

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Committee Members Present: Chair Kjensmo Walker, Lisa Childs, Ken Rodgers, Robert Platz, Kari Sheldon, John Clark, Heidi Myhre, Bre Royer, Lukus Zuker, David Fenley and Patty Thorsen.

Committee Members Absent: none.

Committee Members Excused: Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Dona Harris and Margot Imdieke Cross.

Council Staff Present: Pam Steffen, Ed Petrie, Nick Eull, Jan Dietrick and Steve Mahowald from Metro Transit; Michelle Fure, Gerri Sutton, Andy Streasick, Leslie Kandaras, Katie White, Nick Thompson, Dana Rude, Heidi Schallberg and Alison Coleman.

Public Present: Amanda Swanson from Lifeworks and Andrea Kiepe from Transportation Forward.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Walker called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:31 p.m. on Wednesday, April 05, 2017.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Rodgers, seconded by Platz to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Fenley, seconded by Thorsen to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2017 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. Legislative Update

Leslie Kandaras spoke to the TAAC committee. She is a Senior Project Coordinator in the Government Affairs Department of the Metropolitan Council. Both of the policy bill deadlines have passed, which means the legislature has gone from having thousands of bills. They are funneling it down to the business they plan to act on this year. They are really getting to work on the finance bills. This year is a budget year. The State of Minnesota sets up a budget year every two years. Over the last couple of weeks a lot of the Council staff's effort has focused on tracking those finance bills, including the Transportation Omnibus bill, which is what she is going to focus on today.

Last week both the House and the Senate passed their Transportation Finance Bill. In that bill, it gives funds to the Metropolitan Council and it also funds MnDOT and the Department of Public Safety. It is a very large piece of legislation. The Senate and the House have different approaches to the bill. For the Senate, they retain the Metropolitan Council's base funding for transit but they don't increase the general fund appropriation. The Council is heading into this budget setting session with a deficit. Because the Senate's bill would retain existing funding but the deficit issue would still cause problems for them as an agency. It would ultimately reduce service. It would contribute to the decisions around the potential fare increase.

Also in the Senate bill it is fairly light on policy as it relates to the Council but they did include a standalone bill from Senator Kiffmeyer regarding a Metro Mobility Task Force. That bill language is currently in the Transportation Finance Omnibus Bill. It would create a task force regarding Metro Mobility looking at various options. It was amended in that committee to require that task force to look into taxi service as well as a potential option to enhance Metro Mobility service.

The House has a different approach. Unlike the Senate they don't retain a current general fund base. They look at the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax revenues that we are expected to get in future years. They would use that to offset the current general fund. What it means is ultimately along with the deficit this cut to general fund would be a \$126 million hole in our budget for the next biennium. It is a very significant budget cut that could result in as much as a 40 percent reduction in regular route service. The bill also contains a lot of policy provisions relating to transit. The House did not include that Metro Mobility Task Force Study in the Finance Omnibus Bill. But they did include several provisions that would really curtail potential transitway development in the Twin Cities region. Not just the Metropolitan Council's role in that but the role in local governments to plan, study, design future transitways.

A lot of provisions with policy finance in that bill. This is something that Council staff has been following very closely. That is what happened last week. The bills are pretty different from each other. The next step is to be for a conference committee to be formed. They don't anticipate that happening this week. The Legislature is on break next week. Probably by mid-April Council staff will have a better sense of how the House and Senate come together and how the Governor will weigh in to move forward on coming up with the Transportation bill that will set the budget for the next biennium.

The Kiffmeyer bill for the Metro Mobility Task Force was introduced in both the House and the Senate. Kiffmeyer has the Senate bill and Representative Koznick has the House bill. It did make the deadline in the House but it was not incorporated in the Finance Bill. When the Finance Bill comes to conference they will have a discussion about whether they retain the Senate provision or not. They did not approach us when formulating the bill to the best of her knowledge. Judd Schetnan has had multiple conversations with the authors to understand their intent.

It received more hearings in the House. Koznick said that other metropolitan areas have explored whether different services such as Lyft and Uber may become an option for paratransit travel in those areas. Senator Westrom amended that to say the task force has to include an analysis of taxi service in addition to those services. Whether or not the Council has a position on it. They just want the task force to move forward and is balanced and there are no conflicts of interest from the people who are setting the recommendations and the people who might benefit from this like service providers. They want the recommendation process to be balanced. The bill itself is just setting up the task force. It is not binding.

2. Fare Increase Options Analysis and Discussion

Nick Eull spoke to the TAAC committee. He is the Senior Manager of Revenue Operations at Metro Transit. his responsibility deals with anything that is fare collection related. One of the things that they are looking at to help offset some of the deficit is a fare increase. He is going to give the TAAC committee an idea of what the fare increase would look like. He will give a brief update on the budget situation of Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Transportation Services. He will talk through briefly what the fare change goals and considerations and scenarios they are looking at. He will talk about what the public engagement process looks like. Then he will talk about the next steps.

The transportation deficit as it is seen now. They met with the Council in December when they were forecasting an \$89 million budget deficit. Over the last couple of years that has been revised positively down to about \$74 million and then a revision there. There is about a \$9 million in forecasted growth in MVST based on the most recent projections that are included in this. There is about \$6 million that they are carrying forward from the previous biennium. That is \$6 million in savings that they are going to be able to realize in this next biennium. That is where you see the \$89 million moving down to \$74 million. That is subject to change here in the next few months as well as they continue through this legislative process.

As they think about a fare change this year there are three goals they are focusing on. The first one is generating additional fare revenue across all modes of service including Metro Transit and the regional providers and the suburban transit providers. That includes MVTA, Southwest Transit, Maple Grove and Plymouth Metrolink. They are also looking at Metro Mobility and Transit Link. First and foremost, generating additional fare revenues. They are looking to promote equity. They are looking at various scenarios and how they are going to increase fares. They want to be cognizant of those customers that are most transit dependent and as much as they are able to, make sure those fares are what those customers are able to pay. And simplify the fare increase. The current fare structure is complicated. They will break that down to what impacts the decisions that they are going to have looking at revenue generation and rider impact. Any time they increase fares, ridership is expected to go down. So they are cognizant of that and they are trying to minimize

what those impacts could be with those decisions. They are very cognizant of who the dependent customers are and as they go through and look at these decisions to be aware of that group to make sure that they are at least considering them in the decisions they are making or considering. What they are talking about today is considering the cash fares. Many of the customers don't pay cash. They are eligible for a card of some sort. Or they will buy a 30-day pass. Maybe they are a part of our commuter pass program. There are some other factors as well. It also includes tokens and anything else they offer customers.

Metro Mobility and Transit Link are very important parts of this service. When they think about those who are transit dependent and those who are eligible for Metro Mobility, and use that service, are a key component of that group. Then they also have suburban transit providers. They are an important part of the transit system. Their customers are a little different from some of Metro Transit's customers from a regular customer type. If they were to categorize those customers. They need to be cognizant of that as well. At least on the transit side, any of the changes they are proposing need to go through a Title VI analysis. If you are not familiar with Title VI. It makes sure that when they are making these decisions they are considering the low-income customers and the minority customers to make sure those changes are not having a disparate impact on that group more so than the rest of the population.

There are two primary scenarios that he will talk about here. Scenario one looks at a quarter across the board. That is consistent with what they did with the last fare increases. Both in 2005 and 2008. That would take all of the fares and increase them a quarter. Scenario two looks at a quarter for the local fare and fifty cents for the express fare. The current scenario is looking at fifty cents across the board.

When they look at the various services that they have here at Metro Transit, the Metropolitan Council and across the region there are different costs. Each service has a different cost structure and different farebox recovery indicator. Farebox recovery simply measures of all the operating costs that go into running this service, how much of the operating cost is being accounted for through the fares that our customers pay? It is probably no surprise to you that all of these services are subsidized. Some more than others. As you look at this, the lowest subsidized service they provide is LRT. That subsidizes at \$1.67 per customer. The most subsidized service they offer is Metro Mobility. For every ride, they are providing for Metro Mobility on average that is subsidized at \$24.00. These are 2015 numbers. That has gone up since then. Some of the services are more expensive than others.

Some other things they are looking at with all these scenarios are first and foremost if you are a reduced fare customer with Metro Transit and that would be if you fall into a category of being 65 or older, being a youth ages six through 12 or having a Medicare card holder being qualified for Medicare, and you are over 65 you are considered reduced fare. Currently in our fare structure those customers pay a reduced fare in the off-peak hours. So they would pay \$0.75 for riding outside the peak hours Monday through Friday. But during the peak hours, which are between 6:00 and 9:00 a.m. and between 3:00 and 6:30 on weekdays they pay the full fare.

One of the things they are interested in pursuing or at least getting public comment on is if there is an opportunity for all of those customers to pay the same fare at all times during the day, not having that peak surcharge. Another thing they are looking at is right now if you have a GoTo card and you put stored value on your GoTo card in increments of \$10.00 or more they give you a 10 percent bonus. If you put \$10.00 on your GoTo card they give you an extra dollar. That was about \$2 million in 2016. Metro Transit would like to explore some options on how they could repurpose those dollars to some of the other programs so that would help promote equity and refocus on that question of how are they helping those who need the most help in terms of paying their fares? Anywhere they can simplify the number of fare products that they have would be something they would be interested in. There may be an opportunity to eliminate the off-peak express fare. One of the categories they have. It is only about two percent of the rides. Most of the customers wouldn't be impacted on that so that would be something toward simplification they would be interested in as well.

The first scenario that he has here is looking at a quarter across the board. Including Metro Transit and Council services as well as regional service. That would look to generate about \$6.9 million in the first year. The impacts of that, that doesn't include Transit Link or Metro Mobility, they would lose about 3.8 million rides across the region from those increased fares. That would be about 4.7 percent of the ridership. Anytime they increase fares that is going to have an impact on ridership. This is consistent with the fare changes in 2005 and 2008. In 2008 was our last fare increase. Those fare increases were a quarter across the board.

About 80 percent of the suburban transit providers service (MVTA, Southwest and that group) is express service. Only 10 percent of Metro Transit's transit service is express service. They still do quite a bit more

overall service than those groups do but the majority of the ridership is local. About 90 percent of all cash usage is in the local fares. Folks use much less cash in the express service than they do in the local. It takes 18 to 24 months for the ridership to come back after a fare increase. They look at that \$6.9 million in additional revenues as the base and that could go up in future years as rides come back. A number of things could influence that like gas prices.

Scenario two is where fares are raised 50 cents across the board. The impact there would be they would see approximately \$12.8 million in additional revenues in the first year as a result of that scenario. The impacts there would be significant. They would look to lose about 7.1 million rides. That is just under nine percent of the total ridership. The additional revenues there would be \$12.8 million. With that higher fare, you can expect more of the choice riders or riders who would have an alternative to using transit would pursue that alternative whether it would be car share, commute or some other means other than transit. That is something they are very cognizant of. When they look at the 7.1 million rides compared to what they have lost in scenario one there is about 3.3 million additional rides they would lose by adding that extra quarter. Only about 300,000 of those rides are in the express fare set. Three million of those are on the local fare. So you can see where that would have a significant impact on those customers that are using that local, urban and suburban service.

There are some additional revenues there. They could talk about how they could use some of the other additional revenues for some of the other programs. A few of the other things they are looking at first is to eliminate that stored value bonus of 10 percent. There was almost \$2 million in bonus added in 2016. One of the advantages this would offer is when Metro Mobility customers use a GoTo card or when some of the other transit agencies uses a GoTo card for stored value they are only getting about 90 percent of that value. When you consider the cost of Metro Mobility and Transit Link those are high value services, high cost services. Eliminating this bonus would allow them to capture the full cost of those services given the high subsidization rate. That is one of the benefits of this. Another benefit is \$1.8 million after they consider a 5 percent ridership loss on that.

For seniors, youth and Medicare card holders, if Metro Transit could get rid of that surcharge, there is a cost to that. They would lose about \$660,000 in lost revenues from those customers being eligible for paying a reduced fare at those times now that they are paying the full fare. That is when they consider the cafeteria plan of options. That is where some of the revenue generation from some of these options could offset those revenue losses or where they are not capturing as much revenue to help with some of these programs.

Also, there is a low-income program Metro Transit has been pilot testing called the TAP (Transit Assistance Pass) program. They are in the second pilot test of the TAP program. What this program aims to do is build a little different relationship between Metro Transit and some of the low-income customers. They have roughly 800 or 900 different agencies that they partner with now that provide discounted transit passes to customers who are homeless or low income or have qualifying disabilities or any circumstances that would allow those customers to qualify for a low-income pass or even a free pass in some situations. Metro Transit has a number of customers or riders that don't have that agency relationship but would still fall under a low-income threshold. Right now they are using 185 percent of the federal poverty level.

This program aims to build a more personal relationship between Metro Transit and that customer by allowing that customer that has a relationship with an agency that doesn't necessarily provide transit passes. But at least it certifies based on income. For instance, Catholic Charities. They certify people based on income for other benefits but if Metro Transit can partner with you based on that certification they can allow that low-income customer to receive a transit pass. They have to put their own money on to a pass that would allow them to ride for \$1.00 every ride as long as they are in that low income category. Metro Transit is just about to finish up their six-month pilot test on this program. Based off FTA rules and Council policy they can only go six months as part of a pilot.

From the analysis that was done. The folks that are using these cards, there are about 2,500 cards in circulation as part of this pilot program. The folks that are using these cards are using these cards as much as or more than the premier program like UPASS at the University of Minnesota or Metro Pass, which is their commuter program. Target and Wells Fargo and other companies that provide that as a transit benefit to their employees. It is very popular. Metro Transit averages 32 rides per card in February. Metro Pass is about 27 rides per month. The majority of these rides are occurring during the off-peak hours. That is when we really have the capacity to take these rides without incurring any additional costs on our part. So they are not exceeding the capacity that they have already. So it is helping take care of some of the capacity that they have now. Then 90 percent of these rides are taking place in the local fare set. So these folks are not riding express.

They are riding the core to those places that are important to them like work, school, medical appointments and grocery or whatever the case may be.

The initial estimates on this. They are figuring right now that if they were to implement this program across the region with full scale implementation there would be about \$3 million in a revenue reduction they would take as a result of this. So there are a number of things they are looking at for this fare change to see how these numbers might play out based off the comment feedback they get during the public input process. One thing that is important based on the survey information is about 85 percent of these customers are already Metro Transit customers. The survey suggests that 15 percent of the 2,500 cards, those folks who are riding regularly were previously not Metro Transit customers. There is an opportunity through this discounted program to bring more folks into the system to allow them to take advantage of the benefits that transit offers.

Moving into Metro Mobility and Transit Link. They are both considering fare increases. The \$74 million deficit that they have been talking about includes all of the transportation and transit services that are managed by the Council.

With any increase in the fares at Metro Mobility. They are not anticipating that the rides would actually be reduced. What they are anticipating is that it is going to stem some of the growth. Metro Mobility has been growing in six to eight percent over the past few years. So with this fare increase it is going to slow down growth. The biggest impact it is going to have on the net savings over what they are projected over the operating costs would be at Metro Mobility over the next two years. Through a fare increase considering a subsidy of about \$26.00 per ride they are projecting that will save \$9.2 million over what was projected growth and the company expenses would have been over the next biennium, fiscal years 2018 and 2019. There are also some additional revenues they would generate as well. Two options they are considering is a 50 cent increase. That looks to generate about \$2.4 million over that two-year biennium. If Metro Transit increases the fares by 75 cents that would be \$3.6 million in additional revenues over that two-year biennium. When you consider both the savings and the additional revenues that the fare increase could result in for Metro Mobility they are looking at somewhere between \$11.5 million and just under \$13 million in that range would be the total net impact compared to both what they have budgeted for expenses and revenues for Metro Mobility.

They are looking at a fare incentive. One of the things they are considering is, is there a way for customers to take a portion of their ride on Metro Mobility and then transfer to fixed route at select transit stations? Provide an incentive for those customers. The other thing they are looking at as well is that there is a federally mandated ADA service and there is the state mandated non federal FTA, ADA service. Metro Transit is also looking at that state service, that non ADA putting in an additional surcharge. So any of those rides that are 15 miles or more they would consider a surcharge for those customers to help account for those additional costs that come with that longer ride.

On the Transit Link side. They are also considering two things. One is a fare increase of 50 cents. The second one is a component of a distance based surcharge there as well they don't currently have. With the cost of Transit Link it could make sense to put in a distance based surcharge. It also makes sense to make sure that Transit Link cost is no less than what they are charging on Metro Mobility. It is important that they bring those costs that represent the cost of that service. Similar to what he showed you for Metro Mobility there are two options there. One looks at a \$1.60 increase and one looks at \$1.85 increase depending on what level of fare increase we would do there. Then over the two years that saves them between \$ 800,000 and \$1.6 million. So there is a savings to be generated there and then on the revenue generation side either one of those scenarios generated just over \$1 million in additional revenue. So the impact to Transit Link based on these proposed changes scenarios they are looking at anywhere between \$1.85 million and \$2.75 million. The combined net impact and combined savings and revenues on that.

Right now with Transit Link you can use some of the transit all you can ride passes, the Metro PASS or UPASS. They would like to eliminate that sort of provision given the cost of these services and then would also include a distance surcharge there as well.

The Northstar service commuter rail that runs between downtown Minneapolis and Big Lake. Those base fares have been tied to the express fare rate. Under the scenarios, they are proposing whenever that express fares go up either a quarter or 50 cents the Northstar fare would go up as well. Each station would go up that same amount.

Public Input process. Metro Transit is planning a very detailed and comprehensive public engagement process where they are looking to get out to these communities and to get public input on all of these changes that they

are proposing where they have open houses. They will be receiving public comment through any number of channels be it social media or email or telephone. They will have pop up meetings at some of the major transit hubs where the customers are. They are really just trying to get into these communities and engage folks on helping them really understand what the impacts of a fare change are going to be on all of the groups in all of the customers so they can take that feedback and really formulate what that end result is going to be. What that fare change will look like come September 1st when they put those fares into effect.

Major transit hubs travel times. They are looking to get the Council members involved in some of these discussions to have them be front and center so that their constituents in those areas that they represent can see them there and have an opportunity to engage with them and help them understand what these impacts would be and what some of the opportunities might be. They are also working with the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC). They are going to be involved with this as well and help get this message out to really drive that community input and community engagement on this topic.

Where are they going next with this? They are here today looking for some of the questions and ideas that you might have. They are also meeting with the Council later today at the Committee of the Whole to provide them an update on some of the discussions that they have had and the scenarios they are looking at. If things go as planned, next Monday at the Transportation Committee, they will hopefully approve them moving forward for them to move into the public hearing stage of this process where they will be able to start the meetings and schedule the hearings and start gathering that input and feedback from the community. Then the full Council would vote on this next Wednesday on the 12th. So hopefully next Wednesday evening and Thursday morning they have that approval to move into the public hearing process. That is about six weeks to two months of getting public input that they have some good information from the communities and what the impacts would be and what they should be thinking about. With that they are looking at hopefully having a package ready for full approval in mid to late June or July with the idea that they would go forward September 1st and implement the fare change for Metro Transit customers.

Michelle Fure said that they will reach out to any group that the TAAC committee requests. Just tell them who and where and they will be there.

Eull said that the TAP program would reduce revenue.

3. West End Route 9 Transit Study

Steve Mahowald spoke to the TAAC committee. He is a Senior Planner at Metro Transit. In the recommended plan that Metro Transit staff brought out in March they took the comments received in that period within the last month and they have made a revision to the plan you see in front of you. That revision centers on the Route 9B branch. The service along Glenwood and Xenia west of Penn Avenue. The recommended plan, the one you see in front of you today recommends that complete elimination of that section which has 25 riders on it, which is about 13 trips. That works out to be about four riders per trip. Based on the comments they received in the last couple of weeks. They have decided and they presented yesterday morning with the senior staff they would retain two peak period trips in each direction. So two inbound boarding trips to downtown in the a.m. and two outbound p.m. trips on that 9B branch. They are just starting to get the word out to the stakeholders. He will point out where this needs to be updated. Otherwise they can proceed.

The west end of Route 9 focuses on the area west of the downtown Minneapolis area all the way out to County Road 73 in Minnetonka at the park and ride with I-394 and northern Glenwood is the northern border. Cedar Lake Road, 26th Street on the south. Then they drop down Lake Street for a small section. There are five routes that they focused on, Route 9 west of downtown, Route 25 is a new addition. They did not have that in the concept plan. They brought that into the recommended plan. Just the west end of Route 25 south of downtown along France Avenue. Route 604, which is a suburban circulator on Louisiana Avenue. Route 649, which is a peak period only express route operating between the west end and downtown Minneapolis. Then Route 675, which is the all day express on I-394 serving park and rides along I-394 Ridgedale area and Wayzata going out to Mound. The recommended plan is a budget neutral plan. It meets their project goals. They are the same they were last year. They simplify the Route 9, which is a very confusing route west of downtown Minneapolis. Six branches. They are going to bring that down to three branches.

Metro Transit improved schedule reliability. They are adding a midday bus. Right now, the schedule is tight. So they are having that midday bus be so operators can more easily make that schedule. A key part of this plan is providing better access between downtown Minneapolis and the 5,000 daily transit trips, rail trips per weekday.

There are 123 routes that are coming into downtown Minneapolis. The west end, which is a location of about 12,000 jobs that are being developed on transit friendly guidelines for TOD (Transit Oriented Development). A lot of those jobs surprised us on our initial research. This is a very large concentration of jobs out there that are paying less than \$40,000 a year.

This is a market which they have been trying to serve as well as they can. They did look regionally and they had concentrations of jobs paying less than \$40,000 a year in downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul, the midway area, Mall of America, Southdale. But what surprised them with the degree to which the west end popped up as a concentration of jobs being under \$40,000 a year. They are looking to improve access between downtown Minneapolis and all of the trips coming into downtown Minneapolis and the west end.

They will reduce travel times by 16 minutes. You will be able to get out there in eight minutes. This is seven days a week, morning, midday, evening, all day. There will be a 32 percent increase in the number of trips going to the west end from downtown. By doing that they improve access from areas of concentrated poverty in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. They also improved performance by reducing low ridership branches. The planning process is a typical planning process that they use. You have probably heard that before. Projected conditions, land use patterns, ridership past and projected. The concepts are based upon different scenarios on how they construct services based on their ability to meet the goals and objectives and their potential for ridership growth. They looked at compatibility based on the regional plans. In particular, the C Line and Green Line Extension and the Blue Line Extension.

There was a lot of good input when they brought the concept plan out for public review last fall. They had two meetings. They had about 157 comments. Most of all of them opposed the elimination of 9H service and 26th Street in Saint Louis Park and running along the west side of Cedar Lake Road and the elimination of the 9B branch he spoke of earlier. During the concept plan phase when they looked at several options for retaining the service on the 9B and the 9H they were able to find a way to retain a good chunk of service on the 9H on 26th Street where they have about 15 riders on that branch. They were able to do that by bringing Route 25 into the plan, rerouting that on the very west end on France Avenue. And then running along 26th Street. That retains service for most of the 9H riders. They were able to do it at no increase in cost.

These are the modifications that were made of the concept plan of Route 9 and also reduced peak frequency both west and south end going from 15 to 20 minutes in the peak hour, 30 minutes on the fringe of the peak hour. They brought Route 25 into the plan. They rerouted that. They took a four-block section on France Avenue between Cedar Lake Avenue and Lake Street, eliminated that section. Now all those folks are within a block of alternative service. Either they have the Route 17 on the lake at Lake and France or a block from the new routing at the end of the Route 25. With that they were able to cover the 26th Street segment of the 9H.

There are six reverse commute trips on Route 25 south of downtown Minneapolis. In the morning, these are trips that are going from downtown Minneapolis south to Lake and France. They have four of these in the morning and then in the evening there are two trips that are coming from Lake and France going eastbound to downtown. They call them reverse commute because they are going from the opposite direction the majority of folks are going. Those six trips, there are a total of six rides. They didn't feel like they could sustain that service. What they are doing with this plan is as the Route 25 comes from northeast Minneapolis into downtown and then heads out to the Kenwood area on Lake and France, what they are going to do is come into the downtown in the morning, will end downtown and then zip out on I-394 to Highway 100 and the west end area. They can keep this within budget without spending buses or adding hours.

The areas where they are eliminating service and not replacing it with any alternative. There is one on Glenwood that is going to be limited service. Those two trips that are limited service that he spoke of they will operate that on a demonstration basis. They are going to set a target in terms of ridership. They will go back and evaluate it. If it is not meeting the target then it is a candidate for elimination. They also have a section between Glenwood and Penn. The section of Cedar Lake Road between Glenwood and Penn, all of those stops except for one are within a quarter mile of an alternative stop either on Glenwood or on Penn. One stop at Chestnut just north of the railroad tracks. That is beyond a quarter of a mile with an average boarding of eight folks per weekday on that. They jumped on buses and said "Hey, this is what we are proposing." He was a bit surprised that they had very little pushback or feedback from the folks on this section of Cedar Lake Road. It is a very narrow section of roadway. In the winter, it gets down to one lane only.

The other section that they are eliminating is on the west side of Cedar Lake Road along Cedar Lake Road, Cedar Lake Parkway, Ewing and France. The road switches as it winds along the west side of Cedar Lake

Road. There are six riders on that section. There are 14 riders total with the plan they are bringing out that are beyond a quarter of a mile of alternative service.

The third section is on France Avenue between Cedar Lake Avenue and Lake Street. That is the Route 25 section that he spoke of. All of those folks are within a quarter of a mile alternative service. They have one other section that they don't even speak of. That is just west of Highway 100. Here on Cedar Lake Road there is just one bus stop in that section. It is the east driveway of the Lifetime Fitness. They have one boarding per day there. They are also within a quarter of a mile of alternative service.

They are going to shorten Route 604. It will not run between the Louisiana Transit Center and Park Place along Wayzata Boulevard. There are 12 riders on that section. The 675 will cover that section. There will be 33 percent more trips on that section of roadway. Those folks will have to transfer. They are doing that because of schedule reliability. The route is tight right now in terms of the cycle time. The bus making the schedule. They are going to shorten the route to make it more reliable. They are also going to add a morning trip and an afternoon trip that serves Methodist Hospital for the work start and end time.

The 649 is an express route that operates between the west end of downtown Minneapolis. They are going to eliminate that and they are going to replace it with service either Route 925 or the new 645. Seventy-three percent of the riders on that route will have service that is as good or better than they have today. Twenty-seven percent of those folks will not. They are down on Cedar Lake Road between Louisiana just east of Highway 100. There are 35 riders down there. They will still have the one seat ride to downtown but it will be slower than it is today. Right now, they are downtown in about 14 minutes. With the new recommended plan they will be downtown in about 32 minutes. That will double their travel time. These folks on Cedar Lake Road will also see a tripling of service in terms of the number of trips per weekday that they have. So the 649 replaces the 675. That is the I-394 express route. Right now, it is coming into downtown I-394 to Ridgefield, the park and ride at the Louisiana Transit Center. Then it jumps on I-394 and goes in. They are going to run it a mile more local service along Wayzata Boulevard on the south frontage road of I-394 from Louisiana/Park Place. Then it will go express. So that gives an all day seven days a week express service and they can do it at very little cost. It is an increase of hours and a Saturday and midday bus but it keeps within budget and it then creates that all day link between downtown and the west end to get out of downtown in eight minutes.

The existing 675 route will have about a four-minute increase in travel time. The fare however will drop from express to local. The express fares are determined by how long you are on the expressway. This will shorten that distance to the point where it is no longer an express fare. Part of the game plan was to simplify the routes structure of Route 9. That created a lot of concern for folks who are on these low ridership branches on the 9B and the 9H. The response was "You are eliminating our service so you can simplify it". That is not the case. They simplify by taking branches around by either creating new branches out of those branches. They are covering the branches with another route. They covered 26th Street with the 9H and with the rerouting of Route 25. Eliminating services based on past existing and projected ridership. When they retain and bring back the 9B service. The two inbound trips in the morning. Two outbound trips in the afternoon. That brings them up to 26 buses and the same number of hours. It is basically a budget neutral plan. They anticipate an increase in about 50,000 annual rides by 2019 from this recommended plan.

Title VI service analysis showed no disparate impacts. Over all service decreases in the area. That is because they are eliminating route duplication. Then they made that reduction on Route 9 frequency in the peak period. They do have capacity on Route 9 to handle existing riders and future new riders.

Outreach. They had the fall outreach where they had two meetings. There were 153 comments this spring and in March they had 43 more comments. They had an open house about two weeks ago. They have been jumping on buses and talking to city staff and the Council members and posting things online. Monday, they are scheduled to go before the Transportation Committee to approve the recommended plan. If approved there, April 26 the full Council. They are looking to implement in August.

There should be no decrease in the ADA service area. They will still have service other than a section of Cedar Lake Road and France but the geography, the total footprint, continues to be covered. He does not want to let you believe that they won't have folks that are negatively affected. There are those six people on the west side of Cedar Lake Road and there are those eight people on Chestnut. They realize that when they say that section on Cedar Lake Road between Glenwood and Penn. There are four stops inbound and five stops westbound on that segment. All of those stops except one are within a quarter mile. That doesn't mean that someone has already walked a quarter mile to get to that bus stop.

4. Transportation Policy Plan

Katie White spoke to the TAAC committee. She is a Senior Planner in the MTS department at the Metropolitan Council. The Transportation Policy Plan is the long-range transportation plan for the entire Twin Cities region. This is part of what the federal government calls the three C planning process. All transportation planning is cooperative, continuous and comprehensive. This Transportation Policy Plan is required under state and federal law. The federal law is a bit more strict and has a bit more requirements associated with it. Generally, they refer to the federal requirements. However, occasionally she will refer to the state requirements that they meet under the Transportation Policy Plan as well. The TPP is done by the Council in coordination with many stakeholders, the Transportation Advisory Board, MnDOT, the Metropolitan Airports Commission, the Pollution Control Agency, local governments, a significant amount of public input. There are a lot of folks who have their organizations represented in the TPP.

The TPP looks at multiple modes of transportation, not just highways and transit. but also bicycles and pedestrian, aviation planning and freight (not a mode of transportation but they use the highways and the air). There is an area where there is not a federal requirement to do aviation planning but it is a state requirement. It is easier administratively to do aviation at the same time as the other modes in the region. The federal law requires that the TPP be updated every four years. The most recent plan was updated in 2015. They are starting the process just two years after the previous plan. That means that the federal deadline is March 2019. The Council staff are looking at updating it in 2017 for a couple of reasons. With the March 2019 adoption deadline from the federal government that means that they would bring the final plan to the Metropolitan Council for a vote in January or February of 2019. Given that Governor Dayton is not running for reelection. There will be a new governor in January of 2019. It would be inconsiderate for the Council to bring a new document as one of their first items to vote on in 2019. Council staff doesn't want to watch one of the last things the Metropolitan Council does in December of 2018. They are looking at moving up the timeline considerably. They are doing this in two years to be considerate, to give the local partners time to work with the new plan over several months and to provide feedback then to the next Metropolitan Council.

In 2019, the next Council can be given an opportunity to change the TPP if they want to. The plan will be in place for several months before that changeover happens.

The other thing that is happening right now is the comprehensive plans are being updated at local units of government. One hundred and eighty-three cities are providing new comprehensive plans. They want to make that process as smooth as possible.

So here is the proposed timeline. They are looking at calendar year 2017 being used to develop the content for the plan. The official approval process starting in January of 2018 with eventual adoption in July of 2018. This means there are going to be two sets of opportunities for engagement. The first is during calendar year 2017. Where they will be doing outreach as they develop the content of the plan. Then the spring of 2018 there will be opportunities for comments on the draft plan in its semi-final form. So there is the development portion and then there is the draft plan portion for engagement.

Council staff are in the middle of comprehensive plan updates for the local units of government and that is a big process for them. They really have this once every 10 years. It takes a lot of staff time and energy. They are not looking to drastically change the policy coming out of the TPP. That is just one of many reasons. To change course dramatically and how they plan for transportation systems at this point would be inconsiderate to the local units of government who are operating under the plan that was last adopted two years ago. Another reason they are looking at making focused and limited changes is because our underlying document Thrive MSP 2040 hasn't changed in the last two years. That is in place and they will change some language to sound more like the rest of Thrive but the principles and outcomes (equity, prosperity, sustainability, livability and stewardship) haven't changed. They don't need to drastically change the TPP because those underlying principles and outcomes have not changed. So they aren't going to make too many changes to the document. But they do need to change some to have an accurate and representative update of our transportation system.

The first is financial reasons. MnDOT has a cycle for updating their fiscal projections for the roadway investments that MnDOT tends to create over the long term. MnDOT just updated that document last year. It is called MnSHIP. They do need to take their highway numbers and plug it in to what the region can expect. They did it on a statewide level. They just need to pull out the regional level numbers and put it into the document for it to be accurate and representative.

Underway right now in MTS they are doing a study on highway spending. Not the large highways like I-94 but some of the smaller highways that are run by the counties. They are doing some research now on how much money goes into that system. They want to incorporate that into the long-range plan to accurately prepare for the future. Then of course this group may be familiar with the transit funding changes that may be occurring as a result to the CTIB dissolution. That is something that they cannot prepare for right now but by the end of this year there should be some resolution and they will reflect the transit funding realities as well.

They have some studies which are listed on the slide and a lot of acronyms that congestion management planning and past study planning, principal arterial intersection conversion study, truck highway corridors study, bicycle barriers study, and also Washington County. Metro Transit and MnDOT have recently worked to realign the Gold Line highway bus rapid transit service to Woodbury. They do need to make those changes to their major Transportation Policy Plan that other agencies or other entities have made changes to transportation in their areas. This needs to be up to date and representative of the realities of transportation planning in the region.

The two other expected changes for the TPP. They have been doing some performance measures work because of some federal guidance that has come about. They need to fold that into the plan to prove to the federal agencies that that work is underway.

They had a certification review. It is like a programmatic audit. It is very routine every four years where USDOT looks at their operation and suggests ways that they could improve how they operate. They incorporate those changes as well into our TPP. So, proposed stakeholder involvement. This process will be a continuation of Thrive outreach. When Thrive MSP 2040 was under development several years ago there was an extensive public involvement in the direction of the region. Since Thrive hasn't changed, those principals won't be changing in the TPP so they will pull from that feedback that they heard from the development of Thrive. There is a Council member strategic management team to provide direction for us as staff. Staff will use the existing TAC and TAB committee structure for technical level detail. They are also coming to Council committees such as the TAAC, the Equity Advisory Committee, where She will be in a week or two. The Land Use Advisory Committee as well.

Since the scope of our changes for this plan is relatively limited they plan on bringing through the rest of this year, questions that aren't so broad to the general public for the course of this year. They are going to be pretty specific. They will bring questions to the public as the draft is under development this year related to issues that have potential for change in the long-range plan.

They are also going to be experimenting with targeted listening sessions. This is new for them in the transportation division but also new to the Council as well. They are looking forward to seeing how that tool is used in the planning process. Overall for the major themes of this plan the transportation investments are connecting people to regional destinations and how the highway system works with the transit system. That is true for all the other modes as well. They also highlight the importance of land use and its importance to the success of access to destinations and using the transportation investments wisely. The inner connectivity of the modes is providing options so that the public doesn't feel limited by the resources that are available to them.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Blue Line – Ken Rodgers

Nothing to report.

2. Orange Line- Kari Sheldon and David Fenley

The next Orange Line meeting will be on April 11.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Andrea Kiepe spoke to the TAAC committee. She is here as an employee on behalf of Transportation Forward, which is a coalition of groups working on transportation issues at the state level. She is also with Transit for Livable Communities and Saint Paul Smart Trips. She talked about things going on at the capitol. She is an outreach and organizing staffer.

MEMBER COMMENT

Heidi Myhre said that the MnCCD is working on getting a new person for the TAAC. They want to get someone who knows what this is about and are dedicated to what the TAAC is doing.

Kari Sheldon and Ken Rodgers asked if the Metro Mobility stats could be placed on the agenda regularly every month.

Sheldon asked if the TAAC members could come to the Saint Paul Police Department for a press conference with the Mayor. She will email this to the TAAC members.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary