

Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of February 11, 2015

Subject: Amendment to the Transitways Guidelines to update the Light Rail Vehicle Standards
Proposed Action

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) amend the Regional Transitways Guidelines to add the following guidelines for future light rail vehicle purchases:

- All vehicles must meet or exceed the standards established in the Americans with Disabilities Act
- All vehicles must also include:
 - two dedicated spaces for wheelchair users in each car
 - seating for a companion adjacent to each of the wheelchair-dedicated spaces

Summary of Committee Discussion/Questions

Robin Caufman presented the Item. Councilmember Elkins asked how the seating changed. Ms. Caufman explained that two of the flip up seats were removed from each light rail vehicle and replaced with two seats for companion seats and an open space. Councilmember Munt mentioned she recently met someone that is both blind and in a wheelchair, and asked if this change will benefit him. Ms. Caufman explained that there is a designated space just inside all doors so it will be easily accessible to him. Councilmember Reynoso asked if there was signage that lets passengers know that the open space is designated for wheel chair users. Ms. Caufman responded that there is signage on the window that the area is priority seating for customers with disabilities and seniors.

Motion made by Councilmember Munt, seconded by Councilmember McCarthy and carried with unanimous vote.

Transportation Committee

Meeting date: February 9, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of February 11, 2015

Subject: Amendment to the Transitways Guidelines to update the Light Rail Vehicle Standards

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statutes, Section 473.4056, Regional Transitways Guidelines

Staff Prepared/Presented: Arlene McCarthy, Director MTS, 651-602-1754
Cole Hiniker, Senior Planner, 651-602-1748
Robin Kaufman, SWLRT Asst. Director, 651-602-1457
Melanie Steinborn, SWLRT Assistant Director, 612-373-3811

Division/Department: MTS/Metro Transit / Green Line Extension Project Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) amend the Regional Transitways Guidelines to add the following guidelines for future light rail vehicle purchases:

- All vehicles must meet or exceed the standards established in the Americans with Disabilities Act
- All vehicles must also include:
 - two dedicated spaces for wheelchair users in each car
 - seating for a companion adjacent to each of the wheelchair-dedicated spaces

Background

In 2012, the Council adopted Regional Transitway Guidelines, which serves as standards in the design of transitway investments, after extensive internal discussion and public input. The purpose of the Regional Transitway Guidelines is to provide technical guidance, based in best practices, that supports the development and operation of transitways in a way that is consistent, equitable, and efficient, and delivers an effective, integrated, and user-friendly transit system throughout the Twin Cities region. Chapter 6 provides guidelines for purchasing vehicles and provides a basis for understanding the elements important to vehicle decision making in an industry where technology, styling, and vendors are evolving quickly. The current guidelines state that all light rail vehicles must be ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant.

In 2014, state legislation was passed that states that by January 1, 2015, the Metropolitan Council shall adopt and may thereafter amend standards for the design of light rail vehicles that are reasonably necessary to provide access for, and to protect the health and safety of, persons who use the service. All light rail transit vehicles procured on and after January 1, 2015, must conform to the standards then in effect. The 2014 legislation also requires the Metropolitan Council to specifically amend the standards to include designs that address accessibility and to review those proposed amendments with the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee before adopting, which was done on February 4. At a minimum, the standards must include:

- (1) two dedicated spaces for wheelchair users in each car;

- (2) seating for a companion adjacent to at least two wheelchair-dedicated spaces; and
- (3) further specifications that meet or exceed the standards established in the Americans with Disabilities Act

The Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee reviewed the proposed amendment that was based on the language in State Statutes. TAAC members indicated that the guideline related to companion seating was unclear. As a result, TAAC offered and approved a revision to clarify their intent to have at least one companion seat near each of the wheel chair dedicated spaces:

- seating for a companion adjacent to each of the wheelchair-dedicated spaces

See the attached proposed amended Regional Transitway Guidelines Chapter 6 – Vehicles.

Rationale

This amendment is required by Minnesota State Statutes 473.4056 and responds to concerns over the initial layout of the Type II vehicles.

Funding

The Southwest LRT project includes funding for light rail vehicles.

Known Support / Opposition

The proposed language was reviewed and recommended by the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee.