

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

October 14, 2019

LOCATION: Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN

Committee Members Present: Chair Deb Barber, Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson (not present for Council actions), Reva Chamblis, Molly Cummings, Kris Fredson, Phillip Sterner, Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent: Christopher Ferguson, Francisco Gonzalez

TAB Liaison Present: None

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, October 14, 2019 in the Metropolitan Council Chambers, Saint Paul, MN.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Zeran to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Cummings, seconded by Zeran to approve the minutes of the September 23, 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

TIP Amendments

Normally these are routine items but received notification from the Federal Highway that they will be delaying the approval of the TIP by a few months because they are putting in some extra processes into the review (not just for Metropolitan Council but the State). Impact of that is there are some projects that were going to be starting construction during that time frame that were in last year's TIP. Since construction can't begin unless the project is listed in the TIP, MTS is working with MnDOT on amending the current TIP to include these projects ensuring the projects can stay on schedule.

Metro Mobility 101

Next Monday and Tuesday MTS will be hosting House and Senate staff for a Metro Mobility 101 session, which will include an overview, bus garage tour and view of dispatching work in action. There is currently about 30-40 staff signed up for the two days.

State's Towards 0 Death Initiative

So far in 2019 there have been 92 fatalities in the metro area; last year there were 122 fatalities at this point, which is about a 30% decrease.

Cummings asked about the data sharing request. Thompson replied that it was approved last session and staff is currently working with DHS on a agreement to actually share the data. Thompson continued that first we need to share and understand the data because we can understand if we are able to recapture federal money.

Metro Transit Chief Operating Officer Vince Pellegrin on behalf of Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra reported:

Twins Ridership

Ridership to Target Field reached its highest level since 2012 this season. More than 717,000 rides were provided to and from Target Field this year, a 37% increase from 2018. The biggest gains were seen on the METRO Green Line, where ridership increased by 58%. The increase reflects stronger attendance at Target Field, up more than 15%. Post-season hopes are now being directed toward Minnesota United, which will host a first-round playoff match at Allianz Field on Sunday, Oct. 20. The match against Los Angeles begins at 7:30 p.m.

Bus Lanes

Dedicated bus lanes that have been in use for several weeks on two busy Minneapolis corridors are improving travel times and reliability. The bus lanes are located on Chicago and Hennepin avenues, where buses were frequently slowed by congestion. Travel times in the sections of Hennepin Avenue where bus lanes were added have been cut by about 12%. Travel times in the roughly two-block stretch of Chicago Avenue with bus lanes have been reduced by about 40 percent. The savings mean trips are a few minutes shorter than they used to be. Data also shows that the variation in travel time while using the bus lanes is significantly improved. This fall, bus lanes are expected to be added to a portion of Nicollet Avenue between Franklin Avenue and Lake Street. The bus lane additions are being pursued in partnership with the City of Minneapolis.

Transit Centers

A passenger waiting area at the Mall of America Transit Center opened today as a \$25 million renovation of the facility begins to wrap up. The new indoor waiting area provides more direct access to the mall, as well as a family restroom and better lighting. Spaces have also been created for operators who are on breaks and for transit police. A grand opening for the facility will be held later this year. Attention is now turning to the Northtown Transit Center in Blaine, where we'll be relocating our existing facility due to mall owner redevelopment plans. To inform the new transit center's design, neighbors are being invited to two open houses next week. Those open houses will be held on: Wednesday, Oct. 23, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Spring Lake Park City Hall, and on Thursday, Oct. 24, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Northtown Mall Community Room in Blaine.

Operator Hiring:

Metro Transit remains about 90 operators below ideal staffing level. There has some strong recent classes and remain optimistic, though. Plans are still in development, but Metro Transit is aiming to host a one-day hiring event where applicants could interview, test and receive conditional job offers on the same day, pending a background check and drug screening. Tentative date for that is Saturday, Dec. 7. Still working on a venue. If successful, this could become a model we return to more regularly in the future.

BUSINESS

Consent Items:

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

1. **2019-282:** 2019-2022 / 2020-2023 TIP Amendment: Scott County CSAH 2/CSAH 91 Roundabout

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve the request to amend the 2019-2022 and 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) to modify the geometry and trail connections for Scott County's County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 2/CSAH 91 roundabout project.

NOTE: TAB approved this amendment to the 2020-2023 TIP. However, staff has been informed that the TIP will most likely not be approved by USDOT until January or February 2020, as opposed to November 2019, as had been expected. Therefore, this request also includes amendment of the 2019-2022 TIP, which will be the "active" TIP prior to USDOT approval.

2. **2019-283:** 2019-2022 / 2020-2023 TIP Amendment for Dakota County: CSAH 42 Mill and Overlay

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council approve the request to amend the 2019-2022 and 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) to combine two County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 42 overlay projects into one project.

NOTE: TAB approved this amendment to the 2020-2023 TIP. However, staff has been informed that the TIP will most likely not be approved by USDOT until January or February 2020, as opposed to November 2019, as had been expected. Therefore, this request also includes amendment of the 2019-2022 TIP, which will be the “active” TIP prior to USDOT approval.

3. **2019-284:** Authorize Execution of Contract Options with MCI (Motor Coach Industries)

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council Authorize the Regional Administrator to exercise existing contract options on Contract 14P053 with Motor Coach Industries (MCI) to purchase two (2) replacement Coach express buses in an amount not to exceed \$1,230,000.

4. **2019-285:** Purchase Apollo Video Technology

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to enter into a sole source agreement with Apollo Video Technology in an amount not to exceed \$800,000 to purchase up to 100 DVR/Camera systems and spare units.

Non-Consent Items:

1. **2019-259 JT:** 2019 3rd Quarter Capital Amendment

Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie and Metropolitan Transportation Services Budget Manager Nickolas Hendrikson presented this item. Cummings asked what would have happened if we hadn't had saved the \$10M that is now being applied towards the Bus and Rail maintenance program. Petrie explained that the Bus and Rail maintenance program is very large and which currently only has the first three years funded and three years unfunded, therefore this \$10M will help fulfill some of that need but we still have to find money to fully fund the program. Zeran asked why there are two items on the agenda regarding the NorthStar drop table. Petrie responded that with regards to the budget amendment, this is bringing the money forward which must be done before the other business item which is amending the contract.

Motion by Sterner, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the 2019 Unified Budget as indicated and in accordance with the attached tables.

Motion carried.

2. **2019-269:** 2020 Operating Grant Applications to the Funding Transitway Counties

Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Zeran, seconded by Cummings:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to apply for calendar 2020 grants from the counties of Anoka, Hennepin and Ramsey.

Operating (Base and Non-Annual Share)

- METRO Blue Line LRT Est. \$13.9M
 - Hennepin County - Est. \$13.9M
- METRO Green Line LRT Est. \$13.5M

- Hennepin County – Est. \$8.1M
- Ramsey County – Est. \$5.4M
- Northstar Commuter Rail Est. \$7.8M
- Anoka County – Est. \$6.3M
- Hennepin County – Est. \$1.5M

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

3. **2019-270:** Northstar and Sherburne County 2020 Subordinate Funding Agreement
 Metro Transit Finance Director Ed Petrie presented this item. There were no questions or comments from Council members.

Motion by Chamblis, seconded by Zeran:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate a Subordinate Funding Agreement with the Sherburne County Regional Railroad Authority for subsidy funding of Northstar Commuter Rail 2020 operations.

Operating

- Northstar Commuter Rail \$1.5M

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

4. **2019-280:** Northstar Vehicle Maintenance Facility Drop Table and Extra Track contract amendment 17P395

Metro Transit Engineering and Facilities Interim Assistant Director Jim Harwood and Metro Transit Engineering and Facilities Principal Engineer Tom McGannon presented this item. Sterner wanted to know what happens in the three days in which a train is under maintenance. McGannon answered that when a train is out of service, there are a minimum of spares that are used. Zeran asked when the core drills were done, how many were done and how was that information recoded. Harwood replied that anytime there is a geotechnical investigation and with soil borings you could be missing an entire locomotive underground but the soil information from the borings were recorded in the soil borings report which was provided as part of our bid documents (which the consultants and contractors used to base their work on that information). Harwood continued that staff work directly with our geotechnical engineers in terms of what is the appropriate number of borings to develop recommendations for excavation, foundations, etc. Chamblis asked if this amendment was in the upper range of the original construction estimate or how do we ask our contractors to cushion for overages. Harwood replied that our original estimate was a little lower than what the contractors bid number was and that Council policy allows 10% contingency for change order authority but this \$875k goes above the allowable 10% contingency which is why we need to amend the contract. Chair Barber wanted clarification on the amendment amount (\$875k) versus the budget line item of \$150k RTC funds. Harwood stated the \$150k is a part of the \$875k amendment and the rest of that is already in project budget.

Motion by Zeran, seconded by Fredson:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute an amendment to Construction Contract No. 17P395 with Sheehy Construction Company in the amount of \$875,000.

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

INFORMATION

1. Major Highway Projects Update

Metropolitan Transportation Services Planning Analyst Tony Fischer presented this item. Atlas-Ingebretson asked if there had been discussion on inequities as it relates to North Minneapolis. Fischer stated that in the engagement phase 1, both St. Paul and Minneapolis were included but that MnDOT concluded that this is too broad of a project and a more clearly defined scope is needed for this study. Chamblis asked if we have received the results of the engagement phase 1. Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Nick Thompson answered that the Council financially participated and managed some engagement contracts, was wrapped up in a report that we can share with Council members. Thompson continued that we are encouraging that they used this information in the next phase (environmental). Chair Barber stated that given the scope of the project, the report would be good to look at. Sterner asked what the percentage is for users of the MnPASS Lanes and what percent pay. Fischer responded that the number of vehicles is around 1500/1600 an hour but the actual number of people we are moving is almost twice as many. Fischer continued that most people aren't paying due to being in a high occupancy vehicle or bus. Fredson asked for clarification regarding using the term managed lane vs MnPASS lane. Thompson replied that MnDOT hasn't decided what the lane will be therefore it is a managed lane but if it were to open and branded as MnPASS that would be the correct term at that time. Sterner wondered about the enforcement of MnPASS and if that's easy and if technology can assist. Fischer replied that enforcement is a struggle and discussions occur during the design phase (would need to include a wide left shoulder) but thought there was a recent article regarding new technology but didn't have the specifics. Fredson asked why 43% was MnDOT's target for spending money in the 7-county metro area. Fischer stated this was a historical question and he believed it was negotiated due to pulls on MnDOT resources, recognizing that while Greater MSP has a lot more miles and bridges to maintain but that the Metro has different things to deal with in regard to population density. Atlas-Ingebretson asked if we have been thinking about how we can use StreetLight data to understand where trips are going and what would be creating congestion issues. Thompson answered that we are using StreetLight as much as we can to see what is happening today but that we need to use the Council's model to look towards the future. Thompson continued that on 494 on any given day, there is one vehicle from every single county in Minnesota. Chair Barber suggested that Committee members print out the *MnDOT Construction, Metro Share* slide and talk about this often, which highlights the need for transportation funding.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:22p.m.

Becky Davidson
Recording Secretary