



METRO COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MEETING SUMMARY
April 3, 2012
Metro Council Chamber

Councilors Present: Council President Tom Hughes and Councilors Shirley Craddick, Carlotta Collette, Carl Hosticka, Kathryn Harrington and Rex Burkholder

Councilors Excused: Councilor Barbara Roberts

Council President Tom Hughes convened the Metro Council work session at 2:03 p.m.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE/COUNCIL AGENDA FOR APRIL 5, 2012/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Martha Bennett of Metro mentioned Packy's Birthday Campaign Kick-off happening at Packy's Bar and Grill with the proceeds going to the Oregon Zoo Foundation. Ms. Bennett then informed councilors of the budget roll-out schedule, and that they will receive electronic and paper copies of the proposed budget by Monday, April 16. Ms. Bennett and Ms. Margo Norton of Metro will present the proposed budget at the April 19 Council meeting. Legislation regarding solid waste rates is scheduled for first read on April 19 and second read, public hearing, and Council consideration and vote on April 26.

2. TRIMET CHALLENGES AND CHOICES

Mr. Neil McFarlane of TriMet briefed Council on the general state of the region's public transit agency and discussed observations and changes made during his 21-months as General Manager. Mr. McFarlane shared contextual statistics and benchmarks, citing the 25th and 10th anniversaries of light rail lines to Gresham and the Portland Airport. TriMet boasts 100 million rides a year and has the seventh highest per capita ridership in the country while slated as the 24th largest metropolitan area.

TriMet is currently faced with a twelve to seventeen million dollar budget shortfall next year because of lower than expected revenue from payroll taxes, cuts in federal funding and retiree benefit costs. Mr. McFarlane described TriMet's public engagement efforts that would help determine revenue-generating and cost-savings measures. Feedback from surveys and public meetings indicated that maintained service levels and fare enforcement are most important while fare increases could be tolerated when considering budget proposals. Mr. McFarlane then explained the potential budget impacts of ongoing contract arbitration between TriMet management and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) 757. Mr. McFarlane described the transit union's offer as "not sustainable" and noted that members' benefits package is well above the national average.

Mr. McFarlane reported that TriMet's budget process began three months early because of the projected shortfall. A Budget Task Force comprised of key stakeholders, business and nonprofit leaders, was commissioned to oversee the process. Key recommendations from the task force

included a restructuring of the fare system, the elimination of the Free Rail Zone and a transition to a flat fare. Additionally, some bus routes will be reconfigured to reduce overlapping service, the LIFT paratransit service boundary will be adjusted, and some internal programs and work force will be cut. These changes are intended to elicit savings and address safety, security and equity issues. Regarding impacts to Metro and the Oregon Convention Center (OCC), Mr. McFarlane mentioned the delegate visitor pass that would be provided for convention attendees.

Ultimately, Mr. McFarlane discussed the broader regional picture and how Metro can support TriMet in its mission to provide safe and reliable transit service. TriMet would benefit from more targeted data collection and analysis of transit ridership demographics. Mr. McFarlane cited the Community Investment Initiative (CII) and reiterated the importance of coordinating transportation investments such as pedestrian facilities like sidewalks near bus stops. Furthermore, Metro can support TriMet by communicating linkages between transportation and land use and continuing to provide assistance to local jurisdictions with updating their Transportation Systems Plans (TSP).

Council Discussion:

Councilors asked about TriMet's pursuit of new technologies such as more efficient buses. Mr. McFarlane responded that TriMet will continue to replace and modernize its fleet of buses every year. Mr. McFarlane noted that TriMet has relied on federal funding in the past to purchase efficient technologies priced at a premium. Councilors also inquired about TriMet moving to an electronic fare system. Mr. McFarlane said that even though the budget does not allow for immediate changes to the fare system, TriMet intends to move to electronic fares in the future. Mr. McFarlane noted great potential for proximity-based credit card transactions.

- There was a discussion about the nature of contract negotiations with the transit union. Councilors questioned the effect of management proposed changes to health care for retirees. Mr. McFarlane indicated that management's final offer would protect and define benefits for current retirees.
- Councilors then discussed other countries' privatization of transit service as a potential outcome in the Portland metropolitan region if budget shortfalls cannot be mitigated and continue to affect affordability and service.
- TriMet has contracted LIFT service and in response, received criticism from the transit union. Councilors discussed the importance of making the region's transit service sustainable and robust in order to support Metro's goals to achieve vibrant communities and a healthy environment.

Councilors commended TriMet's public outreach process, citing high quality staffing and material availability at open houses and on their web site. Councilors also expressed appreciation for action taken by TriMet to increase the number of fare inspectors on the MAX. There was general agreement that Metro and TriMet can and should work together to link transportation and land use planning with the implementation of accessible public transit service. Moreover, Mr. McFarlane mentioned lobbying the Oregon State Legislature to consider additional, consistent funding sources for public transportation services and infrastructure.

Councilors indicated support for the general direction TriMet is taking with their budget proposal process, but noted that Metro will not take a position on contract arbitration between management

and the transit union. Council agreed to draft a letter outlining their comments and support for TriMet's general direction. The letter will be distributed to Mr. McFarlane shortly.

COUNCIL BRIEFINGS/COMMUNICATION

- Councilor Collette reported on her and President Hughes' experience at an Oak Grove Neighborhood Association meeting. She mentioned that attendees conducted a thoughtful and well informed discussion, and were generally supportive of Metro and the light rail expansion to Milwaukie. President Hughes noted that there was a discussion on a proposed Walmart and that he was asked to give his opinion on the matter.
- Councilor Craddick recounted an East Metro Connections Plan meeting that focused on evaluation factors used to shape the project selection process.

3. ADJOURN

Seeing no further business, Council President Hughes adjourned the Council work session at 3:30 p.m.

Prepared by,



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ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF APRIL 3, 2012

ITEM	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOC DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT No.
	Agenda	4/5/12	40512 Council Meeting agenda	40312cw-01
2.0	Memo	3/21/12	Questions for TriMet budget presentation	40312cw-02
2.0	Memo	3/15/12	TriMet service reductions and potential impacts to Metro	40312cw-03
2.0	PPT	4/3/12	Transit's Fiscal Challenges	40312cw-04