

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

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

Committee Members Absent: Sam Jasmine and Trevor Turner

Committee Members Excused: Ken Rodgers

Council Staff Present: Bob Peterson, Robert Casseday, Nick Eull, Doug Cook, Meredith Klekotka, Fadumo Mohamed, Jason Tintes, Andy Streasick, Christine Kuennen, Guthrie Byard, Brooke Bordson 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 12:32 p.m. on Wednesday, June 2, 2021.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Vice Chair Paulsen, to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2021 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. ADA Fare Collection Equipment

Nick Eull, Senior Manager, Revenue Operations.

Bob Peterson, Supervisor, Electronic Revenue Repair.

Robert Casseday, Supervisor of Revenue Equipment Repair.

Nick Eull spoke to the TAAC committee. I am here to speak about the new ADA fare equipment. An accessibility overview of the more recent stuff we have done. My team works very closely with the fare collection equipment on light rail, on our buses and really anything that allows the customer to pay.

Next slide. I have got a couple of experts in the house today. Bob Casseday is our supervisor of electronic revenue of equipment repair. The farebox side of things. The bus side of things. He is going to provide an overview of some exciting stuff that we have had with our bus fareboxes over the last couple of years as well as talk about our mobile validator which are the devices that accept GoTo card payments.

After Bob Casseday, we have Bob Peterson, who is going to talk a little about the technology we have on our transit platforms, which include both our light rail platforms. Maybe the last five or six years as well as when we rolled out our transit A-Line and the C-Line and some of the upcoming lines such as the Orange Line and the B-Line equipment and technology that we have on those platforms that make it easy for customers to pay. We will also talk about the station validators as well.

I will turn it over to Bob Casseday.

Next slide. Casseday spoke to the TAAC committee. I am the fare collection supervisor for the farebox side of our fare collections. I would like to give you a brief overview of our fare collection equipment that is currently being used. We currently have two types of fareboxes on our buses. One that is much, much older, which is

why we are replacing them with the new style. Both of them currently accept cash, coupons, tokens. Everything that the old one accepted, the new one will accept. We are phasing out the older style of the farebox. We are replacing them with a newer version of the farebox on a gradual implementation as our budget allows us to do. We anticipate the next five to seven years for the completion of that changeover. We currently have the new style of farebox on 170 buses. We plan on procuring another 100 of those devices this year, for a total of 270 installed by the end of the year.

We reviewed the new style farebox with the TAAC committee back in September of 2018. As well as shortly after that, Dennis Dworshak and I attended the Chapter Meeting of the National Federation of the Blind and demonstrated it there. It was very well received by all of the attendees of the meeting.

Next slide. This shows the GoTo reader on our buses. We have had this in place for about five years now. We replaced the older blue football looking device. Because that is aged out of service and we could no longer get parts to keep it operating. We really strived to mount this device in the same similar location no matter what bus type we have. So it is easy to find and use. It utilizes lights, phones and different colored screens that notes the different types of card. We did have some issues at the beginning, with a few devices having a low volume but we found a replacement speaker and we got them all at a consistent range. We also had some feedback that we had. It was tough to distinguish between a low value chime on the device. So we had that particular tone modified to make that easier for customers to realize when they had low value on their cards. These devices have been proven to be very reliable. We do not have any current plan to replace them at this time.

I will pass this over to Robert Peterson.

Next slide. Robert Peterson spoke to the TAAC committee. I work on the rail side. Light rail and BRT. Currently, on the rail, we have the Cubit ticket vending machines. They are full service to give out change. They are of a higher volume capacity, It has audio language, which is accessible, with headphones and it has a speaker. The validators are the same validators that we have had for the last 10 to 12 years. They have been upgraded. We are now in the process of upgrading them again to Windows 10. So, we are just getting in the parts to that which gives us much more flexibility, more audio capability with that. So far, the older versions have been extremely reliable. We have had very few problems with those.

Next slide. Now, for the new Bus Rapid Transit. Particularly for the Orange-Line and the D-Line coming up next year, we are using the Flowbird Ticket Vending Machines. Flowbird is a replacement for the ones we have on the A-Line and C-Line. It has the same small footprint as those machines, which is much smaller than those in the Cubit TVM's. Faster transactions. We can use these for a lower volume on the BRT locations. The only thing with these is that they have exact change only or credit card.

The audio has been approved. It has a headset and speaker with volume control. We currently have language text and audio, which is English and Spanish. In the future, in which Flowbird will have Vietnamese, Somali, Karen and Hmong. It should be out hopefully before the Orange-Line opens. They are currently working on that. They are telling us it will be ready by then. They have a bigger display screen. The audio is much louder than on the current ones.

Next slide. Eull said regarding what Bob Peterson and Bob Casseday were saying. Upgraded our fare technology, we acquired new technology and new capabilities for new equipment. Our team is very aware of the minimum standards as we call them from an ADA perspective. The checklist used for all platforms includes specifications for: device location, height, approach, control mechanisms, keypads, function keys, contrast, speech output and display screen. Where braille is required. we have audio.

The relationship we have with the vendors who provide this equipment, and our own awareness, in terms of conversation with the FTA across transit. We have always seen requirements. As you listen to Bob Casseday said that the conversations with the National Federation of the Blind for the last few years, said to bring actual users in to use our equipment and to make sure that not only does it meet our requirements for the ADA, but it is usable and how can we increase the usability. In parts we are engaging some disabled individuals in the community that use transit and have run into challenges. There has been a number of one-on-one conversations and exploration that we have done with those folks and trying to make our equipment more useful and more user friendly.

I think, as you listen to this, presentation over the last 10 minutes, I hope when you see that the TAAC has been a very important part of that team as well. We continue to look forward to the cooperation with this team as well as the community that makes our fare system accessible to everyone.

I will take any questions that you have.

Vice Chair Paulsen said with the new ticket vending machines, and the footprint being the same, we are not losing many of the features, but one of the features we are losing is that that machine only allows for exact change. Are we going to lose any revenue because of that or are we going to possibly have some fare evasion because folks don't have exact change and they are not going to want to give up \$10.00 or a \$20.00 dollar bill for a \$2:00 or \$3.00 ride?

Eull said you are correct that machines are exact change only. Even though the machine is going to be different for the Orange-Line or the D-Line, that policy has been in place since we launched the A-Line in 2016. So, both the older style machines that we have on A-Line and C-Line, as well as the newer style machines that we will be installing later this year, are consistent with the policy is exact change only. Not providing change. While we know it does provide some inconvenience to our customers. We do allow for using Credit cards or we do allow customers to use GoTo cards. As to whether there may be fare evasion as a result of that, we understand that there is some inconvenience to customers. I can't speak to the exact amount of fare evasion that we may be occurring as a result of that. But I do know that our officers are out there inspecting fares and all circumstances I believe that whether they site somebody for fare evasion or not. So I really can't speak to whether we are losing money due to fare evasion. I certainly don't have any figures. The point is noted. The balance there is that it is very costly for us to issue change in terms of being able to refill those tubes and things like that. So that is the balance we try to strike with that.

Myhre said when you talk about reeducated and ask what the stable disability in the community. When they are physical disabilities or do they have multiple disabilities, processing problems? Do you bring a wide variety? Because I go to that machine. My brain has to figure out how to process every little part of it. Yes, I have a physical disability and I don't see well or walk well. When the Green Line first came out, I had to learn how to navigate to get to the discount. Because I was more than qualified. Then I got the limited mobility thing put on my card. I go through the county and the county was saying I was double dipping.

So is this process easy to follow or is it complicated? If I use the new technology that you are putting into place. I am concerned about the people in the community that have brain injuries and can't process very well but might have other kinds of disabilities too. I don't want to leave that out because they could get into something and get mad at me. So could you explain this to us?

Eull said a lot of our focus is to improve the functionality of the machine and try to make it as user friendly as possible for groups like the National Federation of the Blind. Probably more so with site impaired customers more so than other customers. We have tried to simplify the process to purchase the ticket as much as we can. When we go back to where we started in the A-Line, almost five years ago, what that process was or that screen mode and which buttons to push and when. They both initiate and complete the transaction. We have changed that many times based on all kinds of customer feedback.

Although I can't say we have directly engaged all individuals. We need time to process that can process that. It is a process. I can say that anytime we get feedback and have the opportunity to improve that to make it easier for everyone, we try and accomplish that.

Chair Fenley said how, are there major changes in the process for paying fare or purchasing tickets with the new machines? Or is it generally the same? More streamlined. Will the people have to learn an entirely new way to purchase tickets?

Eull said generally speaking, the technology is a little bit different. The buttons might be in different places. The screen design and what is on the screen might be a little different. But the process is still really the same as much as it can be with all of our machines. When you approach the machine, most of the time you are able to push one button and pay for your fare. Based on the type of transaction that you are purchasing. Especially for single use tickets. Say you are traveling to a Saint's baseball game. You need circumstances around the number of tickets they wanted to purchase.

In those situations, There may be more button pushes that will happen. But for the vast amount of customers, say 90 percent plus, one screen to choose your ticket. The next screen to identify how you want to pay for that

ticket. Then the actual payment. It is pretty straight forward across all of our platforms. We try to make it as easy as we can on the whole scale vending machines. Like the C-Line or the upcoming Orange-Line.

Chair Fenley said how far does Metro Transit foresee more than one style of these in operation?

Eull said I don't know that there is a time period for that. I think there is an indefinite time period. It is to provide the reasoning for that. That when we purchase a ticket vending machine, that we use on our light rail lines, based on some of the circumstances of that, those vending machines are about \$80,000. And we really factor a lot of use on those machines. A high transaction volume.

Some of our stations like the A-Line or the C-Line, when somebody may act with that machine four or five times a day. Or sometimes less frequent than that. Vending machines that we are purchasing for that line are significantly cheaper. More in the lines like \$12,000 with the volume. If sometimes we were going to look at purchasing the same vending machines, say that \$80,000 machine across of our new lines, it is not financially feasible that we can acquire that technology and still have the funds to necessarily to build the rest of the line.

As much as it is a challenge for both of our customers. And internally, to have different vintages of the machine. We are trying to balance out where the machine fits into the overall service. Maintaining those decisions to expand the line makes sense.

Clark said is the cost of the technology advancing exponentially, and the technology? What is the overall physical impact anticipated?

Eull said while technology does seem to be advancing, I think a lot of the components in the ticket vending machines, we haven't seen any significant price decreases. We have seen some of the capabilities in the machine in terms of the brighter and bigger screens, maybe a little bit more faster processing power. When you press a button, you insert your credit card to pay a fare. Those things happen sooner but a lot of the components inside the machine, like the mother boards or the monitors or some of the components that process change. They haven't really seen a significant decrease in those. To the point that the machines are not necessarily getting any cheaper. They are not getting particularly more expensive. Those prices probably increase by the rate of inflation. The piece will probably get more expensive instead of significantly jumping. We are not going to be recognizing any more appreciable savings.

What we are trying to figure out is where does Mobile play in this both now and in the future? Mobile is not a great fit for everyone. There are some challenges. I believe that there may be some site impaired and otherwise. We are trying to figure out how it fits in and on how it advances it is a little bit more user friendly in the years ahead.

Clark said this seems more scientific or more science fiction. You will see facial recognition. I support that.

Rowan said following on what Heidi said. We also represent the senior population. Some senior members of our population have difficulty with technology. So I just hope that you also, including them when you evaluate the ease of use and simplicity for the sake of that population.

Eull said we do the best we can. A couple of things we do are 1. We try and make that process as streamlined as possible. So there is not a lot of logic that necessarily goes into it. When you approach the machine. If you are a senior, and you qualify for discounting fares during the time of day when one is eligible for those. We like to make that a one ticket purchase. In addition to that, as I mentioned, anytime a customer identifies that process as either cumbersome and could be improved and is willing to provide us feedback, we do take that very seriously and take it to account. Sometimes to the point where one customer over a year may provide us with feedback on something that could be improved. And there is not a specific volume of either complaints or suggestions that need to come in. We just take each one individually to see if we can make an incremental improvement through the process as a result of that feedback and how we try to incorporate it. So I think we have a well rounded process that maybe may not. We do the best we can but when we do get that feedback we really try to incorporate it every step of the way as an improvement. Sometimes a big one and sometimes a little one.

Clark said are there any projections as to ridership and the general population and the population with disabilities?

Eull said from an overall ridership standpoint, since the pandemic started or at least a couple of months after that. At least Metro Transit ridership has been down, I would say about 60 percent on average. That is across all of our lines. Some are affected more than others, like Northstar. And some are affected less than others.

You have the C-Line as an example. For a projection standpoint, there is a danger in projections anytime. Especially in this situation. For example, most of our ridership was based on daily commuters or weekday commuters from their home in the suburbs to downtown Minneapolis. So, while I don't know if we made any projections, we really are watching for the third and fourth quarters of this year to see how companies start to come back to work downtown areas as well as those other areas like the universities, like the University of Minnesota. They had distant learning for a long time, and they have plans to come back in the fall. They are a big source of our ridership. So, I cannot predict a reliability what those numbers will be, I am certain we can try to position ourselves to: 1. Be ready for it. and 2. Once again be that preferred transit either to your school or your workplace or wherever you need to go. A Twins game, groceries, medical appointment.

In terms of projections around disabled customers, I really don't have any information that I am able to share with you in terms of what our projections are.

Fuglie said do you have with the new fareboxes coming in, what will you be doing in case the fareboxes break down?

Eull said it is very similar to what we do now. We have got a couple of different teams that we have that work on them. 1. Each bus is assigned to an operating garage. We have five operating garages throughout the Twin Cities. We have a team of technicians who are staffed at those garages so that if a bus comes in and there is a malfunction by the operator or some other way, we fix that onsite before that bus pulls out. So that when a bus pulls out it is working.

In addition to that they have some maintenance response facilities. Much like a car, if a farebox needs new rollers or other things like that. So there is ongoing maintenance. If something were to happen when that farebox is out in the street. Say that the bus pulls out, the farebox was working fine, and somehow it gets jammed, we have a fleet of mobile technicians that, depending on where that bus is at in its trip. Let's just say it gets out there five minutes into an eight-hour trip, We will send out a technician on the road to meet that bus to one of its layovers to repair that bus onsite.

A couple of things that we do there to repair it. But also have maintenance plans so we don't run into that issue very often.

Myhre said are you going to do any videos or training that teaches people to use these? I am still confused on how the machine works.

Eull said I know we have done some videos, but I will say we have done some training for the operators on the farebox side of things. The bus has a unique advantage over rail or the A-Line. Every time a customer boards a bus, especially on fixed route, that operator should be there so that a customer like you, who has challenges, he or she can walk you through that process. In terms of providing videos, how to pay during light rail or riding on A-Line or one of our machines on the upcoming Orange-Line. I don't know if we have video training on the list of things to work on, but I think that is a great recommendation. I will talk with my staff to see if that is something we can put together and make accessible to our website or some other means.

Clark said is there anything new as far as fareboxes for Metro Mobility?

Eull said I don't think there has been any talk about putting the fareboxes on Metro Mobility buses. There are GoTo card readers on Metro Mobility buses.

Myhre said many times the GoTo card reader has failed over the years.

Eull said you are right that we have seen a higher rate of failure of the devices that are on Metro Mobility buses than are on the fixed route buses. There are a couple of things that contribute to that. There are some unique circumstances for Metro Mobility compared to fixed route. So one of the things that we have done over the last year or so is that partnering with the folks at Metro Mobility. We have hired a dedicated staff overseen by the Metro Transit staff, some of the supervisors that were on this call earlier today. So that we can go out and repair those than relying on the contractors to repair those vehicles who maybe don't have that specific knowledge or experience to be more effective in repairing those. We actually have some dedicated resources now with Metro Transit, that we will partner with Metro Mobility. While we haven't eliminated all of the failures, I am sure that you recognize over the last year or so, I am tracking a maintenance failure data. We have seen a significant improvement in reliability of those machines compared to maybe where they were three or four years ago. That has resulted in higher revenue, higher fare collection, and a better experience for customers.

Myhre said why are the GoTo machines at Metro Mobility having more problems than the ones on the Metro Transit buses?

Eull said on the city bus, the GoTo card readers interfaces with the AVL system, our Trapeze. They just provide a smoother interface there in terms of the driver being able to logon and change fares. They make changes there. With the Metro Mobility fares, since there isn't an interface, the driver has to use a card to log on and it is just not as smooth as a transition. Another thing is that when a fixed route bus pulls into the operating garage, it is using a Wi-Fi to communicate. For the Metro Mobility buses we have a cellular data connection in those devices that use a Verizon connection, a cellular connection to exchange data back and forth versus having Wi-Fi. Sometimes that cellular exchange a lot of times doesn't go as smoothly as something that happens when a bus pulls into a garage. There are dead spots, breaks in the connection and things like that.

The other thing too is we have a dedicated staff at each garage to repair these devices. Unfortunately, some of the contractors that help with the Metro Mobility devices don't have that same level of expertise than those dedicated resources that I spoke of a few minutes ago. We tried to supplement that by having some of our own staff that has expertise help out. So, those are just some of the things that contribute to a little bit more challenging operating environment for those of you who have it on a fixed route. We spent a lot of time on the audio part so people can hear what is being said better.

2. Microtransit Update

Meredith Klekotka, Program Manager, Shared Mobility at Metro Transit, spoke to the TAAC committee. I am here today to talk to you about a pilot project that we are doing in North Minneapolis. That we are anticipating a launch early next year. In the Spring of 2022.

Next slide. Today's Topics. Before I jump into the Microtransit pilot, which I would love to have a really similar robust discussion, like you just had. Where you all are providing some feedback as we are going through planning. I want to give some overall context for shared mobility. And Metro Transit's approach to shared mobility. For those of you who aren't familiar with that term. Shared mobility is transportation services that are shared amongst users.

So technically, transit falls into this category, shared mobility but I will give a couple of examples like Uber or Lyft. If you have taken their shared ride services, Lyft Line or Uber Pool. Those are some examples of shared mobility. Also, the bike share systems. So locally we have Nice Ride. And the scooters that you see on the streets are the shared scooters that Minneapolis and Saint Paul have deployed are some examples.

Next slide. Twin Cities Shared Mobility Action Plan (2018). So I just pulled some graphics from a regional plan. Just to provide some context of this work that Metro Transit is doing in shared mobility. It is happening in your regional context. In the biggest action that was taken regionally on shared mobility was an action plan created in 2018. So you see the cover of it there on the right. It was setting goals and next steps to advance through the shared mobility in the Twin Cities region. It was funded through the McKnight Foundation. It really provided a jumping off point to start discussions around shared mobility. It was involved in a lot of stakeholders and outcomes of this is the two ones that you see graphically on the left. So goal one was shifting households away from single occupancy vehicles towards transit and shared mobility as the region grows.

With this specific goal to get 50,000 cars off the road over the next 10 years. Or by 2028. Then the second goal is really focused on equity. So, ensuring that shared mobility programs are elected to serve the same user base that makes up public transportation. To make sure it is accessible and that it works for everybody. I think the results of this that I wanted to share in context of this. This is not work that happens in one agency. So while I am with Metro Transit, there are a lot of people working on shared mobility programs across the region.

Next slide. Twin Cities Shared Mobility Collaborative. We do have a local implementation collaborative. So this is the Twin Cities Shared Mobility Collaborative. Its mission is really to foster collaboration among government, nonprofits, and the private sector to expand and improve multimodal and shared transportation options.

We actually have openings on the steering committee right now. So that closes June 10. You can apply at tcsharedmobility.org. We do lots of activities. We are funded through the McKnight and it is administered through the University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies. So we do quarterly convenings. We bring in new vendors to talk about new transportation technologies or products. It is a very robust group there.

On the right you see some of the active steering committee members. So we have government entities, research entities, advocacy folks, that all join us at the table.

Chair Fenley said is there a spot specifically for the disability community on the steering committee?

Klekotka said we preserve 20 percent of the seats whether they are filled or not filled. For members representing unrepresented groups. So low income, communities of color. So I think that would be in that category. I would have to look at how many openings we have exactly. Right now, we have seven openings.

Chair Fenley said disability tends to be an afterthought on the diversity list. So just a reminder there to let you know.

Myhre said how is it written in your program so the disabled community can be a part of it? Because if it is written in a way that you might have more low-income people than more of these people. And then the disabled. The disabled get left out more than others. David is right. We should go back and look at how it is written. So we can get our voice heard. We can see if we are even remotely in there.

Klekotka said I will go ahead and make sure we take a look at our governance stock. We are a very small organization that is volunteer based. So, as far as our governing information just recently. So we always have the ability to shift or to change things. I am happy to take a look.

Next slide. Shared Mobility Strategy. On the shared mobility side, what we are doing at Metro Transit. I have been with the organization for about two years. In that time, we have developed strategies for how we are approaching shared mobility. We decided this overall program goal of enabling people to travel without the need for a personal automobile. Slightly different from the function as a transit agency. But still equally important in providing people with a car free trip.

So we had lots of strategies. It essentially boiled down to: How do we leverage these new shared mobility services and concepts. Do we provide some of these services? How do we connect to them?

Next slide. Shared Mobility Strategy – Seven First Moves. From about 30 strategies, we narrowed it down for these seven top tier strategies. This is looking at about a three to five year implementation. So the first one you will see on there is the implementation of a Microtransit pilot. This is what we are going to be talking about today. There are a number of other things. I just put them up there for reference. You are welcome to read through them at a later time. But really what we are working on in this year is implementation of the Microtransit pilot and investment in mobility hubs.

Next slide. Shared Mobility Strategy Investment Priorities Focusing the Goal. I wanted to provide some context for how we are investing in those seven first moves that you saw in the last slide. And so, we have decided the investment priorities for shared mobility for Metro Transit are in areas close to connected to high transit service. So that first bullet point integrating with other providers. Zero to two mile service area outside of the high frequency lines, the Bus Rapid Transit lines or train service. Second it is replacing mobility choices. This is really at the heart of the ability. How do we provide better choices for especially low income areas, communities of color, people living with disabilities, and in low density, high needs area? That might not have high frequency transit service.

The last one is really looking at transit-oriented development and investments. So why are we already putting in transit or transit oriented development where we can get more bang for our buck? And really ensure that people can travel car free in these areas by providing additional bike parking or car share parking, etc.

Next slide. Microtransit Pilot North Minneapolis. So these are two images of the Microtransit service in other cities. I don't have the vehicles look. How people start to access it. The one on the right is a service in Saint Louis. The other one is in Sacramento. With the wheelchair lift deployed. We are looking specifically at a very tight service area in North Minneapolis.

For those of you that aren't familiar with Microtransit, Next slide. Microtransit Definition. It is demand responsive transit. It is not like a traditional fixed route bus. You actually call it on your phone or you can call in to the call in number for your pick-up location. So it is more demand responsive. It operates more like an Uber or a Lyft. But they are shared rides. So the vehicles are able to accommodate multi passengers. The amount of passengers per hour ranges across the country but it tends to be in the three to five passengers per hour range. They are enabled by technology that is managed by a private entity. Though transit agencies bring in a software vendor. They put that software on their vehicles or they sub out all of the operations. They get the vehicles and the operators and the software from those companies.

Next slide. North Minneapolis Microtransit Pilot Project Boundaries. I wanted to share this service area. We have had a couple of changes in the project. So this, I anticipate will change. The boundaries of this will change a little bit. This is the core service area around the C-Line in North Minneapolis. You see on the map there on the right. It is about two square miles. It is past the goals you saw previously. So extending mobility choices. It is next to some of our high frequency lines. So you would, for example, be able to get off of the C-Line station and request a Microtransit trip to that Cub along the East Broadway. It would be able to take you there.

I deviate a little bit and take one or two people along the way. But you would get more of a direct trip than say if you were on the Route 14.

Next slide. Microtransit Features. So Microtransit features just to call out on how it differs both from paratransit and from our fixed route service. It is on demand, real time booking. So you book the trip when you need it. You will get an estimated arrival time at booking. You will be able to see the live tracking of the vehicle on your mobile app or get verbal cues on where it is located. You have the ability to specify wheelchair accessible vehicles or other travel needs. Then you would be able to do contactless payment. So we are going to run a bus service with a farebox like you see on our traditional buses. So we will have that option. You will also have an option of using a mobile ticket on these services.

Next slide. Making Microtransit Work for All users. We want to make sure that Microtransit works for all users. You see in the picture to the right, that is an example of a smaller profile vehicle that LA Metro is using. It is more of a traditional van that has accommodations for wheelchair users. We will take a vehicle that can be used as something that is flexible. In this first pilot, due to budget constraints we are going to be using retired Metro Mobility vehicles, most likely. They will be very familiar with the format of those vehicles. But that could change in a couple of years down the road. Depending on the performance of how this pilot looks. Some other things that we can make adjustments on or I would love to get feedback on spatial coverage. So there is a challenge with balancing wait times with coverage for an area. So trying to keep trips or your waiting time once you call the vehicle to about 10 minutes. It can be a challenge, depending on how large the service area is. And typically to optimize those wait times, it will ask you to travel a block or two. So whether you are in a wheelchair or walking with an assistant device or just walking to meet the vehicle at a particular location.

Then the second is the type of service design. So we can go point to point for this type of service. Which is most likely what we are going to be doing with this first pilot, which means the vehicle can pick you up pretty closely to where you request the trip. Or we can designate a central point like a train station and say: Your trip has to begin or end, which means you have to be transferring to and from transit. This is not going to be the case most likely. With this first pilot we are going to open it up to all types of trips within the service area.

Then the last one is our user interface. As you can imagine because these are technology providers, that are outside the government. These are private companies. The user interface is going to be a mobile app from a different company. So it is not going to be a Metro Transit branded app. It is actually going to be a company like Via is another example of a transit provider and you would be downloading their app.

When it comes to Web content and accessibility guidelines, there are some industry standards, but are those sufficient? It is one of the questions we are in the process of developing RF[?]s over the summer. So this is like a time to weigh in on what those concerns might be.

With that, I will open this up to questions.

Chair Fenley said I will start with two questions. The percentage of vehicles in this pilot that will be accessible. Do you have the percentage on that yet?

Kleotka said it will be 100 percent.

Chair Fenley said all of the vehicles in this pilot project are wheelchair accessible. That eliminates the need for the second question.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I am so excited about this project. I just think right now the on demand service for transit on demand has such a need in Minnesota and in the Twin Cities particularly. However, I wonder, is this going to be a pilot for two years and it is similar to when we worked out a pilot project with Airport Taxi. Before we required local municipality, local taxicab companies to be fully accessible and to accommodate customers with a wide range of disabilities, we allowed them to do a pilot project. And that brought in 20 vehicles that were fully accessible. They were supposed to be on demand vehicles.

What we found happening in that regard was that those individuals that needed an accessible vehicle would often wait an hour to two hours before that vehicle came. So by that time, you have either missed your appointment time or your time to be at the event or you are halfway through and you don't even know if you are going to make it to your event by the time your pickup comes on the return.

So, how do we bridge that gap and how do we make sure that if we do a project like this, and we do see the on demand service. We are not deciding whether they go to, whether they stop at a transit point or whether they hit a light rail point. If we are not making those parameters, and we are doing that point-by-point, then how do we ensure the longevity of the program without really requiring some creative types of advertising in order to keep those vehicles on the road? And keep those vehicles operating till full capacity.

Kleotka said you brought up some points that are really in the heart of Microtransit service. Both what the need is and some of what the challenges are. The first thing I am hearing in terms of the example you gave for time discrepancies in the airport pilot, Time discrepancies for wheelchair accessible vehicles is something we could write into the RFP requirements. But it is going to take some testing to see what exactly and how many vehicles out of the fleet do we need to be wheelchair accessible to provide equal service for people who are requesting a smaller vehicle that might not need a lift service, for example?

So that is some of the ways we could address it in the future. For the purposes of this pilot, it won't impact it because all of the vehicles will be retired Metro Mobility buses. It will be 100 percent wheelchair accessible. But thinking to the future, this pilot is obviously of interest for Metropolitan Transportation Services, so MTS, that runs the paratransit side as well as Metro Transit. So we are looking at all of these things. So it is good to bring up these points.

In terms of ensuring the longevity of the program. It depends on what type of service you are piloting this as. The cost for paratransit, nationally tends to be one of the highest. That is the first way Microtransit is typically tested. We are testing it in this urban environment but obviously, the trips are open up to everyone. Including those folks who might be using paratransit for some of those trips. So that is something that we are just going to continue to track. And obviously, track the budget of the project and how it is performing. But I will say, from what I have seen across the country. A lot of Microtransit pilots. Many agencies have been running then for a number of years. They do tend to over time, save cost wise.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I was just looking at something called "Open Doors." It is a Chicago concept. They do real time transit. And if you could mirror something like that, I would think that we would be ahead of the game here in Minnesota.

Fuglie said this sounds like a good project to have. I live on the north side of Minneapolis. It almost looks like our Transit Link that I take. And so the question that I have is if you call and make that ride, that would be like Cub on Broadway. Would it be at Cub itself? Or would you be dropping us off at the transit center transit stop Instead of the Cub itself? Is it other places or just the transit stops?

Kleotka said with the point-to-point style service, it will take you to your destination. Typically for pickup, is where the software might say you have to walk or roll a block to a block and a half to meet the vehicle. On more of a major arterial as opposed to a residential street. But the destination, ultimately it would take you to the actual parking lot for an appropriate drop off at those locations.

Rowan said do you have an idea of what the cost for the rides will be? Also, what kind of outreach will you be doing to populations that would particularly use the service?

Kleotka said for the cost, we were getting ready to launch in October. Actually, as a first mile, last mile service is centered around stations. Which tends to be a little less expensive than point to point. And so what we anticipated was the cost of a traditional transit trip. So, if you have any discounts through any of our discount programs, those will be eligible to apply to the fare and the same rules apply. So you would be able to do a free transfer. That is just giving the nature of this service area. There are so many trips. So we can definitely cover it. So this first pilot. In the future, Microtransit does tend to be more expensive to users, but slightly over. I have seen pricing range across the country. I think the highest I have seen is about \$5.00 for an all day type of service.

Rowan said what sort of outreach you are doing to populations that might think this is useful? I am thinking in part about the senior population.

Klekotka said yes, since we have had to change the contracting approach, we are in discussions on how to approach engagement. Tomorrow I have something on my calendar with our outreach staff. So this is a good time if you have recommended community members or institutions that we should reach out to. If you are really interested, now is the time to tell us to be sure to reach these folks. We are going to be doing some targeted outreach in that area of North Minneapolis. Asking about what the boundaries are for the service area should be. So what are the destinations for the people who want to get to in those locations?

Rowan said I represent AARP and I will mention this to AARP.

Myhre said my question is you make it sound so beautiful in the beginning with all the vehicles are 100 percent handicapped accessible. With Darrell and his wife and little girl all riding together. In the future, are you still going to have handicapped vehicles down the line and are you going to have 100 percent accessible? How are you going to maintain them? If they come from Metro Mobility. In the picture it shows some of the smaller vehicles. Are you going to use the big buses when they get retired? I was just on one where the lift was just rattling so bad that I had to turn off my hearing aid.

How can you keep me excited for the future? It sounds like you have everything kind of almost 100 percent great right now, but I don't know what the future holds. Because you said right now, it is 100 percent. But will it still be in the future? Five dollars is not bad.

Klekotka said absolutely. It depends who is running the service. I cannot look into a crystal ball and tell you how MTS and Metro Transit are going to decide to build out a program of Microtransit. I will say from some national examples. It is rare that the fleets are 100 percent wheelchair accessible vehicles. Most of the time they are a mix. And that is how the costs are kept lower. That is why I mentioned keeping the parameters around time discrepancies for users. It would be a really important metric to include in the RFP to ensure that everybody is receiving the same level of service.

Clark said I am very excited because I think this has a way of cross management if done right. It gets away from the charity model. I get to my church and Metro Mobility wouldn't. We need to arrange their vans for 10:00 a.m. services. I couldn't get through to the people I was talking to. To reach the churches in the metro area. The Christian charity is neither. It depletes people and on the other hand non tailored approaches end up burdening the taxpayer. And it is like frequent examples of the radio that what one needs is a liberal program for that to be inclusive. You need to be in terms of the individual to be tailored. I think I want to be on this committee. If any of these thoughts seem to weigh.

Klekotka said it depends on how you define charity. So this service is subsidized just like all of transit. Cars are subsidized just like service. But these companies are viable on the market. So they are part of the free market economy. The software providers we use. So there is market viability there. So the transit agencies have seen the benefit of partnering with these companies. When it comes to how tailored it will be and how large scale it will be in the future, I think that is to be determined.

Metro Transit and MTS are very interested in this style of service, but it is going to take quite a bit to work out some of those kinks. It is not going to be perfect. At launch, there will be a big learning curve over the next year.

Clark said how will you deal with the blowback when it is not perfect?

Klekotka said we will listen with open ears. This is very much a trial. So we are going to be doing some pretty robust engagement and feedback both throughout the project. So about three months in, we will ask the users how did everything about this service work. But also, after the pilot. As we are thinking about how we are going to move forward with Microtransit as we plan for the future.

Vice Chair Paulsen said as we are going forward and looking at this pilot project. I would look at the fact that you are using old, retired, Metro Mobility buses because that gives me a little bit of capacity room. Meaning that if I am traveling with my wife, who is also in a wheelchair. We are using a single van ride. That means she cannot ride with me. I cannot ride with her. So by using a bigger vehicle, you will have the opportunity to allow for another passenger to come along. Or a care provider. Or even if say they stopped at a grocery store and they needed to pick up a few items along the way. They would have room to be able to do that.

By putting them in a sedan or a smaller vehicle, that would eliminate, for me, the ability to try to travel with my wife and my daughter. So, or my PCA. That means I might have to either travel with him, in a separate vehicle or call a second vehicle for my wife. That means we might not get there together, or we might not be able to be

there at the same time together based on capacities on the system. So how do you ensure that when I am calling for a ride, and I say yes, I have a passenger with me who is also in a chair, how are you going to ensure that I am going to get that bigger vehicle? Because I know like for instance, Like in Wisconsin. When you go to the Wisconsin Dells, you have to let them know ahead of time that you have two wheelchairs. So they can put that bigger vehicle on their system. If they don't have a need for that bigger vehicle, then that vehicle sits there and doesn't get used.

So I am a little concerned about that. At one time you say that 100 percent of the vehicles are ADA accessible. But then you say that because of the constraints of the program, or the timing of the program, we might be able to use a mixture of vehicles. We might be able to use a mixture of fleets. If we start to use a mixture of fleets, then we are losing the full concept of being completely accessible all of the time throughout the service.

Kleotka said Christine, can I ask how many wheelchair accessible seats are there in the Metro Mobility buses? Is it two or three?

Christine Kuennen, Senior Manager of Metro Mobility, said It depends on the fleet type. But the typical one will have three spots.

Kleotka said so, Darrell, I took away two things from your questions and comments. One is having the ability to increase the number of riders who are using a wheelchair in the software platform. When you go to book a trip. To be able to differentiate, what is not actually in the software I have seen. When you can distinguish, you would have to call in. The second one is how to keep those without enough capacity so that you don't have to book two vehicles.

When it comes to the Metro Mobility vehicles, is that a sufficient amount of seats, two to three in those vehicles?

Vice Chair Paulsen said personally, from my standpoint, I travelled quite a bit before the pandemic. Not as much during the pandemic. But, from my standpoint, I do think that you are going to get the retired vehicles from Metro Mobility. And they are probably going to be the three seaters or even the four seaters. Because some of those bigger vehicles are the ones that rattle the most and they don't have them in circulation as much. So those are the retired vehicles that I assume you are going to get. So assuming that those rides are not going to be as comfortable. You are going to have a lot of noise. So I am saying if we can figure out a way to make sure that when we are using those vehicles, that they are being used completely in the system and they are not being used when somebody calls and says: "I have two wheelchairs today." So we need to get this up and running. Because you need to keep this vehicle out there. No matter if you are using it today or you are going to use it tomorrow. Because if you only put it out there when there is a need for it, then we are not going to incorporate fully accessible taxis into our transit system. Because we are not going to have a need for it.

Kleotka said thank you for verifying. On the retired vehicles' side, this is just for the pilot. This was for the purposes of the testing. In order to keep most of the budget within our operations, so we can serve the most amount of time in the most amount of service area. I don't think anyone who has anticipated that this is what we will use for a full-fledged program.

Chair Fenley said this is related to Darrell's question. To what extent is this a coincidence or have you been working alongside the City of Minneapolis, who do have some proposed policy changes in new development to eliminate parking and while that is nice, our vision to move away from personal vehicles and our driving and parking anywhere they want. Kind of moving away from our reliance on vehicles. I think a problem with that doesn't take into account people who have their own vehicles, accessible vehicles that they use to drive around and to park places. Those folks with disabilities might not be able to give up that. Give up the vehicle option as readily and as easily as the general public can. So I am curious. Is this just a coincidence? This accessible on demand shared vehicles provides a way to potentially be a solution to that? Or are these two things happening at the same time on purpose? Or is Metro Transit moving forward with this without the knowledge that Minneapolis is planning on not allowing parking spots in new development?

Kleotka said I am aware of that policy. This pilot and interest in Microtransit has been around for a very long time. So about four or five years. They have been trained to pilot something. I will say we did coordinate with the City of Minneapolis on the service area. They were actually very interested in this similar style service over or on Washington Avenue and in North Minneapolis. So that was one of the reasons in addition to all the other factors when we did the analysis of why we wanted to go in this particular location. We considered their interest in the feedback from their community that this type of service would really be needed. When it comes

to implementation of the zoning for the requirements for no parking spaces. I think that is going to be very slow development in my experience. Banks don't change their finances for those major construction and capital projects. They still tie those bank loans for some of the buildings that are rehabbed or constructed to the number of parking spaces associated. I think what would be needed is a robust plan on how we convert traditional parking spaces into wheelchair accessible locations or for some of those vehicles that you identify in particular.

The idea is to have a suite of services that people can use so they don't feel tied to just their personal vehicle if they don't want to use it.

3. Legislative Update

Brooke Bordson, Senior Project Coordinator Intergovernmental Relations, spoke to the TAAC committee. I wish I was here to give the final report on the outcome of the 2021 session. Unfortunately, there is really not much of substance to report on today. As you probably remember, the regular legislative session ended on May 17. It ended without any budget bills being passed. On that last day of session, the legislative leaders and the administration did agree to some global budget targets for the major issue areas. However, all of the details about how each omnibus bill will meet that target are yet to be worked out.

Those motions are still happening in work groups or between committee chairs. It is sort of a no man's land in that because the legislature is not in session. There are no official committees. The conference committees that were appointed expired, for lack of a better word. On May 17. So, it has been challenging to track who is talking to who and what they are talking about.

So the goal, when these leaders agree to these targets, the work groups would meet and have budget agreements at least with the numbers sorted out by May 28. And then that would be followed by a bill language on June 4. We did not meet that May 28 goal of having budget agreements. I don't think anyone is anticipating that bill language is going to be done on Friday, which is that June 4 goal.

Specific to transportation the big global targets that the leaders agreed to would allocate \$200 million in the first biennium for transportation so that Transportation Committee targets \$200 million. Not much in the tails so that is going to mean that primarily, that \$200 million is for one time spending. I would also remind members that the Transportation Committee includes the Metropolitan Council, all of MnDOT and then drivers in the vehicles in the Division of the Department of Public Safety. So that is a lot of programs for \$200 million to be up for grabs.

Logistics wise, the one date that is certain on the calendar is that the legislature would need to be called back in for a special session on June 14. If and when the governor extends the peacetime emergency. So that is sort of a new target for getting at least the bills drafted. And then the legislature can go in for a special session on the 14th and it probably would take more than a day to pass all these bills. But that would be the timeline for bills to come together and have that avenue to get those passed. Of course, the real, hard deadline is when the current budget ends on June 30. If there is no budget put in place. That would begin on July 1, and we would be looking at a shutdown scenario. I hope that we can all agree that we don't want to go there. July 1 is going to be coming up sooner than we are ready for.

So my report is that I don't really have a report. unfortunately, at this time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Vice Chair Paulsen said the \$200 million that everybody is fighting over in transit. What does that look like as far as, there are pilot projects that we just spoke about before you came on, Brooke. What I am more concerned about is that the MVST dollars and also the fact that I am trying to change the fare evasion policy to make sure that it in accordance to a ticketable offense that it doesn't become a felony or a permanent issue on somebodies record. Just because they refused, or they didn't pay or couldn't pay a \$2.00 fare.

The fact that I know clients and I have friends and family that are being denied housing and are being denied appropriate services based on the fact that they ran into something with similar problems and forgot to pay a fare that they should have paid. So we know that this is out there. Obviously, That is why the Chair was willing to get behind this policy and talk about it. I have had bus drivers refuse to take a fare because we are disabled. But the other driver on the other end doesn't necessarily know that. So at that moment, do I risk paying the fare again or have that driver yell at me again? So a lot of times i tried to pay but the driver refused my payment. So, I mean what do you do in those regards? We try to tell everybody that we have to fare away, but when we

try to pay the fare, we get told “That’s O.K., you don’t have to pay” or “it is fine”. I don’t know how you convince people with disabilities to say: “Yes, you have to get up to the plate and pay your fare share. But all the drivers and everybody else say: “It’s O.K. if you can’t reach the football, it is O.K.” So how do we go lock step and step with the policies of the Transportation Committees or Metro Transit or Met Council? But yet the drivers on the other end are not getting that same message. They are getting told that they can run their shifts the way they want. And they clearly do that.

Bordson said I can speak to the legislative proposal that we put forward this year and in previous years as well. More than the operational side of that. But the proposal to allow the Council to set up an administrative citation program for fare enforcement is still in the mix. The more people supporting that, the better. The Chair has really been pushing this as an important priority for the Council and it still is. So we are hoping that in these final negotiations that we can find a way to get something that will work for everyone to get through because it is better operationally, for the Council, to have this authority to set up this program. Because it is a criminal citation. There are collateral consequences that come with having this being a misdemeanor that maybe nobody intended and nobody would really see that as fair or equitable. So that is still in the mix and we are still really pushing that with the House and Senate. And then because you mentioned the financial side. I will just note that we are really trying to hold firm on not accepting any cuts to our base general fund appropriation so that another huge priority on the side of the administration as goes the budget.

Myhre said my concern is Darrell is right about what he proposed. But I am also concerned about the people who make it too light when the legislatures work on this. I see on the bus in the city. If we lighten it people will cheat even more. When I know they can pay it.

Bordson said just in terms of what is actually in the proposal. It would require the Council to adopt and set up the free work of the program. That would be done through a couple of process. And part of that process would identify what is appropriate fee structure whether that would be graduated in terms of a first, second and third offense that giving the Council the authority that if the program allows for a discussion of what an appropriate administrative citation system would look like.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Blue Line

This item was not presented.

2. Green Line

This item was not presented.

3. Gold Line

This item was not presented.

4. Rush Line

We are getting 10’s of dozens of responses. Their environmental phase completion and then they completed the public comment period. It is open until June 25. It is a 45-day comment period. If you have any comments about BRT and the Rush Line particularly, as it runs north and south, it goes to Woodbury. We can talk about it as a group, or we can take it offline and talk about it.

Bus Priority Seating, TAAC Work Group

Vice Chair Paulsen said from the time that I have been watching that committee, that committee has done tremendous work. They are about ready to put about three or four different scenarios and different PSA’s online and are about ready to test it. We are close to doing some really phenomenal work. They are going to test it a little bit. We have been waiting for this for a very long time. In the communication division of Metro Transit. So, I am excited to see what comes out of it. Everybody that serves on the committee is very active and participates. I think some of the commercials, some of the public service announcements are going to be a little bit cheeky and cheesy, but we are going to get our point across, and it is going to be fun. When I say fun, I haven’t seen a lot of enthusiasm from Metro Transit in a long time. But they are enthusiastic. To see them excited about this is really eye-opening. They really want to bring a new direction to Metro Transit and make transit available for everybody.

CHAIRS REPORT

Chair Fenley said I have a relatively quick report. It is less of a report and more of a question to you. Traditionally, we don't have a July meeting because it tends to butt up against the July 4 holiday. This year it is not the case. So I did want to pose the option to committee members to have a July meeting. We have been getting a lot of requests to get on our agenda. So having one more agenda, one more meeting in 2021 could help us do more work. But that being said, Alison Coleman, who is responsible for staffing this meeting, takes her vacation around this time. I would not want to cut short her vacation or burden her in any way. I don't want to make this decision all by myself. So, do we want to have a July meeting?

Vice Chair Paulsen said if we cancel the July meeting we should keep all the other meetings on track. I would like to make a motion that we cancel the July meeting.

Bates seconded the motion to cancel the July meeting.

Chair did a roll call to see who wants to cancel the meeting. All but one person voted to cancel the meeting. the July TAAC meeting is cancelled.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Andy Streasick said just a few quick Metro Mobility things. This morning, some of you may have gotten an email that said starting tomorrow and through the summer, every Thursday, from 5:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. the Nicollet Mall is going to be shut down for all vehicles including ours for the farmer's market. We won't be able to access the mall, doing outdoor drops at the cross streets if people need to go to the mall on Thursdays during those times. As most of you might know, we do tend to try to drop at cross streets anyway at the mall. So it shouldn't be too much of a change.

On the second thing, I just wanted to give people a heads up on. As of this morning, the MTS Director did decide that Metro Mobility is going to start following suit this week with Metro Transit and do away with six feet of physical distancing on Metro Mobility buses. Just like there isn't any on the fixed route public transit. This will be listed on the website. I would like to receive people's feedback on this. Please email or call the service center with any opinions on physical distancing and what you would like to see. That is where things sit as of righty now.

Chair Fenley said It is on LRT, fixed route, buses, BRT and it is on Metro Mobility. Is that correct?

Streasick said yes, we are in the process of pulling stuff down off of our website and off of communications.

Myhre said do we still have to wear the masks?

Streasick said the mask requirements are still in place according to federal rule.

Vice Chair Paulsen said are they still out for Metro Mobility for the driver to stay with you, or are they eliminating that?

Streasick said that is called curbside. We are leaving curbside in place for now. We are trying to keep this in place for at least the pilot process.

Vice Chair Paulsen said who do we talk to to make this stay in place even after the pandemic ends?

Streasick said same deal. Pass that along to the service center.

MEMBER COMMENT

Rowan said I just got an email that says the Biden administration allocated \$239 million to Minnesota projects and \$100 million for the Gold Line.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary