

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

August 24, 2020

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

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, Reva Chamblis, Kris Fredson, Phillip Sterner, Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent: Molly Cummings, Christopher Ferguson, Francisco Gonzalez

TAB Liaison Present: Peter Dugan

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was not present when Chair Barber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:02p.m. on Monday, August 24, 2020. A quorum was present before taking committee action.

TAB REPORT

Peter Dugan reported the following from the Transportation Advisory Board meeting on August 19, 2020.

Agency reports

MnDOT: Highway 5 construction is proceeding; eastbound is now open and westbound is closed.

MAC: passenger levels are down but airport work is being completed quickly due to the lack of traffic.

The airport has not needed to touch reserves and has been able to give rent waivers. Delta remains the only airline committed to not selling the middle seat.

AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Fredson, seconded by Atlas-Ingebretson to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2020 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 5 Atlas-Ingebretson, Chamblis, Fredson, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 4 Cummings, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Sterner

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Public Comment

Public comment on the Draft Update to the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan and the Draft 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is completed. There was a record number of comments received on the TIP (400+), and a little less on the TPP.

Operations Update

The demand for services from Food Shelves remains strong and at constant levels, and it's anticipated that service can continue through at least the end of

2020. With the return of fare collection in early August, essential service trips on Transit Link where there was no fare charged for essential workers has ended. But the essential health care worker service on Metro Mobility is continuing and staff are evaluating if this should continue after the September fixed route transit service increases in service. It does continue to be a well-used service with consistent strong demand. Last week here was one positive COVID tests among contractor employees. Contractors are reporting no issues with staffing levels needed to meet service demands.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

September Service Changes

Friday Metro Transit issued a media release regarding the September quarterly services changes that will take effect September 12th. The changes will bring Metro Transit to 80% of pre-pandemic services levels but varies across service types (BRT- 100%, supporting local- 98%, core local - 94%, LRT- 93%, Northstar- 33%, commuter- 25%).

Ridership

Recently moved to front door boarding, which continues to go smoothly.

For the week of August 10, the system was down 63% total compared to pre-pandemic levels:

System wide: down 67%

Bus – down 63% (varies by type of route)

Blue Line – down 77%

Green line – down 70%

Northstar – down 97%

Face Coverings

Street Operations staff sampled over 1500 operators for masks compliance and found there was less than 2% that were in clear violation of the masks requirement which is defined as neither wearing a mask nor having the barrier up. While that is a good percentage of compliance, Metro Transit will continue to emphasize the importance. Staff are currently in the process of conducting a similar review of passenger rates of compliance with the face covering requirement.

Chamblis asked that since there is a now a governor mandate on masks, if most passengers already have masks. Kooistra responded that Metro Transit has handed out well over 50,000 masks to the public and the governor has said in terms on monitoring the mask mandate is to educate, which is the approach we are asking our operators and police to take.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

There were no consent items on the agenda.

Non-Consent Items:

1. 2020-227 SW: Operator Apprenticeship Grant Amendment #3

Metro Transit Deputy Chief Operating Officer- Bus Brian Funk presented this item. Zeran asked who decides if the apprentices completed the program and if there was a third party review. Funk responded that Metro Transit is keeping track of milestone achievements (ride alongs, group meetings, etc.) and when all milestones are completed and the first year of employment is complete, Metro Transit notifies the state. Funk continued that there is an established Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JAC) which includes Metro Transit Management and ATU President and Vice President who meet regularly regarding the program. Zeran asked if Funk could speak to Traction Power's apprenticeship, to which Chair Barber stated she could get Zeran in contact with the correct staff. Zeran ask if the training modules and steps for program completion are clear to the apprentices. Funk stated to his knowledge the program requirements are clear and he hasn't heard otherwise. Fredson thanked Funk and staff for assisting with this program as it is a great program and making a huge difference in connecting people to full time employment.

Motion by Zeran, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute grant amendment 3 for contract 2019-222/METRO2018MAI with the State of Minnesota.

Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Atlas-Ingebretson, Chamblis, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Cummings, Ferguson, Gonzalez

2. **2020-228 SW:** Authority to Execute the Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Full Funding Grant Agreement if Awarded by the Federal Transit Administration
Metro Transit SWLRT Project Director Jim Alexander presented this item. Atlas-Ingebretson and Chair Barber expressed excitement and appreciation for the project reaching this step.

Motion by Atlas-Ingebretson, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Chair and the Regional Administrator to execute the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for the Southwest Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Project (SWLRT) with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in an amount of \$928.8 million if awarded by the FTA.

Motion carried.

Aye: 6 Atlas-Ingebretson, Chamblis, Fredson, Sterner, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 3 Cummings, Ferguson, Gonzalez

INFORMATION

1. Regional Solicitation Project Scoring Update

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson presented this item. Fredson asked how this effects funding for the B Line. Thompson responded that the B Line did receive funding last cycle, and should the bonding bill pass this fall, the B Line would be considered fully funded but if it doesn't a scenario could include funding to B Line. Thompson continued that it is anticipated the \$25M set aside for BRT would not be for the B Line or D Line but rather a new BRT line that hasn't been identified. Thompson added there is an application for downtown stations in St. Paul that are tied to Gold Line but could be used by B Line and other services, so there is a possibility that piece could be funded. Chair Barber stated TAB is still very committed to dedicating the \$25M to BRT but have been understanding of the fact that we want to have some additional time to do community engagement and outreach which is more challenging these days.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 4:48p.m.

Becky Davidson
Recording Secretary