

Bereavement Leave: SWT will provide bereavement leave for its eligible employees who desire to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member, household member, or coworker. Employees who wish to take time off for this purpose must notify their supervisor immediately. All employees must request bereavement leave from their Department Director.

Bereavement Leave Due to the Death of an Immediate Family Member or Household Member: Up to three days of bereavement leave will be allowed due to the death of an immediate family member or household member to eligible regular full-time and regular part-time employees. The Chief Executive Officer may grant additional bereavement leave at his or her discretion.

SWT defines “immediate family” for the purposes of bereavement leave as the employee’s spouse, domestic partner, parent, step-parent, child, sibling, step-sibling, grandparents or grandchildren; the employee’s spouse’s parent, child, or sibling; or the employee’s child’s spouse. SWT defines “household member” as any person who shares a significant relationship with the employee, and who resides in the same household as the employee.

Bereavement Leave Due to the Death of a Coworker: Bereavement leave will be provided due to the death of a coworker at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer to eligible regular full-time and regular part-time employees. Bereavement leave due to the death of a coworker will normally be granted unless there are unusual operational or staffing requirements.

Employees may, with their supervisor’s approval, attend the funeral of a coworker during regularly scheduled working hours without interruption of pay as long as the leave is less than the equivalent of a regularly scheduled shift.

Bereavement leave requests for any reasons not addressed by this section shall be treated the same as personal leave requests.

Election Day Time Off: Minnesota employers are required to provide employees who are eligible to vote with paid time off to vote on an election day. For purposes of this statute, Minnesota defines election as: (1) a regularly scheduled state primary or general election; (2) an election to fill a vacancy in the office of U.S. senator or U.S. representative; and (3) an election to fill a vacancy in the office of state senator or state representative. Employees are not required to request time off in advance, but employees should make every effort to not disrupt SWT operations and notify supervisors one day in advance of their voting time intentions.

School Conference Leave: Eligible employees may be granted a leave of absence to attend school, child care, or preschool conferences or activities for their child under the age of eighteen (18) or age twenty (20) if attending secondary school. Eligible employees are defined as those who work at SWT at least part time. Eligible employees may take leaves up to sixteen (16) hours during any 12-month period, provided the conferences cannot be scheduled outside the employee’s normal workday. Employees must provide reasonable

notice of their request for leave and shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so not to disrupt SWT operations.

Military Leave: Military leave provides employees with time off in compliance with applicable federal and state law. Military leave, whether paid or unpaid, must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Employees subject to these military obligations will be expected to notify their supervisor in writing as far in advance of the training period as possible. When they are again available for work, SWT will make every effort to return them to their former position, or a comparable position, in accordance with requirements of the law. Employees should contact Human Resources for more details.

Jury Duty & Witness Leave: SWT provides employees with leave for jury duty. Employees are eligible for jury duty leave for the time they serve on a jury. They are expected to provide their supervisor with a copy of the jury duty summons at least one week in advance. These employees will be paid the difference between their regular earnings and the amount received from the court for jury duty service up to a maximum of 40 hours per week. The jury duty benefit is paid for a maximum of two (2) weeks in any calendar year. Employees are expected to return to work any time they are released from jury duty during their regularly scheduled work hours.

Should an employee be subpoenaed to appear in court as a witness, he or she must use personal leave according to the guidelines in this manual.

Unpaid Personal Leave: SWT understands that employees may need time off for personal obligations and may provide employees unpaid time off in these situations.

Eligible employees must be regular full-time employees and have been employed at SWT for a minimum of one year. Prior to requesting unpaid personal leave, an employee must first exhaust all earned paid personal leave. All requests for unpaid personal leave should be submitted in writing as soon as possible and preferably at least 2 weeks prior to the start of such leave, unless a medical necessity does not permit an early request. The leave request should specify the start and end date of such leave. If the leave is for a medical reason, a physician's certification is required.

The length of time for unpaid personal leaves will be evaluated and approved by the Chief Executive Officer and/or Commission. Anticipated workload requirements and staffing considerations, etc. will be considered.

Subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans, health insurance benefits will be provided by SWT for unpaid personal leaves not exceeding 30 days. Should the leave need to extend beyond 30 days, employees will be responsible for the full costs of these benefits through COBRA if they wish to continue them. When the employee returns from an unpaid personal leave, benefits will again be provided by SWT according to the applicable plans.

When an unpaid personal leave ends, SWT will make every reasonable effort to return the employee to the same or a similar position for which the employee is qualified. However, such assignments cannot be guaranteed.

If an employee fails to report to work promptly after the approved leave has expired, SWT will assume the employee has resigned effective the date the leave commenced.

Employees should contact Human Resources for more details.

Family and Medical Leave: SWT complies with all applicable provisions of state and/or federal laws on family and medical leave. The policy in Appendix 1 of this manual outlines the rights and obligations of employees, the notification requirements, and SWT's obligations. All questions about our Family and Medical Leave Act Policy should be directed to Human Resources.

Parental Leave: Individuals employed at SWT for at least one year and who have worked an average of at least half time per week, may request an unpaid parental leave in conjunction with the birth or adoption of a child. This leave is available for a maximum of twelve (12) weeks. Any time taken for parental leave will be in conjunction with Family Medical Leave and may be reduced by any period of paid parental or disability leave already provided by SWT. During the twelve weeks of parental leave, the employee must use earned personal leave before taking unpaid leave.

Employees requesting such leave should give reasonable written notice to Human Resources and may continue all group insurance during the leave by paying the necessary premiums.

Employees requesting a parental leave will retain the accrued benefits they had prior to the leave. SWT will return the employee to the same position or a position of comparable duties, number of hours, and pay. If the leave is more than one (1) month, SWT requests at least two (2) weeks' notice prior to returning to work.

Employees should contact Human Resources to discuss any need they may have for a parental leave.

Bone Marrow Donation Leave: In accordance with state law, employees who work an average of twenty (20) hours or more per week may be granted a paid leave of absence to undergo procedures to donate bone marrow.

Qualified employees may determine the length of leave required to donate bone marrow; however leave shall not exceed a total of forty (40) hours of paid leave unless approved by the Chief Executive Officer. SWT may request verification by a physician as to the purpose and the length of each leave requested by an employee.

Severe Weather Conditions: In the event of severe weather the Chief Executive Officer shall determine the advisability of work stoppages and the closing of SouthWest Transit

facilities and services. Department Directors will determine who should/can report to work when reduced service is operating. If a Severe Weather Emergency is declared by SWT in the morning, then reduced service will also run in the afternoon.

When all service is cancelled, managers will instruct employees to not report to work for that day and give them instructions for their next work shift if the reporting time varies from the posted schedule. Employees will be notified by phone, text, and/or email.

On days when severe weather results in the closing of SWT offices prior to the start of normal business hours, the time not worked by an employee will be unpaid unless the employee elects to use personal leave. With prior approval from his or her supervisor, the employee may make up the time during the same work week.

In the event that an employee cannot report to work or is late for reporting to work because of severe weather, the employee must notify his or her supervisor immediately and report to work when safety permits. The time not worked will be unpaid unless the employee elects to use accrued personal leave or requests to make up the time during the same work week.

COMPENSATION

5.01 PAYROLL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Time Sheets: All employees must complete time reports on a bi-weekly basis. Time sheets will be provided to employees by SWT and upon completion they must be signed by the employee and their Department Director or supervisor. In the absence of the employee's supervisor, the time sheet may be signed by the Chief Executive Officer or Human Resources.

Non-exempt employees must accurately record the time they begin and end their work, in addition to any departure from work for any non-business reasons, either by punching a time clock or by completing a time sheet. Non-exempt employees should consult with their manager or supervisor for proper time reporting instructions. Overtime work must always be approved before it is performed.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in corrective action as described in section 2.04.

Payroll Deductions: SWT is required to deduct federal and state taxes, social security (FICA) and Medicare from employee paychecks. In some cases, child support is also deducted from an employee paycheck in accordance with state statutes. Contributions to the Minnesota Public Employees Retirement Association are deducted from the paychecks of eligible employees. Additional amounts for the employee's share of medical and/or dental insurance, additional life insurance, STD, LTD or contributions to deferred compensation plans are also made through payroll deduction.

5.02 OVERTIME PAY

Non-exempt employees who work more than forty (40) hours per week will be compensated at one and one-half (1½) times their normal hourly rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours. All overtime work must be approved in advance by a Department Director or Chief Executive Officer. Paid holidays will be included in the forty (40) hour work week for the purposes of calculating overtime.

Each Department Manager may maintain an approval process to aid in the effort to minimize overtime work. This may include prior written approval for overtime worked.

Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime. In the event an exempt employee's job responsibilities routinely require working outside of the department's normal work schedule, an alternate work schedule may be approved by the employee's supervisor on a temporary or permanent basis.

5.03 STANDBY/CALL BACK PAY

Employees may be eligible for standby pay if they are required to be available to be called back to work hours outside their normal work shift. An employee on standby who is not called back to work will receive standby pay in an amount to be determined by the Chief Executive Officer. An employee on standby who is called back to work will be paid for a minimum of 2 hours at one and one-half (1½) times the regular rate of pay. Early shift reports or shift extensions do not qualify for call back pay.

5.04 HOLIDAY PAY

Non-exempt employees required to work on a designated SWT holiday will be compensated at the rate of two (2) times their normal hourly rate for all hours worked on the holiday unless they are allowed to take off another day as the holiday, paid at their regular hourly rate.

Exempt employees who work on a designated holiday may schedule another day off with pay upon receiving approval from the Chief Executive Officer.

5.05 PAY DAYS

For payroll purposes, the workweek starts at 12:01 AM on Sunday and ends at 12:00 midnight on Saturday. Employees are paid bi-weekly on every other Friday. Each paycheck covers the two (2) previous weeks ending on Saturday.

5.06 EMERGENCY PAY DURING A PANDEMIC

Employees must exhaust all paid personal leave in the event of a slow down or shut down due to a pandemic. In the event the employee has exhausted all their leave, the employee will be allowed to go up to 15 days in arrears regarding personal leave. The employee will

be required to sign an agreement to reimburse SWT, should the employee terminate employment prior to earning/paying back the advanced personal leave. The 15 days will be paid back prior to receiving additional paid leave.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

6.01 EMPLOYEE SAFETY

SWT is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all of its employees. To ensure that work environments are safe, supervisors shall be responsible for:

1. Establishing safety regulations within their departments.
2. Reviewing safety procedures with their employees.
3. Instructing employees in accident prevention.
4. Coordinating with SWT's insurance provider on safety inspections and programs.

It is the responsibility of employees to:

1. Understand and follow all rules and safety standards.
2. Make sure they are familiar with the safe and proper use of equipment.
3. Operate all tools and equipment in a safe and careful manner.
4. Report unsafe working conditions and work-related accidents to their supervisors immediately.

6.02 SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- SWT will provide a reimbursement of up to one hundred dollars (\$100) each year for employees required to wear steel-toed shoes. General work boots can be purchased anytime between March-October.
- SWT will provide a reimbursement of up to one hundred dollars (\$100) each year for employees required to work in inclement weather, for winter boots. Winter boots can be purchased anytime between October-March.
- SWT will reimburse employees up to one hundred dollars (\$100) every two (2) years for prescription safety lenses for employees required to wear safety lenses.
- Once a year SWT will provide a reimbursement of up to thirty dollars (\$30) for facility maintenance employees who do not qualify for full uniforms to purchase shorts that fall under SWT dress code.

6.03 WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Worker's compensation insurance may provide wage replacement and medical payment benefits to SWT employees who become ill or injured as a result of performing their required work duties.

If an employee is injured on the job, the employee shall report the injury to his or her immediate supervisor or Department Director as soon as possible and receive medical

attention as necessary. All injuries, no matter how insignificant, shall be reported to the employee's supervisor. The Department Manager must complete a first report of injury and notify SWT's certified Managed Care Plan provider and Human Resources.

If the worker's compensation leave is also a qualifying leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, the provisions of the FMLA policy shall apply.

6.04 PROPERTY/EQUIPMENT DAMAGE REPORTING

Any damage to SWT property, vehicles, or equipment must be reported to a Department Director or supervisor within twenty four (24) hours of occurrence. It is the Department Director's responsibility to document the damage and report it to Human Resources.

If an individual, other than a SWT employee, incurs property or physical damage caused by SWT property, vehicles, or equipment and wishes to submit a claim, the Department Director must report the damage to Human Resources along with any documents related to the claim. If the individual has any questions related to the claim, he or she should be directed to Human Resources. Under no circumstance should an employee answer questions related to a claim without authorization from the Chief Executive Officer or Human Resources.

6.05 VIOLENCE PREVENTION

No SWT employee is expected to risk injury in the course of performing his or her job. In addition, violence or threats of violence by employees will not be tolerated.

Employee and Vehicle Operator Responsibilities:

- Treat co-workers and the public with respect and courtesy.
- Politely inform passengers about required fares. It is not operators' responsibility to engage in conflicts over fares or property if such conflicts put the safety of operators and/or passengers at risk.
- Use professional judgment and avoid taking passengers' rudeness personally.
- Attend Violence Prevention Training when scheduled and follow all violence prevention procedures.
- Call Dispatch for assistance in dealing with a difficult passenger.
- Use common sense in assessing a situation. It is not operators' responsibility, nor do operators have the authority, training or equipment to police transit vehicles.
- Employees should file a police report if they are assaulted and submit the case number of that report to their supervisor. If the police do not make a report at the scene of the incident, it is the employee's responsibility to go in person to any police station in SWT's area of operation to file a report.
- Report all threats and/or actual incidents of violence to Dispatch and also file an Accident Report if the incident involves physical injury to people or property and an Incident Report regarding other incidents.

Operation Policies to Assist Vehicle Operators in Reducing Violence: Operators have the right to refuse service to passengers who seriously threaten the physical safety of passengers, the operator or pedestrians. If an operator makes such a decision, he or she must notify Dispatch.

If an operator becomes aware of violence in the area of his/her route, he or she may re-route the bus on an emergency basis, if necessary, to prevent serious injury. The operator must notify Dispatch of this action as soon as it is safe to do so.

In vehicles equipped with radios, operators must test radios during the pre-trip inspection before leaving the garage and immediately report non-functioning radios to their supervisor. Dispatch is responsible to notify operators if there are reports of violent activity in the vicinity of their routes.

Employee or Vehicle Operator Initiated Violence: Violence by employees or vehicle operators will not be tolerated. If an employee initiates a violent incident, SWT, First Transit Service, and/or local law enforcement shall determine the appropriate response.

Self Defense: Employees or vehicle operators are only permitted to use force if they are being physically attacked or coming to the aid of someone who is, and then must only use enough force to stop the attack. Employees and vehicle operators are prohibited from carrying weapons of any kind while on SWT premises or vehicles.

Record Keeping: In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this section, it is important that SWT keep accurate records of all threats and violent incidents. All incidents of violence must be reported to the employee's supervisor, the Chief Executive Officer, and Human Resources.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

7.01 CONVENTIONS, CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS

SWT employees may attend conventions, seminars, workshops, and state or national conferences after approval by the Chief Executive Officer, or the Commission Chair in the case of the Chief Executive Officer. Approval will only be given if the gathering is directly related to the employee's job responsibilities. SWT will pay the expenses related to the training of employees, if provided for in the annual budget. When these training functions occur during normal working hours, employees will be given time off with pay to attend.

7.02 TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

SWT will reimburse out of pocket employee expenses for tuition for job-related educational courses or certification programs the employee chooses to attend, to a maximum of \$4,000 per year. All courses must be pre-approved by the Chief Executive Officer, be specifically related to the employee's position, and be attended at an accredited institution of higher education. To be eligible for reimbursement, the employee must complete the course with at least a grade of "C" or its equivalent, or obtain a certification (e.g., Microsoft certification or ASE certification). Employees are eligible for 50% of the reimbursement costs up front, with pre-approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

To receive reimbursement, employees must provide to their Department Director:

- Their detailed course syllabus;
- An official document issued by the accredited institution of higher education establishing satisfactory completion of the course in accordance with this policy; and
- An original receipt for tuition, excluding costs covered by grants, scholarships, or other funding sources.

Employees will be required to reimburse SWT for any tuition reimbursement if they voluntarily leave SWT employment within two (2) years of receiving tuition reimbursement.

The foregoing policy does not apply to employees employed by SWT under a Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice Program.

Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice Program:

For employees employed by SWT under a Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice Program, SWT will reimburse fifty percent (50%) of out of pocket employee expenses for tuition and fees for job-related courses or certification programs offered by an accredited institution of higher education. To be eligible for reimbursement, the employee must complete the course with at least a grade of "C" or its equivalent, or obtain a certification (e.g., Microsoft certification or ASE certification).

To receive reimbursement, employees must provide to their Department Director:

- Their detailed course syllabus;
- An official document issued by the accredited institution of higher education establishing satisfactory completion of the course in accordance with this policy; and
- An original receipt for tuition, excluding costs covered by grants, scholarships, or other funding sources.

Employees will be required to reimburse SWT for any tuition reimbursement if they voluntarily leave SWT employment within two (2) years of receiving tuition reimbursement.

7.03 LICENSING

Certain SWT positions require that an employee be licensed or certified to legally perform the duties of the position. When licenses or certificates are required for a position, SWT will reimburse the employee for the actual cost of obtaining and maintaining the license or certificate. The employee shall present the original receipt and license or certificate to their Department Director in order to obtain reimbursement.

7.04 Travel Pay

Travel, meals, and conference expenses incurred by SWT employees and Commission members while traveling as representatives of SWT will be paid by SWT, in accordance with SWT's Meals and Travel Policy. Employees should see Human Resources for a copy of the Meals and Travel Policy for more detailed information.

LEAVING SWT EMPLOYMENT

8.01 RESIGNATIONS

When possible, an employee who voluntarily resigns from employment with SWT shall give two (2) weeks' written notice to his or her Department Director. The notice should include an indication that the resignation is voluntary, the reason for leaving, the last day of actual work, and the employee's signature.

Unauthorized or unapproved absences from work by an employee for a period of three (3) consecutive work days will be considered a resignation without proper notice.

8.02 PAYMENT OF PERSONAL LEAVE

Accrued personal leave time shall be paid to employees as taxable income at the time of termination. PERA deductions will not be taken from the accrued personal leave payout. Insurance premiums may be deducted to fulfill the employee's contribution for the month of termination. Premiums for subsequent months will be paid by the employee under COBRA, as described in section 8.07.

8.03 DISCHARGE

SWT employees are employed at will. SWT may dismiss any employee at any time with or without notice, for any reason not prohibited by law. The reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to, misconduct, inefficiency, incompetence, violation of work rules, lack of job performance, or other reasons determined by SWT. Employees who are involuntarily terminated will be paid through their termination date and will receive the value of any accrued personal leave as provided in section 8.02.

8.04 TERMINATION PROCEDURES

A terminating employee is an employee who is leaving SWT employment as a result of a discharge, resignation, retirement, layoff, or death. To assist employees in making a smooth transition when leaving SWT, the Department Director shall notify Human Resources as soon as he or she learns that the employee is leaving and shall provide Human Resources with the original letter of resignation (for a voluntary resignation) or a copy of the termination notice to the employee (for a discharge or layoff).

The termination date shall be considered the last day that the employee works a regularly scheduled workday.

8.05 DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE

If an individual dies while employed by SWT, the extension of medical benefits for the employee's survivors will be offered on the following basis:

0-10 Years of Employment: Extended coverage will be offered at the option of the survivors and at their expense under COBRA.

10-15 Years of Employment: Extended coverage will be offered with the first three (3) months premium to be paid by SWT. Additional coverage is optional to the survivors at their expense under COBRA.

15 Years of Employment: Extended coverage will be offered with the first six (6) months premium to be paid by SWT. Additional coverage is optional to the survivors at their expense under COBRA.

8.06 REFERENCE CHECKS/RECOMMENDATIONS

All information requests on current and former employees are to be directed to Human Resources or Chief Executive Officer. Under no circumstances should other staff members respond to inquiries regarding current or former employees.

If an employee would like to authorize someone to have access to private data about them, they must send SWT written authorization, witnessed by a third party and signed by a parent, guardian, or authorized representative if applicable. The request should detail the name of the person or agency authorized to review the material and the specific information that the former employee authorizes SWT to release.

8.07 INSURANCE CONTINUATION AND COBRA

Certain state and federal laws permit former eligible SWT employees and their qualified beneficiaries to continue coverage under SWT's group health, dental, and life insurance plans if they have a qualifying event, such as leaving SWT employment or a reduction in work hours below benefit-earning levels.

COBRA stands for Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985. This federal law and state law allows employees and their qualified beneficiaries to continue SWT's group health plan coverage for up to 18, 29, or 36 months after termination, depending upon the qualifying event.

If an employee is retiring and is eligible for a retirement annuity or is receiving disability benefits from a Minnesota public retirement plan (such as PERA), the employee may remain on SWT's group health plan until becoming eligible for Medicare or another employer-sponsored health plan, at the employee's own expense. This provision only covers retirees if they are covered continuously under SWT's group health plan after January 1, 1992. This "indefinite" continuation is made available under Minnesota Statutes § 471.61, also known as "Chapter 488."

Retiring employees who wish to continue purchasing insurance coverage through SWT will be notified of their COBRA and Chapter 488 rights at the time of employment and also at the time of the qualifying event and may elect coverage under one plan or both plans within sixty (60) days of the qualifying event. Employees and qualified beneficiaries shall be notified of their rights under COBRA and Chapter 488 and shall, at their own discretion, determine which coverage best meets their needs.

OTHER

9.01 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

SWT is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities, which may include providing reasonable accommodation where appropriate. In general, it is the employee's responsibility to notify his or her supervisor of the need for an accommodation. Upon doing so, the employee may be asked for his or her input, the type of accommodation he or she believes may be necessary, or the functional limitations caused by the disability. SWT may request the employee's written permission to obtain additional information from the employee's physician or other medical or rehabilitation professional. Any information obtained by SWT is kept in a confidential employee file.

9.02 BULLETIN BOARDS

SWT has established official bulletin boards as one means of communicating information to employees. It is the responsibility of all employees to regularly check the bulletin board for current information.

Non-SWT information or materials may not be posted personally by employees, but rather must be submitted to Human Resources or Operations and Maintenance Director for approval to post.

Employees should check with their supervisors for the bulletin board locations.

9.03 CONFIDENTIALITY

Current and former employees may not copy or distribute any confidential information which comes into their possession as a result of employment with SWT, other than for an approved use.

Employees may not disclose to others, for anyone's use or benefit, confidential information that comes into their possession as a result of their employment with SWT, including, but not limited to, plans, customer lists, or employee lists, unless such disclosure is authorized by the Chief Executive Officer or determined by the Chief Executive Officer to be necessary in the ordinary course of performing their duties as an employee of SWT. Disclosure of confidential information includes, but is not limited to, in-person communication, telephone communication, written communication, email, the internet, and any social media, such as blogging, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and instant messaging.

If in doubt as to whether any disclosure of any confidential information is authorized or in the ordinary course of performing their duties as employees of SWT, employees must ask the Chief Executive Officer prior to such disclosure.

Upon termination of employment, employees will be required to return all materials and information, and any copies of such materials, to their supervisor.

9.04 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS & COMMUNICATION

SWT is committed to providing a positive work environment for all employees. Our practice is to treat each employee as an individual. We seek to develop a spirit of teamwork: individuals working together to attain a common goal.

Should an issue arise, it is the employee's obligation to bring it forward by contacting his or her immediate supervisor or Human Resources and explaining the facts.

9.05 PERSONAL CONDUCT

The efficiency and productivity of SWT requires that every employee maintain discipline and proper standards of conduct at all times. This is necessary to protect the health and safety of everyone in the workplace, to meet our customers' needs, to protect SWT's property, and to maintain a climate of cooperation among employees.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical, and productive manner while at work and while representing SWT when out of the office. Employees are further expected to maintain an awareness of the rights of others, a respect for the people they work with and for, and a commitment to SWT's values, mission statement, goals and policies.

It is impossible to anticipate every situation that might occur. SWT reserves the right to respond to any employee conduct or behavior which, in its judgment, compromises the safety or well-being of any individual in the workplace, diminishes good order, discipline and morale, or detracts from SWT's overall business goals. If SWT's expectations about conduct are unclear, employees should talk to their supervisor or Human Resources.

9.06 TITLE VI

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, Title VI provides that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." (42 U.S.C. § 2000d)

SWT is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of transit services on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI and explained in Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1.B

APPENDIX 1

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT POLICY

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of SouthWest Transit to comply with the requirements of the Federal Family and Medical Leave Acts (FMLA). Generally, an eligible employee will be granted up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave during a 12-month period on a rolling 12-month period looking backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave. The leave may be unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid, depending on the reason for the leave and the benefits to which the employee may be eligible. This policy will be administered in compliance with the National Defense Authorization Acts of 2008 and Fiscal Year 2010 as they amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, and the regulations implementing the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 effective March 8, 2013.

Eligibility

To be eligible for leave under this policy, an employee must have been employed by the company for at least 12 months. In addition, in the 12 months immediately preceding the commencement of the leave, the employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours to qualify under federal law.

Amount of Leave Available

As stated above, an eligible employee is generally eligible for up to a total of 12 weeks of protected leave within a 12-month period on a rolling 12-month period looking backward from the date an

employee uses any FMLA leave for any combination of reasons.

Types of Leave Covered

A. Birth or Placement for Adoption or Foster Care

Family leave will be available to eligible male and female employees for the birth of a child or for placement of a child with the employee for purposes of adoption or foster care. Such leave must generally be completed within 12 months of the birth or placement of the child.

B. Serious Health Condition of Employee

An eligible employee who experiences a “serious health condition,” as defined by federal law, may take medical leave under this policy. A serious health condition will generally occur when the employee:

- Receives inpatient care in a hospital, hospice or nursing home;
- Suffers a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive full calendar days accompanied by continuing outpatient treatment/care by a health-care provider;
- Is pregnant, including severe morning sickness;
- Has a history of a chronic condition which may cause episodes of incapacity; or
- Has a permanent or long-term condition which requires continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Medical leave may be taken all at once or, when medically necessary, in smaller increments. The need for leave must be documented by the employee’s treating health-care provider through the medical certification process.

An employee may be paid for all or part of a medical leave to the extent s/he is eligible for benefits, such as personal leave or short-term disability.

A fitness-for-duty statement will be required in order for an employee to return from a medical leave. Failure to provide the statement will result in a delay in the return to work.

C. Serious Health Condition of Immediate Family Member

An eligible employee may take family leave under this policy in order to care for a son, daughter, spouse or parent with a serious health condition (see above section for general definition). This leave may be taken all at once or, when medically necessary, in smaller increments. It will be necessary for the family member’s treating health-care provider to document the need for leave through the medical certification process.

D. Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave

An eligible employee may take family leave under this policy while the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent (the “military member”) is on covered active duty or call to active duty status for any qualifying exigency under federal law. This leave may be taken all at once or, in smaller increments. It will be necessary to submit a complete and sufficient certification for FMLA leave due to a qualifying exigency. Qualifying exigency leave may be taken by family members of regular armed service members, as well as family members of Reserve and National Guard members, provided the service member is deployed to a foreign country.

E. Military Caregiver Leave

An eligible employee may take up to an additional 14 weeks (not to exceed 26 weeks total) of family leave in a single 12-month period under this policy to care for a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, or, the National Guard or Reserves who is on the temporary disability retired list, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty (or existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by active duty) for which he or she is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or otherwise in outpatient status; or otherwise on the temporary disability retired list. A covered service member may also be a veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

This entitlement will be applied on a per-covered-service member, per-injury basis. The covered service member must be the eligible employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent, or next of kin. It will be necessary for the covered service member's treating health-care provider, as defined by law, to document the need for leave through the medical certification process.

Notifying the Company of the Need for Family or Medical Leave

Generally, an application for leave must be completed for all leave taken under this policy. When the need for leave is foreseeable, the employee should provide notice at least 30 days in advance. When this is not possible, notice should be provided as soon as the employee learns of the need for leave. In cases of emergency, verbal notice should be given as soon as possible (by the employee's representative if the employee is incapacitated), and the application form should be completed as soon as practicable. Failure to provide adequate notice may, in the case of foreseeable leave, result in a delay of the leave. Leave application forms are provided by the Human Resource Department.

Calling in "sick" does not qualify as FMLA leave. An employee must provide sufficient information regarding the reason for an absence for the company to know that protection may exist under this policy. Failure to provide this information as requested will result in the employee's forfeiting all rights under the policy. This means the absence may then be counted against the employee for purposes of discipline for attendance, etc.

Medical Certification of a Serious Health Condition

Generally, the company will require medical certification to verify that an employee or family member's illness meets the definition of serious health condition and to determine the nature and duration of the leave. In the case of a family illness, the provider must also verify that the employee is needed to care for the family member.

Periodic recertification to verify that a condition is ongoing may be required as provided by the law.

The appropriate form should be obtained from the Human Resource Department and should generally be returned within 15 days. Failure to provide this certification may result in delay or denial of the leave.

Additional Certifications

If the company has reason to question the validity of a medical certification, an employee may be required to provide a second certification from a health-care provider selected and paid for by the company. If the second opinion differs from the first, a third opinion may be required. The health-care provider for the third opinion must be mutually chosen by the employee and the company and paid by the company. The third opinion, by law, is binding on all parties.

Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave

FMLA mandates that an employer provide unpaid leave to eligible employees. However, an employee or employer may elect to substitute a paid benefit for which the employee is eligible in order for the employee to receive pay during the leave. SWT requires that benefits, such as personal leave, be used before the employee may take unpaid time. When paid benefits are substituted for the otherwise unpaid time, the employee is using the benefits concurrently with FMLA leave, and those benefits will not be available to the employee later. When paid benefits are substituted, the employee may be required to satisfy any procedural requirements of the organization's paid leave policy.

In cases where substitution of a paid benefit is not possible, the employee will receive reduced compensation consistent with the number of hours the person actually works.

Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave

Intermittent and/or reduced schedule leave will be permitted when it is medically necessary and, in some cases, for birth or placement for adoption. In all cases, the total amount of leave taken in the backward looking rolling 12-month period should not exceed the 12 weeks defined earlier in this policy.

Intermittent and reduced schedule leave must be scheduled with minimal disruption to an employee's job. To the extent an employee has control, medical appointments and treatments related to a serious health condition should be scheduled outside of working hours or at such times that allow for a minimal amount of time away from work.

The company may, in some cases, transfer an employee to an alternative position, with equivalent pay and benefits, in order to better accommodate the need for intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

Benefit Continuation During Leave

Coverage under group health insurance will continue while on leave, but employees must continue to pay their portion of the premium. Other employment benefits, such as group life insurance, AD&D, etc., will also be continued during the leave, as long as the employee continues to pay any required contribution. Payment arrangements will be discussed with individuals upon their request for leave.

Rights Upon Return From Leave

An employee who takes leave under this policy will be reinstated to the same job or an equivalent position upon completion of the leave. If an individual has exhausted all leave under this policy and is still unable to return to work, the situation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine what rights and protections might exist under other company policies.

The law provides that an employee has no greater rights upon a return from leave than the individual would have had if s/he had continued to work. Therefore, an employee may be affected

by a layoff or other job change if the action would have occurred had the employee remained actively at work. In such cases, the official date of the layoff will mean the end of FMLA leave for the employee. If the employee is recalled, if FMLA leave is still required, it may then continue.

Worker's Compensation Absences

When an employee is absent due to a work-related illness or injury which meets the definition of a serious health condition, the absence will be counted against the employee's allotment of FMLA leave under federal law. In other words, the employee is using Federal FMLA leave concurrently with the worker's compensation absence.

Early Return from Leave

An employee who wishes to return to work earlier than originally anticipated should provide at least two days' notice of such request. A fitness-for-duty certification may be required.

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the SouthWest Transit (the “SWT”) Employee Manual. I understand that the contents of this Manual are for general information and guidance and it does not constitute a contract. I understand that this Manual replaces and supersedes any previous policies, manuals, or communications, whether written or oral. I further understand that all contents in this Employee Manual are subject to change in accordance with applicable laws but employees will be advised of any changes.

I have entered into my employment relationship voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Employment with SWT is “at will.” As such, employees have the right to terminate their employment relationship with SWT at any time, with or without notice, for any reason. SWT has the same right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, for any reason not prohibited by law. SWT retains sole discretion to add, delete, or change anything contained in this Manual except employment-at-will.

I understand and agree that no employee or representative of SWT has the authority, at present or in the future, to promise me any benefit or make any agreement with me, oral or written, which in any way conflicts with this Employee Manual or any of these statements, and that no person other than the Chief Executive Officer has the authority to change any policy, benefit, rule or procedure as stated in this Manual.

I understand it is my responsibility to read and understand the contents of this Employee Manual including the topics of harassment, attendance, drugs and alcohol, safety, and Title VI.

Employee Signature _____

Print Name _____ Date _____

Note: Employees are required to acknowledge receipt of the Employee Manual by signing this acknowledgement.

- This copy is to be removed and placed in the employee’s personnel file -



SOUTHWEST TRANSIT

To: SouthWest Transit Commission
From: Len Simich, CEO
Date: January 13, 2021
Subject: 2020 SouthWest Transit Leadership Awards

REQUESTED ACTION:

That the Commission approve the individuals outlined below as their 2020 award recipients:

BUDGET IMPACT:

NA

BACKGROUND:

At the December Commission meeting, potential recipients for the 2020 SouthWest Transit Leadership Awards were discussed. Initially it was decided not to provide any awards in 2020 given the fact COVID interrupted the 2020 Legislative session resulting in little action related to related to suburban transit.

However, as we discussed this further, it was felt that one individual on the Blue-Ribbon Committee which examined amongst other things Metropolitan Transit, stood out with his support for suburban Transit.

SouthWest also lost at the end of 2020 a long-standing member of the Commission and two term Chair Brad Aho. Brad played an instrumental role in our success over the past nine years.

Therefore, the following two award nominees are being presented for Commission approval.

Friend of Transit – Mayor Jim Hovland - This award goes out to an individual or elected official who has supported Suburban/SouthWest Transit through pro-active leadership, advocacy, and legislative initiatives.

Distinguished Career – Brad Aho - This award is provided to an individual who has served in an official capacity for SouthWest Transit and through their actions, have helped shape the organization into the agency it has become today.

Outstanding Political Champion – It is recommended not to present this award for 2020.

It was determined in this meeting that the award for the “Friend of SouthWest Transit”, and the award for the “Distinguished Career” were all warranted for 2019. The Committee did not believe the “Outstanding Political Champion” award was warranted for 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission approve individuals outlined in this memo as the award recipients for 2020.

Updates

Administrative Updates

State Budget Forecast - Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) released a positive January economic update. Net general fund receipts again exceeded expectations, and economic indicators also show a likelihood of higher-than-expected GDP. Long story short, the February forecast (which is the final economic projection that the Legislature will receive and will use for purposes of budgeting) is likely to improve over the previous November forecast, meaning the Legislature is likely to have greater flexibility in its budgeting decisions.

COVID News – Vaccine Distribution: We have not received word from DHS yet on timing of the vaccine. The Metropolitan Council is planning to hire a vendor to administer the vaccine to our staff and contractor staff. The vaccine itself will not cost money, but the contract for the administration of the vaccine will and I and all transit agencies will be asked to share in that cost.

CRRSAA (aka CARES 2) Funding: The FTA announced the allocation of \$14 billion in funds to support public transportation during the pandemic. According to the information that FTA released, the Twin Cities region will receive about \$185.9 million from the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA).

The Council has not released any information on allocation. They indicated that they would have more information on allocations in the coming weeks after we receive guidance from FTA and after they work with the Governor's office and MMB towards the Governor's FY22-23 state budget recommendation, as well as obtaining feedback from the legislature.

The initial CARES funding was distributed by formula (5307). SWT receives 1.11% of the 5307 funds in our region. If that same process is followed again, SWT's portion of the new CARES funding would be \$2,063,232.

City Forums – Similar to the discussions had with area Legislators, I am trying to get on a work session agenda in Eden Prairie and Chaska to not only discuss our Legislative initiatives/platform for 2021, but to also engage the Council's in the potential merge discussion (see attached letter). I am currently scheduled to be part of the January 25 meeting City of Chanhassen work session.

Metropolitan Council at February Commission Meeting – Chair Charlie Zelle, Council Member Deb Barber and Council Member Chris Ferguson have all agreed to attend (virtually) the Work Session scheduled prior to the February 25th meeting of the Commission. The Work Session will begin at 6pm and I have it scheduled for an hour.

State Fair – The Minnesota State Fair Board issued a press release indicating plans for the 2021 Minnesota State Fair are underway. Organizers say they are looking for ways to continue the end-of-summer tradition.

While we need to see what if any changes will occur this year, there are some things we really need to begin within the next three months if we plan to operate at all. They include determining the days we plan to run (all twelve as in the past or only of the two Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Labor Day); Bus Fare (see attached letter to Nick Thompson); Hiring process (drivers – including drug and alcohol testing); Staffing plans (ticket agents, ground personnel on both the east and fairgrounds end); and rental agreements (Wooddale being the major contract). This year's great Minnesota get-together is scheduled to begin on Aug. 26 and run through September 6.

SWLRT Delay – Since the Commission acted in December giving the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit an additional ten months to complete its work at SW Station, it did not come as a surprise to see the announcement (attached) indicating the entire project is being delayed. A new completion date has yet to be determined.



December 15, 2020

Matt Podhradsky
City Administrator
City of Chaska
One City Hall Plaza
Chaska, MN 55318

Dear Matt;

I wanted to follow-up on our meeting yesterday regarding the preliminary discussion the Executive Task Force of the SouthWest Transit Commission (SWT) has had with a similar group from the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVST).

Late last month a meeting was held to determine if there was any interest to examine merging operations in the future. To be clear, no decisions regarding a merge took place, the intent of the meeting was exploratory, to determine if examining this option was something of interest and to begin establishing a process to move discussions forward.

I understand information regarding this initial meeting with MVTA has started to circulate within the City Council. Our engagement strategy was to begin discussions with each of our founding cities once we knew there was :

1. Interest from MVTA's Board to look at this further, and,
2. Once we had a better understanding of the issues that need to be examined.

However, after our discussion yesterday, I thought it may be in our best interest to get this information out to the Mayor and City Council members now and follow it up early in the new year.

I am sure the main question being asked is why are we even looking at this? There are many reasons organizations look at mergers including administrative cost reductions, innovation, and sharing resources to name a few. Each of these apply to why SWT and MVTA have an interest in examining a potential merge, but to say political pressure did not play a role in this decision would not be truthful. A merge between SWT and MVTA would provide more legislative leverage than exists today and would make the new organization the second largest transit system operating in the State.

In 2011, the Legislative auditor completed a report on metropolitan area transit and concluded

that it would be beneficial for suburban systems to explore merging operations to gain greater efficiencies. Besides eliminating administrative duplication, the fact that transit is no longer funded by the property taxes in each community was also cited as a reason for the recommendation.

While the Legislative Auditor was primarily taking aim at the individual city operations in Maple Grove, Plymouth, Shakopee and Prior Lake, consolidation has once again been brought up by Minneapolis and St. Paul Legislators, members of the Governor's Blue-Ribbon Committee, and by Metropolitan Council members and staff (note: since the conclusion of the Legislative Audit, both the Shakopee and Prior Lake transit systems have merged with MVTA).

Actions aimed at creating better system efficiencies is not going to go away. Given the Blue-Ribbon Committee's recommendation to study this every five years and given the fiscal cliff Metro Transit/Metropolitan Council's transit operations is facing in the future, there is a strong probability something could be forced upon us that would not be beneficial to our communities. A voluntary/supported consolidation is one thing, forced consolidation, especially if the consolidation were to be forced under the Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit is another.

Furthermore, the reality is that a transit agency's size, power, and relevance is ultimately dictated by its overall ridership. As we transition into a post-pandemic world it is all but certain that SWT and MVTA's ridership will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels. This new "normal" will present opportunities for opponents of suburban transit to legitimately push for the consolidation or elimination of SWT's services. A merger with MVTA would create an agency large enough with ridership levels great enough to justify its existence, and hopefully stave off any consolidation/elimination attempts.

As previously pointed out, the only thing that has occurred to date is that SWT and MVTA's Executive Committees have agreed that examining a potential merge could be in each organizations best interest.

There is a possibility that the differences between SWT and MVTA are just too great, making any potential merge unlikely. Several steps need to be examined over the course of discovery including a better understanding of the organizational cultures in each agency, as well as understanding of the vision and values that exist in each organization.

This process is not something that is going to be done quick or in a vacuum. There will be plenty of opportunity to have further discussions as we begin to examine this potential opportunity.

Since nothing can happen without our three founding cities approval, we need to make sure all city concerns are examined and addressed. Any feedback you can provide now or throughout this process would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Len Simich
CEO

John Haggenmiller

From: Len Simich
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 12:00 PM
To: John Haggenmiller
Subject: FW: State Fair Fares



Len Simich

**Chief Executive Officer and
General Manager**

Phone: 952.974.3101

Mobile: 952.486.1898

Email: lsimich@swtransit.org

Web: www.swtransit.org



From: Len Simich
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 9:40 AM
To: Thompson, Nick <Nick.Thompson@metc.state.mn.us>
Cc: Barber, Deb <Deb.Barber@metc.state.mn.us>; Ferguson, Christopher <Christopher.Ferguson@metc.state.mn.us>; Mike Huang <mhuang@chaskamn.com>; Zelle, Charles <Charles.Zelle@metc.state.mn.us>
Subject: RE: State Fair Fares

Nick,

As you may remember the FTA was confused. They seemed to think the Minnesota State Fair was the contractor. This is a public service not a charter. We just need to make sure we are not losing money on a special event service. I'd like to recommend the Council look at establishing a Special Event rate that is different or provides flexibility. To me this would satisfy the FTA and work best for the region in these tight fiscal times.



Len Simich

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General Manager**

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From: Thompson, Nick <Nick.Thompson@metc.state.mn.us>

Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 8:55 AM

To: Len Simich <lsimich@swtransit.org>

Cc: Barber, Deb <Deb.Barber@metc.state.mn.us>; Ferguson, Christopher <Christopher.Ferguson@metc.state.mn.us>;

Mike Huang <mhuang@chaskamn.com>; Zelle, Charles <Charles.Zelle@metc.state.mn.us>

Subject: RE: State Fair Fares

Len, Based on the FTA response last year (copied) for this similar request, per regulations FTA will expect that SouthWest Transit issue and RFP for charter services and only if no one responds will it be potentially possible to operate the service with a charter type fare.

Thanks, Nick



Nick Thompson

Director

Metropolitan Transportation Services

nick.thompson@metc.state.mn.us

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CONNECT WITH US



From: Len Simich <lsimich@swtransit.org>

Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 4:00 PM

To: Thompson, Nick <Nick.Thompson@metc.state.mn.us>

Cc: Barber, Deb <Deb.Barber@metc.state.mn.us>; Ferguson, Christopher <Christopher.Ferguson@metc.state.mn.us>;

Mike Huang <MHuang@chaskamn.com>; Zelle, Charles <Charles.Zelle@metc.state.mn.us>

Subject: State Fair Fares

Good afternoon Nick,

Given the tight budgets we all will be dealing with this year, SouthWest Transit would like to request once again at getting an exemption from charging the \$6 round trip Metro Transit does to/from the Minnesota State Fair Grounds to the \$8 per round trip we charged in 2019.

We are requesting this based on the distance we travel (i.e. similar rational used for the extra charge on the Northstar line for Twins/Vikings games), as well we believe our approach to providing the service is closer to a modified demand response service than fixed route service (i.e. our Prime rate is \$4 one way/\$8 round trip).

As you know, for the FTA to even consider this would require support from the MPO. Please let me know if this is possible. Thank you.



Len Simich

**Chief Executive Officer and
General Manager**

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NEWSRELEASE

Southwest LRT Announces Potential Delay

St. Louis Park, January 14, 2021 - Today the Metropolitan Council along with Hennepin County are announcing a potential construction delay for the Southwest LRT Project. Over the course of the 2020 construction season, the project staff and our contractor, Lunda-McCrossan Joint Venture encountered unforeseen conditions in the Minneapolis segment of the of the alignment which will take longer to overcome. These include:

- Due to the poor soils we encountered in the Kenilworth corridor during the initial construction of the tunnel, an alternative construction method is needed to complete the tunnel. The construction method we are introducing (secant wall) will stabilize the soils while constructing the LRT tunnel. We are taking this approach out of an abundance of caution to protect the foundations of adjacent buildings.
- We are constructing an approximately 1-mile corridor protection wall for an additional layer of protection between the BNSF freight trains and LRT trains. The corridor protection wall will be located in the BNSF's Wayzata Subdivision in Minneapolis from the Bryn Mawr Station to just east of I-94. This protection wall was added as a requirement of BNSF after final design and civil construction contracting. While this element is not a surprise, we have now completed analysis and design for the wall and have a fuller understanding of the challenges of constructing this project element in an active freight rail corridor. [Watch this short video about the corridor protection wall.](#)

These are no small changes and require thoughtful and deliberate engineering, design plans and construction methods. What this means is Southwest LRT will most likely not be meeting its opening day projection of 2023. While these types of setbacks are not uncommon on projects of this scale, we are also disappointed by this development. We strongly believe the long-term benefits of this project to the region and state outweigh the short-term challenges we face.

During the next several months project staff and the contractor will be analyzing the schedule and we will share more information later this year. Southwest LRT is the largest public infrastructure project in the state of Minnesota's history and is incredibly complex as we construct LRT, freight rail and regional trails. Challenges will always arise in a project of this size and scope. It is important to note that current construction on Southwest LRT continues in Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis. This includes key project elements including stations, LRT and trail tunnels and LRT, freight rail and trail bridges which will continue to be constructed. We will continue to work directly with stakeholders to minimize these construction impacts whenever possible.

Operations, Planning, IT, Vehicle Maintenance and Facility Maintenance Updates January 2021

Shakopee Prime service launched on January 11th. The service provides trips between the SW Prime service area and large portion of Shakopee. What makes the service unique, besides the expansion of the SW Prime service area, is that riders can actually book rides in advance on the same day if desired. This helps out the efficiency of our SW Prime operation as the Spare Labs software will then automatically batch scheduled rides to ensure vehicles are being used in the most efficient manner. The service has been received favorably by customers, on social media, and has received some positive press in local publications and from the Star Tribune. The service experienced some regular riders during its first week, which is a good sign that there is demand for the service and that it will continue to grow.

Another service that launched on January 11th was the new **Grocery Getter service**. This service initiative offers \$2 SW Prime rider on weekdays between 9am and 12pm (generally, our slowest time period of the day) to major grocers in the SW Prime service area (Cub, Walmart, Lunds and Byerlys, Target, Aldi, Costco, Coopers, and Kowalski's). This service has also been received favorably by riders, on social media, the Star Tribune, and it also received some national attention from transit industry publications. The Grocery Getter service will be offered while we continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and possibly beyond.

CMAQ Scoring – Staff was made aware that Met Council staff is recommending that a previous CMAQ award that was not used and is being reallocated to a 2020 Regional Solicitation project in the Transit category is being recommended to fund a BRT project in Washington County, which does not follow the current Regional Solicitation rules for project selection. If current rules were followed, a SWT project would be the next eligible project to receive funding based on scoring. Met Council staff is asserting that the current project selection rules do not apply in this case since the funds are from a previous solicitation when the rules were different. SWT, MVTA, and the STA do not agree with this assessment.

US Department of Energy (DOE) Grant Application – Staff is currently working with an autonomous vehicle vendor, Bluespace.ai, and the University of Minnesota on submitting a grant application to the DOE that, if awarded, would demo an autonomous electric vehicle in the Golden Triangle Area of Eden Prairie. Staff will provide more details on this grant submittal at the Commission's February meeting.

Two **Ticket Vending Machines** have been purchased to install in the lobbies of SouthWest Village and East Creek Station. Once configured and branded, riders will be able to purchase a \$10 or \$20 Go-To stored value card to use on our routes. This provides more options to our riders when the Customer Service counters are closed.

Our new Asset and Maintenance Management software **eMaint** is now in the configuration phase of implementation. Staff will be working with the company for the next 7 weeks to configure the system and make it work for our needs. We expect training to start in March.

Vehicle Maintenance updates

The vehicle maintenance department is currently installing passenger seat barriers into spare MCI coach buses. We are eagerly awaiting the delivery of our new MCI low floor coaches, currently three of the four coaches are slated for February delivery.

All SWT vehicle recently underwent a required State inspection, and we are happy to report that all vehicles passed without any infractions.

Facilities Updates

The facilities crew has been working to complete the construction at the garage. The build out of the fitness centers shower room and locker rooms is at about 50% completion. We expect them to be completed and usable within the next couple of weeks. The shower room is expected to be completed before the end of the month. We have had a few snow events between the holidays, we were able to keep everything clear and open for our vehicles and passengers without issues. Our buildings and buses continue to be cleaned and disinfected daily to assure a safe environment for all.