

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 5, 2014

**Committee Members Present:** Vice Chair Nichole Villavicencio, Rozanne Severence, Kjensmo Walker, Margot Imdieke Cross, Bob Anderson, Robert Platz, Heidi Myhre, Darrell Paulsen, Mark Hoisser, Chad McGuire, David Fenley and Patty Thorsen.

**Committee Members Absent:** James Williams

**Committee Members Excused:** John Lund

**Council Staff Present:** Mary Karlsson and Pam Steffen from Metro Transit, Andy Streasick, Andrew Krueger and Alison Coleman

**Public Present:** Claudia Fugile and Mark Hughes.

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Vice Chair Villavicencio called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:05 p.m. on Wednesday, November 05, 2014.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Imdieke Cross, seconded by Thorsen to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Paulsen, seconded by Walker to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2014 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

## INFORMATION & BUSINESS

The committee members spoke about the passing of the TAAC Chair Ron Biss. They passed out a card for everyone to sign for the family.

### 1. Metro Transit Service Improvement Plan (SIP) Update

Mary Karlsson spoke to the TAAC committee. She is going to talk about the short range bus plan. She works in the Service Development Group at Metro Transit. There is a Draft Bus Service Improvement Plan that is out for public comment right now. This plan was prepared in response to a lot of comments that they have gotten over the years saying that the Transportation Policy Plan and the Long Range Transportation Plan lays out the transitway system for the light rail, rail or bus rapid transit. Well what about the bus? This is the plan that speaks about the bus piece and the local bus service.

The Service Improvement Plan is the bus service expansion plan. It is local and express bus. It is about adding service. It builds on the existing network. It identifies potential new routes, frequency and span improvements on existing routes. It is a prioritized, specific list of how to grow and improve local and express bus service between 2015 – 2030. Most of the projects are within the first five years of the plan. The implementation requires additional operating funds. They don't have funding today to implement this plan.

Why create a SIP? Buses are the backbone of the transit system. Seventy percent of the rides today are from the bus system. Similar plans exist for transitways. Demonstrate bus service needs and the need for additional funding for bus service. This will go into the legislative programming for next year. They will be working with all of the transportation providers, all the bus providers in the region to develop the Regional Service Improvement Plan. Then they will be using this plan as a platform for any transit funding

opportunities that come up, for example the Regional Solicitation or those kinds of funding opportunities through the Transportation Advisory Board.

What is included? New bus routes, improved service levels on existing bus routes, Arterial BRT (except A Line), bus services connecting to rail and Highway BRT stations, routing and scheduling improvements, operating costs only and projects in Metro Transit service area.

What is not included? Reduction or elimination of service to existing destinations, light rail and commuter rail, Highway BRT or A Line, improvements to passenger amenities, fare changes, new garages, capital investments and projects in suburban provider service areas.

They have been working on this for about a year. It started last year with some outreach and engagement. There was a survey with about 4,000 responses. There were three kinds of information: 1. origin – destination information and specific suggestions for improvements, 2. Current transit usage/behavior and what would encourage people to use transit more often, 3. Goals and priorities for what the transit system should accomplish and how they should address trade-offs.

There are guiding principles for this evaluation process that they went through. Maximize ridership growth, emphasize high productivity/low subsidy projects, provide faster travel time, enhance connectivity of transit system, support transit friendly land use and design, expand service for off peak and non work trip purposes and improve transit equitably.

The project Identification Methodology was the survey, customer relations requests that they have gotten over the past several years, staff ideas and feedback from Thrive MSP, the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan and other recent projects.

There are three main groups of evaluation criteria:

1. Productivity – criteria demonstrate the ridership potential of service improvements using land use and density factors (50% weight). The productivity based measures are existing population, existing jobs, regional job concentration areas served (Thrive MSP 2040), riders per in-service hour, subsidy per passenger and intersection density.
2. Social equity – criteria evaluate how well improvements serve people most reliant on transit (25% weight). The social equity-based measures are number of jobs paying less than \$40,000 a year, routes serving low-income communities, people of color, people living with disabilities and auto availability (age 16 and older).
3. System connectivity – criteria establish how well projects improve connections and service throughout the Metro Transit service area (25% weight). The system connectivity-based measures are number of intersecting routes, persons served by new route or route expansion, number of key destinations served, improvements of off-peak, span of service and/or reverse commute service and educational institutions served (Thrive MSP 2040).

After the initial screening of all projects here is what they have that is recommended for implementation: there were 165 projects that were considered: 41 high projects with 8.9 million new rides and \$2.73 subsidy per passenger; 81 medium projects with 7.3 million new rides and \$5.40 subsidy per passenger. There were 43 low projects with 2.5 million new rides and \$12.34 subsidy per passenger. They are recommending the high and medium projects for implementation. If the funding were available those projects would be ready to go. They think the climate isn't ready for the 43 low projects at this time. They will update this plan in four years. At that time they will consider the 43 low projects.

She showed a map of the transitway system, the existing network and community boundaries, Arterial Bus Rapid Transit and park and rides. The Arterial Bus Rapid Transit was included in the plan but not scored. There are projects that they recommend for implementation. This is looking at future development and future population, future employment, future development form and urban form.

Of the projects they are recommending for implementation, there are 122 projects on 86 routes. There could be two projects on the same route. Seventy-seven expand coverage and improve connectivity. Seventy-one improve frequency on existing service. Sixty-two expand span of service. Fourteen add reverse commute service. The implementation phases are: 2015-2017, 2018-2020, 2021-2030. Most of the projects fall into the first six years, 2015-2020. The route types are: urban core, urban supporting, suburban local and commuter express.

With these improvements you are looking at about an increase of almost 30 million rides with these improvements at a cost of \$106 million, with a subsidy of about \$75 million. That is about a \$2.60 subsidy per passenger. This is just for the service. This does not include an additional garage, which would be required. It would also not include additional mechanics for the additional buses or planning staff to plan and implement these routes. These are just the service costs. This is contributing to the 2015 legislative proposal. It will have the holistic view of the costs and what would be needed on all of the facility and service perspective to deliver this. This does not include the Metro Mobility costs. This would be just for the fixed route costs. Metro Mobility would be included in the legislative proposal for next year. The numbers come from the census, Metro Transit and Metro Mobility. None of this will happen unless they receive increased revenue.

The SIP development timeline: Initial stakeholder outreach: Nov – Dec 2013, Phase I public input: Dec-Feb 2014, Review and process input: Feb – April 2014, Develop Draft SIP: May – Oct 2014, Review Draft SIP (public comment period and Title VI service equity review): Nov 2014, Refine and finalize SIP: Early 2015.

There are five additional public meetings between now and November 18. Now is the public comment period. They are looking for input. The project website is [metrotransit.org/sip](http://metrotransit.org/sip)

## 2. Metro Transit Update

Pam Steffen spoke to the TAAC committee. She played a training video in which some of the TAAC members participated. At least once a year Metro Transit provides professional operator training to its bus operators. This year's segment was about customer service. The bus operators work various shifts, including split shifts, overnights and weekends. The key point of the whole development process is: are they thriving or just surviving? Are they taking care of themselves and their family life? Or are they doing what they can to just get by? That feeds into the bigger picture of customer service. If you are thriving and feeling good about yourself and you are able to spend time with your family and are eating healthy that perhaps the customer service that you give the customers is also thriving. If you are barely getting by and are not very healthy, having a lot of issues at home, that may portray how you respond to customers. A lot of the customer service training was based on reevaluating yourself as an employee of Metro Transit, a family member, husband, wife, etc. Then you would revise some things in your life so you would be thriving instead of just surviving.

At the tail end of the two hour customer service session they show this video. Brian Lamb talks about thriving and surviving. Then there are some customer testimonials. There is also a segment on human trafficking. They also talk about a lot of veterans come home suffering from PTSD. It also talks about folks with disabilities and seniors. All 1,400 of the operators are going through this training. They sign a document that they have received the training.

Several months ago Jason Podany and Gary Nyberg presented the enunciators project. Their plan is to roll out this program to all buses by the end of November. Steffen asked for feedback from the TAAC members on how that is going. Too fast, too much, too loud, etc.

McGuire asked that Metro Transit review the Code of Federal Regulations regarding the duty to announce stops. The language is very specific and it includes language about announcing intersections, stations and destinations along the route. His experience with enunciators is that they announce intersections but they don't do many destinations or other major landmarks. Even with the enunciator the driver should let people know where they are if they ask the driver.

Indieke Cross asked about the legality of Metro Transit free rides and charging for the same rides on Metro Mobility.

Andy Streasick said that the Metro Mobility Service Center did consult the FTA regarding this subject. The state statute specifically excluded paratransit from free fares.

Thorsen asked about the cost of Metro Mobility free rides if someone wanted to lobby for them.

Streasick said the MMSC could calculate the approximate cost by subtracting the \$3 or \$4 subsidy from the full cost of each ride and multiplying that number by the average weekday ridership.

### **3. Metro Mobility Update**

Andy Streasick declined to present today because they ran out of time.

#### **MEMBER COMMENT**

Streasick said that there has been a change in the role of Pam Steffen. She will be sitting at the table with the TAAC committee. She will be an additional staff liaison in addition to Andy who is the first staff liaison. The agendas will be coming from the Metro Mobility staff. The new chair will be appointed by the Met Council.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mark Hughes talked about a couple of issues he had.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary