

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

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

Committee Members Absent: none.

Committee Members Excused: Claudia Fuglie and Kody Olson.

Council Staff Present: Jan Dietrich, Robin Caufman, Adam Mehl, Doug Cook, Wendy Wulff, Andy Streasick, Nick Thompson and Alison Coleman

Public Present: None

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:36 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3, 2020.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Dains seconded by Jasmine, to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Rodgers, seconded by Jasmine to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2020 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. Robin Caufman Introduction

Robin Caufman spoke to the TAAC committee. I have been with the Council since 2001. I started in Community Development. I started working more closely with TAAC during my tenure with the Central Corridor Light Rail Project. Most people call it the Green Line. I was the Manager of Public Involvement at that time. I worked closely with Ken Rodgers at that time and many others on the community advisory committee. I really feel that TAAC and its participation really made the project a much better project.

Then I went on to working on the Southwest. Now in January I took on a role as the Director of Administration for Metro Transit. In that role I am taking on some administration functions but now I am overseeing the Customer Relations and the outreach component and part of the intent there is to bring what we have learned from the light rail projects and our best practices and engagement and applying that across the agency and tying all of our outreach together and applying that consistency with strategies.

Customer Relations is a new one. I have spent the first three months of my new administration restructuring the new component. And looking at it from a data driven perspective. We get about 300 calls per day in Customer Relations. It can be anything from GoTo cards or complaints to reports of damage to complements.

One of the first things I have been working on is taking that data that comes in from emails and phone calls and logged. I have been working with some of our planning staff and mapping staff. We now have a start of a tool that we can start mapping our complaints and start drilling down on what the issues are and where they are and to use it as an analytical tool. A way I have used this recently is with Covid. I am sure that we have had to change our transit operations. One of the ways that Transit Operations does as far as routes and frequency and also some of the practices like rear door boarding.

The complaints that we do get are about operators not allowing people to use the front door. I use the application in draft form to zone in on that issue. We are able to see the trends. What routes or stops and get it to the correct garage. The supervisors can sit down with the operators of those routes and lines and focus on how to address that issue. People do need to use the front door and indicate that we should allow them to do that.

That is just a real time example of ways that we are using that new data and bringing that approach to that department.

Depending on your agenda, I would love to work with Doug and Alison and see about bringing that and use it as a demo for the mapping system and bringing that to you if you are interested in that.

With that I am willing to answer any questions.

Rodgers said I am happy to hear you are in this leadership role. I have always been impressed with your ability to listen. My one suggestion is I have personally experienced time and time again an issue that I have continually called Customer Service and because of the extremely long wait time that you are on hold with no indication how long it is going to be. I end up hanging up. The problem that a person is calling about doesn't get reported. I am afraid because of that time on hold in that system that we use does not indicate how long you are going to be on hold. I have been on hold for 30 minutes before I hung up. I am sure I am not the only one. So I bring that to your attention so that it could be something that is looked at as we go forward. It would be a huge benefit to our system if you could capture what is going on all the time.

Caufman said if I may add a few comments and thoughts. Thank you for that comment and I will check and see if our system can add change to how we address customer complaints and streamlining more information so the staff can address issues once they get through. In addition to that we are looking at revising our online comment forms so that it is more user friendly. We have it partially drafted and are hoping to get those live shortly. We also have an email system where people can submit comments too.

We are trying to provide some more opportunities and ways for people to comment in addition to just the phone system.

Jasmine said are you counting the numbers of people boarding the bus or are you just allowing it to get as full as it gets?

Caufman said due to Covid we are trying to limit the number of passengers to a bus so that we are able to do special distancing. That is why you will see more articulated buses especially on the heavier routes. So for the small buses we are allowing six to 10 people. For the articulated buses we are allowing 15 people. Generally, families and groups will get on and sit together. So there might be a few extra people. But that is our goal. On some of the heavier routes we are adding additional buses. So that we can carry as many people as we can. If a bus is getting too full, we might not pick up more people. The bus driver would contact the Control Center to send more buses to carry the demand.

Jasmine said are you instructing drivers to at least stop and inform people that the bus is full if they are not able to pick them up? And that another bus is coming?

Caufman said absolutely, that is the instruction that the operators have been given. If that is not the case let us know. Those calls allow us to address issues and correct things if needed.

Dains said on entering the bus or exiting the bus how is that working in terms of social distancing? Where people are congregating in getting on and distancing when they get on the bus. I don't understand. I have seen it both ways. I am a little confused by that.

Caufman said the goal would be for folks to socially distance as they embark and then get on the bus and try to socially distance themselves. It is difficult especially when you are sitting in the seat right next to the door. There are going to be short periods of time when people come in closer proximity. So having people use face coverings should help. The CDC advises that will slow the spread. That is another aspect that in short periods of time it can help reduce the spread of any infection.

Jasmine said there are those people who are not wearing masks. My understanding is that this is a requirement. What happens if someone gets on without a mask?

Caufman said we are asking customers to wear a mask or face coverings. It can be a scarf or bandanna or any face covering. We recognize that some people don't have access to one. There is also the case that some

people aren't able to wear one. For example, if they have asthma or respiratory issues. Or they are not able to put one on or take it off. We can't enforce it. We don't have the staff to do that. But we are strongly requesting that folks wear them if they are able to.

Paulsen said when I was on the bus multiple times within the last eight weeks, I would encounter some drivers that would not even wear their face coverings and they also had very different viewpoints as to what was going on with the pandemic and Covid-19. Also, I want to know, have you been on that bus within the last four days where there was a tag that said fares are not required at this time? That says a mixed message that says to pay if you have the ability to pay, but not to pay.

Caufman said I will start with the drivers not wearing the mask. The drivers are welcome to wear masks if they want to. They have all been provided with masks. With most passengers boarding at the rear door, and some buses have the plexiglass shields installed. We are continuing installing them. One of the concerns, especially if someone has glasses. Sometimes the glasses can pose a safety concern. If you wear glasses and a safety mask, it has a tendency to steam up the glasses. That can be a safety concern. They may have a chronic lung issue.

Paulsen said it is a driver personal preference. I encountered more than one driver saying they didn't believe in the severity of the pandemic and they were not going to wear the mask anyway, even if it became a requirement.

Caufman said as far as the fare tag. I know we received some comments about that when they first went up. I don't know about that. I will have to check and get back to the group about that.

Paulsen said I did notice that they did refuse a couple of folks that asked to use the front lift because they were ambulatory and they didn't seem to be lift dependent. They demanded that they use the back door. It was only when I got the driver's attention and told him if they say they need to use the lift, you need to help them.

Caufman said we recognize that that has happened. We do encourage you to call and let us know that. Because then that allows us to follow up with the driver and reinforce the requirements.

Chair Fenley said I do want to encourage folks to remind their community that if they have issues to feel free to reach out. Also, after this meeting is over, please feel free. I think we have Robin's contact information. As these issues arise. As the environment evolves. I am sure that Robin will value our feedback.

Myhre said I am doing a speaking engagement with one other person at the Arc. They are asking the same questions that we are today. How do I explain to them? I have a picture of the sign and the bar to show them. Do I show that picture? You are talking about if they have to pay or not. I don't know how to talk about this now. Because you changed the amount of people who can be on the bus. It depends on the size of the bus. Are you putting out new maps of the buses?

Caufman said if you are going to be talking to Arc. Is that an event coming up? You can ask Doug or others to join you. I would be happy to help with that presentation. Or I can type up some of these talking points and send them to you so that you would have them.

Myhre said we would have to put it in our powerpoint. They are asking the same questions that we are today.

Caufman said maybe Doug and I can help. We may already have these powerpoints. So maybe we can share them with you. When is it?

Sheldon said it is going to be the second Tuesday of this month.

Caufman said Doug and I will get something to you.

Myhre said I need it by the end of the week to get it finalized. They also want to know about Metro Mobility. The information that is going out by email is so confusing. With Metro Mobility, they say you can only use it for work. I have doctor appointments coming up and I need to know if I can still use it for that, and if I can still use it for grocery shopping. I am capable of doing it on my own.

Chair Fenley said we will continue this discussion after the Metro Mobility presentation. I would like Adam Mehl to do his presentation now. I want to give him time to talk about the Metro Transit Redesign.

Metrotransit.org Redesign

Adam Mehl spoke to the TAAC committee. Metro Transit launched its redesign back in December of 2019. It was a result of years of work. Hopefully, you got a chance to check it out. If you are riding our service and checking out tools, there is a good chance that you have.

As we were working towards this redesign, we had three main objectives. They were to improve the customer experience, increase accessibility and modernize the sight. We want to make sure we are delivering an experience that are up to the times. Our site was last redesigned nearly six years ago by the time we launched it. As you are probably aware that the way folks use the internet and the way the things look and behave on the internet have changed quite a bit in a six-year time period and our site hadn't really adapted over that time.

Once our objective that encompassed everything was to make our site more adaptable and less static. We made minor tweaks to the site over the years to this site. They were just tweaking the main site that remained largely the same. This site was designed to be a lot more modular and a lot more flexible. As customer needs change and design standards change as accessibility standards changed, it should be much easier to make those changes proactively on the Metro Transit site now.

As we were looking to prioritize the site users, we really wanted to focus on the folks who are using the site the most. That is not to say that we did not prioritize everyone having a good experience. The most important riders that we wanted to focus on the most would be the daily commuters and the people who used us for more than the daily commute. That would be for the doctor appointments, grocery shopping and visiting friends. They are using it as a primary transportation mode. We also wanted to make sure that first time users were able to get rides easily without having to wade through a lot of junk to get there.

It is the same with infrequent riders. People who ride with us a couple of times per month to do various things when it suits them. Our special event riders. Like folks taking the light rail to the Twins game or to go to the State Fair. Something like that. Out of town visitors. People like that. We know a lot of people, when they come to visit, their first experience with transportation when they get off a plane is taking the light rail. Getting around town. They don't want to rent a car. They are going to use Metro Transit to get around too.

Just to run through the design. We really worked hard with an outside agency as well with doing a lot of testing internally. Looking at customer feedback over the years. What we first did was design some wire frames based on the previous research we had done. That included paper prototypes as well as digital prototypes that we build off of. We did design with a mindset towards accessibility. Very different from the way we did it in the past. A lot of the time it was "Let's build something. Let's design it how we want it to look from a visual perspective. How we want it to act from a visual perspective." Then how do we make sure that that works for accessibility.

We did those things hand-in-hand this time. We really wanted to make sure that we were looking at everything being built with accessibility first rather than "O.K. we built this thing that we like. How do we make it accessible? That just creates a worst experience for everybody. We wanted to make sure we were avoiding that this time around. A lot of visibility testing was done and continues. I will talk about that in a little bit. And the development throughout the process. then a lot of iteration, testing, looking at the site. Seeing how it performs. And then getting into the site today.

We will talk about what has happened since we have launched. So continual testing for all users has been happening. This goes through customers we have engaged that have tested for us when we are testing new things. We are looking at feedback through social media. Through Customer Relations. Through avenues like this, of course. Trying to engage our users and customers And making sure we are open to changes. A big part of that is with relation to accessibility is using very in-depth testing and issue mitigation with the Met Council's new website accessibility testing.

We did some testing early in the year on that. In the beginning of the year in January and got a list of a number of issues that we saw. We did what we could when we launched but things change. When you get it out in the wild you have other people testing it, things come up that you weren't able to anticipate. So we have a list of projects that came from that accessibility testing and are working through that list to improve based on that. Anticipating regular testing with that group WECO. Daily monitoring for accessibility that there are site improved website monitoring services. That is a tool that we have installed on our site that trolls the site on a daily basis and looks for issues. It flags issues that it knows would be accessibility issues. It is a robot, so it doesn't know everything perfectly. It has some false positives but also has some things that we have to asses.

It alerts us to something and then we have to bring it to a higher level to make sure we are getting it right. We have to solve the problem. It just says there is a problem. We do that on a daily basis.

Ongoing learning and training for our website. You have to obtain a high standard of accessibility. Much higher than in the past, which is something that we are doing. Our current front end developer, with a lead on this project, has really dived in on accessibility standards. He has been working really hard to make sure he is up to speed so that everything he is doing is built from the ground up to keep that in mind.

