

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

**Committee Members Present:** Chair David Fenley, Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Patsy Murphy, Ken Rodgers, Jeffrey Dains, Vice Chair Darrell Paulson, Kari Sheldon, John Clark, Heidi Myhre, Claudia Fuglie, Diane Graham-Raff, Kody Olson, Erik Henriksen and Richard Rowan.

**Committee Members Absent:** None.

**Committee Members Excused:** Patty Thorsen

**Council Staff Present:** Barrett Clausen, Ben Rajkowski and Doug Cook from Metro Transit. Richard Koop, Sara Maaske, Christine Kuennen, Heidi Schallberg, Andy Streasick, Guthrie Byard and Alison Coleman. Council Member Chai Lee

**Public Present:** Mara Peterson and Julee Quarve-Peterson from JQP, Kristen O'Toole from Alta, and Maria Wardoku.

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:31 p.m. on Wednesday, December 4, 2019.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Daines to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Graham-Raff, seconded by Daines to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2019 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

## BUSINESS & INFORMATION

### 1. ADA Self Evaluation & Transition Plan Update

Guthrie Byard, Metropolitan Council ADA & Title VI Administrator, Mara Peterson, Senior Access Specialist at JQP, Julee Quarve-Peterson, President of JQP, spoke to the TAAC committee.

Byard said JQP is the vendor that we have onboard to conduct the ADA Self Evaluation, which is wrapping up here at the end of the year. And so I thought it would be good to provide TAAC an update about where we are at and where we are looking to go.

Just a little bit of background. Most folks here know that the Self Evaluation is being conducted in an effort to conform with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act that it relates to state and local governments. On the Self Evaluation, in this particular case, is including in our public and support facilities and several of our facility connected bus stops. As well as a review of our programs and services and our policies and procedures. So, this work is work that we couldn't do alone and so we have JQP Incorporated onboard here and they have actually gone to over 400 locations to conduct site reviews.

Each location includes a report that they will touch on a bit more. These reports are essential in us understanding where we are out of compliance. It also includes recommendations on what we need to do to get into compliance. It gets translated into a transition plan that details what needs to be done, who is going to do that work and when that work is going to be done. Along with conversations about budgets and where the funding is going to come from. Ultimately that this work is being incorporated into our planning process and our projects going forward so that we are not only making remediations and fixes, but we are building according to

Minnesota accessibility code and ADA design standards so we don't fall out of compliance like we are in several cases right now.

The transition plan essentially details what the self-evaluation included. So the facilities that were evaluated. The findings that were found as well as a timeline for making fixes to get into compliance. It also details the particular divisions or departments and their related staff who are going to be making those changes. Oftentimes it will involve findings of a review of programs and services which could entail a survey of community members, other public engagement and opportunities where we are soliciting input and feedback on the accessibility of programs and services. As its name suggests, it is an acknowledgement of the work ahead. It is the transition of being out of compliance into being in compliance.

In cases where it is possible to go beyond compliance. As we know, the ADA is going to be 30 years old soon and the spirit of the law is what we are intending for. Not the letter of the law. The letter of the law doesn't necessarily relate to the equality that the Council is looking for when it is seeking to implement its aims towards Thrive 2040 and the other guiding documents that we have in place.

Chair Fenley said to be clear, Title II of ADA covers government. Title III covers the private sector. Title I covers employment. In 1990 it was passed. A couple of years after that, government entities were required to create a transition plan. Basically, saying how they would transition into compliance with the technical standards of the ADA. It applies to programs, policies, but also the bill, is where JQB comes in with the self-evaluation. It is making things accessible, pre to post ADA. We have had the discussion. It has been 30 years. We are not going to revisit that. Just so members understand what the transition plan is.

Byard said just a recap on public engagement. This work is work that will be posted with ongoing updates on that transition plan and the work that is being done on an accessibility webpage that is just about ready to go live. That is where the ADA grievance procedure is. The public note is the updates on the transition plan and resources. Greater insight on how the Council is going to engage its staff and community members around accessibility and the ADA compliance. That work is going to be there on a page that is intended to be fluid, not static. So that is a top priority for us.

Additionally, we conducted staff and community surveys earlier in the year. That information has informed work that is going to be done next year and ongoingly. It certainly has informed the need for greater training and awareness about accessibility. How that is operationalized, how that is defined and implemented within the Council and its programs and services.

We held some listening sessions in the community as well that JQP incorporated and was a part of and we will hold a public comment period on that Draft transition plan, which is in its early stages right now and that will be conducted in late January for a 30 day public comment period. The deadline we set for ourselves for that transition plan is the end of March.

Some of the survey findings. I thought it would be good to share with you all. Instead of going through each bullet point here, the key takeaways are that the community had found the Council to be more accessible in its programs and services than its employees did. When I looked at that a bit more, I noticed that when employees were really finding issue with were the very issues that we brought JQP onboard to address that facility access. It is employees that are utilizing our public and support facilities that are being reviewed and they are finding a lot of deficiencies just in their experiences. Whether they were responding on behalf of themselves as an employee or also as a public transit user. I thought that was informative that showed that this work is important and certainly needed. Julie and Mara will speak to the number of findings and trends along those findings to really backup the survey results.

Just a little bit more about JQP Incorporated. The contract was awarded to them in June. So they have really been doing quite a bit of work over the last six months. They spent many hours and many days each week going to our facilities, including our parking lots, our transit centers, our park-and-rides, light rail platforms, our support facilities, public facilities, Robert Street location here. Looking at pretty much every inch, every corner of those locations. With their level and their measuring takes to really insure that the reports we are getting are robust in that we are not overlooking or losing sight of the primary function of these facilities and what they are intended to be used for.

We met with them on a monthly basis to get progress updates. This involved a cross divisional team of folks. Engineering and facilities, environmental services. We didn't touch too much on environmental services here given the nature of the committee. But there were several facilities that JQP went to that are under

environmental services purview, which is really unique in that there is a lot of programmatic and policy issues. They offer public tour routes. A lot of the focus was on the public tour routes that are voluntary. If we wish to continue with those, there are some changes that need to be made. So we wanted to make sure that we were getting input from environmental services and their understanding of their compliance under the ADA was also being addressed in their work going forward.

These findings are being put into facility reports that are being worked on right now. The contract ends at the end of this month. Those results are going to be incorporated into the ADA transition plan that is currently being drafted right now. I wanted to pass it over to Julee and Mara. I thought it would be good to hear from them directly about their reporting methodologies. How they approach this work. To touch on a few of the trends that they identified in some of their findings.

Mara Peterson said we spent the summer out in all of the park-and-rides and all of your facilities. Julee was personally at every single site. We have consistency in the report findings and survey methodology when we were out on site. As Guthrie mentioned, it was all of the park-and-ride facilities, support facilities, as well as the environmental service locations which is primarily wastewater treatment plants. Not the specialty of this committee but an interesting feature of the Metropolitan Council. If you have never been, I suggest you go. It was one of the coolest places I have been. I measured toilets and parking spaces all over the country.

Our reports are being prepared by facility. We use a database system which integrates very well into the facility management program that Metro Transit already uses. Instead of this being just a stand-alone document that will inform the transition plan, it will be fully integrated into the facility management program and philosophy that is already in use. So it not just that stand-alone document. It is part of the systems that the engineers and planners already use on a daily basis. With the hope that this will continually be incorporated into their ongoing work. Not just of the transition plan.

As Guthrie mentioned, this information that we are providing will be used to help inform the timelines of that transition plan. We do prioritize our recommendation. It is our professional opinion that on a one to four scale of how critical is that issue or deficiency as it relates to the overall purpose of that facility.

Some examples of priority one issues are things like park-and-rides that don't have any designated accessible parking spaces. That is a priority one issue for us. Not having an accessible route to get from those accessible parking spaces to the bus boarding and alighting area is a priority one issue. I was playing with the numbers a little bit this morning because it is in a database. It allows us to manipulate the data, trying to extract certain things. So as of 11:00 today, it is 2,700 issues that have been entered into the database as deficiencies so far. Breaking those down by priorities.

The priority ones only represent about four percent of that total. There has clearly been an effort by Metro Transit and Met Council over the years to insure the accessibility is provided. Does this mean that they are perfect at every location? Absolutely not. We still have the remaining 97 percent of those 2,700 issues that are things that don't fully comply. There are definitely things that need to be done towards improving accessibility at Council facilities.

The types of things that were reoccurring include slope and cross slope issues, which are critically challenging for those for people who need that level surface to negotiate the accessible route. Also, an incredible challenge to address in the built environment. We got down to the nitpicking details. How high is the sign that designates the accessible parking? The second most frequently occurring recommendation we have so far relates to the placement of that sign. Yes, there was a sign there but unfortunately it is not in the correct location.

The photo on the left shows a sign that should be designating accessible parking. Although it is so faded from the sun, you can no longer see what it says. It is a completely a white sign with a red border. There are a lot of maintenance type recommendations where it was installed correctly 20 years ago or whenever it had been put up. But it needs to be revisited to make sure those features of accessibility are maintained in the long run.

Another frequently occurring maintenance and operational type of issue is patch and repair of the surface material. It deteriorates, especially where you have big heavy buses crossing over asphalt routes. It leads to lots of rises in the surface material gaps. Crumbling of the surface material that creates a hazardous route for pedestrians. There are quite a few recommendations related to some ongoing maintenance to keep those accessible features compliant.

The second photo on the righthand side shows a set of about 10 stairs that are outside. This is representative of a wastewater facility. Just something we wanted to touch on since that was part of our project is that that is

an essential part of that facility operates to treat our wastewater. They do offer tours to the public. They have the opportunity to modify their tour routes. Not all locations offer tours.

In some locations they lend themselves better to offering tours. For somebody who may not be able to negotiate stairs or fully participate in the current route. My recommendations here are working with the individual site operator to modify that route as needed to accommodate the participants. Whether it is due to use of a mobility device or the ability to climb stairs. If they aren't using a device. And also talking about different means of interpreting what is out there. Descriptions, tactile models, video information, including signage. Because it is incredibly loud in some of the rooms in the tour. So we are looking at a more holistic, how do we tell the story of what is happening in these wastewater plants? They have some opportunities to improve that storytelling. A tour experience through changing their policies and procedures where recommendations related to where transit activities are. You need to fix the physical site. There are a whole variety of things we have looked at.

The picture on the left-hand side shows a transit center. This particular one is at Maplewood Mall. We found throughout there seems to be an internal policy of providing power operated door openers. At exterior doors leading into public spaces, which is provided at this location. Unfortunately, the reoccurring issue is that things such as trash cans have been positioned between the push pad to the power door opener and the door itself. It is the type of thing that really is a zero-dollar fix. But it is an important feature to maintain. So raising awareness of staff on the maintenance side. Raising awareness of staff on the planning side to figure out where should that trash receptacle should be located so it is not creating barriers. There was a fair number of issues identified throughout our site visits.

Then the photo on the right, shows one of those frequently occurring issues that I mentioned which is trying to get your accessible route all the way into bus and transit centers that need to meet the existing city sidewalk height to meet the curb height creates a lot of cross slope issues. Needing to either address them in the field or as planning takes place. Making sure that those pieces of information are considered in advance of where is there adequate space to put this while still maintaining that route between the boarding and alighting area where the bus and that transit center are located.

Julee said since I went to all of the places, I just wanted to touch on a couple of things. One is we oftentimes found that there are relationships that the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit has. Cities, churches. The faded sign is actually at a theater. So it is a joint effort. There needs to be conversations. It may be partially the responsibility of the Transit, Metro Transit to negotiate with these landlords and owners because they don't really have the right or the resources to go out and start moving all the accessible spaces from in front of the church to where the bus picks up. Or adding sidewalks. Or widening sidewalks. So it is not 100 percent easy or it is not 100 percent the responsibility of the Metropolitan Council. I had no clue that there were that many shared locations. It is really pretty complicated.

Byard said I wanted to share a few of the projects that are planned for 2020. Right now, a lot of the conversation that I am having is with engineering, facilities and environmental services. So you are familiar with some of the findings so far. Based on some of the reports that we received. How does this translate into the transition plan? How do we identify work that you can quickly take on next year? A lot of the conversation is about: So we have got JQP's priorities. What are our priorities? How do we prioritize barrier removal in a way that addresses cost and personnel needs? Are these things where we need to talk to maintenance about moving receptacles and things like that? It is fairly easy to fix.

With that last photo, we are talking about the cross slope that is right next to a shelter that has built in heating. So you don't just pick up the shelter and move it very easily. That is pretty laborious. It requires a lot of conversation about how we prioritize these issues. Whether it is deemed a priority level three or four for JQP. Does that mean that it is the case for the Council? Those conversations are occurring, but I wanted to just share some of the work that has been agreed on and that has already been worked on that is going to be addressing some of the findings. In particular, the Council and Metro Transit has a Better Bus Stops program. They are going to be replacing several A shelters where they have just fallen out of repair and need to be replaced. So that is going to be occurring next year along with the addition of some new shelters. Based on the number of boardings at a location. We see that that increases over a certain threshold that we want to add greater amenities for folks who are waiting for buses.

Also, adding in what is called ADA pads. Those are five-foot by eight-foot concrete, flat surfaces that you might see in between a bus stop sign and a shelter. It is a landing spot for somebody possibly in a wheelchair. It is

also a flat landing spot for the ramp to go down on. So we are identifying locations. Certainly, those where folks have limited mobility or where the lift is being deployed quite a bit to add in those ADA pads.

Additionally, this self-evaluation did not include all of the 12,000 or so bus stops that we have. That is a very large undertaking. So Phase II is insuring that we are addressing those bus stops and in particular bus shelters where we have those amenities already. To align that with our Transit Asset Management program so that when we are doing facility maintenance and asset management, that we are aligning it with the high priority ADA issues.

The Transition Plan is something that is going to be updated on an annual basis. This isn't a plan that is going to sit on a shelf. It is something that is going to be worked on and updated frequently with the input of the different divisions. It is something that will be modified on an annual basis given that we aren't going to be putting out a transition plan that says we are going to be doing all of this work over the next five to 10 years. The reality is that with funding and with the weather as such, a level of amenities and facilities that we have. It is really not a practical undertaking or useful for anybody to really plan out over a year or two with some of this work.

There are going to be enhanced shelters and BRT stations as we roll out Bus Rapid Transit lines. Some of that work is work that will occur next year but it is going to go into additional years as well. So in particular the D-Line will be replacing Route 58 routes on the D-Line station with enhanced shelters.

More work in 2020. Rail stations in particular. There are some ongoing improvements that are occurring there. Pedestrian crossing improvements, transit centers, park-and-rides and support facilities. There is already work that has been slated. This is work that has already been touching on the ADA findings. But also, on findings that have already been identified through our asset management and facility maintenance efforts that are up for repair or addition.

I mentioned that it is really hard to identify and pinpoint work beyond a year out that we can all rally around and agree on. This work is going to be looked at. The transition plan in particular is going to be updated on an annual basis so that it is relevant to staff and the community. So barriers identified in particular right now will be looked at as we move forward with our capital improvement projects. So that has a wider timeframe in projects that are already identified to address ADA compliance and accessibility. Where we can expand the scope on that and make it a bit more robust by addressing some more of the findings. Where if we notice that at a particular facility we have some priority two and priority threes, we can bundle those up and make some of those changes at that timeline along with some other corrections.

With that, I wanted to open it up for some questions that any of you may have.

Myhre asked about getting work done like cleaning up the shelters and bus stops and the placement of the trash cans.

Byard said we have shared lots and there are leases in place. It is a tough dance as far as who is responsible for what. This whole process has been very informative for a lot of staff members about the level of communication and collaboration we have not only with other transit providers, but with those who own or otherwise operate the facilities that we work within. In addition to the level of communication and collaboration we have with municipalities. We have nearly 200 municipalities that we work with in some form or fashion in the region.

This isn't just one city that we are working with. So each one has a way that they engage with their public works department if we are talking about snow removal during the wintertime, which is a huge issue. It is a lot of effort to try to get everybody on the same page. But that doesn't mean that anybody should be absolved with their responsibilities. So in the particular case where if you did notice or did experience the Council not being receptive towards any sort of communication and or complaints or comments, certainly let me know about it. I will get in contact with the right people. So there is at least a formal process that is being adhered to and you are getting feedback and follow-up in an appropriate manner.

Chair Fenley said I have a follow-up question to that. Will a plan to avoid these sort of oversites in the future with a trash can. Whether it is negotiating leases and who is supposed to do what at this particular site. Is that going to be a part of this transition plan so you can avoid anything like that where you have to come back and move that trash can every two years? Because someone keeps on sticking it back there. That applies to partners too.

Byard said what I want to be in the plan is to be ongoing collaborative nature of this work and the requirement and need for a greater communication and collaboration. Not just me and my role but with the colleagues that I work with across the Council. So my work is Council-wide. I think that that is going to be expressed there now. As far as how that shows up internally. That is where the ongoing look at our policies and procedures, transit issues and bulletins, which really act as procedures on how a lot of our transit related work should be conducted. In particular towards operators. But when it comes to the public facility maintenance, support facility maintenance. Things like that. How that work is being communicated. That is ongoing discussions that need to be had.

To your point. It is not sufficient at all to have the receptacle in the way of something that costs thousands of dollars to put in in the name of accessibility. Then to throw a receptacle in the middle there. That is where not only the asset management comes into play. It is just that routine maintenance, especially during the wintertime when you are at these sites. We need to be mindful that that is an infraction, that is an issue. Take five seconds out to place that somewhere else. The education and the awareness. so that particular individual that would be there at that site is aware of that being out of compliance. That being an issue if someone can't readily fully access that power assisted door as it was intended to be accessed.

Myhre asked if they were also looking at light rail because there are some faded signs there and at the Capitol.

Byard said JQP did look at the Blue Line platforms and stations there. I don't want to step on the toes of the next presentation. But they might address some of that for you.

Chair Fenley said to circumvent us getting into the weeds too much, would you be open to being contacted by committee members who find something that might be a violation. And then you can either cross check that to see if it is a violation or not. You can determine if you want to put it in.

Byard said yes. My contact information is there. Go ahead and contact me with any questions that you have. I will make sure that I have an answer for you in a timely manner.

Chair Fenley said a lot of these folks are using these facilities on a daily basis. So does everybody understand? If you have a specific barrier violation, just take it to them offline. We don't have to call out everyone of them here today.

Rodgers said is there going to be an attempt in identifying the dollar amount once the figure is known of what is it going to cost to fix deficiencies? I would imagine, based on priority levels, and ask for a sum of money to do that work separately. Or is this to be incorporated in normal activity for the Council?

Byard said the conversation on budget and funding is ongoing. There are some funds that have been designated for projects this year. That would be used for projects next year that are specific just to Metro Transit or Environmental Services. But the plan is that going forward that these projects that are needed in order to address these findings, have funding that is allocated to them. And that these are built into the divisions' budgets so that they have ownership over this.

I work within the Office of Equal Opportunity. It is not just up to the Office of Equal Opportunity. That gets to the awareness and the education so that when we are looking at designing this project or that project that we are taking into account ADA compliance. If that does increase the budget, then so be it. Because we at least know that we are in compliance and it is not something that we are going to make remediations after the fact. Which oftentimes could be more costly to retrofit something. I want to have those ongoing conversations with those divisions to make sure that they are fully aware of the cost that is going to be necessary on an annual basis to address these.

Rodgers said I'm not talking about projects moving forward because those should be accessible. Period. That's the law. So, I'm talking about how are we going to address the identified high priority deficiencies, which is the purpose of the transition plan? Other than just incorporating it into our regular work cycles without calling out for lump sums of money to address these specifically these deficiencies now that some of them could be 30 years old.

Byard said to further clarify those conversations about how to specifically address barrier level two's, three, four and in some cases, one are conversations that are occurring right now. The final reports aren't due until the end of the year. So it is that delicate balance of having the reports right in front of us to be able then to prioritize on our end with the budgets that need to be in place. So for my part, it is working with those different divisions to find out where can we expand on projects that have already been identified to specifically target

these findings that we have had. And can we identify additional projects where we go through the process of identifying is this work that can be done internally? Or is this work we need to contract out? Do we have personnel to be project managers and things like that? Those are the kind of things that heavy lifting that is occurring right now. But with an emphasis that these divisions are specifically addressing through dedicated projects these findings and have staff dedicated to follow this through. So that they are completed in a timely fashion.

Chair Fenley said so, in short, you are not sure where the money is going to come from at this moment.

Byard said I wouldn't say that. We have money that is available right now. But as far as on an annual basis, where that money comes from, I can't rightly say right now. Each division is going to dedicate this X amount of dollars or not. That is not something I can state. But right now, I want to make sure that there is funding available to at least initiate projects and to complete projects that have already been set for 2020. With an emphasis on those that can address these findings.

A lot of it is working to expand scope on some of these projects so that they also take into account some of these facilities findings. If they are already going to be there to address some issues they have identified.

Olsen said my question is how is the intention of this transition plan to be a living document? Is it going to be frequently updated? How malleable is this transition plan? How frequently will it be updated?

Byard said this plan is going to be a livable document. It is going to be updated on an annual basis. As projects are identified that specifically address the findings. This is going to be informed by that cross divisional team of folks that work for the different divisions. Environmental Services and engineering facilities in particular and will be certainly something that won't be on the shelf. It will be updated as frequently as it needs to be with the work that we are doing.

Dains said just out of curiosity, you said you had 2,700 issues. Are those through ADA grievance forms? How do you get back to people?

Mara Peterson said these are issues that we identified in the field through our site survey. An issue might be that the aisle serving the accessible parking space is only seven feet, 11 inches wide instead of eight feet wide. There are findings from our site and facilities surveys.

Dains said if an individual has a problem, how do you communicate back to them?

Mara said it would be through Guthrie. It is separate from our component of the project which would be looking at the physical site on the day we were there.

Julee Quarve-Peterson said based on codes and standards.

Chair Fenley said they are actually out there with tape measures and slope measures to figure out what is right and what is wrong.

Dains said I am more concerned about people that complain or file a grievance. How is it communicated back to them? To actually resolve it.

Byard said it is Metro Transit specific. So those go to Customer Relations, Pam Steffen and her team. And then OEO and myself. We get copied on anything that is identified as an ADA or disability related complaint. As it goes to the affected department for resolution. That is all tracked so that we know where these findings are coming from. Rather where these complaints are coming from. If there are trends in the number of complaints, say at Robbinsdale Transit Center. That is a flag for us to look at it and possibly take action on.

Paulsen said how does an organization such as the size of the Met Council and in the facilities that we have. How do we measure up with partners that do similar activities that we do? We know that they don't do everything that we do because there is nothing like the Met Council anywhere in the Midwest. How do we measure ourselves from other partners and know that we are doing the right thing?

Byard said I try not to do this work in isolation or in a vacuum. It is noteworthy that as a regional government we are very unique. Even outside the Midwest there are very few agencies that have the scope and breath and depth of work that the Council does. So that makes my job a bit hard. But it also makes it learning oriented on a daily basis. I do appreciate that. It is really hard to tell. On a transit side Mara and Julee alluded to the fact that there have been a lot of efforts to improve our accessibility and our ADA compliance. But as they have also identified with the nearly 3,000 barriers, there is a lot that needs to be addressed. Fortunately, not a lot is

the level one. But these are still issues that impact people's ability to address and otherwise public service. That is the important thing. These are public services that we offer. So whether it is two, three or four level, it needs to be addressed as quickly as possible with the work that we are doing.

I think the fact that we are doing a self-evaluation right now means that we are certainly behind. This should have been done decades ago. The admission is there amongst a lot of people that this work should have been done a long time ago. We have thousands of locations including those bus stops that had they been properly addressed and reviewed when the ADA was put into place, we wouldn't have those deficiencies today. The cost goes up each year.

Paulsen said not only are we keeping up with the Joneses, but are we on pace to keep up with the Joneses for the next decade?

Julee said I can't speak for the next decade but Mara and I do accessibility work all over the country and after we got this project I couldn't help but take a quick left turn at Denver and follow their transit light rail and park-and-ride and see what they had. They nationally help themselves as being the best. Our worst looks better than their best. At least at that location. There are other communities you can login at various websites. Was it El Paso you were following?

Mara said certain ones that are out there. They are big.

Paulsen said the reason why I asked this question is because I also do some similar kinds of transit work at the airport. Every month they are comparing themselves to 20 airports within their system. The top 20 airports. So do we compare ourselves consistently to the top 20 transit systems throughout the country? How often do we measure up against that?

Byard said I can only speak to the ADA compliance and accessibility. I can't speak to other areas. There is a lot of room to improve. Just looking at my role. My role is new to the Council. This is the first time they ever had this role. A lot of this work is new for a transit system that has been around for a very long time. When I am looking at my peer agencies and I am connecting and networking with other ADA managers, they are further along in the game. There is already built in acumen and institutional knowledge and awareness of ADA compliance. Even universal design principals. They are being incorporated because that is where they are at in their line of thinking. That is down the road for us. But it is work that needs to be done. We are making our way there.

Chair Fenley said you said that you are basing ADA pad placement on lift deployment data?

Byard said in part, yes.

Chair Fenley said that is a good way to use data but I would also say that if a pad was there to begin with, folks might actually utilize it if they have a mobility device. Otherwise they might just avoid it at that particular stop. So maybe don't just rely on lift deployment. Look at just making things generally accessible.

Graham-Raff said you are talking about your position being new and a lot of things being aspirational. With this new way of thinking, do you get the sense that the movement towards universal design is part of that thinking already or are we still moving towards that? I ask that both from that communities from a lifetime lens and also as a taxpayer that doesn't like paying to fix things that should have been done the right way the first time.

Byard said I think that the drive towards universal design is very much interest here. We are working on phasing towards that. So what I mean by that is that we need to first understand where we are out of compliance and get to compliance as part of that first action. So there is definitely a need for awareness among engineering facilities. Particular Route 88 design standards and what we should be expecting in designs. What we should be expecting of architects, instruction crews. Making sure it is built in even into the procurement process. Things like that. Universal design is that next step where when we are looking at building new construction and rehabbing. Where can we go beyond ADA compliance? So where we are looking at greater ease of use and flexibility beyond just building towards ensuring that people with disabilities can access it. I think that there is a strong interest in that and desire for training in that. So that is definitely something that is being looked at.

Councilmember Chai Lee said I was wondering is this process also looking at our other capital assets such as our regional parks facilities and public housing facilities?



Byard said when it comes to JQP and their involvement, no. That is work that is ongoing. Part of the programs and services piece. So look at in particular what policies and procedures strive. Housing work, our HRA work when reasonable accommodations come in and what is the process that we are undertaking. How are we managing ADA complaints and recommendations where what is required under the Fair Housing Act? And with parks too. There is a big emphasis within park staff of making sure that we can improve how we are looking at regional park plans to understand and to better operationalize and define accessibility. Because we do ask questions about what are some of these projects going to be doing to improve accessibility? Is there an emphasis on greater accessibility among communities who are low income, both color and people with disabilities that I have a strong emphasis in getting more engaged in. So that we see ourselves as greater ambassadors for improving access to our parks. In particular, for folks with disabilities where they haven't been as represented.

## **2. Wayfinding Signs & Tactile Maps**

Ben Rajkowski, Assistant Manager, Transit Information and Barrett Clausen, Transit Information Service Specialist for Metro Transit spoke to the TAAC committee.

Barrett Clausen spoke to the TAAC committee. We are here today with all the planning and design to get your input on a project to improve our wayfinding information at stops and stations. When I say wayfinding, I mean the type of sign that Heidi was referring to that we have out at stops telling you where the light rail track that goes to Minneapolis or downtown Saint Paul or at a transit center where there is a bunch of bus gates that will tell you where to find the bus gate you are looking for. Transit information is asking to create a set of design guidelines that we can use to improve our wayfinding information and we are specifically asking Alta to focus on accessibility in the design and thinking about universal design.

We will take those guidelines and apply them to the work and the signs that we create. This project is part of the Better Bus Stops project that you are aware of. With expanding where we have shelters. Guthrie talked about it in his presentation. So we are really looking at making improvements at bus stops. Kind of an important thing about this grant is we are limited in what we can use it for. So we are not really able to use it for digital or any announcements improvements. That is something that we are interested in improving through other projects. It just is an important note about the scope of what Alta is doing is looking at printed materials and signs.

So Rachel McCaffery from Transit Information came in front of this committee earlier this fall. They introduced the project and let you know that we are asking for your input. In the past few months, Alta has begun their work and is in the middle of the project right now. We wanted to come back to you to get your input so it can be integrated into the final product.

We are hoping that today can be more of a conversation than a presentation. Kristen has a number of questions and some drafts of ideas of what we want your honest feedback on. That will then go into the final product they create and give to Metro Transit. So we can use it for our work.

Kristen O'Toole spoke to the TAAC committee. I am with Alta Planning and Design. What we will be doing today is giving a couple questions that are asking about your experiences using transfer points today. So those are examples of the places like Snelling and University where you have a variety of different forms of public transportation intersecting in one location.

Those are examples of Maplewood or Robbinsdale that were referenced earlier today. After asking a couple of preliminary questions, we will talk through the specific signage elements that we are proposing at the location shown in the rendering, which is at Snelling and University. We also have a few questions about tactile elements and how those might work well for you or things that we should consider for those elements.

Just to start out. I would like to ask people generally what have your experiences been like when transferring throughout the Metro Transit system? As an example, that might be going from the light rail to a local bus or going from a Bus Rapid Transit line such as the A-Line, to a local bus.

The good points. Things that work well for you. Things that aren't working well for you.

Paulsen said how do you convince not only the drivers but the traveling public? Because of the inclement weather, the space on the sidewalks has gotten smaller. It doesn't mean you get to be mean or to hold onto that space. You have to accept what is going on. How do we change attitudes barriers of people using the system that maybe don't use the system all year round?

O'Toole said we do want to make sure that the system works for people who might be new to the Cities. Might just be visiting. Specific to your question about the public space shrinking in wintertime, based on snow storage and other factors. That is something we would like to ask specific to where we should place signage to make sure it is out of areas where people would need to be walking on the sidewalk as well as away from the snow clearance areas.

Chair Fenley said so we are not talking about the proposed pictures quite yet. We are looking for general input from the committee. Could you give us one or two minutes of the scope of this project? It is strictly signage wayfinding.

O'Toole said yes, of course. This project ultimately will be creating a guidebook that looks at how to improve static wayfinding signage at transfer points within the Metro Transit system. How we have proposed to approach that is to divide each of the major transit centers or transit transfer points into five different typologies. We are considering differences between transfer points that might have multiple levels. So places like West Bank's station where you have to go between different grades to access different forms of public transportation.

Other examples of different typographies include Union Depot. Static signage is signage that is just one board with lettering or icons or colors. Verses dynamic signage, which would be the scrolling text features, which we do often integrate within static signage. But for the purpose of this grant, we need to consider only static signage.

There is another project that Ben and Barrett can speak to. That looks at wayfinding, which in the context of using Bluetooth beacons. That technology allows somebody to use a mobile app and communicate with Bluetooth beacons that are located throughout the system. That project is still in the early phases. Ben and Barrett can speak to that.

That is an example of using a different funding source that allows them to explore that type of technology. Unfortunately for this project, because we are focusing on static signs, we are looking at a typical sign face with information. We are however, trying to experiment with how we can interpret that. For example, the rendering which we will discuss, shows a wrap with a round signal pole. We are considering how we can use elements to provide more information.

Ben Rajkowski said as Kristen mentioned, we do have a suite of other projects that we are looking to. That explore other solutions. We fully believe that there is a suite of projects and tools that are needed to look at accessibility information. We are happy to put together a presentation that we can give around all those projects.

As we go through today, if you have questions outside of the static signage elements. Feel free to email me directly. I can make sure you have my contact information. We can make sure that you are alerted to what we are looking at and get feedback on other projects and ideas that are out there.

Rodgers said I will give you my view on transfer sites from a blind person's perspective. Generally, I am a little bit taken back by the single focus project. I understand that it is a limited grant, but to implement the project would require complete accessibility. If you are just talking about putting signs up, that is not completely being accessible to our entire accessibility community.

It worries me that we are looking at single projects like this that don't meet the general requirements of the ADA. Now whether there is Braille on the sign. That doesn't necessarily mean that it is ADA compliant. That is one thought.

The other is I personally would never, ever use a transfer point that I was not intimately familiar with. A case in point is the Snelling Avenue area. It is so complex and so dangerous that unless I know specifically, like the back of my hand, where I am going, I am not going to attempt it on my own. I don't think any blind individual that is completely blind, would do that type of thing. That is just too dangerous. We would avoid that intersection at all cost as I do.

Other people with different types of disabilities. You have sight. You can see things. You can maneuver. You can go around. You can avoid barriers. You can see what is coming. But for a blind individual, I would never engage in a transfer point that was complex. That I didn't have very specific training.

O'Toole said to your first point. We do recognize the shortcomings of only being able to use this funding to focus on static signage. That is where we are looking to work closely with Ben and Barrett to see how these projects can transcend their boundaries.

Rodgers said did you do a lit review for wayfinding signage?

O'Toole said yes. We did submit the tech memo out to be distributed by email. So you should have received that. You can contact us if you didn't. That does include a summary of universal design elements and some best practices we found.

Rodgers said so is one of your resources the Airport Cooperative Research Project of Wayfinding Internally?

O'Toole said yes. My colleague Maria Wardoku looked at that in detail. She can provide any feedback or responses if you have specific questions. There was something that we found to be very useful.

Chair Fenley said we will have one more member talk about the question generally what have your experiences been like with transferring within the Metro Transit system.

Graham-Raff said when traveling with people who have cognitive disabilities, the whole directionality thing is a real challenge. If somebody thinks they know which direction they are going can be very interesting. To make sure they are headed to the right downtown.

Looking at your ideas here might be useful or to develop very specific icons for Minneapolis and Saint Paul that are distinct enough that a person who cannot read, who would be able to look and see that's the Saint Paul, this is the Minneapolis with the arrows. Because when it is all just words and you are trying to get somebody to go on the train, headed in the correct direction and what information they have access to is limited. That is not good enough. It also means that those individuals must have somebody traveling with them. They are not independent. If we can break it down to a consistent icon used across the system. So that basically, they learn two or three or four things. They know if the arrow is pointing towards that icon then they are headed in the right direction.

O'Toole said that is good feedback. We are experimenting with what those icons should look like. Yes, it's true. Just the difficulty that is posed between having two different downtowns adds to the confusion. I wanted to make sure that we are being consistent with how we are representing those destinations.

Not included within this material. But we are working internally to think about what those icons might be. And also, how to identify some major landmarks. A part of this project is trying to avoid using cardinal directions. So you see for example, frequently throughout the system and other systems, the use of things like north and south, these cardinal directions. We are trying to think of how we can orient people in other ways that would be legible. For instance, we have been experimenting with different types of arrow icons. For example, a chevron compared to a more typical line and then the chevron.

So I am interested in a little bit of hearing feedback of how logical those are. And then also then, tomorrow going to the Eisenhower Community Center. We do have specific questions about how icons and legibility for people with limited English proficiency.

I would like to now talk about our ideas for some potential designs that we hope could improve the experience of transferring within a transfer point. I will note that this is a preliminary sketch. We have been internally working within the project team, out different improvements. Then we would like to incorporate your feedback today as well as the feedback from the Eisenhower Community Center. And then we do have a steering committee meeting next week to hear from more folks. Just to give context. The rendering we are talking about, which is an idea of how to improve the southeast corner of Snelling and University. We did send out a description of this location and the proposed signage in advance of this meeting.

One of the tricky things about this location is that there are two different places where you need to make a decision about where to board the Green Line light rail train. For example, to go to downtown Saint Paul, there is a different platform than the train that is headed in the direction towards downtown Minneapolis. There is also an A-Line bus that passes through this location, going northbound and southbound. Then there are the 21 and 16 bus routes.

Our scope, which is admittedly a challenging one is to help people transfer to all those different modes. The signage conflict that we are working on right now would look at placing a kiosk with information close to the light rail transit platform. So then when somebody exits the transit vehicle, they are able to obtain more

information about how to transfer within that location. So similar to the information that is provided today. We are looking at ideas for how to provide that information in tactile formats. So for example, Braille and raised lettering. A tactile map is something we talked about at the first steering committee meeting. We heard from people that it is very important to balance the amount of information shown on tactile maps. The sample that we brought in that was perceived to be far too detailed for somebody who just would be approaching a kiosk, and then reading the tactile map. With that in mind, we want to make sure that we are providing an appropriate level of information at different points throughout somebody's trip.

Located in the foreground of this image, there is a person who is about to enter the crosswalk on the south side of University to head towards the Green Line platform. To this person's right, there is an existing signal pole, which also has an accessible pedestrian signal push button. Our idea is to use this existing signal pole as a place where we could put a vinyl wrap around the pole. It has a green background with enlarged white letters that says Green Line with an arrow pointing straight. Below that there is an arrow pointing left towards downtown Minneapolis. We are also interested in how we might use this accessible push button feature as a location to display more information in a tactile format.

Another idea is to have the decision pole that I mentioned. It points people in different directions based on the type of transit that they are looking for. So the Green Line versus bus routes. You will note that in this image we have identified where to access the Blue Line. That is not obviously located at this location. But we just wanted to talk about the difference of how we might use color to identify these different routes.

When we were investigating different transfer points during different field visits, we noticed that the blue color that is used on existing signage is often confusing to folks because the blue backing of a sign may be near a Green Line station. Especially for people with limited English proficiency, and others. We want to make sure that the colors are very clear and the noting in certain places.

We are also interested in having tactile elements within these decision poles. And then within the transit platform itself, we are interested in inputting tactile elements on the handrail. That is an idea that we would like feedback from you all today. So whether that makes sense. And also, how you would find this information? So if we are placing tactile information. How can we do that in a way where you would know how to find that information? Especially, as it was mentioned earlier, if you do not often frequent this location. So something that was inspiring us was the location of station name signs.

In our first steering committee meeting, people said that those are often located in predictable places and they have high color contrast. They have raised letters and they have Braille. However, they do not provide that much information. So for example, if a sign says University/Snelling Station, you know the information you receive from that sign is the name of the station. But we were thinking that might be an opportunity to add a bit more information.

So perhaps a raised arrow then the text toward downtown Saint Paul. Or an arrow and an icon. But we are interested in your ideas about where to place these certain elements and how they can function for a variety of people. With that in mind. I know we have talked about some of the limitations. But this is based on static signage. But I am interested in your preliminary thoughts and reactions to the rendering.

Jasmine said audio is going to be the best way. Not everybody reads braille. Not even people who can't see. If it is winter, you have your gloves on. The audible situation to me is the best option for not just people with visual disabilities, but everyone in this room.

O'Toole said when thinking about where to place audio information or just information in general, are there things that you have seen? Locations that work better for having that information.

Jasmine said I would be interested in Ken's comments. What he thinks. I'm not going to know where it is if there is nothing that identifies there is something audible to look for.

Rodgers said it is the age-old problem of we can't see to be able to know that there is a button to push to receive the audio information necessarily. So that gets into the issue of a locator tones. And locator tones make some people crazy because they listen to it all the time. That is not necessarily the best solution. Blind individuals travel based on landmarks. Landmarks that are either audible or tactile or have some sort of edge or something you can feel that allows you to know where you are in relation to the space. That's how blind people travel. We need edges. We need guides. We need the edge of buildings to follow. Curbs to follow. People are now starting to experiment with tactile dots and putting them all over the place. They are not intended to be guides. They are intended to be warnings. When you are about to enter a dangerous area. Or a

different area. I want to avoid us being creative and creating something that isn't a standard. Braille, at the edges of banisters or handrails is something that is utilized quite frequently in Japan and some other countries. But that is a known entity. So people that are blind know that if they find a rail they can find where that rail is going to by reading the braille. Like Sam said, not everybody reads braille. Especially for people that have any type of sensitivity, they are not going to take their gloves off to read braille. Especially on a metal object.

Jasmine said I am going for the locator tone. We have 500 people on their cell phones, talking all the time. So if you want to talk about a locator tone driving them crazy, get off the phone. I am very pro locator tone. You know where your stoplight is. If you have an audible stoplight. You have a locator tone. Something I think that gives everyone. You should know it is there.

Rodgers said it speaks to me with the concept of you need to find something in order to know where you are in the space. That locator tone helps you find that object.

Streasick said I just wanted to clarify. You made reference to considering the option of putting raised indicators on handrails or near handrails at a stop that people could use to identify. I think that is fine. Do you mean actually on the handrail itself? It is important to bear in mind that a lot of people as they need balance or are tired put a significant amount of weight on that. If it is raised it could be problematic depending on skin conditions. You are talking on the rail itself. That is something to consider.

O'Toole said we ran into a number of considerations when the weight that somebody would put on the raised lettering, which could be small and potentially painful. So that was an issue. As well as how we would make that legible. If somebody is traveling up a ramp, then your hand is traveling from right to left. Which is contrary to how we would read English, typically. So, there are a number of considerations that we had with that idea. We are thinking about putting some sort of plaque between the handrail and the railing element itself. I am curious about your ideas. If that seems like a better alternative. Perhaps if we had a sign at the top and at the bottom indicating that there was this information.

The idea was really for the people to get information as they are traveling through a space without having to stop for a long time.

Paulsen said what are we doing as far as implementing or incorporating QR codes (Quick Response code)? What I saw in Virginia was during high traffic areas or during high visibility areas or even construction areas. They had QR codes at their stations. That QR code stayed at the station location permanently. But they could readily change that information as things changed within the system. They could easily change that information from that QR code but that QR code was stationary at the location and people were using it. I don't see anywhere in our system where we are encouraging this. A QR code would fit very nicely on some of the static signage. However, I know Sam and Ken would have issues with it because they may not know where the QR code sits within that sign.

Rodgers said you have to have a smart phone to read a QR code.

Rajkowski said we did experiment with QR codes for our new bus stop sign project. To access Next Trip information. The QR code had to be very large on the bus stop signs for the QR scanners to read it, which became a barrier. In a location like this where you can have it fixed in a set location that might offer another possibility. That would be very easy to update and change information.

Paulsen said where I see QR codes being used they had various different sizes. They were tucked along the location where they put them. If you made them more visible, I think you could use them more.

Chair Fenley said is this rendering an example of what you want to do or examples of everything you could do?

O'Toole said this is an example of everything we could do. There are a few signs that are left off of this. But this is an example of everything we could do in one location. The idea was to funnel people into the crosswalk at meter decision points. But in the actual pilot, we could choose to implement only one of these signs, for example.

Bates said my suggestion would be a different color blue. I work with African immigrants and they can tell me what blue is. You have two different colors of blue. They will get confused. My only suggestion is to change the bus route to a different color. The other thing I would do with the bus route is to put the "T" in the bottom corner. Because they are used to looking at the "T" when they get on the buses.

O'Toole said so in the bottom corner of the bus route.

I am interested in ideas of how to make the decision pole less cumbersome looking. Currently we are pointing people toward the Green Line and towards various bus routes. If there are ideas of how we could do that in a way where we are able to direct you to everything that is going on at this location. But perhaps in a simpler way. I am open to any and all ideas.

Myhre said if you could present us with about 10 ideas, we could see what would work and not work.

O'Toole said something that we have been struggling with is the placement. So if you said how we could place signs in ways that aren't interfering with people using mobility aids and walking. We should follow up after this conversation.

Murphy said for me, I find it personally helpful that blue is pointing blue and green is pointing green. Other than the top one.

O'Toole said the top one is going to be an icon indicating the direction that you are traveling towards. In this case, the Green Line is pointing straight. The idea is that we would have these different toppers indicating the path that you would travel to reach that destination. So if you are going towards downtown. Then again, we would change the icon to make it more specific to Saint Paul.

Murphy said the piece at the top of that pole looks like a cell phone.

O'Toole said that is meant to indicate that you are traveling towards a downtown. The content of the icon is more to be determined to make it look like downtown Saint Paul. The idea is that you could follow these icons to reach the Green Line station to head towards downtown Saint Paul.

Murphy said that one doesn't make sense to me. I like using the chevron arrows pointing in that direction. It is much easier to see that than just one arrow pointing down.

Streasick said I worry about the amount of snow that we get filled up with plows and shoveling. Particularly as it relates to how low that sign gets to the ground. If we are going to put per Chris's recommendation, the red "T" on the corner of the bus sign. I wonder if we could lose the red "T" indicator has its own box. And be able to move everything up so that we have got more space between the bottom of that sign and where the snow is likely to build up.

O'Toole said that is a good point. When we are looking at this corner in particular, it was challenging to find a location that wouldn't be either reserved for snow clearance or would interfere with a level landing pad or ramp. So this is where we landed. I am open to different ideas.

Myhre said are you prepared for people who don't like what you did and then you have to clean up? Is that going to cost more money where you have to put back what you thought worked?

O'Toole said one thing is anti-graffiti coating. That is a polyurethane type of material that would go over the sign face. This makes it more resistant to the graffiti. There are limitations. Another thing is making sure that modular elements are able to be switched out easily. Also, there are updates we want to be able to switch out or in case of vandalism. That is always a constant struggle.

Chai Lee said I was worried about how close the sign is to the corner, so it doesn't get taken out by right turning semi's.

O'Toole said I think we would have to explore that further. I agree. There is a lot going on on this corner. It is hard to find the exact place that would work best.

Cook said a quick observation about the pole and the comment about winter and where you are going to place the pole. Why can't we just use the traffic light pole? It is higher than the APS to put all that information. It is all right there. I think it is redundant to have it on both of them. It would be high enough so that graffiti wouldn't be a problem.

O'Toole said so moving the separate tower and having that information on the signal pole itself. I think that is a great idea.

Rodgers said there used to be when accessible pedestrian signals were first implemented. Here used to be an optional feature. On which the top of the box that houses the accessible signal fixings, could be a flat metal plate. That was designed so that that could be a simple tactile map of an intersection that was unusual. That wasn't just a perpendicular crossing. Those never really caught on. I don't know why. That is also another

option to look at. The original accessible pedestrian signal with the option of a metal plate to install some sort of tactile map.

O'Toole said that is good to hear. We are interested in using the existing street elements wherever possible. I'm not sure how prevalent those plates are in the transfer points, specifically. I think there is an opportunity maybe to affix a new sign face on top of the existing tactile information. So maybe where somebody is already looking to have the map, the diagram you mentioned. We could explore that further.

One thing we haven't talked about so far, which we have heard from other people is that it can be sometimes difficult to differentiate bus stop poles or the pole that is meant to show a bus stop from other poles that might be nearby. So for example, ones that are indicating parking requirements or other such signposts.

One of our ideas was to add tactile information to the signpost itself that would say "Bus Stop Here" or have an icon or other such information. Generally, does this sound like a useful feature? Or no. And why.

Chair Fenley said is that an issue that anybody on the committee has run up against? The confusion between a parking sign and actual bus stop locator sign.

Myhre said every city does things differently.

Rodgers said from a blind perspective. It is really not an issue. I would never look for a pole. I listen to where the buses stop and that is where I go. Or I go to where the people are standing. Or I stand by the curb.

O'Toole said Ken, how do you find it if no people are standing there? Say you have to find something during the day and no one is standing there.

Rodgers said I go as close to the corner as possible and stand by the curb. When I hear a bus, I wave.

Jasmine said some of the places I go are in the middle of the block. There is not necessarily a corner on that side of the street. I am talking about a suburb area. So in that case, I try to listen for something like that. But never knowing that there would be a sign on there. How would I think to check? But I do listen for poles.

Sometimes I train my dog to find those. I have never known there to be tactile information on a pole.

Regardless if there is a pole or not. We need to know where the bus stops are. They are not only on a corner.

O'Toole said this issue came up during our first steering committee meeting. That is where people were talking about difficulty in finding where buses stop. That is where this idea came from.

Clark said I was just wondering if the red circle with the "T" could be confused with the actual bus stop.

O'Toole said thank you for letting us know that.

Murphy said I heard one person say that the red circle "T" symbolizes bus. But I noticed that it is actually on the sign that is talking about the Green Line. Does the red circle "T" signify buses?

Chair Fenley said so the confusion would be is that pole be confused for a bus stop pole? Given that it has the red "T" on the top of it because bus stop poles do. But no, that red "T" is systemwide. It is just a logo of Metro Transit.

Rodgers said I think several people brought up some interesting points that lead to a suggestion that whatever you decide, is going to be implemented. There needs to be as part of this project, an education campaign. How is the word going to get out that this stuff now exists and what does it mean? I think we oftentimes forget that piece. So if you can incorporate that in your project. Whether it is an outline of how this could be taught or whatever.

O'Toole said I have some initial ideas.

Chair Fenley said if you come out of this with more questions, you can send them to me and I can ask specific questions to members, if you want.

O'Toole said thank you. That would be helpful. I do have some questions about next steps for you, David. So we can follow up after the meeting.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Blue Line**

This was not discussed.

## **Green Line**

This was not discussed.

## **Gold Line**

This was not discussed.

## **Rush Line**

Paulsen said the Gold Line did come out with an 86-page report. It talks about some of the things we learned about in Virginia in October. It talked about the need for fully level boarding wherever possible along the system. And how level boarding will be costly in some spots. In some spots you can do level boarding when it comes to BRT. Wherever we can do it. Let's do it. Let's make the initial investment now. So we don't have to worry about it in the future. We talked about minimizing the gap. We talked about the gap being less than three inches in some spots. It might be as much as four to five inches. How do we minimize that? In those particular areas where the gap is a little thicker. How do we convince people in the traveling public and people in the community to maintain that spot? So the gap doesn't get cluttered with debris. So that we will have enough opportunity to get our wheels stuck in there. If that is what they are looking to happen. Let's keep that on the table. Those are the things I learned on the last two trips that I have taken. Both committees have heard from this committee that we on this committee have taken the gaps very seriously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

Bates said I have two questions. The first one is for either Andy or Christine. I thought earlier this year the Council appropriated money to update and upgrade the Rangers in the van. The Ranger took us way out of the way. What is going on with that?

Streasick said we have updated the maps a couple of times. But that is an ongoing process to get everything. As of right now that is like the number one priority that our IT folks are currently working on is another map update. They are aware that there are issues with the maps. They are updating them now.

Kuennen said that could be a scheduling issue rather than a mapping issue.

Bates said second issue. Transportation Committee.

Chair Fenley said we asked about that a year ago. We followed up last month. But thank you very much for bringing it up again. I have no answer for you. I think it will happen. I just don't know when. I will get back to you.

Jasmine said a little while ago I tested a demo you were doing with the phone and computers in regards to scheduling online. It seems like it fell by the wayside. I didn't get any more information. Is there new stuff? Should I be testing more. I haven't heard anything. Can you speak to that?

Chair Fenley said staff doesn't have to respond. It is just a time for us to make comments. If they do want to respond, they can.

Streasick said there is nothing new at the moment. We are in the process of putting together more folks to grow the testing group. I know you sent me one who is an Apple user. We are putting together other folks who have expressed interest to grow that group. Right now, there has been no changes yet. Although those should be coming directly. We are coming up on the deadline for Trapeze to implement the initial changes. So we will be reaching out again as soon as there are changes to look at.

Jasmine said my second comment is that with yesterday and today, I have eight people that I can give you who have had both missed appointment times and two-hour wait times for their rides. I don't know of any traffic problems or snow problems. This is scaring me for the winter. I didn't know if we are having a driver shortage. But it feels major around me.

Rodgers said I am sure that you are well aware of this but for the last two days. Trying to call the transit center to arrange for a ride. I have gotten that weird circuit busy signal. I am sure that you are well aware of it. There has been a big overload of people trying to call services that can't get through. I tried for over an hour



yesterday. I thought I was going to have to give up and get an Uber home. But I was finally able to get through. As winter hits, I encounter more and more of that.

Chair Fenley said there is no meeting in January.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary