

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

## Committee Members Present:

Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Zelle

## Committee Members Absent:

None

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Chair Zelle called the regular meeting of the Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:01 p.m. on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 15 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Fredson

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Chamblis, seconded by Johnson to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2021 regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole. **Motion carried** on the following roll call:

Aye: 15 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Fredson

## BUSINESS

- 2021-315 That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2022-2025 TIP to remove planned improvements at the CSAH 35 (Portland Avenue) intersection with American Boulevard in Richfield.
- 2021-316 That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2022-2025 TIP to change a terminus and add a trail and roundabout to the project description of Ramsey County's Lexington Parkway extension.
- 2021-317 That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2022-2025 TIP to change the scope of MnDOT's MN 3 project (SP# 1921-110) to reflect the construction of a trail.
- 2021-318 That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2022-2025 TIP to add a new project for the apportionment of the Orange Line Small Starts Grant Agreement (SSGA).
- 2021-319 That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2022-2025 TIP to accommodate a total project cost decrease (and

federal funding increase) to MnDOT's US 10 bridge replacement and rehabilitation project in Anoka.

2021-320 That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2022-2025 TIP to add a new project near the intersection of Concord St (MN 156) and Page St. in St. Paul.

2021-321 That the Metropolitan Council adopt an amendment to the 2022-2025 TIP to increase the cost and add installation of a clearform catchment system.

2021-322 That the Metropolitan Council adopt four amendments to the 2022-2025 TIP to:

- Add an installment of an automatic gate and associated crime prevention features for night closure at the Burns Avenue Overlook in St. Paul. (2021-268)
- Add a new project to fund start-up operating costs for electric carshare in Minneapolis and St. Paul. (2021-279)
- Add a new project to fund mobility hub equipment and community engagement in Minneapolis. (2021-280)
- Add a new project to fund the purchase of two battery electric buses and two charging stations with associated electrical upgrades for SouthWest Transit. (2021-281)

It was moved by Barber and seconded by Wulff. **Motion carried** on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 15 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Fredson

## INFORMATION

### 1. METRO Orange Line Update

The following Metro Transit staff gave an update on the METRO Orange Line BRT project and service launch: Charles Carlson, Director, BRT Projects; Derek Berube, Manager, Engineering and Construction; David Hanson, Assistant Director, Field Operations; and Kelsi Stones, Supervisor, Market Development. Carlson began with an overview of the project. The METRO Orange Line is a seven-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line from Downtown Minneapolis to Burnsville which builds on decades of highway and transit investment along I-35W/I-35. The Orange Line will provide all-day, bi-directional service to destinations along the corridor. The Orange Line will be opening for service on December 4, 2021 and had a \$150.7 million project budget. Berube then shared pictures of a virtual tour of the line. Hanson then presented information about operations. Service will be every 15 minutes on weekdays and every 30 minutes on weekends. The Orange Line will provide increased connecting service including new routes, and increased frequency for both the Orange Line and connecting routes is planned as operator availability increases. Hanson also provided information about the Orange Line bus fleet. Soft opening was on October 21<sup>st</sup> to test route functionality, which performed well without any issues. 139 Orange Line staff and operators have been trained so far. Stones then shared information about the Grand Opening events. Orange Line will begin service operations on December 4. A grand opening event is planned for Saturday, December 4 at 1:00pm at the I-35W and Lake Street Station Plaza. Rides on Orange Line will be free December 4-6, 2021.

Council Members thanked staff for their hard work bringing the Orange Line to opening. Council Members had questions and comments regarding the Orange Line grand opening event and interjurisdictional cooperation.

## 2. Regional Economic Perspectives

Michael Larson, Planning Analyst, Community Development, introduced regional economic initiatives that are supported by partners of the Council. Larson introduced panel members Tawana Black and Andrea Ferstan, Center for Economic Inclusion, and Peter Frosch and Amanda Taylor, Greater MSP. Larson began with an overview of the Regional Economic Framework. The Council adopted the Regional Economic Framework last year in partnership with the Center for Economic Inclusion and Greater MSP. The framework developed and integrated nine key economic strategies for the region. It allowed access to competitive dollars from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA); EDA created six funding programs to award ARPA funding, the largest being the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, an effort designed to revitalize regional economies by growing new or scaling up regional industry clusters. In partnership with the Center for Economic Inclusion and many others, Greater MSP is leading the development of the region's proposal for the Build Back Better Regional Challenge: the Bold North BioInnovation Cluster. The proposal's vision is to build the nation's most inclusive bio-innovation cluster by building on existing competitive assets in health and agriculture including industry leadership, talent, research, and infrastructure. The Center for Economic Inclusion will support the centering of racial equity and driving accountability for equitable outcomes across the project's components. Phase 1 of the proposal was submitted to EDA in October 2021. Regions moving to Phase 2 will receive up to \$500,000 in technical assistance funds to support the development of a full application. The team should learn in December 2021 if they will be moving to Phase 2. EDA will then select 20 to 30 regions to receive awards from \$25 to \$100 million to implement proposed projects. Greater MSP created a Regional Federal Funding Hub to support eligible applicants, help identify projects that are consistent with the Regional Economic Framework, provide technical assistance, make introductions to EDA representatives, and write letters of support. Panel members shared their perspectives on the project. Peter Frosch, Greater MSP began and introduced Amanda Taylor to share more information about the project and grant process. Many of the projects are located directly on the Green Line and the investment in transit could be an asset to the application to the EDA. Ferstan and Black, Center for Economic Inclusion, shared their goal of centering racial equity on the key metrics of the project.

Council members thanked the panelists and their organizations for their work and recognized the heavy lift of such a large project. Council Members Cummings asked what happens next in phase 2. Frosch clarified that the federal government is expected to approve only five percent of the over 500 proposals submitted, and while he is confident that the region submitted a strong proposal, he believes that even if the project is not selected they should still continue to talk about the BioInnovation idea. Taylor shared that EDA is congressionally required to award the money by September 2022, and the funding needs to be spent within five years. Council Members had other questions and comments about the focus on bio-innovation in the region, connecting good jobs to the outer edges of the region, and positioning the region in a global economy.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Bridget Toskey  
Recording Secretary