

## Minutes of the

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

July 13, 2015

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

**Committee Members Absent:** Jon Commers

### CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Schreiber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:03 p.m. on Monday, July 13, 2015.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Elkins, seconded by Rodriguez to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2015 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

### TAB LIAISON REPORT

Chair Schreiber had provided the committee members with a copy of the Regional Solicitation Approved Projects list. Councilmember Rodriguez explained that these recommendations are being incorporated into the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for those federally funded projects from 2016-2019. It is out for public comment until August 5<sup>th</sup>. TAB will be discussing the TIP at their August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, and it returns to the Transportation Committee on September 14<sup>th</sup>, going to full Council on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Arlene McCarthy added that the total draft TIP for the next four years totals \$3.2 billion.

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

#### MTS Director Arlene McCarthy reported:

1. MVST receipts for the month of June were at 105.49% of the February forecast, a nice rebound from May, when it was only at 87%. That brings year to date with only one more month left in this fiscal year, to 100.52% of the February forecast.
2. MAP-21 expires July 31<sup>st</sup>, the deadline for Congress to extend the current Surface Transportation Authorization bill. Late August is the estimated date when the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) will start to run low on cash for reimbursements to states. That means that July 30<sup>th</sup> and August 7<sup>th</sup> are key dates for Congress and legislative activity. July 30<sup>th</sup> is the day the House of Representatives starts a five week recess through the month of August; August 7<sup>th</sup> is the day that the Senate begins its four week recess through the month of August.

The fact that there is a lack of joint plan between the House and the Senate before their long legislative break means the House is at an advantage, given their different versions. This could come into play with the treatment of the

Surface Transportation Authorization legislation. The House prefers a five month extension of existing authorization and HTF spending authority until December 31, 2015, rather than a new multi-year authorization bill, preferred by the Senate. Before they leave on July 30<sup>th</sup>, the House could pass an authorization extension bill that would include \$11 billion in additional funding to keep the HTF solvent; that would force the Senate to accept the House extension or reject it with no time to make any changes, leading to a potential shutdown on July 31<sup>st</sup>. It appears that the leverage is in the hands of the House, and the most likely outcome will be a five-month reauthorization. One other point of interest: House member Tom Rice (R-South Carolina) introduced a bill to increase the federal gas tax by 10.1 cents per gallon which would be indexed for inflation; this would raise an estimated \$214 billion over ten years for the Highway Trust Fund. It would be offset by other tax decreases, so the bill is viewed as revenue-neutral and one that would greatly benefit Transportation.

3. Update on Metro Mobility Transition: On June 28<sup>th</sup> two contracts for the restructured service areas went into effect. First Transit began operation of the new Metro Mobility South Zone (formerly operated by Transit Team); also, Transit Team began operation of the newly configured West Zone (which includes all of Minneapolis). 11,000 certified riders in 21 different cities switched providers.

Performance so far: We are relatively pleased with the on-time performance of the pickup window; both contracts are averaging more than 97% on time. On board time is meeting the maximum allowable time for 97% of the trips, and there have been zero denials. We are struggling a bit with the South Zone with on-time performance at 87%, which is not acceptable. The problem is a combination of a new service area, new contractor and new drivers, and getting acquainted. We are meeting with the contractor on a daily basis.

Reynoso asked if we set standards on calls per driver ratio. Arlene responded that it all depends on scheduling, and there is sophisticated scheduling software in place – bottom line, it really is a question of resources – are there enough resources in place to meet the demand. Metro Mobility staff are asking the contractor if they need more drivers. Reynoso asked if we had the option of insisting that more drivers be hired, and Ms. McCarthy said yes, they have performance measures that they must meet by contract.

### **Metro Transit General Manager report:**

Vince Pellegrin, Chief Operating Officer, introduced himself and said that he was filling in for Brian Lamb.

Mid –Year Ridership: Ridership is up 6 percent – or around 2.4 million rides – through the first half of the year. There were 42.2 million rides through the end of June, about 2.4 million more rides than halfway through last year. Ridership is 1%, or 377,000 rides, below the year-end goal of 87.5 million rides.

The Blue Line has seen a significant increase in ridership, up 14 % from last year to just over 5 million rides. There have been 5.6 million rides on the Green Line. Northstar ridership is up slightly, about 420 rides or 0.12 %, to around 344,000.

Bus ridership has declined as customers shift from buses to the Green Line in the Central Corridor. We have had 31.2 million bus rides this year, and average weekday bus ridership is about 207,000 – about 10 % below last year.

June was an especially active month for special event ridership. For the first time since 2011, Twins attendance topped 40,000. The Blue Line had its best Saturday of the year on June 20, when the

Twins played at Target Field, and concerts were held at TCF Bank Stadium, the Walker Art Center and in downtown Minneapolis. Combined, there were nearly 84,000 light rides that day.

**Rail Safety:** Light rail experienced its first collision-free month since the Green Line went into service in June 2014. There was one collision in May. Rail Operations, Safety and Metro Transit police continue to identify and address safety concerns and make adjustments as needed. The latest initiative involved painting warnings at unsafe waiting areas at around 40 intersections.

**Construction impacts:** Operations have gone well since Nicollet Mall detours went into effect last Monday. Detoured buses have experienced few delays and outreach efforts have helped smooth the transition for customers. Improved signage and shelters at detour stops have been or will be implemented to further improve the customer experience. Our next operational challenge will be lane closures on I-394. Without viable detour routes, customers are being encouraged to be patient and take earlier trips when possible. There are 20 express bus routes that use the I-394 high-occupancy lanes that will be used for general purpose traffic while the roadway is repaired.

Councilmember Rodriguez asked for clarification about usage being up 6% from last year, but slightly behind the goal numbers. Mr. Pellegrin said that is correct, and added that there is a budgetary goal set each year to increase ridership, and that's where we're at with it now.

Councilmember Munt mentioned that it was good to see ridership up by 14% on the Blue Line, and asked what he thought it was attributed to. Mr. Pellegrin answered that the Twins are pitching a lot better – but in all seriousness, ridership for special events is doing really well and Saturday ridership is much improved. At Target Field it has taken up to 45 minutes to clear the platform. He added that it's been a longstanding joke that the best improvement for Northstar would be in funding a Twins pitcher. Councilmember Elkins added that he attended the game on Father's Day, June 21<sup>st</sup>, and that both the train and the stadium were full.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Consent Items:**

2015-159: 2015-2018 TIP Amendment: Metro Transit Orange Line Corridor Design (MTS Senior Planner Joe Barbeau). Chair Schreiber asked if there was a motion to approve as a consent item; Letofsky made the motion, seconded by Elkins, to proceed to full Council as a consent item. **Motion carried.**

### **Non-Consent Items:**

2014-157: Southwest Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line Extension) Municipal Consent Plans and Public Hearing. Metro Transit's Assistant General Manager/TSD-SW Craig Lamothe, presented this item.

The proposed action is that the Metropolitan Council:

- Direct staff to prepare Southwest LRT Municipal Consent Plans consistent with the project scope as approved on July 8, 2015, and submit to Hennepin County and the cities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis; and
- Authorize scheduling and conducting a joint public hearing with the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council on the revised plans on August 27, 2015 at Hennepin County's Minneapolis Central Library.

Elkins asked about individual cities holding their own hearings. Mr. Lamothe replied that by state statute we are required to hold one joint hearing. Reynoso suggested that it would be wise to go to each one of the communities for municipal consent. Dorfman recommended that we encourage attendees to use transit when attending the Minneapolis Downtown Library hearing due to the limited parking; Chair Schreiber added that the information packet should be distributed to other Council members, and Arlene McCarthy suggested that the power point slide be attached to the business item as it goes to full Council. A motion to approve was made by Munt, which was seconded by Letofsky.  
**Non-consent to Council.**

## **INFORMATION**

1. Transportation Funding Overview. Metropolitan Transportation Services Deputy Director Planning and Finance Amy Vennewitz concluded her presentation initiated at the June 22<sup>nd</sup> Transportation Committee meeting. This portion of the presentation included Transit Revenues and Expenditures.
2. Multi-Year Planning Work Update. Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Katie White presented the highlights of the Transportation Policy Plan's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) 2015-2016 Program.
3. Orange Line Update – Knox Avenue Layout and Downtown Access Options. Metro Transit's Senior Manager, Transitway Development Charles Carlson discussed the downtown Orange Line routing concepts with a six-month look ahead.
4. West Broadway Study Concepts. Metro Transit's Senior Manager, Transitway Development Charles Carlson presented slides discussing the funding partners and decision making process, the study schedule, the arterial BRT alternative, modern streetcar alternative and the economic development and revitalization approach. Slides also included information from ongoing public outreach events.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Linda Thayer  
Recording Secretary