Other than that, that is all I have unless there are specific questions.

Myhre said are you working with lists? I am trying to see how this works.

Mehl said we tried to get away from lists, entirely as much as we can. In most cases, there is a search option rather than pulling from a list. So, if you wanted to find a landmark, like the Mall of America, you had to go through a numbers that says "Attractions, Shopping, Mall of America". That takes you through multiple menus and multiple lists. We got rid of those drop downs entirely and everything is auto complete. Just like you are using Google or any other search engine. You type in your address and their number to call it up. There is some list there, but we try to keep it short. So, if you want the Mall of America, you would just type in Mall of America and it will work for you.

Similar with bus route information. You are able to search for bus routes by number. Or go directly to the bus you know that you want by number as well.

Myhre said have you built in a microphone? If I have to type things in, I would have to have the correct spelling.

Mehl said the microphone feature would be a feature of the device, not the website. So, it would be through the browser or the phone that you are using. Or through accessibility. If you are using a screen reader or something like that. That comes from your device, not the website itself. You can access the route by typing in the route.

Myhre said are you going to update your videos? You have learning videos.

Mehl said we try to keep our videos up to date. We have a COVID-19 video on the website right now.

Vice Chair Paulsen said do you have the ability on the website to rate the cleanness of the bus and maybe report if the bus is not clean? Or maybe rate the bus driver.

Mehl said the current way to do that would be on the comment page on the bottom. The Contact Us link. You can give a commendation, suggestion or complaint. We are looking into down the line to have a mobile app that would feature things like that. What that actually looks like is not determined yet. We might have that feature at some point. It is something we have talked about. The best way to do that is through the Customer Relations tool right now.

Vice Chair Paulsen said if I report the bus is dirty. Where does that go and how do I see that report?

Mehl said that would go to Customer Relations.

Vice Chair Paulsen said is the bus going to be pulled out of service until it gets cleaned? Or how often does that report get checked?

Mehl said that would go to Customer Relations. I don't know how fast it goes. I believe it would be instant. That is not really website related. That is more a bus operations question. I am not sure how buses get pulled out of service like that.

Caufman said with the website forms, during business hours they will be checked and responded to. But sometimes if they come in overnight, they will check them and respond in the morning. So for cleanliness it might be better to call in. But for cleaning, they hired more cleaners on the LRT and buses. So we would clean them very regularly, especially with COVID. There is more heightened cleaning because of that.

Myhre said are the alerts on the buses the same as on the website?

Mehl said the alerts page is all active alerts. If there is an alert out there, it is on that page. You would be getting them on your phone or email if you have signed up of these alerts, which you can get to on the top of that page and sign for alerts. If you don't see something on this page, it isn't there. It means it is from Transit Information.

The alerts are just displayed on the website, but they are all fed through Transit Information. But it all depends if there are activities on the route. Routes that move more frequently through the city may have more changes to the routes. More detours, more repairs. It varies. The information comes from a web service that feeds the site that is managed through Transit Information. If you signed up for an alert, you will find it on your phone.

2. Metro Mobility Changes

Andy Streasick spoke to the TAAC committee. There are three sections here. 1. Additional services. 2 procedural changes. 3 Additional messaging.

Additional services Metro Mobility is offering regarding COVID-19. The numbers I will give you are bookings for each of these services as of Monday morning of this week. The first one that we did is Metro Mobility is doing grocery and essential goods delivery in an effort to cut down on customer's need to go out. You order your groceries and goods and pay for them online or phone and Metro Mobility will pick them up and deliver them to you. We are not allowed to pick up prescriptions. We can pick up other over the counter goods from drug stores.

We are also doing curbside service. Because so many people need to just run into the store and grab something. Banks are closed except for ATM's. it really did not make sense to have our rules in place about having one bus pick you up after another bus has dropped you off. For those circumstances where you just are picking up some food in a drive-thru setting or for carry-out or an ATM. You can book a curbside ride and the same bus that brought you, even though it will be counted as two trips, will wait for you while you do that. Then you can get back on the same bus and head back home.

We have partnered with food shelves to do food shelf delivery. As of Monday morning, we did 659 bookings for grocery and essential goods delivery. We did 3,145 bookings for curbside. Food shelves have been bigger than both of those. We did 8,552 bookings for food shelf deliveries. An important note there is that those are relationships that we have built right with the food shelf directly to deliver food shelf goods to their customers. So that is a service we are providing to people who may not be Metro Mobility certified. If you are receiving food from a food shelf, the food shelf is connected with us. We can bring you your food even if you are not Metro Mobility certified.

Another one we are offering to people who may not necessarily be Metro Mobility certified is Health Care Worker transportation. As of Monday, there have been 20,167 Health Care Worker bookings. Those are designed to bring folks to and from facilities where folks are being treated. With the idea that we can help drop that curb on the pandemic by bringing folks to the facilities where people are seeking treatment. The important thing to note is that you do not need to be a doctor or nurse. You just need to be working at a facility where somebody is receiving treatments. We can bring you to and from that facility.

Another new service has come up in regards to COVID-19 is AWARE. AWARE is a service that was just recently started by our taxi provider. To provide rides to folks that we can't transport safely because they are symptomatic or because they have tested positive. Obviously as public transit, it is a direct threat to transport somebody during a pandemic who is showing symptoms or who we know is positive. So we are not taking those folks on Metro Mobility buses.

What we are doing instead is offering them this AWARE service, which is similar to our Premium Same Day program except that drivers have enhanced PPE's, enhanced cleaning on the vehicles, and barriers between the back and front seat so that they can maintain safety and social distancing.

Then finally, essential worker. That is a new one in the face of the Metro Transit stoppage that has taken place based on the social justice uprisings that have been going on. We have done 159 of those as of Monday morning. Obviously, many more now. We have done 16 AWARE rides as of Monday morning because it is brand new.

Essential Worker is similar to the Health Care Worker thing. Except it is open to any essential worker. Not just somebody going back and forth from a health care facility. But anybody who is an essential worker.

Those are the new kinds of rides that we are doing. Then we have some procedural changes I need to outline. We have similar PPE requirements for passengers and operators to what is happening now on fixed route. Meaning that our operators are expected to wear face coverings, particularly during escorts. If they can maintain social distancing requirements. They don't need to wear them during driving necessarily for safety reasons. But they are expected to do so whenever they can.

The passengers are required to wear face coverings if they can. But if they can't put them on or take them off independently. Or if they can't because of a respiratory disability, there are exceptions made.

Escorts and ID. There have been changes to both of those. If a person is stable, on their feet or if a person can self-propel, we are allowing drivers to see them inside while maintaining the CDC recommended six feet of social distancing. Similarly for ID checks. We have become much more lax by allowing that six feet of social distance. You show your ID. There is not going to be a lot of scrutiny there. They are going to check it out from six feet and call it good.

Fare charging is similar to what is happening in fixed route. If someone can independently tag, we are asking them to continue to do that. If they need any help with tagging, or if they are trying to pay cash, we are not collecting that fare in order to maintain the distancing. We are not going to go back and collect fares after the fact.

We have ceased no-show suspensions temporarily during the COVID situation. With everything going on and everything up in the air, it doesn't seem appropriate to be moving forward, as if nothing has changed with no-show suspensions.

We are doing our best to minimize the shared ride aspect of the service. So far, we have been pretty successful in doing one seat rides for everybody in terms of our certified customers. It is looking more like two people with Health Care Workers in particular.

For Metro Mobility customers, it is looking so far that we are doing pretty well such as one person on the bus at a time, which is ideal. In any case we want to maintain six feet from the driver and from any other passengers. Whatever we can do to minimize the shared ride aspect, we are doing it to keep that distancing in place.

We are continuing to run with the essential trips messaging. Certainly, doctor appointments would rise to the level of essential trips. Work, for people who are still working out in the community is going to be an essential trip. We are not policing what is or is not an essential trip. We are relying on customers to do that. If somebody's love one is on their death bed and they are going to see them, that sounds pretty essential even though it looks like they are just going to somebodies' house. Essential is in the eye of the beholder, here.

While we are asking people to, in the interest of safety, everyone limit your trips to essential trips, we are not enforcing things. Because we do not have the case by case knowledge that would be necessary to do so.

The front seats are all off limits on all Metro Mobility vehicles at this point. I believe the signage is in place indicating such. That is to maintain distancing between customers and driver.

We have a very beefed up cleaning regimen. After each trip, drivers are spraying and wiping down all the surfaces on the bus with a high-level disinfectant. They are doing the full-on deep cleaning of each bus every day.

No new replacement ID's are being issued. Because our offices are closed. Because we are not requiring fare payment. If your ID GoTo card expires, you are not getting a new card currently. We are waiting on that. Tied to that obviously, your ID is not expiring right now. We are not doing face-to-face assessments at this time. We are not letting people's accessibility expire. We are just kicking that out until post crisis can begin.

If we get new applications, same deal, we are getting them certified without an assessment short term. We will come in after the fact and conduct assessments later on.

All of our drivers have access at this point to free testing. Including drivers who are not symptomatic. And they are allowed to use the Council vehicles for drive thru testing. That has been going well. MTS wide, I know we have had at least had a couple of drivers who were not symptomatic who had tested positive. So, it is a nice resource to be in place.

They are also doing temperature screening for drivers just to make sure that they are not symptomatic prior to the start of their shifts.

So in terms of additional messaging, we have for you first and foremost here is to be totally clear, all those extra services I was talking about before, they are all subject to operational capabilities. At this time, we are anticipating that they are going to continue throughout the summer. But that could change. We are also expecting that our ridership is going to maintain roughly the same level that it is at all through the summer, then we will see. We are acutely aware that our responsibility is to do ADA paratransit. And that is what we are going to do.

As soon as any of these or all of these do not interfere with our ability to provide reliable ADA paratransit to certified customers. They are gone. So, I do just want to stress that. Right now, we are currently at about 20 percent of our ridership. That is why we can do these things.

Transit Link is providing transport for essential workers beyond health care workers. As of Monday morning, they have done 454 runs. It is important to note that with Metro Transit workers buses starting back up today. Today is the last day that Metro Mobility is doing the non health care worker rides. Those fall back on Transit Link or on the fixed route system after today.

So far, Metro Mobility service hours have not been impacted by the Covid scheduling on fixed route. We don't anticipate them to be impacted either.

I think that all of you know that our hours are based on fixed route hours. But we have chosen not to follow suite with regard to curtailing hours in any communities.

One last thing I wanted to add. I know my staff got hit hard with it. The state commandeered retired Metro Mobility buses for use in transporting folks during the response to the unrest. Again, those are retired buses and weren't being operated by Metro Mobility. But unfortunately, they didn't have the striping taken off of them yet. So I got to sit on the news and watch what looked like our buses carrying people away. They are not Metro Mobility buses but former Metro Mobility buses that had been retired. Not operated by us.

Jasmine said I have a question about ADA and non ADA. Will this ride planning affect me being non ADA? How do I know if I will get my ride if I need it?

Streasick said non ADA paratransit rides are a higher priority for us than any of the tertiary programs that I ran through. So certainly, we have to prioritize the federal law with ADA paratransit rides. We consider paratransit to include the non ADA service area. Your rides are a higher priority to us than any of those other grocery run, food shelf run, curb side run. Whatever. Those are wonderful things we can do while we can do them. But serving our customers including in the non ADA service area is more important.

Jasmine said you said there are two things. When you take someone curbside and wait for them, are you charged for two rides? If we can pay, how do you want it?

Streasick said the only way to pay is to independently tap your GoTo card on the bus just as always. So if you are capable of doing that, without driver assistance, that is the one way we are accepting payment. And yes, for those curbside rides, we would collect the fare on the go and the return. It is two payments. It is two different trips. The only difference is it would be the same bus with the same driver, who is going to wait for you.

Jasmine said if somebody was qualified for Metro, but they ran out before the Covid thing, how can they get back on or do they have to wait?

Streasick said we have been handling that on a case-by-case basis but anybody who applies formally, we are getting you in right now. If they go through the paperwork and get it into us, then they are getting extended. Anybody who expires during Covid, who I mentioned is getting suspended, then we had a few people who expired right before our office closed. For whatever reason can't get to the doctor or aren't wanting to go outside to do so who really wants that safety net of a Metro Mobility certification. If you were not part of the stuff that was already done, you just missed that, we are going in and extending that manually.

Jasmine said can you talk anything about the lift contract that is supposed to start?

Streasick said it is still going to happen. Our timelines are in total limbo. And I really have to shout out to our staff. Covid has been hard for everybody. But we fundamentally altered the core vision of our service in a week. My staff took on weekends. They started working differently. They started working more and they have all done just great. But unfortunately, I can't give you specifics on the lift timeline, given the procurement stuff in place. It is going to happen. I can tell you that. But I just don't know when yet.

Vice Chair Paulsen said what Transit Link is doing for essential workers. They are home care workers, they are PCA workers, those numbers are 451?

Streasick said those numbers are 454 as of Monday morning.

Vice Chair Paulsen said anything from Amazon can be picked up and delivered via federal employee service. You can do your payment online and they will deliver.

Streasick said I am going to piggyback on that. Walmart locally is doing that too.

Vice Chair Paulsen said we worked for the last four months to make that happen. Minnesota just locally popped in there the last few weeks or so.

Myhre said I know you have old buses and new buses, I have been on some of the old ones where there are rips in the materials and you can't sanitize them. Are you just using the new buses so we can all stay safe?

Streasick said we are using all of our vehicles still. We have beefed up all of our cleaning and repairs. So if there is anything that looks like it could hold germs, like a crack or a rip you are describing, we are prioritizing getting that all cleaned up to make sure that a bus is safe to deploy.

Jasmine said I presume that the extending of the hours is going along with you will let us know when the lift contract happens if there is any extending of hours in communities. Then the other thing is if you get money for everybody's rides if you are keeping track of them so that you can get the funds.

Streasick said are you talking about the federal Covid reimbursement?

Jasmine said you get money for us, right? When each person rides.

Streasick said no. The only money that we really get for rides is the fares that we collect. We have been creative with how we are reimbursing our contractors. Because, typically how they get paid from us has a lot to do with revenue hours and how many people they are transporting. In this situation, in addition to servicing the community and helping from a social distancing standpoint, from a stewardship of the community standpoint one of the nice things about this tertiary programs is that it has allowed our contractors to stay solvent.

It is good to say you are going to prioritize ADA paratransit but that doesn't do you much good if you don't have any contractors left in existence to provide your ADA paratransit when you get back on the bus. We are pleased that we have been able to keep folks pretty busy on the contracto'rs side and also to modify a bit how we reimburse. So they can continue to exist and not go out of business during the crisis.

Myhre said when it is safe to go back to the old ways, are you going to tell them they still have to take us to the door? We have already made some serious complaints of them not following the rules since Covid-19 came into play. Now with all this distancing, when we can go back to the old ways of Metro Mobility, are you going to start making sure that they follow those rules?

Streasick said we are piggybacking off of the CDC recommendations. When it is safe. When the CDC gives you the green light to do away with the physical distancing part of things, we will run with that. If there is some reason to raise the eyebrows, we will take another look with, for example if something weird came out tomorrow, that said never mind, everything is fine, we would be a little more cautious than that. But when there is good reason to believe that we have weathered the storm here and it is safe to look at going back to the way it used to be, Yes, we are going to prioritize that. If somebody needs assistance, either because of the inability to self-propel, or instability or whatever, if you need an escort, we are still going to escort you the same as we always have. For folks who don't need that, we are going to maintain the distancing. I do understand what you are saying. Because that is what the rule is, it doesn't mean that that is necessarily always what happens.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Blue Line

This item was not presented.

2. Green Line

Christopher Bates briefly mentioned the construction in Hopkins.

3. Gold Line

This item was not presented.

4. Rush Line

This item was not presented.

CHAIRS REPORT

This item was not presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MEMBER COMMENT

The July meeting is cancelled.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:13 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary