

Metropolitan Council

Metro Transit Heywood Chambers, 560 Sixth Avenue North, Minneapolis MN 55411

Meeting of the Transportation Committee Monday, January 23, 2012

Members Present	Steve Elkins, Chair Lona Schreiber, Vice Chair	Roxanne Smith Edward Reynoso	James Brimeyer Jennifer Munt
Members Absent	John Doan	Jon Commers	Adam Duininck
Staff Presiding	Brian Lamb, General Manager Metro Transit	Arlene McCarthy, Director Metropolitan Transportation Services	
TAB Liaison	Robert Lilligren		

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Committee Chair Elkins called the regular meeting of the Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. on January 23, 2012 at Metropolitan Council Chambers St. Paul.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Elkins noted that materials for item 2012-26 have been provided since the publication of the agenda, and also that item 2012-30 has been removed from this meeting agenda. Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Smith to adopt the amended agenda for the January 23, 2012 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Schreiber, seconded by Brimeyer to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2012 Transportation Committee meeting. Motion passed.

METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

Brian Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit, reported the following:

2011 Ridership

Customers boarded Metro Transit buses and trains nearly 81 million times in 2011 – an increase of 2.7 million rides over 2010. Bus ridership accounted for all of the year-over-year gains, posting a 4.3 percent increase to 69.8 million. Hiawatha light rail ridership topped 10.4 million for the second time in the line's seven-year history, falling short of last year's record year by just 55,000 rides. Although daily commuter ridership continues to increase, the overall ridership decline is attributable to fewer special event riders. We've been thanking our customers for their patronage using displays on buses, rail platforms and bus stops as well as banners on some of our buildings.

GO-TO Use, Sales, Purchase Options Expanded in 2011

The Revenue Operations department reports that over 250,000 individual Go-To Cards were used on Metro Transit buses and trains in 2011, representing a 16 percent increase over 2010 and 42 percent of all fares paid. Sales of Go-To Cards through the web store totaled \$5.9 million – 38 percent higher than 2010 sales. The number of Go-To Card sales outlets at locations such as grocery stores expanded from 40 to 73 in 2011. Outlets accounted for 14.8 percent of all prepaid Go-To Card sales at \$5 million in sales during 2011.

Bus-Related Accidents 7.4% Lower in 2011

The Risk Management and Safety departments report that the rate of bus-related accidents per 100,000 miles dropped to 3.91 in 2011 from 4.19 in 2010 – a 7.4 percent improvement. This measure reflects all traffic accidents (collisions with vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles or other objects) and customer claims for accidents on buses such as falls. Traffic accidents improved by 8.4 percent. Customer accident claims improved 4.3 percent. Since 2001, the number of accidents per 100,000 miles has dropped more than 24 percent.

Revised Code of Conduct Card Placed on Buses and Trains

The Marketing department reports that an updated “Code of Conduct” interior card has been placed on all buses and trains. The card (located near the front door of buses and close to train doors) is a reference for operators, customers and other transit staff with guidelines on proper behavior on buses and trains. This version of the card distinguishes more clearly between discourteous behavior and activities that are against the law.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR REPORT

Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS, reported the following:

Twin Cities Transit Basics. A presentation on transit basics was given to the TAB by Cole Hiniker, MTS Planner, and John Levin, MT Director of Service Development. A copy of the presentation is provided in the meeting packet. Staff is planning to work with the Communications department to provide a series of different presentations of this type.

Bottineau Boulevard. McCarthy reminded the committee that DEIS scoping meetings are being held this week and next week. FTA staff are planning on attending Wednesday 1/25 meeting at the Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC) Facility, North Minneapolis. Hennepin County is accepting public comments on scoping until February 17, 2012.

MVST Revenue. The November 2011 forecast was more conservative than the February 2011 forecast. The good news is that November receipts totaled 114% of the forecast and the December receipts totaled 119% of the November forecast. For the first six months of SFY 2012, receipts are at 103% of projected based on the November 2011 state forecast.

Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill. The House Transportation and Infrastructure staff is working on finalizing their Surface Transportation authorization bill text. Three Senate committees (Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, Finance Committee and Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee) have not yet completed their portions of the bill but are working on them. The extension of SAFETEA-LU runs through 3/31. FHWA distributed the first 6 months of highway funding to DOT. The amount distributed to Minnesota was roughly 5.5% less than FY 2011.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Brian Lamb introduced Steve Jaeger, Bus Operations Manager at East Metro Garage Facility.

Jaeger presented the employee recognition award to Jerry Larson, Operator. Larson has been a Relief Instructor since 2011 and also served as Heywood’s Safety and Security representative. He is a certified Safety Keys Instructor and has received the safe operator award 14 of 14 years, and the outstanding operator award 12 of 14 years. He is also a graduate of the Leadership Academy.

BUSINESS

Consent Items

There were no consent items at this meeting.

Non-Consent Items

2012-26: Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line): Business Marketing Contract

Robin Kaufman, Asst. Director-Administration, Communication and Outreach, presented this item. Brimeyer requested an executive summary of the objectives that MOD & Co. hopes to achieve with the program. He also had a question not related to the business item; he asked for status of the funding of business loans, which Kaufman provided. Munt asked if there is a way to quantify success in the program, how businesses will know if the program is helping. Kaufman answered that there are items written in the scope of work that can quantify, and there metrics and monitoring of the program provided, for example monitoring the amount of coupons are used at businesses.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute the appropriate joint powers agreement(s) with local authorities and contract with Mod & Company for a two-year professional services contract in an amount not to exceed \$1.2 million.

Motion passed.

2012-27: Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (Green Line): Authorization to Approve Contract Amendment for Environmental Testing and Monitoring During Construction

CCLRT Project manager Kathryn O'Brien presented the business item and answered a question from Brimeyer whether there could be more amendments to come. O'Brien stated that there may be; there could be unknown conditions that surface after work is begun.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to: Execute an amendment to the professional services contract with Braun Intertec for environmental testing and monitoring during construction as part of the Central Corridor LRT (Green Line) project in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 for a total amended contract value of \$1,049,229.26.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair Elkins stated that this item could proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

Information: Interchange Project Update

Metro Transit Lead Project Manager MarySue Abel presented background on the Interchange Project.

2012-28: Minneapolis Interchange Project – Programmatic Agreement

CCLRT Project manager Kathryn O'Brien presented the business item. There were no questions or discussion by committee members.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to take the following actions required to satisfactorily complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process:

- Sign the Minneapolis Interchange Project Programmatic Agreement, developed jointly between the Federal Transit Administration, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office pursuant to federal regulations.
- Execute a cooperative Agreement with Hennepin County and Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority identifying the County as the entity with primary responsibility for implementing the terms of the Programmatic Agreement.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair Elkins stated that this item could proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

2012-29: Light Rail Transit/Bus Rapid Transit System Name and Identity Recommendations

Metro Transit Customer Services and Marketing Director Bruce Howard, and Senior Graphic Designer Charles Decker presented this item and answered a question from Reynoso as to what Northstar signage would look like, (Howard stated the Northstar signage will not change) and also a question from Munt about what would happen to the "Metro" logo when an advertiser "wraps" a bus. Howard answered that they are looking at whether or not to have wrapping advertising on the BRT. It is possible that the vehicles would not carry any advertising during the first couple of years of service in order build up the brand with the public, and then perhaps only allow bus side vehicle advertising after that period so that the logo would still be visible.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve "METRO" as the new name for the region's system of light rail and highway bus rapid transit services.
2. Approve the new METRO logo, vehicle designs and station signage concepts as recommended in the attached drawings.

Motion passed.

2012-31: Authorization to Execute a Capital Grant Agreement with SWT

Director Metropolitan Transportation Services Arlene McCarthy presented this item. There were no questions or discussion by committee members

Motion by Munt, seconded by Smith:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute an agreement with SouthWest Transit (SWT) for \$1,957,196 to provide the 20% required local match for a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) federal award of \$7,828,782.

Motion passed.

Hearing no objection, Chair Elkins stated that this item could proceed to the full Council as a consent item.

2012-12: Adopt Transportation Committee 2012 Work Plan

At the last T.C. meeting, Chair Elkins asked the committee members to provide their list of top ten items of interest for the 2012 T.C. work plan. Some members have responded but, when combining members' lists, the compiled list is rather large.

