 2012 beginning with the next scheduled meeting on July 9.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Elkins adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 5:50 p.m. June 25, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,
LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary