

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

**Committee Members Present:** Chair David Fenley, Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen, Sam Jasmine, Patsy Murphy, Ken Rodgers, Kari Sheldon, John Clark, Claudia Fuglie, Erik Henricksen and Richard Rowan.

**Committee Members Absent:** Heidi Myhre.

**Committee Members Excused:** Christopher Bates, Jeffry Dains, Patty Thorsen and Diane Graham-Raff.

**Council Staff Present:** Doug Cook, Andy Streasick, Cyndi Harper, Wendy Wulff, Andrew Brody, Guthrie Byard, Sara Maaske, Pam Steffen, Juan Rangel, John Dillery, Christine Kuennen, Jason Tintes 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 12:37 p.m. on Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Fuglie, seconded by Jasmine, to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2021 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

## BUSINESS & INFORMATION

### 1. Orange Line Connecting Bus Service

John Dillery, Senior Transit Planner, Metro Transit and Project Manager for this project  
Cyndi Harper, Manager of Route Planning, Metro Transit in the Service Development Division  
Juan Rangel, Outreach Coordinator, Metro Transit Community Outreach and Engagement Team

Cyndi Harper spoke to the TAAC committee. I am going to start us off with some background information. Then hand it over to John to get into some of the more detailed changes. Then Juan will come back in the end to talk about our outreach and engagement next steps.

So the Orange Line process, the connecting bus study process, initially kicked off in the fall of 2019. However, this is something that we had to put on pause last spring, due to Covid. And then restarted again last fall. And now we are at the point where we put out our proposed service changes for the public for their feedback for engagement.

Next slide. First let's start off with the foundation of our project, the Metro Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit itself. The Orange Line replaces most of Route 535 and 597. A dozen stations between Downtown Minneapolis and Burnsville. It is all day station to station service, 7 days a week, which is an improvement over the Route 535 today. Every 10 minutes in the rush hour, every 15 minutes in off peak. It is under construction right now. It is scheduled to open in late 2021.

Next slide. Our project goals are to maximize the extent and the access of the benefits of the new Orange Line. Our goals include connecting more than 50,000 jobs outside Downtown Minneapolis with the new highway BRT line. Prioritize those who are reliant on transit the most. Including black and indigenous people of color and low income communities. Of course, whenever we have the opportunity to reassess our service, we are always looking to simplify our routes. Making them easier to use and understand and just more convenient.

Next slide. I will turn it over to John to walk through the proposed changes.

Dillery spoke to the TAAC committee. I will go from north to south. So we don't miss anything. The first slide shows the Lake Street Station. That was a stop on I-35W over 10 years ago now. Route 27 dates back to that time. It was designed to connect the Phillips Neighborhood residents. And also the largest employers in South Minneapolis. Abbott Northwestern and the Allina Group and Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, with connections in two major places. It replaces the Blue Line station, Lake Street and Hiawatha on the east end and Lake and I-35W on the west end. Almost half of the ridership went away when the Lake Street, I-35W stop had to close for the construction.

Now we are excitingly awaiting the opening of the new pleasant and easy to use new station at Lake and I-35W to extend this route from its terminal shown in light blue now, 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue westward over to Lake and I-35W. the buses will come back using First Avenue to get back to 38<sup>th</sup> and back to the other end of the line. It runs every half hour, Monday through Friday from 5:30 a.m. through 7:30 p.m.

Next slide. I skipped 46<sup>th</sup> Street. That is because we have service and important connections to 46<sup>th</sup> Street. But we are not making any changes to the routes at that point. So we will move to 66<sup>th</sup> Street. There are two basic kinds of service changes we are looking at when it comes to bus service. There are the route changes that we really need to make to place the local pieces of Route 535, Route 597. Then there are the services where we are making the connection between 66<sup>th</sup> Street and Route 515. No problem. But we should be able to make a good connection and distribute riders back and forth in Richfield.

But while we are at it, we have been looking at this for years, let's see if we can simplify this route. So indeed, this is the proposal. And this is tradeoffs. We make it into one basic route plus all the busses, all the same trips. The Mall of American on the east, 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Bloomington Avenue through the eastern edge of Richfield. Swing through 66<sup>th</sup> and Cedar area by Cedar Point Commons shopping center. Then right across 66<sup>th</sup> Street to Southdale. Back and forth. Run every 20 minutes daily on this route. To do this between a simplified route, we move the branch that goes to the VA Medical Center to 54<sup>th</sup> Street via Medical Center you see in the purple on the right corner.

We just recently extended Route 7 from 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 58<sup>th</sup> Street down to Cedar Point Common, 66<sup>th</sup> and Cedar makes a good connection for the 515. We didn't extend all the trips but with this concept plan we are extending virtually the whole route, rush hour, everything. Every half hour it runs. That helps replace service in the branch up there.

But to get to the VA Medical Center itself, the alternative would be to take the 515 to the Mall of America. To the station there. And get on the Blue Line, which is rapid and frequent, to the VA Medical Center. We can make that work with connections that can work. It is the VA Medical Center Station. As opposed to the VA Medical Center stop. It is a longer trip to do that. But it is one of the tradeoffs.

The other branch of the 515 would be running on Longfellow Avenue on the east side of highway 77. You will see it in purple. along with 66<sup>th</sup> Street, that would all be moved over to Bloomington Avenue. There is a lot better service on Bloomington Avenue.

There are a couple of employers at the airport, Fed Ex and UPS that rely on the bus there to a very small degree. With eight passengers a day. We are in conversation with employers who are looking at some creative alternatives.

Going down 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue across I-494 and American Boulevard. That is the current route. We will actually keep running that route this coming year until late 2022. The proposed route is recommended to follow the new 77<sup>th</sup> Street underpass, which is under Highway 77, that will open in late 2022. That is everything about Richfield 66<sup>th</sup> Street.

Next slide. In Bloomington, where most of the big changes are, Route 535 has 80 bus stops between Normandale College and Downtown Minneapolis terminal. Here is the Orange Line coming along with 12 stations. We have to measure that difference and say where are those differences. Most of the bus stops needing coverage are in Bloomington.

Glendale Avenue would be served by a new route called 534. it is a short shuttle route that would run north/south in Glendale between American Boulevard station at Knox Avenue, where it says Southtown at the top of the map. Then it would proceed between American Boulevard south on Lyndale. It would terminate at

98<sup>th</sup> Street Station. Which we have been calling South Bloomington Transit Center. Now it is called the 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station going forward.

That is a short, efficient route. We can provide significantly better service than what Route 535 has been offering. Thirty-minute frequency. In the non-rush hour evenings between these two points. Twenty-minute frequency in the peak rush hours and we can divert trips by a Chase Avenue, you see on the dotted blue line. Central Bloomington Industrial Park. We can get people to work over there.

These volunteers enlisted to assist people and Hennepin County Human Services are located near Lyndale and 96<sup>th</sup> Street. It would have better service than today's 535.

The 553 is a commuter express route that is considered a bit unique. We have suspended most of our commuter express routes because everybody downtown is now telecommuting from home. But the 553 serves unique local service on Portland Avenue near Bloomington. You see on the far edge of the map. No other route does that.

The proposal is run the Route 553 on the new extension across the 102<sup>nd</sup> Street and Lyndale and have it terminate in the 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station, with a connection. Replacing part of Route 535.

Next slide. What do we do about the Route 535 and services along I-494? Today, the 535 is on I-35W north of 76<sup>th</sup> Street. And south of 82<sup>nd</sup> Street. But, between those two points, it covers local needs along 76<sup>th</sup> Street and 77<sup>th</sup> Street north of the freeway and also among American Boulevard south of the freeway by Southtown. And it provides local access to Penn Avenue. And Lyndale Avenue. There is a lot of coverage there.

The Orange Line stops at two places. One at Knox Avenue just south of 76<sup>th</sup> Street and Knox Avenue at American Boulevard with route access. Route 540 exists. It is our crosstown route. Right along 76<sup>th</sup> and 77<sup>th</sup>. It is simplified to be an exact route between the Mall of America along the north side of the freeway of 77<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup>. All the buses will do the same thing all the time, without exception, which isn't the case now. Now go to Normandale Lake area, which is shown at the western end of the route there, which is Normandale Lake Boulevard by Cahill Road where there are apartments. Simplified route returning to 20-minute frequency during the peak periods and 30 minutes service during the other hours. There is an improvement on weekend service. That is 30 or 60 minute service. Connections by the north side of the freeway.

American Boulevard, south of I-494. We have Route 538, which continues essentially unchanged. It is between Southdale and the Knox American Station by Southtown and then East 83<sup>rd</sup> Street to the Mall of America.

We have these two scenarios. If we can afford it will with a higher investment, we would put in better midday frequencies than it is today. But essentially, it is the same route. Route 542 is the big news. That route is currently suspended. So we bring it back, showing on the south side. It is the American Boulevard route. The Mall of America and the old Route 542 used to jog up Lyndale and 77<sup>th</sup>. Come down Penn Avenue, back to American Boulevard. Now, the proposal is straight across American Boulevard to the American Boulevard Station. Because that is a more direct route, we can send the route farther west. It used to just end at Normandale Lake Boulevard. But the time savings to go straight across American Boulevard, it would go further west. It would cover the area along 78<sup>th</sup> Street, north of I-494, out to Highway 169 right along the farthest end of the map. Then that would have some office buildings and the Bremer Park area in Edina.

Basic service every half an hour, roughly so in peaks. Hopefully, we can invest some more and to our full service route that runs every day in the off peak and peak.

That covers our distribution of people from the Orange Line and I-494.

The next slide. One of the major changes needed is 98<sup>th</sup> Street. This map shows the concept to change those things. Route 535 runs most of its trips on weekdays. Across 98<sup>th</sup> Street right to 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station. I-35W straight over to Normandale Community College, at least, directly. But it isn't there anymore. The Orange Line doesn't go to Normandale College. It has contributed a large amount of riders daily on this route during the school year.

We feel we need to make a big move. So, what we are recommending here is Route 539, showing here is the same crosstown that existed now between the Mall of America and Old Shakopee Road and 98<sup>th</sup> Street. But the I-35W is a completely changed in this concept. It becomes a direct route. It goes straight across 98<sup>th</sup> Street to serve Normandale Community College and Normandale Village. There are a lot of apartments and affordable housing along there and Normandale Village.

This route would run every 30 minutes most hours, weekdays, 30 or 60 minutes on weekends and it is an improvement over the existing Route 539 on weekends. In the morning rush hour. It is so important to get students to school at Normandale College conveniently. Everybody is coming at once to morning classes. Route 539 would have a 20-minute frequency, which is an upgrade from what is there today. Route 539 becomes a good direct link between the Orange Line and these important destinations.

What about the current 539, which serves Penn Avenue around Southtown, Old Shakopee Road, on the west end there, and the Valley West Shopping Center, as well as France Avenue?

To replace Route 539, we proposed Route 536, a new route which would be a parallel connecting route. It starts at the American Boulevard Station on the north end there and go directly where most of the riders are. It goes straight down Penn Avenue, across 98<sup>th</sup> Street, by Creekside Community Center, which is at a corner down to Old Shakopee Road. Take Old Shakopee Road, veers to 108<sup>th</sup> Street to get by the apartments to Valley West Center. Then the route would end at Normandale Community College. There are people on Old Shakopee Road that would go directly to the Mall of America via the current route and vice versa. The connections between these two routes 536 and 539 would be very important to arrange at the points where they cross.

Now, there is an impact where the current Route 539 on the map and notice that 90<sup>th</sup> Street between Penn and France is no longer served. This is one of the impact areas where we will be discontinuing service. Route 537 might be brought back if we would invest more in the market returns. That would bring service back to 90<sup>th</sup> and France. There is an apartment building there. But otherwise, that is an impact that we would have to deal with and listen to people about that.

90<sup>th</sup> Street has about nine passengers on it. most of them are within walking distance from Penn Avenue. So that covers the 98<sup>th</sup> Street area.

Next slide. Route 547 is the express route that runs in peak periods between southwest Bloomington points, which is what this map is showing, and I-35W. The buses go generally I-35W express to and from downtown Minneapolis rush hours. The route also has carried people who work in Southwest Bloomington on Old Shakopee Road. Southwest Bloomington employers from Minneapolis, Richfield and Bloomington. We are recommending the Route 597 be replaced completely. The Orange Line takes over between the 98<sup>th</sup> Street station in downtown Minneapolis. The local branches, the Route 597 are being replaced. Route 597 would be the new route that would connect 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station. Go out to the employment areas, along Old Shakopee Road at 6:00 in the morning, coming along Auto Club Road and 110<sup>th</sup>. Bring the residents back to 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station, where they would get on the Orange Line. Perhaps other routes too, depending on where they are going. The process of that route would reverse in the p.m. peak period.

Route 547 would run every 30 minutes, both peaks. Broad peaks covering all the key work shifts. Route 597 has another branch today that runs west on West 107<sup>th</sup> Street. We replaced that with the Route 548, which is a little different from today's routing. It would start on Hyland Greens Drive west of Normandale and there are apartment buildings. It would come straight across 102<sup>nd</sup> Street all the way over to Old Shakopee Road. It is a little more direct route that would take you to 98<sup>th</sup> Street Station.

Thirty-minute rush hour service over a broad peak period for all the major work shifts both a.m. and p.m. No 98<sup>th</sup> Street service on this route anymore. As you would recall, we are putting in frequent all day service on Route 539 and 98<sup>th</sup> Street.

That is all of the details of the concept plan

The next slide follows on the plans which I was describing. It is a list of route improvements options if resources become available.

Route 515 on 66<sup>th</sup> Street increases frequency on weekdays and Saturdays to every 15 minutes. There is a 15-minute frequency on the connecting Orange Line.

The new Lyndale Route 534 would add weekend service every 30 minutes.

Route 537 restore weekday service.

Route 532 would be a major increase by adding midday and weekend service.

Henricksen said with so many routes changing and altering, what type of educational campaign do you have to notify users what these changes are? Do you take into account accessibility when you are looking at reaching out to users and riders when changes like this happens?

Harper said this is a really nice transition to the last slides we have here for the transition process. Our project timeline. Right now, we are right in the heart of our engagement. I will talk about that in a minute.

Rangel said we are seeking comment through our survey through February 22. The process of March-April 2021 plan revision before developing recommended plan that will seek final approval in June 2021. Then the proposed plan would be implemented with the Orange Line scheduled for late 2021.

On our project website, we have the concept plan report in a PDF form and broken down by specific chapters to make it a little bit more manageable to view. We also have a project video presentation. One of the main tools we are using to inform folks about the concept plan and the feedback is a map-based survey to guide feedback using the maps that John shared earlier.

We are highlighting the proposed changes in a simpler way so folks can provide feedback. We expect this map-based survey will be our main tool to get a lot of feedback. We are offering other ways for folks to learn about the project. We are hosting a couple of public meetings and a public hearing. Our first public meeting will be this Saturday. And we also have one on February 9 and February 10 for folks to learn about the project can participate in a question and answer discussion there.

Harper said just to finish off with we have three community meetings coming up starting Saturday. All three meetings will be exactly the same, so same format, same content. So you only need to go to one of those. If you are planning to. We are also working, in addition to our community meetings, we will be out on the street starting today, talking with some of our customers at key stations at bus stops. Right now, especially with the pandemic, not everyone who is interested in transit is actually riding with us right now. We need to make sure that we are reaching out otherwise to get their feedback. There are four main ways for folks to tell us what they think about the proposed changes. Attend one of the meetings on February 6, 9, and 10. Sending us an email. Go to our website. There is a full project report on the website. We are handing out brochures. Letting them know what is going on. We are also hosting some of our bus stops and giving information and working with some of the institutions in the area such as Normandale Community College, the I-494 Transportation Management Organization and other employers in all four cities in the area.

Rodgers said my question or comment is basically, you mention a lot about map-based surveys. Map-based surveys traditionally are very difficult for people who use screen readers or other technology. A suggestion could be that a narrative could be written describing what is being asked for on a map-based survey that is narrative in nature. That could be a suitable substitute for people that use assisted technology and can't use a map-based system.

Another comment. That may be out of scope for this conversation because I missed the majority of the presentation due to technical issues trying to log back in. I just want to also make a plug here that the importance of stations being really intentionally focused on in terms of accessibility. So if all of the stations appeared to be the same, that is the best scenario. Because it doesn't matter what station we are on, we know what the platform layout is. That is comfortable for people that are blind or visually impaired. We run into some problems with some other lines where a station is switched to the opposite side of the street because there is no space for a station in the normal spot. That presents a huge problem for travelers that are blind or deaf-blind. I would just like to stress and emphasize the importance of uniformity in where the stations are and the platforms being as much as possible the same footprint and the same pattern.

Jasmine said I do want to echo Ken's comments on how important uniformity with stations for those who are blind or vision impaired. I think that is super important. I wanted to ask of when you do a trial route or if you are doing a new route, how long do you leave that route there or in place before you decide that it isn't working or you don't have the ridership to support that route?

Harper said I did hear about your discussion on the layout for the Orange Line stations themselves. Those are already well in construction. I do think There has been discussion. Maybe Juan can follow up with it or talk with Robin Cauffman about doing a tour over the summer of those stations before the Orange Line opens so you can see for yourself how things are laid out. It is a very structured, consistent design. Also, a quick clarification for the comments about the map-based survey. Thank you. We should have been a little more clear. The

survey is accessible, and it does include a description of what is going on with the design as well as just the map. So hopefully, that does make it a little more universal.

In response to the question about how long we try some of these new things. Generally, we like to do at least 12 to 18 months. It depends a little bit on what is going on in terms of our overall budget situation. If we are facing budget issues that may be a complicated factor. Also, trends are very important to us. And so, if a route isn't necessarily meeting its ridership or subsidy or productivity standards right away. If it is showing substantial growth that is certainly a positive sign.

Rowan said looking at your engagement plan, I would just like to emphasize that there are a lot of seniors that live along this route. I am not as familiar with this part of Bloomington and Minneapolis. But I think it is always a good idea to reach out to agencies that serve seniors to try to get input from that portion of your ridership.

Rangel said I think that is a good point. We are working closely with the city to help spread the word. If you have any contact, we make sure we get messages out to them. There is a campaign to reach out to local media as well.

Murphy said what I have to talk about has to do with the bus that you will be servicing MOA to the college. So you would be talking about bringing about the college towards Southdale. Since I live in Bloomington, I am not sure how well aware you are with the new bridge that they placed on France Avenue, west side, to make it easier for the college students. Because a lot of them are taking up residence right there in the apartment complexes on 94<sup>th</sup> and France there. During the wintertime there is a lot of walking over that bridge. The bussing is very necessary there.

Dillery said that is Route 539.

Murphy said when you go from the Normandale College heading north on France Avenue, there is an apartment complex right there on the west side that a lot of people are taking up residence there while they are going to school. That is one big concern is the lack of transportation from them to the college. They used to walk right there on France Avenue. Now a current bridge is placed along the side of the road. But in the wintertime, it is icy.

Dillery said I am trying to understand. You are referring to the housing that is north of Normandale College and west of France Avenue?

Murphy said correct.

Dillery said I will take a look at that.

Murphy said the other comment that I had was going along with what Ken and Sam were saying. Not only is the continuity of the stops are for someone who is visually impaired, but also somebody who is disabled. Keeping that idea is if it is all the same, we know where things are. But when it changes from one stop to another. Even when I rode other bus routes, it was difficult to know where things are sometimes. Sometimes there were bus stops that had an opening on each side. And there was a wall in between. Some only had one opening at the bus stop. So it is not just somebody who is visually impaired, but there are a lot of people with different disabilities.

## **2. TAAC Letter**

TAAC Chair, David Fenley, spoke to the TAAC committee. Almost a year ago now, we had a couple of resolutions in which we voted to support the increasing of accessible seating on buses, essentially. We also had another resolution that voiced our support for some sort of educational campaign that would let folks know what this thing is for. We have put together an unofficial letter that was sent out along with the agenda last week. Hopefully, everybody read it. It is the final version that a small group of us had been working on for the past few months. We are hoping to be done with it and have it submitted to the Chair and Council Members. So they can see where we stand on this. And take steps accordingly. I think they are on board with what we wanted to do. But it is always nice to have it formalized.

We have all been dealing with this for many years now. From what I have heard from folks at the Met Council, they are on the same page as we are when it comes to this space in the buses. But I want to make sure that everybody's input has been heard. You all saw a draft of this letter months ago. This is just the polished version of it. I will start reading this letter now.

Dear Chair Zelle and Metropolitan Council Members,

The Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) and all its members are writing to you regarding the issues faced everyday by people with disabilities that utilize Metro Transit services. In particular is the issue of Priority Seating on the fixed route bus system being used by individuals that it is not intended for.

The Metro Transit's fixed route bus system operates for the benefit of everybody: workers, shoppers, people with disabilities, parents, teachers, old and young, rich and poor. By mandate of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), Metro Transit is required to have on all its fixed route bus systems Priority Seating, which is designated only for people with disabilities and those aging. While Metro Transit is in full compliance with the ADA, there is a documented and consistent issue of Priority Seating being used by people for whom it is not designated. Sometimes it's not even a person occupying the Priority Seating, yet furniture items, grocery bags, strollers, or other large, bulky items. If someone is in need of the Priority Seating because of a disability and the seating is full, the bus driver is required to ask someone to move (49 C.F.R § 37.167). However, it is too often the case that the person will not move to other available seats (keep in mind not all disabilities are visible). When alternative seating is not available for the rider being requested to move, drivers are encouraged to use free ride "coupons" to encourage people to move from Priority Seating. Nonetheless, when people do not move themselves or their bulky items it causes the crux of the matter at hand, which are rider "pass ups". A "pass up" is when there is no spot for someone on the bus. From data provided by Metro Transit, between January and June of 2019, almost half of the "pass up" riders were people who use a wheelchair (360 riders).

While it is Metro Transit policy that the driver call in every "pass up" to ensure there is either space on the next bus no more than 30-minutes away, or if more than 30-minutes away calling in another form of transportation for that person, there are many documented complaints where either the 30-minute rule isn't followed or even worse the pass-up is never called in. This would be out of line with Metro Transit policy and Federal Law, and when drivers are out of step with the law they are disciplined and retrained.

March 4, 2020 Passed Motion: TAAC supports increasing the amount of priority/accessible seating on fixed route buses.

- This could entail other forms of space on the bus for folks who may need it but do not have a disability

March 4, 2020 Passed Motion: TAAC supports an awareness campaign on the uses of priority and accessible seating and its importance to people with disabilities, transportation and the general public.

- TAAC is willing to contribute to the content and production of PSA materials
- Video
- Social media
- Brochure
- Broadcast media (PSA's)
- Posters at bus stops
- News story on local television

As always, TAAC will work with Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council staff to ensure the rights and safety of riders with disabilities are met and that every rider, no matter disability status, obtains the full benefits of a robust and equitable public transportation system.

**Sincerely,**  
**TAAC Members**

TAAC Members suggested some changes in the letter.

Pam Steffen said what I would like to add is that the Metro Transit representative is Doug Cook. And then Metropolitan Council representative Guthrie have been following along with the process of the letter and resolutions. What I wanted to tell folks today is that internally, Metro Transit has a draft plan regarding the resolutions. We would like to ask that a couple of us work with some TAAC members to look at the plan that we have put together addressing an awareness campaign regarding priority seating. And then also more discussion on additional priority seats. So we would like to form a working group so that we can get these things accomplished.

Vice Chair Paulsen said that is an olive branch. I do think we can work together in forming a subcommittee that would do that with you. I think the timeline would look like to us. I think your plan with us. You can get on the agenda and present this to the committee as a whole. And then we can form that subgroup. And take some of the technical questions offline. I do think it is good for the whole committee to hear what you guys have been talking about before a subcommittee or another group is formed.

Steffen said we can certainly do that. The one caveat to us presenting the plan is that it is a draft plan of what we put together. We actually want your voices in that plan.

Rodgers said I don't think that that is necessarily the best use of the group's time. What Pam is suggesting, I think it is a really good way of looking at the draft and formulating something that can be presented to the TAAC in a more holistic manner. That would better utilize our time, I believe. There is no sense of us using out group time. Just limit it to giving our group some feedback go back and rework waists a lot of staff and committee time. I think working with a small group like this is a perfect way to approach this. I am willing to work on that with a small team.

Chair Fenley said we do have a good amount of time in this meeting. I think we could probably tackle setting this up right now. I think what it sounds like, Pam, is that you are asking us to jump in at the beginning stages of the discussion internally at Metro Transit and the Met Council. I would say, let's just take this olive branch and roll with it.

So I have Ken willing to sit on this. Darrell, do you want to chat real fast? Then I will ask other members, if they want to say anything. Then I will ask for some more volunteers too.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I would also want to serve on that committee as well. I think this is good for staff, but the letter is still going forward, right?

Chair Fenley said yes, the letter is still going forward.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I think there is plenty of time for them to know what our concerns are. I think our work group will be up to it and fairly small. I think that we make sure the I's are dotted and the T's are crossed. Everybody is happy with it. I don't think that we should take a lot of time. But it is going to be a little different from what I am used to.

Fuglie said I do agree with what Ken is saying. If we could all do it together faster. We can get this thing rolling faster and it would be easier getting transit. If you do need some help, I would be willing to help out also.

Sheldon said I would too.

Jasmine said I would too.

Chair Fenley said I think this is plenty. This is not to say that folks shouldn't be on it. But I think five is a good number. If one or two people can't make a particular meeting, we will have folks represented. It is good to have different members on this work group. We will dub it as a work group or subcommittee.

Pam, are you the person we should work with in setting this up? And starting to chat about what happens next?

Steffen said here is where the Metro Transit, Metro Council stakeholders are at. We have a draft plan that is being reviewed by a couple of our bosses. We hope to have that finalized within the next week. Once we have that ready for your consumption, then my hope would be that, I would reach out to the five folks who want to collaborate with us and figure out a time that is good for you folks to meet virtually and go over what we have.

Chair Fenley said the letter is done. I will give it one more once over. Then put it on our TAAC letterhead and send it off to the people in power at the Met Council. The Chair and the Met Council Members.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **1. Blue Line**

The Blue Line has reengaged. They had one meeting thus far. So that process is beginning again. The freight rail process is a dead deal. We are looking at realigning the Blue Line alignment. We are basically starting over. Looking at all of the pluses and minuses. A different alignment not using the Burlington Northern right-of-way. It will give us some options going through neighborhoods that might serve people better than just going on a rail right-of-way. There are options going forward. There is a lot of engagement with consumers, constituents, buildings, people, businesses, all that stuff that has to be worked through. We will have to resubmit environmental plans. We are really starting again. Not really from scratch. But for a big part of the alignment it is going to be a heavy lift. There can be a lot of more changes with New Start dollars. The project had high scores initially anyway. And now starting again, I think it is a good thing for us.

### **2. Green Line**

This one was not presented.

### **3. Gold Line**

This one was not presented.

### **4. Rush Line**

This one was not presented.

## **CHAIRS REPORT**

The Chair had nothing to report

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

Vice Chair Paulsen said I have two things to bring up. When the letter is actually submitted, I would like to make sure that we see a copy of it. At least in our file. Make sure that it gets posted. Maybe gets posted online and on the website. There is a really unique opportunity for folks with disabilities to weigh in on something more innovative. Current legislation that I and a few other folks have brought forth personally on a private level. I would dis encourage folks even though we are not able to engage with each other or in person for not being able to go up to the capitol. Don't forget to reach out to your representatives and to your senators. Tell them how important transit is to you. Whether that means public transportation or private transportation. Whether that means you have been stuck in the house because of the pandemic. They want to hear those things. It is important for you to say those things today. More than ever before. If I can help you do it, please reach out to me.

Rodgers said I would like to request that maybe Andy or you could get together and figure out if our meetings might be better suited by using Teams platform. I know the Met Council uses Teams internally. The state uses Teams internally. It seems to be a much easier user interface to use. I cannot find any of my typical opportunities to turn and mute myself or unmute myself. Turn video on or off. I can't seem to use it today. We had a lot of audio issues with other people as well. I think that Webex is a difficult system to use. It is not user friendly. I would like to suggest that if you and Andy could put your heads together and see if Teams might be a better approach for us to use. It is much easier all around. I think it is a stable platform.

Sheldon said I wanted to discuss or just mention that because of this Covid19 thing, I have occasionally had issues with drivers not wanting to tie my scooter down. Because they don't want to have physical contact or anything like that. We are talking about safety here. I would just like to mention it here. But I don't know if I have to mention it offline to anybody.

Streasick said please do, whenever that happens, call it in to the Metro Mobility Service Center. We are going to want to know what specific driver that is. They still want to secure every mobility device. Regardless if somebody transfers out of it or not. For people who still need escorting.

We want to make sure everybody gets escorted. Drivers are still required to do that. We have told drivers that if people are stable or able to self-propel, that they can stay six feet away during an escort. Those two if's are really important. Those are the only changes that we have made with regarding escorting or tie down. We want to know if drivers are trying to avoid tying down or escorting.

Sheldon said I was specifically speaking about Metro Transit.

Steffen said just hearing what you are saying. I manage the Customer Relations Department. Please feel free to send me an email and or call my office phone. I am happy to take the report on what specific operator it is.

You can always call one of my staff too. They are actually better at the research than I am.

Murphy said I have two different things. I have been using Metro more since the pandemic came along. With the change of the company, these people have been amazing. That is scheduling my ride, drivers, timeliness, whatever. If you want to pass that on, it has been going great.

The second thing, and I am not sure how many people this will affect. Part of my brain injury alliance group meets weekly. Because we are not able to do it at the capitol, we do it with, our leader calls a Tuesday Zoom meeting at the capitol. One of our ladies is up in Greater Minnesota and her big concern that she has is ability of transportation and for her to come down to the capitol and go back home. The way they do things up there. It would cost her \$150.00 or something like that. It would be the same as if you were paying for a cab. Plus she has to pay for them to have lunch while sitting and waiting for it. That is in the works right now for becoming the bill to become a law. That is something in the works right now for anybody that knows people who are outside the immediate Metro area. We are working towards.

Rowan said it seems that when we have presentations. Since the Orange Line presentation today. I am not trying to single them out because I think it is typical that I find out about the comment period when the presentation is done, and the comment period is getting close to being over. I am just wondering if there is a way we can get better information about what projects have a comment period going on because the organization I represent, the AARP, is not that nimble in terms of getting information out in a short amount of time. It would be helpful to know about these things with more lead time.

Chair Fenley said there is no requirement for Metro Transit or Met Council to respond.

Sara Maaske said if they are doing comment periods, I have a mailing list for both Metro Mobility customers as well as the TAAC. I would be happy to forward on any public comment periods that are happening.

Steffen said this thought was being talked about. I was typing a bullet point to my boss, Robin Cauffman, I will let her know and make her a part of the plans the coordinators develop is to make it automatic that they reach out to you guys and other folks that Sara mentioned. Just to make it a known part of the plan.

Rodgers said I also want to share that all of these projects have a mailing list that you can sign up for to receive all kinds of information related to particular lines. I don't know if there is a general list that you can sign up for, but I see pretty regularly that you can sign up for a mailing list to keep abreast of specific projects. So that is something that is also an option if you want to sign up individually.

Chair Fenley said how about if Pam and Sara work with you or I could just dig up the website and mailing list sign ups and get out those mailing list sign ups and options to TAAC members. So if they do want to opt in and receive updates on particular projects and just all projects in general, we can.

Vice Chair Paulsen said it is similar to the airport. The airport has a lot of committees. You can pick and choose what committees to subscribe to. That can be changed at any time. I believe that if we go into the Met Council website. Go into their publication subscriptions. I believe they have a similar feature. It may not show up on their phones, but it probably does show up on a desktop or a larger device. I believe you would be able to sign up and opt out on your own choice.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary