

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

February 11, 2019

LOCATION: Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Gail Dorfman, Cara Letofsky, Jennifer Munt, Lona Schreiber

Committee Members Absent: Jon Commers, Marie McCarthy, Edward Reynoso

TAB Liaison Present:

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Barber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:08 p.m. on Monday, February 11, 2019 in the Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Motion by Letofsky, seconded by Schreiber to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Letofsky to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2019 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR AND METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson reported:

Weather impacts

Weather continues to make February a challenging month for Metro Mobility service, anticipating only 3 days in first half of the month that will not be impacted by weather. There is an impact on on-time performance, and many customers choose to cancel. We have sent alerts out to customers and are also asking locations to make sure walks are shoveled.

Riverview

Public Comment period has closed, we originally were going to bring it to tonight's meeting but have moved the item to the 2/25 Transportation Committee because we wanted to: 1) take more time to address the public comment report 2) complete requested meetings with Tribal nations. Today we met and received input from MN Historical Society staff who lead the Dakota Community Council and next week we will be meeting with the Prairie Island Indian Community, Chair Slawik and Council member Barber will be part of that meeting.

Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

Winter weather response

Sub-zero temperatures and snow have created some incredibly challenging operating conditions these last few weeks. Last Monday, ice-covered power lines and tracks led to service delays on the Blue Line. As a precaution against damage, light rail vehicles are programmed to turn off when there are interruptions in the power supply. Our Track Department has also responded to eight cracked rails over the past two weeks – more than twice the amount we see in a normal winter. Rails are vulnerable to cracking in extreme cold when they stretch and become tense. Temporary fixes have been made at all locations, and we'll make permanent repairs when it warms up later this year.

Snow that fell during three different commute times last week also led to service delays. Despite the challenging conditions, our staff have responded remarkably.

Overnight rail repairs were made in -20 degree temperatures. We've heard reports of managers picking operators up at their homes when their vehicles wouldn't start. Operators have been commended for looking out for their passengers. And police have been involved in increased efforts to ensure everyone has a safe place to stay on extremely cold nights.

Downtown St. Paul shelter improvements

A new waiting shelter was recently installed outside the old Pioneer Press Building – the first of several planned improvements to downtown St. Paul bus stops. The new shelter is located on 5th Street between Cedar and Wabasha streets. The busy boarding stop had previously been without a shelter, in part because it's located on a hill with a narrow sidewalk. Bus stop improvements were incorporated into the redevelopment of the St. Paul newspaper's former headquarters into nearly 150 apartments for low- and middle-income earners. Other downtown St. Paul stops that will be improved this year include:

- Minnesota Street and 6th Street East, where plans call for a new shelter
- 6th and Wabasha streets, where plans call for a replacement shelter

Plans call for new and replacement shelters to be installed at six other locations through 2022.

Dorfman asked how cracks in the rail are discovered. Kooistra said sometimes they are discovered by an interruption in electrical currents and other times people visually notice them.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

There were no consent items on the agenda.

Non-Consent Items:

1. 2019-40: Metro Mobility Sedan Replacement

Metropolitan Transportation Services Fleet Services Manager Paul Colton presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Dorfman, seconded by Schreiber:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a purchase agreement with Midway Ford (State of MN Contract 134736) for up to 24 replacement Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) in an amount not to exceed \$750,000.

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

2. 2019-24: Public Hearing on Proposed Elimination of Route 614

Metro Transit Route & System Planning Senior Planner Steve Mahowald presented this item.

Munt thanked Mahowald for the collaboration with the City of Minnetonka and for the effort exerted to save the route. Dorfman asked how close the area is to the nearest proposed SWLRT station. Mahowald said it is about 3-4 miles and a conceptual route such as what Dorfman mentioned has been discussed in the future 2035 build plan.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Dorfman:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes a public hearing to accept comments on proposed elimination of Route 614.

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

3. **2019-36 SW:** Metro Transit Heywood Office and Police – Facility Furniture
Metro Transit Engineering & Facilities Project Manager Robert Rimstad and Metro Transit Senior Project Coordinator Molly Ellis presented this item.

Munt said she is supportive of this item because it welcomes the community into our area and thus we need more furniture than if we had just staff using the furniture.

Motion by Schreiber, seconded by Letofsky:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute a contract for the procurement of facility furniture for the Metro Transit Heywood Office and Police facility for an amount not to exceed \$1,176,000.

Motion carried.

4. **2019-38:** Orange Line Engineering Services Contract Amendment
Metro Transit Engineering & Facilities Project Manager Jim Harwood presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Dorfman, seconded by Letofsky:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute amendment two to contract 15P138 with HNTB Corporation in the amount of \$531,082 for engineering services for the Orange Line project. This amendment would bring the cumulative contract value to \$8,212,292.

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

5. **2019-39:** Orange Line BRT Knox Avenue Transitway Cooperative Construction Agreement
Metro Transit Engineering & Facilities Project Manager Jim Harwood presented this item.

There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Munt, seconded by Letofsky:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Cooperative Construction Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for construction of the Orange Line BRT I-494 and Knox Avenue underpass.

Motion carried.

INFORMATION

1. Ridership Report

Metropolitan Transportation Services Contracted Transit Services Manager John Harper presented this item.

Letofsky asked what the anticipated decrease in ridership was projected to be when the fare increase took place. Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra answered that it was expected that there would be a decrease of 4.5% immediately but it would rebound over 2 years. Kooistra added that today we should be at a 2.5% ridership reduction, in the rebound period. Dorfman asked if these numbers

took special events into consideration, Harper answered that yes, they factored in. Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson said aBRT lines are along local bus routes so there will naturally be local bus line declines as routes switch to aBRT. Kooistra mentioned that evaluations happen on a quarterly process and more reductions have happened and less reinvestments have taken place. Kooistra said there is proof that ridership follows investment so there is a budget issue and bus suffers the most because of State and Federal funding. Munt asked about our Metro Mobility deficit. Thompson said it is \$36.5 million in the biennium and it will grow from there without any change. Munt said if we cannot deny ADA service then we will have to take from our bus service. Kooistra said we are looking at funding Metro Mobility under other sources so that doesn't happen. Letofsky said Route 2 has exciting things happening with investing in speed and reliability improvements. Dorfman added that Metro Mobility funding is going to continue to be a challenge moving forward and it needs to have sustainable funding that isn't to the detriment of the rest of our system.

2. Transit Signal Priority

Metro Transit Control Center Manager Gary Nyberg presented this item.

Letofsky asked if it was known how much time will be saved on Route 5 from end-to-end. Nyberg said 2-6 minutes was the original estimate, but buses still have to collect the data to find out. Munt asked what permissions are needed to have signal preemption, MnDOT, the county, public works, etc. Nyberg said the jurisdictions involved are all coordinating and participating – cities, counties, sometimes the state.

3. Final Four Service Plan

Metro Transit Field Operations Assistant Director Dave Hanson and Metro Transit Street Operations Manager Antoinette Brasson presented this item.

Dorfman asked if there is pre-planning with homeless assistance agencies like there was before the super bowl. Hanson said the magnitude of this event is not as interruptive to the community because it is so much smaller. Dorfman said it was helpful to have a flyer so that folks knew they could still ride the trains and access shelters – letting people know that their lives would not be impacted. Dorfman suggested touching base with non-profits in the area. Hanson said he will take this feedback and share it. Munt said she is glad transit helps allow events like this but she does not want regular customers to feel less important. Munt asked if this was a money-maker or a money-loser. Hanson said there will be a post-bill to the NCAA after the event so there should be less folks who ride without paying. Dorfman asked if it is a secure perimeter, Hanson said it is.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Jenna Ernst
Recording Secretary