Arlene McCarthy stated that some of the items will be coming before the committee automatically at their appropriate milestones, such as: MnDOT Highway State Multimodal Highway Investment Plan, Transit Regional Services Improvement Plan (RSIP), Interchange Project, Metro Freight Study, 2012 Transportation System Performance Evaluation.

Lamb noted that members expressed an interest in looking into fare policy and options. This is a very complicated scenario-based subject. The Transportation Committee may want to consider naming one or two members to a task group to work with staff on various scenarios, outcomes and impacts based on modeling performed by staff. The Transportation Committee could direct staff to pursue that. Schrieber stated that prior to spending a lot of time and energy on investigating different fares, the T.C. should have the approval of the Council Chair and Executive Branch. Lamb stated that for forecasting and budget discussions, alternatives analyses should be discussed in 2012 in order to consider changes in July 2013, which is the start of the next biennium. McCarthy mentioned the existing Regional Fare Committee, consisting of Metro Council staff and members from each of the regional providers.

Elkins asked to add the following to the 2012 work plan list: FHWA 4-year evaluation of the MPO for recertification, and FTA Triennial Review.

The top three major policy items to focus on are:

Fare Structure. McCarthy and Lamb will discuss with Regional Administrator Born and Council Chair Haigh and report at the next meeting.

Corridors of Opportunity/Community Development. Discussed holding a joint CD/TC meeting or a Committee of the Whole meeting. It was decided that the Committee of the Whole is the better alternative. Staff will speak with Guy Peterson/Allison Bell about Committee of the Whole meeting schedules.

Regional Solicitation Programming Review. Chair Elkins has been in discussions with TAB Chair Hargis, who has expressed a desire to work on this. McCarthy will discuss with TAB Chair Hargis and TAB Liaison Lilligren how to approach this item.

Schreiber stated that staff is very good at providing items that need the approval of the committee, many of which are transit items. She would like to see a more global view, perhaps a presentation each month from an outside organization, dealing with transportation issues. McCarthy stated that some of these presenters are part of the work plan and will be worked into the Transportation Committee schedule as the agendas permit. Schreiber also suggested a monthly report from the TAB liaison following the monthly TAB meeting.

Staff will work on refining the 2012 Transportation Committee Work Plan attachment for the next Transportation Committee meeting

Motion by Brimeyer, seconded by Munt to delay action on Business Item 2012-12 to the February 13, 2012 Transportation Committee meeting.
Motion passed.

INFORMATION

1. Transit Link Dial-a-Ride Program Status

MTS Assistant Director Contracted Transit Services Gerri Sutton presented an update of the Transit Link Dial-a-Ride Program status and statistics since the program implementation in 2010 (and 2011 being the first full year of service). MTS Project Administrator Sheila Williams was also present to answer questions as needed.

Sutton stated that staff is working with MnDOT on a joint powers agreement in order to allow service to select business districts or health facilities across the 7-county border. Brimeyer commented that providing service to destinations outside the 7-county area should include premium pricing or MnDOT funding. McCarthy stated that this is more of a reciprocal system with Wright County (MnDOT) funded trips.

Munt asked if there could be discussion about providing evening/weekend Transit Link service. McCarthy stated that all transit, including regular route services have requests for more service. The Regional Service Improvement Plan (RSIP) is identifying the different services being provided and will help in reviewing unmet services, needs.

2. Transitway Guidelines Comment Summary

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Mary Karlsson and Planner Cole Hiniker presented this item. Councilmember Wendy Wulff, Chair of the Transitway Guidelines Committee, was also present to answer questions as needed. The presentation included highlighted major themes and comments and responses. The Transitway Guidelines will be updated as necessary prior to Transportation Committee action in February.

Munt stated that many cities have already begun work on TOD plans around station areas. Cities would like to have the opportunity to inform about where transit stations are located, taking planned land use into consideration. Instead, the decision is made by the Corridor Management Committee. She stated that in order to make TOD work, that we should offer groups the opportunity to feed information to the CMC in order to maximize development.

Wulff stated that information will be sent out to Transportation Committee members electronically. Committee members will receive an e-mail of a red-lined version showing the changes, and the changed version will be posted on the Metro Council website to review. A spreadsheet of all comments is available; committee members were satisfied with what was presented today.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Schreiber adjourned the Transportation Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m. January 23, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,
LuAnne Major, Recording Secretary