

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING of the TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

July 27, 2015

Committee Members Present: Chair Lona Schreiber; Vice-Chair Katie Rodriguez; Steve Elkins; Deb Barber; Gail Dorfman; Marie McCarthy; Edward Reynoso; Jennifer Munt; Cara Letofsky

Committee Members Absent: Jon Commers

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Schreiber called the Regular Meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:03 p.m. on Monday, July 27, 2015.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Letofsky, seconded by Dorfman, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

It was moved by Reynoso, seconded by Maluchnik, to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2015 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

TAB LIAISON REPORT

Commissioner Randy Maluchnik reported that there was no TAB meeting in July, however the TAB has held two meetings to assist in choosing an Equity consultant. MTS Director McCarthy added that one of the Council's equity initiatives is to have a consultant come in and help TAB and the Metropolitan Council, jointly through a series of workshops, discuss a two-step process: the first set of workshops will define equity, as people have different understandings of it. The second set of workshops will focus on equity in Transportation – how it should be applied. After the consultant is on board the dates for the workshops will be set and announced.

METRO TRANSIT EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann, sitting in for General Manager Brian Lamb, introduced Director of Light Rail Operations Brian Funk and Green Line Train Operator Todd Churchward. Mr. Funk commended Mr. Churchward for his immediate response in aiding an assault victim, who later contacted Metro Transit with effusive thanks and praise for Todd's calming and helpful reaction during a crisis situation.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER AND DIRECTOR OF METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES REPORTS

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann:

1. **Weekend Event Ridership.** We seem to be celebrating ridership more and more with each special event lately. This weekend was no exception. With the New York Yankees in town, we figured we'd get a boost in ridership to Target Field, and we were right. Over the three days that the boys from the Bronx were here, between the Blue and Green Lines and Northstar Commuter line, we gave an estimated 30,600 rides. Last night with the band One Direction performing at TCF Bank stadium, we estimate just over 9,000

rides were given; that's nearly 40,000 rides for people who didn't have to fight parking, get caught up in traffic jams or have to walk far from our platforms to their event. Platforms for these events are quite literally at the venue front door. We proved once again, that when it comes to handling large events and crowds, we know what we're doing and we do it well.

2. **State Fair.** It's no secret that we are only one .month away (to the day) from the annual end-of-summer extravaganza known informally as the Great Minnesota Get Together, or more officially as the State Fair. We're coming off a year of record breaking ridership, thanks in part to a new transit hub on the north end of the fairgrounds that allowed buses to avoid congestion on Como Avenue and gave riders direct access to the fairgrounds. Last year more than half a million riders took our express route and regular route buses serving the fairgrounds. We're looking forward to bringing those crowds to the fair again this year, but also for the chances to get out and meet the people we serve.

3. **Celebrate Snelling.** In a few weeks, communities up and down the Snelling Avenue corridor in Saint Paul will celebrate the various transit improvements and projects that are taking place there, including the reopening of the Snelling Avenue bridge and the evolution of bus rapid transit along the line. We are partnering with MnDOT, the City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County for the celebration and while details are still being worked out, we expect that it will highlight several of the businesses along the corridor and include a pedestrian tour of improvements near the Snelling Avenue and Interstate Highway 94 intersections. As details emerge, we'll work to keep you all in the loop.

MTS Director Arlene McCarthy:

1. **ADA Anniversary.** Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit took part in 25th anniversary celebrations for the Americans with Disabilities Act at the Minnesota History Center yesterday. The Council handed out free ride coupons to Metro Mobility certified riders as a thank you for their attendance at that successful event.

2. **ADA Certification Guide.** MTS Director McCarthy held up a new brochure that the committee members had received prior to the meeting, and advised that Metro Mobility will be distributing this ADA Certification Guide to help answer questions about the often confusing certification process.

3. **Transportation Planning.** The Dakota County staff and their consultants on the Cedar Avenue implementation plan will be presenting an update presentation at today's meeting, and similarly, the Regional Rail Authority board will be distributing the Draft Final Report tomorrow on the Robert Street Transitway alternative analysis for public comment. Three alternatives were considered: Arterial BRT on Robert Street, a streetcar (also on Robert Street) and a highway Bus Rapid Transit on Trunk Highway 52. The Steering Committee concluded the alternative analysis to carry forward the ABRT and Modern Streetcar alternatives and allow for cities along the Robert Street alignment to update their comprehensive plans and allow for a more informed decision on an LPA at a later time.

BUSINESS

CONSENT ITEMS:

2014-175: Authorize Execution of Contract Options with MCI on Behalf of Maple Grove Transit (Paul Colton 651-602-1668). Proposed Action: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise existing contract options on Contract 14P053 with Motor Coach Industries (MCI) to purchase up to seven replacement coaches in an amount not to exceed \$4,200,000, contingent on satisfactory results of the Pre-Award Buy America Audit.

It was moved by Rodriguez, seconded by Letofsky, that this item proceed to full Council as a consent item. Motion carried. No further discussion.

NON-CONSENT ITEMS:

2014-176: Authorization to Execute Sole Source Agreements for Red Line BRT Transit Service (Arlene McCarthy 651-602-1754). Proposed Action: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a sole source agreement with the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority for 2015 Metro Red Line Station to Station operating expenses in an amount not to exceed \$2,228,099. It was moved by Munt, seconded by Barber, that this item proceed to full Council as a non-consent item. No further discussion.

INFORMATION

1. Draft Cedar Avenue Transitway Implementation Plan Update, presented by Kristine Elwood, Dakota County Transit Manager and Mona Elabbady, consultant team leader. Councilmember Dorfman asked what was included in the bike and pedestrian \$100,000 placeholder for each stage of the improvements; Councilmember Elkins asked about stationary planning that may lead to zoning changes; Councilmember Munt asked whether the BRT stations were chosen with TOD potential in mind. Arlene McCarthy mentioned that Dakota County plans to fund most of the stationary planning. Commissioner Maluchnik asked about upgrades to the MOA Station for integration with Red Line.

2. 2016 Draft Budget Discussion. MTS Director Arlene McCarthy and Transit Director of Finance Ed Petrie presented this overview. Regarding the Transit draft budget: Councilmember Rodriguez asked how many months of A-Line is in the assumptions, and whether gas prices are determining the flat ridership numbers; Councilmember Letofsky asked how the reserve fund is replenished; Councilmember Dorfman asked about council allocations under expenses; Councilmember Elkins asked why insurance was such a significant share (13%) for Northstar, specifically, which Deputy General Manager Fuhrmann answered was due to the 2009 contract with BNSF which requires us to maintain a \$200 million general liability risk policy. Regarding the MTS draft budget: Councilmember Dorfman asked about calculating the unduplicated riders figure, or how many individuals are we are providing services for, vs. total number of rides; Councilmember Rodriguez asked about an update to regionally allocated MVST figures; Councilmember Munt commented that this is a good balanced budget with the restrictions we operate under, but we are just maintaining – Metro Transit’s ridership stays at 87.5 million at a time when the public is asking for more and better transportation. The reason that we had to tap our reserves is because the legislature gave us funding and then took it away for Southwest – this budget makes a case to the public that we need the additional half-cent, and we need it sooner rather than later.

3. Blue Line Extension Overview of DEIS Scope and Cost Estimate was presented by Transitways Systems Development BLRT Project Director, Dan Soler. He explained how the project scope (identified in the DEIS from Hennepin County for the Blue Line Extension) will progress through modifications by project and funding partners into a municipal consent plan, to be presented to the Transportation Committee at the end of this year. At the conclusion of his remarks the Transportation Committee members, along with a few members of the press, took part in a field tour of the Blue Line Extension corridor.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Linda Thayer
Recording Secretary