



3/16/2010

Media Release

For immediate release

Metro Bus delays route restructuring plans

ST. CLOUD — At its monthly board meeting today, the Metropolitan Transit Commission agreed with Metro Bus staff's recommendation to delay route restructuring plans until economic and Federal and State funding program conditions improve. Metro Bus has been working on the initiative, which it calls "Moving Forward," for more than a year.

"In September, when the study consulting firm AECOM presented the proposed restructured Fixed Route system, it was projected that there would be sufficient funding opportunities to proceed with the Transition Phase this fall," said Metro Bus Executive Director, David W. Tripp. "Since then, a number of funding program situations have arisen that seriously jeopardized this plan — the largest being our own State's projected budget deficit levels."

The State of Minnesota is a major funding partner of Metro Bus operations, providing 53 percent, or \$4.5 million out of its total \$8.5 million annual operating budget.

Metro Bus estimates the Transition Phase of Moving Forward would have added approximately 10,295 annual operating hours, at an estimated cost of \$617,000. Phase I, the preferred level of service, would have provided 11,900 additional annual hours, at an estimated cost of \$714,000 over Transition Phase, or an additional \$1.3 million over current levels of service.

While Metro Bus staff expressed "extreme disappointment" in having to delay the implementation of its proposed restructured Fixed Route system, they are working on a plan to service Sartell's new Epic Center development, which includes Walmart and Sam's Club stores, this fall. Metro Bus staff anticipate presenting its recommendations for this new service to the Commission by May.

###

St. Cloud Metro Bus operates 7 days a week and provides more than 2.3 million Fixed Route and Dial-a-Ride passenger trips annually in St. Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park. For more information about Metro Bus, visit ridemetrobus.com.