

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL
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TRANSPORTATION **A**CCESSIBILITY **A**DVISORY **C**OMMITTEE **M**EETING
Wednesday, June 6, 2012

1. Call to Order

At 12:32 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Ron Biss. **Public present:** Karen Hubescher from H.S.I., Josh Straka, Josh Collins, Sean Raible, Steve Morris, Greg Brown and Rick Cardenes. **Council staff present:** Pam Steffen, from Metro Transit, David Russell, Andy Streasick, Mike Kuehn and Alison Coleman.

Members Present: Ron Biss, Kjensmo Walker, Margot Imdieke Cross, Wayne Wittman, Bruce Lattu, Heidi Myhre, Darrell Paulsen, John Lund, Chad McGuire, Diogo Reiss and Nichole Villavicencio.

Members Absent: James Williams, John Schatzlein, Kim Kang and Willie Daniels. **Members excused:** Jerolyn Pofahl,

2. Approval of the Agenda

Paulson moved to approve the agenda. Walker seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. Approval of May 2, 2012 Minutes

McGuire moved to approve the minutes. Lund seconded the motion. The motion carried.

4. Legislative Update

Mike Kuehn spoke to the TAAC committee. The legislature adjourned May 10. The state bonding bill included a direct allocation of funds to the Council for transit. That was \$2.5 million for the Minneapolis Transportation interchange facility near where the Northstar, the Hiawatha and eventually the Central line and hopefully the Southwest will come together. That is a project that also has funding committed by the Counties Transportation Improvement Board which is tied to the regional sales tax and the City of Minneapolis is pursuing federal dollars to help with that.

There are two other items in the bonding bill that are noteworthy. The bill did include \$44 million to the Department of Admin, which includes capitol renovation. An unspecified amount of that money is committed for the design construction and equipping of a new tunnel that will extend from the capitol building and pass under University Avenue. This way it is more cost effective to do the project at the same time that the street is being worked on for the Central Corridor. That will help improve transportation safety for access to the capitol from the north side.

The last item in the bill that was approved is \$47.5 million that is unspecified for projects. Because the Council did not receive bonding money although they had a \$25 million request supported by the governor for Southwest LRT, they are in conversation with the governor's office at this point to pursue an application for requesting some money for Southwest in an amount yet to be determined but enough money to keep that project moving. There are other funding sources as well. This is critical to send a message to the federal government regarding the commitment of the federal government for the

Southwest. The lack of state commitment does have some impact on how the federal granting authority will look at this project. They are trying to make sure there is an indication of advancing this project with state funding.

That \$47.5 million is competing with a requested amount that was not funded in the bonding bill for three convention centers located in Rochester, Saint Cloud and Mankato of about \$30 million. The Saint Paul Saints have a ballpark request of \$27 million.

Next is the Regional Transit Bonding Authorization. In the Transportation Policy Bill they did get language included that does allocate money to continue with the capital improvement projects for regional transit, which is usually bus purchases but other transit enhancements of a capital nature. It is at the amount is \$39.6 million. They requested \$35.4 million. The reason there is \$4.2 million additional in regional bonding authorization is in that policy bill there is language that was going to change the transportation financing process in the biennial budget process from last year that would provide more assistance to the Opt Outs, which was revenue neutral and would take money from the other transit programs. The Opt Outs said when they got their funding reduced last year that a hunk of that money was of a capital nature. That they had money in their reserves for capital projects when the legislature reduced their funding because of their substantial reserves. So an agreement was reached that some of their capital issues would be addressed but it would be done through the regional bonding program. This will enable them to purchase the transit equipment.

There was a bill that didn't pass that would stagger the terms of the Council members four year terms with half up every two years. That bill was vetoed by the governor. The governor thought that it was a matter of accountability. They removed legislation that would require legislative approval of the Council's budgets and also put the Met Council on the state fiscal budget cycle which would be a July 1 to June 30 budget cycle. The Council gets a lot of money from regional property taxes both for paying the transit bonding requests and for general assistance to run the planning functions of the Met Council. The property taxes are collected and managed on a calendar year basis.

Six Met Council members received Senate confirmation. One was brought forward without recommendation and was not acted on. The other members we assume their names will now be returned back to the committee that is responsible for the appointments. The next legislative cycle those names will be brought forth again. The members will continue to serve without confirmation. It is not the first time this has happened. Legislators like to use this sometimes for sending messages. Unless they are removed or not approved for appointment they continue to serve even if they haven't been confirmed by the Senate.

Of the 201 members that were in the legislature this year there are 47 legislators that will not be back. As they enter next year they are going to be facing new members who will need a lot of education to transit.

5. Depot Tour

Steve Morris and others of the Ramsey County Rail Authority gave a brief description of the project and then gave a tour of the Union Depot.

They started construction on January 2, 2011. They will be done with construction by the end of 2012. The Ramsey County Rail Authority is a part of Ramsey County. The County Commissioner serves on the Board of Directors. They are the owners of the facility. This was one of the early train stations that was open in the mid 20's. At that time there were about 282 train movements a day. There were 10 platforms and 20 tracks and served as many as 20,000 passengers a day. In 1971 was the end of the service at the depot. In 1974 it was placed on the National Register.

The work on Fourth Street is done by the Central Corridor project. The Union Depot work is done by the Ramsey County Rail Authority.

6. Tour Discussion

None.

7. Member Comment

None.

8. Public Comment

None.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.