

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

October 12, 2020

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

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Reva Chamblis, Molly Cummings, Christopher Ferguson, Kris Fredson, Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent: Francisco Gonzalez, Phillip Sterner

TAAC Liaison Present:

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Barber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:00p.m. on Monday, October 12, 2020.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Zeran to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2020 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 5 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Fredson, Gonzalez, Sterner

TAAC REPORT

Darrell Paulsen reported that at the October 7th TAAC meeting the group received a presentation on the Gold Line project which is currently at 60% Design review and is still open for public comment until November 16th. TAAC members discussed platform height and the need for due diligence for operators so they can pull as close to the platforms to eliminate the gap. Paulsen also asked for staff to revisit the Hazel Station intersection crossing and the real time sign annunciators at platforms to be more visually impaired accessible.

Chamblis stated the importance of receiving feedback for accessibility and encouraged Paulsen to follow up the project managers.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Governor's Blue-Ribbon Committee

The Committee heard two presentations today, the first from House Research staff which was a broad overview of Transit in Minnesota and in detail for the region. This covered statutory authority, funding, system operators ETC. The group concluded that transit finance is complex and there are many entities involved. The second presentation covered the findings from the 2011 Legislative Auditor's report on Transit Governance. The state auditor covered findings but did indicate it doesn't reflect any review that has happened since 2011.

TPP

MTS will be mailing out the TPP to Council members this week in advance of the request for Council approval that will occur next month. The version that will be sent includes all the changes that are made in response to public comments. Staff are sending in advance to provide ample time for Council members to review changes before being asked to approve the 2040 plan.

COVID Update

Across contractors, there was one positive test among employees. This brings the total to 56 positive and to date 53 have returned to work. Ridership on Metro Mobility and Transit Link has now crossed the 50% of normal level. It has been on a steady growth since June 1st. This is a different trend than what is occurring on fixed route and important to monitor because there may be a need to change some of the special services like food delivery or health delivery.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

COVID Update

107 employees have been diagnosed with COVID in total since the start of the pandemic, which includes 8 new confirmed COVID cases since last meeting.

To date monthly total:

- April: 6
- May: 27
- June: 11
- July: 11
- August: 26
- September: 18
- October: 7

Northstar Funding Partner Discussions

Metro Transit is meeting with Northstar Funding Partners regarding the future of the service and assess the impact of COVID as staff develops the 2021 budget - not just Northstar but also Blue Line and Green Line. Staff have also reached out to FTA to understand options. Northstar has experienced over a 95% decline in ridership since the start of the pandemic. Trips have been reduced from 72 trips per week to 20 trips per week, but the fixed costs mean there is still a considerable expense.

Minnesota Public Transit Association Awards (MPTA)

Last week Metro Transit received three awards as part of the MPTA conference.

- Deputy Chief of Operations for Bus, Brian Funk, won Transit Professional of the Year.
- The Transit Assistance Program won the Management Innovation Award. Andrea Kiepe accepted the award on behalf of TAP.
- Melanie Benson received the Operator of the Year award. Melanie has been an operator for 44 years.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

There were no consent items on the agenda.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2020-254:** Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) SEH Contract Amendment for Construction Monitoring for Contaminated Materials, Contract 16P298

Metro Transit SWLRT Project Director Jim Alexander presented this item. Cummings thanked staff for their work and attention to the details in this complex project. There were no questions from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council approve a sole source contract amendment for Short Elliot Hendrickson Inc. (SEH) for Construction Monitoring for Contaminated Materials (16P298) to add \$853,380 for a total contract amount of \$2,998,986.

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

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Sterner

2. 2020-255: Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Subordinate Funding Agreement No. 13 with Minnesota Department of Transportation for Staffing to Master Funding Agreement #121021

Metro Transit SWLRT Project Director Jim Alexander presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Zeran:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 13 to the Master Funding Agreement (MFA) #121021 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for 2021 SWLRT staff support in a total amount not to exceed \$2.2 million.

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

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Sterner

3. 2020-256: METRO Blue Line Extension – Subordinate Funding Agreement No. 7 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to complete the Bassett Creek Storm Sewer Utility Relocation to Master Funding Agreement #141044

Metro Transit BLRT Transit System Design and Engineering Director Nick Landwer presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 7 to the Master Funding Agreement (MFA) #141044 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to pay MnDOT \$1.6 million of committed project funds to complete the Bassett Creek Storm Sewer Utility Relocation related to the Blue Line Extension Light Rail Transit Project.

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

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Sterner

4. **2020-267:** METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit – Subordinate Funding Agreement No. 05 with MnDOT

Metro Transit BRT Projects Assistant Director Chris Beckwith presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute METRO Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit (GBRT) Subordinate Funding Agreement (SFA) No. 05 with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for an amount not to exceed \$1,550,017.

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

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 2 Gonzalez, Sterner

INFORMATION

1. Microtransit Pilot Project

Metro Transit Shared Mobility Program Manager Meredith Klekotka presented this item. Cummings expressed her excitement for this project and the creativity and innovation for looking at things differently. Chamblis echoed the excitement for this project as it can help close some gaps in terms of access to transportation. Chamblis asked that while we are using a well-used route for the pilot, if there will be potential to look at lower volume areas. Klekotka answered that Microtransit can service as a coverage model for lower frequency and suburban routes and that is where a lot of the piloting has happened in other parts of the country and that staff will be partnering with MTS to learn more. Chamblis asked why North Minneapolis was chosen for the pilot. Klekotka responded that when North Minneapolis was identified as a potential site, staff were looking at the existing ridership in a COVID context and didn't see the big drop in ridership there and wanted to provide another level of service. Klekotka continued that the city of Minneapolis approached Metro Transit a year ago and had been seeking proposals from other transportation companies to do a circulator in North Minneapolis as there was the need in the community. Chair Barber questioned what the difference was between Microtransit and Transit Link. Klekotka replied that the Microtransit is demand and you'd request a ride within 10 minutes of when you want the trip. Chair Barber asked how we are approaching public engagement and marketing. Klekotka stated that we are looking to engage the community with education around what the service is and how it operates. Klekotka added that we will have specific engagement with groups leading up to the launch and 3 months into the pilot, we'll have current users evaluate the service and adjust as needed.

2. Capital Budget Presentation

Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie and Metropolitan Transportation Services Finance Director Heather Aagesen-Huebner presented this item. Chamblis asked that since we've known about the Metro Mobility growth for some time, if we have advocates talking to the legislature for funding. Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson responded that we have many advocates that have been talking to Legislature for several years. Thompson continued that Legislature did make a first step with the operating budget last year by separating out the Metro Mobility budget into its own separate line and we'll continue to advocate as Metro Mobility is unique and important for the region.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:36p.m.

Becky Davidson
Recording Secretary