

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 14, 2016

LOCATION: Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul, MN

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Lona Schreiber, Jennifer Munt, Cara Letofsky, Deb Barber, Katie Rodriguez, Marie McCarthy, Jon Commers, Edward Reynoso, Gail Dorfman

**Committee Members Absent:** Steve Elkins

**TAB Liaison Present:** Randy Maluchnik

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum was present when Chair Schreiber called the regular meeting of the Council's Transportation Committee to order at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 14, 2016 In the Metropolitan Council Chambers, St. Paul, MN.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Motion by Letofsky, seconded by Barber to approve the March 14, 2016 agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Barber to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2016 regular meeting of the Transportation Committee. Motion carried.

## TAB LIAISON REPORT:

TAB Liaison Randy Maluchnik reported that the TAB met on 2/17/16, preceded by a TAB Executive Committee meeting. At the meeting, the TAB Chair reported that the Executive Committee discussed future agenda information items. The TAB Chair also welcomed new TAB member Rolf Parsons. Metro Cities is working on naming a replacement for Nora Slawik. The TAB received a report from Rodriguez on MC Chair Duininck's State of the Region speech, and the TAB also acted favorably on routine non-controversial action items previously approved by the TAC.

## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION – Metro Transit

Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb introduced Director Service Development Adam Harrington who presented the employee recognition awards to:

Metro Transit Senior Transit Planners John Dillery, Steve Mahowald, and Scott Thompson for their combined 120 years of experience in bus and LRT schedules, transit planning and operation standards and guidelines, and regional planning and transit operations knowledge.

Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb introduced Metro Transit Police Chief John Harrington who, in turn, introduced Metro Transit Police Captain James Franklin who presented the employee recognition awards to:

Metro Transit Police Sergeant Tim Asp, Metro Transit Acting Police Sergeant Sidney Jones, and Metro Transit Police Officer Marcus Johnson for their work on the North Side Community Police Team (NSCPT).

Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb introduced Director Bus Maintenance Rob Milleson who presented the employee recognition award to:

Metro Transit FTH Garage Clerk Terry Qualy for filling in on a temporary assignment at the Overhaul Base in addition to her duties at FTH. One of the monumental tasks of the assignment was the two-year maintenance, which required contact with nearly every maintenance employee (300+).

## **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION SERVICES DIRECTOR and METRO TRANSIT GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS**

Metropolitan Transportation Services Director Arlene McCarthy reported

### 1. State Forecast

The state has released the 2016 February forecast which includes the MVST forecast. Looking ahead for the next four years, the forecast had an average 1.7% lower anticipated MVST revenues compared to the November 2015 forecast.

### 2. Regional Solicitation

At its 3/16/16 meeting the TAB will consider adopting the new Regional Solicitation for release. Once TAB approves, there is a lot of online programming work to do and the release will go out about mid-May. Applications will be due mid-August. To help potential applicants with the process, Metropolitan Council staff worked with Metro Cities to conduct outreach. On Friday March 4, Metro Council and Metro Cities hosted a Regional Solicitation informational meeting at the Metro Cities location. Thirty-five city representatives attended. As in the past, Metro Council will hold training sessions. The training will also be available as a video on the Metro Council website for those who are unable to attend training or need a refresher while preparing their applications.

### 3. Amtrak Shuttle

On Monday 3/07/16 Amtrak began a "Thruway" bus service to connect people to their train service in Lacrosse, WI and St. Paul. It is called the Go Carefree Shuttle and it operates 4 times/day with intermediate stops at Rochester/Mayo, Winona and MSP.

### 4. Highway and Freight Grants Available

At the federal level, US DOT is looking for applications to award highway and freight grants. The new name of the program is called FAST LANE (Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for Long Term Achievement of National Efficiencies). Applications for the first year are due 4/14/16. Available funding for FY 2016 is \$759M, 90% of the grant money is for large projects – at least \$100M projects, and 25% of the funding must go to projects in rural areas. Highway, rail crossing, and waterway projects are all eligible.

Following the MTS Director report, Chair Schreiber said a few words about MTS Director Arlene McCarthy's upcoming retirement announcement and asked McCarthy to think about specific items she would like the Transportation Committee to address/finish prior to her July retirement. McCarthy said that the growth in Metro Mobility usage is of concern and one thing she would like to address is the ability to attract Metro Mobility drivers in this competitive work environment with such a low employment rate.

Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb reported:

### 1. Transit Driver Appreciation Day.

Transit Driver Appreciation Day is on Friday, March 18. To mark the occasion, bus and rail operators will be served breakfast and lunch at each of our garages and light-rail operations and maintenance facilities. Council members are welcome to visit and share a meal; details can be coordinated through our Bus and Rail departments. In addition to these celebrations, we'll invite customers to show their support by saying thank you as they board or exit the bus, to share their appreciation on social media and to write commendations. Transit Driver Appreciation Day is celebrated on March 18 because the first known bus service is believed to have begun on that date in 1662 in Paris, France.

### 2. St. Patrick's Day.

To help people celebrate St. Patrick's Day safely, Metro Transit will offer free rides on all bus and rail lines from 6 p.m. until 3 a.m. Friday morning. This is the 20th year we've provided free St. Patrick's Day rides in partnership with Miller Lite and J.J. Taylor Distributing. The companies underwrite the

promotion, offsetting lost fare revenue (\$40,000 this year). Metro Transit police and partnering agencies will be prepared to handle large crowds in our downtown areas. Metro Transit will also be marching in the Minneapolis and St. Paul parades. Nearly 60,000 rides were taken on St. Patrick's Day last year.

### 3. Service changes.

Several bus service changes will take effect on Saturday, March 19. Route 11 will become part of our Hi-Frequency Network. As part of the Hi-Frequency Network, there will be trips every 15 minutes throughout the day on weekdays and on Saturdays. There will be 30-minute service during the evenings and on Sundays. With service between south Minneapolis, downtown and Northeast, Route 11 is among our busiest urban local bus routes. Customers we visited with last week said they are looking forward to having shorter wait times between trips.

### 4. Better Bus Stops.

More than two dozen community-based organizations gathered last week to kick-off a yearlong engagement effort for our Better Bus Stops program. These groups will be having conversations on the bus and at events and performing other outreach activities to help us better understand how we can better serve our communities. An online survey with questions about our shelters and shelter guidelines will be available beginning next month. The outreach efforts are funded through the federal grant we received in 2014. The FTA and peer agencies will be looking at this roll-out as an example of how to engage communities in the future.

## **BUSINESS**

### **Consent Items:**

Motion by Reynoso, seconded by Rodriguez to approve the following consent items.

Motion carried.

#### 1. 2016-56: 2016-2019 TIP Amendment: City of Minneapolis Intersection Project Scope Change.

Motion: That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to adjust the description and increase the cost of its 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Street Intersection Overhead Signal project (SP # 141-030-023).

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

#### 1. 2016-58: Travel Demand Management (TDM) project selection

Metropolitan Transportation Services Senior Planner Katie White presented this item, explained the selection process and that the selection committee discussed regional distribution. She also said that in the future the timing of the TDM solicitation will better align with the Regional Solicitation. Commers asked if the projects that were not funded was because of their region-wide scope and if these projects could still be implemented without these funds. White responded that the scoring criteria for the application was created to not give a bias towards or against region-wide projects. The Metro Transit projects may be considered for alternative funding sources. MTS Director Arlene McCarthy added that the three projects that were not selected for funding in the TDM solicitation may apply for Regional Solicitation funds when the Regional Solicitation is released in May 2016.

Motion by Commers, seconded by Letofsky:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to award \$1.8 million in Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to eight innovative travel demand management (TDM) projects at the recommended funding level per the attachment.

Motion carried.

#### 2. 2016-60: 2016 Supplemental Operating Agreements with SouthWest Transit and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

Metropolitan Transportation Services Grants Specialist Heather Johnson presented this item.

Metropolitan Transportation Services Manager MTS Administration Heather Aagesen-Huebner was

also present and answered a question from Barber regarding the timing for reconciling MVTA's funding amounts. Agesen-Huebner said that the operating side of funding for MVTA will be reconciled in the next few weeks, and then staff will work on the capital side of funding. No problems are anticipated. Motion by Barber, seconded by Munt:

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute grant agreements in the amount of \$1,047,000 with SouthWest Transit (SWT) and an amount not to exceed \$5,819,000 with Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) to provide supplemental transit operating funding during CY2016.

Motion passed.

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

## **INFORMATION**

### **1. Annual Park & Ride Usage Report**

Metro Transit Manager Planning and Urban Design Anna Flintoft and Intern Dustin Kleingartner presented this item. The presentation included an overview of the P&R system, annual usage, changes in capacity and usage increases by site and by travel corridor. There has been a trending toward larger facilities to manage congestion and provide more frequent service. License checks at P&R facilities are performed every two years. Committee members expressed a desire for more frequent license checks and at different times of the year, as this would help understand where riders are coming from, and may be valuable information to share with the legislature. Members asked about whether Park & Pool lots are being utilized and whether they are being marketed by Metro Transit. MnDOT runs the Park & Pool lots and may market them more than Metro Transit.

In response to A. McCarthy, Maluchnik and Rodriguez agreed that the TAB may find this presentation valuable since the TAB has provided funding to P&Rs over the years.

### **2. Metro Transit Mobile App**

Metro Transit Market Development Specialist Adam Mehl presented this item which included an update on the Metro Transit Mobile App, where riders will be able to obtain tickets to all modes through an app on their smartphones. The mobile application may reach millennials and tech savvy riders, cash riders, low-income customers and non-commuters/pass holders (out of town visitors/convention attendees). Reynoso expressed a concern whether PayPal would be profiting from Metro Transit ridership and stated that there are other credit cards that could be used as well.

In response to Dorfman, staff will research and report how this program differs from the St. Paul Smart Trips – Trip Planning TDM project that was awarded funding in Business Item 2016-58 earlier in this meeting.

### **3. BLRT Municipal Consent Update**

Metro Transit Deputy General Manager Mark Fuhrmann and Assistant General Manager TSD-BLRT Dan Soler presented this item. They reported that BLRT has received approvals from all municipalities and reviewed upcoming dates for the next project major milestones. They also reported on the similarities between BLRT and SWLRT schedules.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.