

## Minutes of the

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

September 28, 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, Francisco Gonzalez, Raymond Zeran**

**Committee Members Absent: Phillip Sterner**

**TAB Liaison Present: Peter Dugan**

#### 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, September 28, 2020.

#### AGENDA

Chair Barber stated she was rearranging the order of the Information items. There were no other changes.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Gonzalez, seconded by Zeran to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2020 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Sterner

#### TAB REPORT

Peter Dugan reported the following from the Transportation Advisory Board meeting on September 16, 2020:

Two items were passed that are on the Consent agenda for today. One for the UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) which is a summary of all the budgeted expenditures for transportation planning activities in the metro. The second is a streamlined TIP amendment for I-94 Frontage road Pedestrian Improvements.

Agency reports:

MPCA- working to get three RFPs out VW Settlement money. RFPs are for outstate EV charging stations, replacement of diesel school buses for electric and replacement of diesel in heavy off road vehicles.

MAC- work on highway 5 is going smoothly and on time. Last week of august there were about 80,000 passengers, compared to 240,000 during the same time frame in 2019. Cleaning crews are continuously cleaning in the airport; there are 250 hand sanitizers throughout the airport; there are 250 automatic hand sanitizers throughout the airport. Delta is keeping middle seat open through the year; Southwest through Thanksgiving and will evaluate after.

Chamblis expressed her appreciation for having these updates so Council members can be assured of where things are or where things need to be addressed.

## **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS**

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

### Blue Ribbon Committee

Today staff presented an overview of the MPO structure of the Council to the Governor's Blue Ribbon Committee that is looking at regional governance. The presentation covered federal and state law, MPO planning requirements, the unique structure of TAB and Council, and some background on legal requirements if this MPO was to be redesignated with a new structure. This was an information presentation, with follow-up questions from the Committee. The next meeting of the Committee will review transit governance, including presentations from the State Auditor and House research staff. The Blue Ribbon Committee will have recommendations end of 2020

### MVTA Board Meeting

Councilmembers and staff will attend MVTA's monthly board meeting this Wednesday. This is part of the semi-annual invite of the MVTA board. The topics this month will include a discussion of the Council decision to move the Red Line from MTS division to Metro Transit this upcoming December. The Red Line is currently operated through a contract between MTS and MVTA.

### MTS Operations Update

This past weekend MTS successfully transferred the Washington and Dakota Transit Link service to a new provider (First Transit) as part of the five-year agreement approved in this committee in early summer. Last committee, I mentioned our AWARE taxi transportation service for persons with COVID or COVID symptoms. Since last meeting the Department of Human Services has issued guidance to local counties for the AWARE taxi transportation service – which is for persons with COVID or COVID symptoms. It is anticipated that additional partnerships will be established from others to transport County Health services clients to testing for COVID or for other transportation services for clients that have tested positive.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

### COVID Update

97 employees have been diagnosed with COVID in total since the start of the pandemic, which includes 15 confirmed COVID cases thus far in September.

The 15 cases in September are spread across several facilities:

- Nicollet: 4
- Heywood: 3
- South: 2
- MTPD: 2
- Green Line: 1
- Blue Line: 1
- East: 1
- Ops Support Center: 1

The Council and media were made aware of complaints regarding Metro Transit's COVID protocols and practices. There were 5 OSHA complaints that were filed over the past 3-4 weeks. Two of the complaints resulted in a more formal review and site visits but at the exit conferences, there were no citations given. The other three were all informal reviews (no site visits but written responses given to their questions) and are considered closed due to no further communication from OSHA. The independent, third party review to assess our COVID safety protocols is ongoing.

### Ridership

System ridership is down 67% total compared to pre-pandemic ridership:

Bus - down 64%

Blue Line- down 73%  
Green Line - down 71%  
Northstar - down 96%

Homeless Action Team (HAT)

the Metro Transit Police Department Homeless Action Team won one of the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce’s “Leaders in Local Government” Awards. HAT won the Chamber’s award for “innovation.” Congratulations to Chief Frizell, Captain Blakey, and the entire Homeless Action Team.

**BUSINESS**

**Consent Items:**

Motion was made by Chamblis, seconded by Gonzalez and carried, to approve the following consent items:

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Sterner

1. **2020- 252:** 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Resolution 2020-18

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council:

- Adopt the proposed 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with a budget of \$6,134,275;
- Adopt the attached resolution (2020-18) authorizing the filing of an application with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for a planning grant under the FAST Act; and
- Authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation, for distribution of FHWA and FTA planning funds.

2. **2020- 253:** 2020-2023 and 2021-2024 TIP Amendment for MnDOT: I-94 Frontage Road Pedestrian Project

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve an amendment to the 2020-2023 and 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) to increase the cost of MnDOT’s I-94 pedestrian Project

**Non-Consent Items:**

1. **2020-246:** METRO D Line – City of Minneapolis Joint Powers and Cooperative Construction Agreement

Metro Transit BRT Projects Assistant Director Katie Roth introduced Metro Transit BRT Project Manager Shahin Khazrajafari who presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute agreement 201064 with the City of Minneapolis in the amount of approximately \$4,700,000, for shared fiber communication infrastructure, and locally requested pedestrian and signal improvements at 19 intersections along the D Line BRT project.

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 1 Sterner

2. **2020-247:** METRO D Line – City of Bloomington Joint Powers and Cooperative Construction Agreement

Metro Transit BRT Projects Assistant Director Katie Roth introduced Metro Transit BRT Project Manager Shahin Khazrajafari who presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Gonzalez:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute agreement 20I022 with the City of Bloomington in the amount of approximately \$500,000, for shared fiber communication infrastructure and locally requested pedestrian improvements in conjunction with the D Line BRT project.

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 1 Sterner

3. **2020-248:** METRO D Line – Hennepin County Joint Powers and Cooperative Construction Agreement

Metro Transit BRT Projects Assistant Director Katie Roth introduced Metro Transit BRT Project Manager Shahin Khazrajafari who presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute agreement 20I024 with Hennepin County in the amount of approximately \$3,500,000, for locally requested pedestrian and signal improvements at six intersections along the D Line BRT project.

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

Aye: 6 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Barber  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 2 Sterner, Zeran

4. **2020-249:** METRO D Line – Hennepin County Fiber Optic Reimbursement Agreement

Metro Transit BRT Projects Assistant Director Katie Roth introduced Metro Transit BRT Project Manager Shahin Khazrajafari who presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute agreement 20I023 with Hennepin County in the amount of approximately \$1,250,000 for financial participation in the construction of the fiber optic communication network along the D Line BRT project corridor.

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Sterner

**5. 2020-250: METRO D Line – City of Richfield Joint Powers Agreement**

Metro Transit BRT Projects Assistant Director Katie Roth introduced Metro Transit BRT Project Manager Shahin Khazrajafari who presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute Joint Powers Agreement 20I058 with the City of Richfield for easements, permits, and right-of-way management authority needed for construction of the D Line project

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

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Sterner

**6. 2020-251: METRO D Line – Rejection of Bids for Construction Contract 20P156**

Metro Transit BRT Projects Assistant Director Katie Roth introduced Metro Transit BRT Project Manager Shahin Khazrajafari who presented this item. Zeran asked how this would affect the schedule. Khazrajafari responded that the schedule at this point is not impacted, but the team is looking at alternatives with rebidding and/or combining with major construction. Cummings asked if staff were surprised by having the two bids differing so greatly and what would be changed in the request going forward. Roth answered that staff was surprised but given the time in the season, there was some risk that in order for the contractor to complete the work in the time frame the cost includes working through the winter. Roth continued that better timing of the rebidding would likely improve bids.

Motion by Zeran, seconded by Chamblis:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to reject all bids received for the D Line System Wide Communication Conduit Construction project, contract number 20P156.

Motion carried.

Aye: 7 Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Zeran, Barber

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Sterner

## **INFORMATION**

### 1. TPP Public Comment and Responses

Metropolitan Transportation Services Metropolitan Council Outreach Coordinator Sara Maaske Planning/Financing Deputy Director Amy Vennewitz presented this item. Chamblis stated it was refreshing to hear there was the success of teleworking during the pandemic in terms of reducing congestion and questioned that if teleworking becomes permanent, how can we shift our resources to other areas. Chamblis continued that collecting data about historical inequity is important and that we should be using that in our research and planning. Vennewitz responded that staff are currently conducting a survey on how COVID changed travel patterns in the region and that Council members previously heard the results of the first round. Vennewitz continued that there will be at least two more rounds to collect additional data and with the next round, staff is broadening the sample of who takes the survey – staff will provide the Committee an update on the new approach and results of the current survey in the future. Vennewitz stated the survey will conclude next year but it's not expected that a lot of specific data will be included in this current TPP since it's so new.

### 2. Regional Solicitation Funding Scenarios

Metropolitan Transportation Services Transportation Planning Manager Steve Peterson presented this item. Chamblis expressed delight with the way the information was laid out and that the frame work will be a helpful tool in making decisions and guiding discussions when more detailed information is available.

### 3. Regional Bicycle Transportation Network Guidelines and Measures Study

Metropolitan Transportation Services Planning Analyst Steve Elmer presented his item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:30p.m.

Becky Davidson  
Recording Secretary