

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

February 14, 2022

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

Committee Members Present: Deb Barber, Molly Cummings, Kris Fredson, Francisco Gonzalez

Committee Members Absent: Reva Chamblis, Phillip Sterner, Raymond Zeran

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 4:02 p.m. on Monday, February 14, 2022.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Fredson to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2022 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 4 Barber, Cummings, Fredson, Gonzalez

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Chamblis, Sterner, Zeran

TAAC REPORT

Fenley reported on the February TAAC meeting, including priority seating results.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Charles Carlson reported:

Planning

The 2022 regional solicitation for federal funds is getting ready to open. I've shared before that overviews of the process have been underway. Before your next meeting we should have the application system open to receive applications. An announcement will be released when that occurs. Applications will be due April 14, with scoring across the summer and decisions on project selection late this year.

Finance

Motor vehicle sales tax receipts for January 2022 were flat with last January, at \$26 million. Actual receipts were about 9 percent below forecast. This contrasts with the sources in the state, where collections were 25% higher than expected, led by corporate tax receipts. No single month is a good performance indicator so we'll be watching closely for the February forecast update.

Operations

I've reported before that we are amending our service contracts to improve hourly wages for drivers to a minimum of \$20. These are now executed and providers have reported the increased pay has resulted in increased applications.

Some contractors are even reaching out to former operators to see if they'd be interested to return. Meanwhile we've seen COVID case counts drop off significantly and have seen service quality improve as operator availability has been restored. Finally, you may have seen news reports of a bus fire affecting a bus in our regional fleet. Last Friday a coach bus in the Southwest Transit garage caught fire; the cause of the fire is under investigation. Quick reminder that the Council owns most regional fleet including the suburban transit association providers like SW Transit. That vehicle appears to be a complete loss, and other vehicles will need cleaning due to smoke from the fire. Fire suppression systems helped contain the fire, along with emergency response from Eden Prairie. Unfortunately, 4 firefighters were injured from smoke inhalation. From media reports we understand 3 treated on scene and one transported for additional treatment. Wishing a quick recovery to the responders.

Council Members asked about the fire investigation and MTS Director Carlson responded that Eden Prairie Fire is leading the investigation.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

COVID

Since the last Transportation Committee meeting on January 24, Metro Transit has had 56 cases of COVID reported by our employees. While 56 reported cases is significant, it also marks a decrease. And we ended up with more than 300 reported cases in January in total. So far in February, we've recorded 15 cases. At this point, the operational impacts we experienced during the Omicron spike have largely been resolved.

Operator Staffing

Turning to an update on our operator staffing, we are about 33 operators below our ideal levels of full time and part time weekday operators. We continue to promote our openings. This includes our hiring events. We had about a dozen candidates who attended our event on Saturday. The next event is Wednesday from 4-7pm at our Instruction Center.

Zero Emissions Bus Transition Plan

Finally, I'll mention that we officially submitted the Zero Emissions Bus Transition Plan to the state legislature on Friday following the Council's adoption last Wednesday. The plan is available on our website, and we are raising awareness about it via social media. Want to once again recognize the staff involved in that work.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

Motion was made by Gonzalez, seconded by Fredson and carried, to approve the following consent item:

Aye:	4	Barber, Cummings, Fredson, Gonzalez
Nay:	0	
Absent:	3	Chamblis, Sterner, Zeran

1. **2022-37:** Gold Line Utility Reimbursement Agreement with Minnesota Pipeline Company, LLC
Motion: That the Metropolitan Council ("Council") authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Utility Reimbursement Agreement ("URA") (#21M092) with Minnesota Pipeline Company, LLC ("Minnesota Pipeline") for the Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit Project ("the Project") for an amount up to \$700,000.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2022-38: METRO Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit Engineering and Project Management Services Contract 21P242**
Metro Transit Senior Project Manager Craig Lamothe and Metropolitan Council Contracts and Procurement Director Jody Jacoby presented this item. Gonzalez urged attention to detail.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Gonzalez:

That the Metropolitan Council (“the Council”) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute contract 21P242 with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc, to provide design, engineering, and project management services for the METRO Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit Project (“Project”) in an amount not to exceed \$34,998,088.

Motion carried.

Aye:	4	Barber, Cummings, Fredson, Gonzalez
Nay:	0	
Absent:	3	Chamblis, Sterner, Zeran

INFORMATION

1. 2022 Transportation Committee Work Plan

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra and Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Charles Carlson presented this item.
Cummings asked for more information on the relationship with the Suburban Providers.

2. Q4 2021 and Annual Ridership Report

Metropolitan Transportation Services John Harper and Metro Transit Analytics and Research Manager Eric Lind presented this item.
Barber and Fredson noted the great framework created so metrics can be measured well.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Jenna Ernst
Recording Secretary