

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: July 6, 2022

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members Present:

- Chair, David Fenley, at-large
- Sam Jasmine, Precinct A
- Christopher Bates, Precinct B
- Patsy Murphy, Precinct C
- Ken Rodgers, Precinct D
- Jeffrey Dains, Precinct E
- Darrell Paulsen, Precinct F
- Kari Sheldon, Precinct G
- Rachel Garaghty, Precinct H

Attending From Home
Sam Jasmine, Patsy Murphy,
Diane Graham-Raff

- Trevor Turner, MCD
- Erik Henriksen, MCD
- Diane Graham-Raff, MAAA
- Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- Heidi Myhre, MCCD
- Claudia Fuglie, MCCD
- Richard Rowen, AARP MN

Excused
Ken Rodgers, Erik Henriksen

Ex-Officio:

- Phillip Sterner, Council Member Liaison
- Andy Streasick, Metro Mobility
- Douglas Cook, Metro Transit Advocate
- Guthrie Byard, ADA & Title IX Administrator
- = present, E = excused

Absent
Rachel Garaghty

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:33 p.m.

Agenda Approved

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Fuglie to approve the agenda. Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Paulsen, seconded by Bates to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2022 regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Business & Information Items

Discuss the Findings from Transit Onboard Survey

Ashley Asmus, Data Scientist/ Travel Modeling & Research.

My name is Ashley Asmus. I am a Data Scientist at MTS. I work a lot with travel survey data. I have come to this group before to present to you the Household Travel Survey. The whole Council does this to track travel behavior over time. This is sort of a subset of that household travel survey. It is the same program. The same funding structure. Instead, we are looking at people's travel behavior onboard transit. And it is called the Onboard Survey because we are literally asking surveyors to ride the buses and trains and interview people about their trips while they are travelling.

I am coming to you with the small text on this slide says: "Pilot Survey Update". That is because the data I am presenting to you today is from our pilot of our main transit onboard survey that is in the field right now. We have people out collecting information on the whole regional transit system right now. But last fall, we did an extended test of that survey to see what travel behavior was like in the time of Covid.

Next slide. First, I will cover what the Onboard Survey is. I guess I have already talked about that a little bit. And then, I will go through the pilot survey findings. So, with three main parts. First, who is onboard transit now? What are the demographics of riders like? Second, what kind of trips are people making? Third, how has travel behavior changed among riders with disabilities? I have just a slide about how our main survey is going as a placeholder. And then some time for feedback or discussion from you all. I think I have my questions that I am asking you on the next slide.

Next slide. So here are the places that I am hoping to get feedback from you.

1. How do these findings match your impressions and experience riding transit?
2. How do they differ?
3. What are research areas where we need to dig deeper?
4. What linkages should we make between this survey's findings and transit/transportation planning?
5. Would you like this research to find a broader audience outside of the Council?

Next slide. First of all, what is the Onboard Survey? On this slide is the picture of me conducting the survey. I rode the buses for a few days this fall to get a sense of what the survey was like. It is really fun. I walk up and down the aisle with a tablet and as I intercept people. I am counting a random number to choose who to interview. I sit down with them, and I ask them about themselves and about where they are coming from and where they are going to. We conduct a rich survey with this tablet. We get a lot of information.

It is called an "Intercept-interview" survey. Because we are randomly intercepting people on board trains and buses. That is really important because this is really the only source of data we have about transit in our region. It is randomly collected. We are not depending on people to return paper surveys that they are handed on the bus or the train, which can give you a biased picture of who is willing to talk to the person.

In this survey, in fact, we hand out \$1.00 free ride coupons to people who complete the survey with us. That has really boosted and made really equitable the response across race, ethnicity and age.

We do this survey every five years. The last survey was in 2016, which is actually six years ago. I don't know if you remember something that happened. As we were ready to roll this out in 2021. Basically, the FTA asked us to wait one more year before we went out in the field with that. We did just that. So this fall, in 2021 pilot. It was just a test of our survey instrument. But also, to collect as much data as possible. So, we sampled the busiest Metro Transit routes. I have a list of those at the back of this presentation.

Next slide. We do this survey to better understand current transit riders and markets. It also improves transit forecasts and planning. And it supports before-and-after studies. This type of data. This random sampling of people who ride transit, it is Federally required. We need robust data like these to evaluate transit service and how it is affecting our region.

Next slide. Before I get into the findings, I just want to talk about how we are sort of conceptualizing these data. On this slide, here, I have two big circles. The first big circle is larger, and it represents the trips and riders in 2016. So, the universe of trips and riders in 2016. There is a smaller circle on top of that. But it almost overlaps, but not quite. That corresponds to the trips and riders of 2021.

So we think that the people that we are encountering onboard transit right now and the trips they are making. It is mostly, but not entirely a subset of those trips.

Next slide. So using that framework, we can calculate those trips that we have retained and kept on the system. And those that have been lost in the Covid era. In 2016, on these routes that we



sampled. Our top 12 busiest routes. There were 157,000 trips per day in 2016. So we have got these darker colored people icons. All these icons represent all those trips that were taken on the whole system. Only 72,000 or 46 percent were retained overall. While 54 percent or 85,000 trips were lost. So that is how we are conceiving on this data. That 46 percent retention rate. you could use that as a base number for the rest of the comparisons I will make through this presentation. So roughly, we retained about half of trips on the transit system for these routes.

Next slide. So first I am going to start with demographic comparisons. Who is on board right now?

Next slide. We will start with a simple one, gender. But it actually says a lot, I think. The top line here says, "Retained a greater share of men's trips than women's trips." There is a little bit more to the story. First of all, going into the survey, in 2016, it was already a male bias onboard transit. There were 90,000 trips made by men and boys in 2016. Compared to 72,000 trips per day made by women and girls. So already more trips by men and boys on the transit system. But that has gotten even larger in the Covid era. Because we retained only 41 percent of trips made by women and girls compared to 47 percent of trips made by men and boys.

Next slide. How this plays out in terms of the composition of people onboard transit. So this is the percent of the weekday trips made by men and women. In 2016, it was a 45/55 female to male split of trips. In 2021, it is a 40 percent/57 percent female to male split onboard transit. Plus, this year, we are also asking about non-binary and transgender identities. So some people are also responding as not identifying as either of these binary gender terms. It is a small share, so I have not broken it out on this slide. There is an appendix that shows you how that is playing out across age groups. That is really fascinating. A lot of younger people, especially who are identifying as non-binary or a different gender that is not listed on the survey.

Next slide. So that was about gender. We are retaining more trips by men. We also retained a greater share of trips made by riders of color. This is showing you all of the racial and ethnic groups that we had people select on the survey. They could select multiple options, of course, so sometimes people might be double counted down this chart, if they identify as more than one race or ethnicity.

I just want to talk about two numbers here. That is the column for riders that identify as white and then the column for the riders who identify as black/African American. Those are the two most commonly selected racial identities on the survey. But before, the majority of trips were made by white passengers, 79,000 trips per day in 2016. About 40 percent of those were retained in 2021. Compared to black and African American riders. We started with 46,000 trips per day. So about half of the trips made by white riders. And 50 percent of those trips were retained. So 40 percent retention rate among white riders, 50 percent retention rate among black and African American riders.

Of course, we know race can be a stand in for a lot of other socioeconomic factors because of the way racism works in our society. So when we think about income, access to cars, where people live. All of that is playing out in this retention rate by race.

Next slide. This is how it plays out in terms of the portion of riders. Identifying as one or more of these race or ethnicities. White people who only identify as white from this chart. So, you can better see the top line here. In 2016, half of riders identified as black, Hispanic, Asian, multiracial or native American or another identity. In 2021, that share of people who identify as BIPOC has increased to 55 percent. So a greater share of riders who ride transit are male. Also, a greater share of people riding is BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color).

Next slide. I said there are a lot of socioeconomic factors that play here. One of those is household income. We know that people with lower incomes tend to be more reliant on transit and tend to have less access to personal vehicles. That has played out really predictably in the Covid era. We retained way more trips by people who are making less money compared to those who are bringing home more money. So people who said they made less than \$15,000 a year in their household, retained over half of those trips. Compared to 36 percent, 43 percent of trips for people making a little bit more than that.



Once you get to these really high-income categories, \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year, we retained only 19 percent of those trips. First of all, there were more lower income people taking those trips in 2016. And second, we have retained more of those trips. I think that sometimes people might use this as a shorthand for transit reliance. We also ask about access to cars on the survey as well. It shows what you might expect.

Next slide. Now we are getting into the disability stuff. This first one is showing a retention rate for those who consider themselves to have a disability. Yes or no. We also have a preferred not to answer option here. Plenty of people choose that option. We are not showing it here for simplicity.

For people who identify as having a disability. They made about 19,000 trips per day in 2016. We have retained 71 percent of those trips. Remember our baseline number was 46 percent of all trips retained on the system. Seventy-one percent of trips made by people with disabilities were retained in 2021. That is huge compared to 42 percent for those who said they did not have a disability. Additionally, the share of trips made by those with a disability has increased onboard transit from 11 percent to 18 percent. So one in ten to almost one in five people onboard transit right now says that they have a disability of some kind. That is huge. It says a lot about the way we need to plan transit to make it accessible to our current group of riders.

Next slide. We also retained more trips by men than women overall. That is true for people with disabilities too. So people with disabilities. We had 59 percent of trips made by women with disabilities retained compared to for men with disabilities. Seventy-three percent of those trips retained. So the gender dynamics that we are playing out in the population as a whole are also playing out in the disabled population. The population with disabilities.

Next slide. Looking at this across age. This chart is really complex. If you would like more information here, we can discuss this at a later time. We see in our data as we do in the world at large that older folks tend to report having a disability at a higher rate than younger folks. So we see the number of trips taken by people with disabilities increase with increasing age. Because those people 55 to 64 for example, are more likely to report having a disability than younger people.

But then we see that across the age groups for people with disabilities. Whether they're under 18 or over 65, we see consistently higher retention rates compared to folks without disabilities in the same age group. So, 36 percent, for example, of riders between 18 to 24. Thirty-six percent of trips made by people without disabilities who were real young, 18 to 24, college age, were retained. So just a third of those trips retained for people without disabilities. Seventy-two percent of those trips by college age people with disabilities were retained. So, double the retention rate in that age category. It is just true across the board.

There is also a tiny interest and tidbit here where we are seeing more people in the under 18 categories say that responding that they have a disability of some kind. I am not sure that that is just a change in the way people identify themselves or share their information. Or it could be a rise in disability rates among younger people as well.

Next slide. What kind of trips are people making? I talked about demographics. I talked about gender, disability status and income and race. Now I want to talk about where people are going onboard transit.

Next slide. The first two slides are sort of a cartoon. I will talk about it as if you were riding a train and you were going to sample 157,000 people in 2016 and ask them where they were going. Roughly a fifth would say they were going on a social trip. Maybe a third would say they were commuting to work. Maybe they were going to work on that peak 9:00 to 5:00 hour. They have those nine to five style commutes, or they were taking off peak commutes where they were going to work in the middle or the end of the day. We have people going to school. We have people going on errands. We have people going out to eat. And going to medical trips. We also separate those out and just a handful of people you would encounter those kinds that were going to the airport.

Where have all these trips gone in 2021?



Next slide. We are missing a lot of the people onboard transit. But we are still encountering all these different trip types onboard our buses and trains. Plenty of people are still going on social trips. Still about a third going to or from work. And everybody who said they were making an errand trip in 2016 are still there. Still making their errand trips in 2021. Obviously dining trips are way down. Airport trips are way down. Only one person instead of four would say they are going to the airport now. And our medical trips. Almost everyone who said they were going to a medical trip in 2016 onboard transit, is still there in 2021.

Next slide. So this is showing you that in numbers, we grew the number of errand trips onboard these lines in 2021. We retained over 100 percent of errand trips. So people doing these basic life maintenance type activities. That has grown onboard transit over time. In the meantime, we are retaining about 39 percent of peak nine to five commuters. Thirty-seven percent of off-peak commuters. Half of all school commutes. Bear in mind, this is even when we were using the transit system to take high school students around when the school buses weren't working so well in Saint Paul. Seventy percent of medical trips retained. Compared to just 22 percent of the airport trips.

Next slide. So if we look at that as a share of people onboard transit again. Adding everything up to 100 percent. You will encounter onboard transit now. Many more people relative to all the other trips. More people going on errand or shopping trips. Twenty-four percent of people onboard transit say that they are going to the grocery store. Going to the pharmacy. They are going to pick up something from their lawyer. Compared to 11 percent in 2016. So that number has more than doubled.

Meanwhile, every other category has shrunk a little bit except for medical trips and school commutes. The share overall has grown a little bit for those two categories even as the number has decreased.

Next slide. Here it is for people with and without disabilities. I am showing you for 2016 and 2021. But we are just going to talk about that 2021 bar on the right. So, in 2021, people who said that they had a disability. Thirty-eight percent of those trips were for errands. Compared to only 20 percent of trips made by people without a disability who said they were going for errands. So we are seeing a huge share of people with disabilities traveling for errands. And a much larger share of trips made by people with disabilities to medical facilities. To some sort of doctor appointment. To the hospital. To their physical therapy.

Fifteen percent of trips made by people with disabilities are made for medical trips compared to less than five percent for those without disabilities. And of course, every other trip type is represented as well as one of the take home messages. What I would like for you to get from this presentation is that transit continues to serve a wide variety of trip types. Social trips, going to work. All of these are valid trips for people to take transit regardless of who they are and why they are onboard.

Next slide. This is just for fun. So, we had this mystery that was occurring to us as we were going into the survey that we wanted to resolve. We had been seeing that before Covid, there were these two distinct peaks across the course of the day. When people would travel, we would see that 9:00 a.m. peak and then that 4:00 p.m. peak as workers and school kids were going to and from work and school. We never saw that come back during the Covid 19 era. We still see a really smooth trend in the number of trips people made across the course of the day.

Even this week, you won't see a 9:00 a.m., and a 5:00 p.m. peak. Those peak commute times are essentially gone. And that people have taken away from that trend. To get ridership back, we just need to bring back those 9:00 to 5:00 commuters. I want you all to know that that is just not true. I think I wrote it on this slide.

A rebound of a 9:00 to 5:00 commute alone will not restore ridership to peak pandemic levels. It was true in 2016 and it is true now. All sorts of trips were actually forming the backbone of that two hump patterns. It wasn't just 9:00 to 5:00 commutes going to their office jobs. It was people traveling to get to their shift work job. It was people traveling to see their friends. It was people traveling to go out to eat. All of which we are doing a lot less of now than we were before. And



people are opting not to take transit at a greater rate than before. Because of concerns about the pandemic and other issues. And this is true for people with disabilities.

Next slide. I just wanted to break out this time-of-day graph for people with and without disabilities. Also, for people with disabilities, we see a smooth trend across the course of the day in the number of trips people are making. People with disabilities onboard transit still relying on all day service.

Next slide. I have two slides here to talk about other travel behavior. At previous presentations I have given about this data, people have asked me how are people getting to transit in the first place? And how are they planning their trip?

Basically, about half of all riders regardless of age, are just taking a well-known trip. To me, this says that people are really reliant on predictable and frequent service. They aren't consulting Google maps when they get on a bus. They know where their bus stop is, and they are going to go and get on it. And of course, younger folks, more of them are using a smart phone to plan their trip compared to older folks who are text savvy.

Next slide. And we have how did you get to the first transit stop? Both for 2016 and for 2021. For people with and without disabilities. The vast majority are walking, jogging and rolling to get to the transit stop. In 2021, 95 percent of those with a disability were walking, jogging or rolling to get to the transit stop. Which says a lot about how we need to make our transit stops and our pedestrian infrastructure accessible to make transit, in general, work.

Next slide. Key findings for overall trips and rider's routine. Retaining more BIPOC riders, more men, lower income riders. Those who are unemployed are still relying on transit service. And riders who identify as having a disability. Remember over 70 percent of trips by people with disabilities are retained.

What is the core trip types transit continues to serve? I want you to remember, all trips. It was never just commutes. It is all types of trips that people are making their life happen.

Next slide. I presented some disability specific information here. I hope it told some kind of story. I would love to know if anything jumped out for you. If you see any linkages between what I said here and policy.

Bates said here is one of the things. Your survey stops at 2021.

Asmus said we are conducting the main survey now.

Bates said I think some of the numbers would be skewed because of the price of gas. I have family and friends that couldn't live without their cars. They are taking the bus to work. in my building, which is a senior disability building, we are seeing more Transit Link and more Metro Mobility usage than we have before. That will skew the numbers a little bit, correct?

Asmus said I would think so. I think, even now, or at least the last time I checked, overall trip rates, like boardings per day, hasn't changes as much as we would have expected it to. With rising gas prices. But we are definitely monitoring it over time. And you know what we are going to see is that for people with lower incomes. They are especially going to switch to transit compared to those with a higher income. Because a greater percent of your income goes for paying for gas or a car payment or whatever the expensive costs of our private vehicle travel. We are going to keep an eye on that for sure.

Myhre said my question is I am always going to be in the low-income category because of the disability that messes up your data. If I don't have Metro Mobility or Metro Transit. Because of the disability I have, it is always transit. I have to use it as much as I can for certain things. Thank God I have Metro Mobility because buses don't go everywhere. And the pandemic has cut back on having buses out there. There used to be more buses out there.

I use the bus because my disability doesn't allow me to drive. I have to rely on everybody else to take care of me. So how do you come to me and say you get the real data that you need? Because of my disability, you may not get the data that you need.



Asmus said I think that is actually a good point. I think in general, what I am hearing from you is that we are not capturing the accurate picture of what your situation is. It is not just that you have a disability, and you are riding transit. You are riding transit because you have a disability that prevents you from having a driving option in your life.

Myhre said I don't have the processing to do it. And I live in the suburbs. That is different than living in the city. Your data might be different in how I use transit.

Asmus said you are making me think that we should look more into another question that we ask on this survey. A question that we asked that I didn't put in data about is "Do you drive?" If they say "Yes, I drive sometimes." Then we say, "Could you have driven for this particular trip?" To get at was driving an option for this person at all?

We don't ask. I think maybe we don't want to ask for a government survey. We are trying to build trust. Maybe we don't ask like why can't you drive? They may have a DUI and that is preventing them from driving. We just want to know if driving is an option for them.

Thank you for that feedback. I think I will come back to you with an extra bit of information about that question in particular. Hopefully that will fill in some gaps for you.

Rowan said I do have two questions. This committee not only represents people with disabilities, but also the senior population that may not consider themselves as having a disability. I didn't see you break up figures regarding the senior population with your gathered data on that. I am just pointing that out. That would be of interest to me. The other thing is the change when peaks occur. Would that tie into changing the idea of charging more during peak hours. Even out the fare throughout the day instead of charging these higher amounts.

Asmus said for your second question. I don't know if this data is informing that discussion. I know that equity considerations are really driving some of the fare discussions. Fare structure discussions that are happening at least at Metro Transit. And I am not sure about the distribution of trips over the course of the day. I can ask Eric Lind and get more information about how this information is feeding into the fare simplification.

Then your first question was about age. I kind of glossed over one of the slides really quickly that was the one with like 20 bars.

Rowan said I saw you mentioned older men and that sort of thing.

Asmus said Yea. We do see higher retention of trips in general, for people who are older.

Sheldon said I noticed that you only had the timeframe from the morning to the evening. What about homeless people? Because there is an increase in that. did you question them if they had a disability? I think that would make your survey clearer.

Asmus said I didn't present it here because we made a change halfway through our pilot survey. Because it was the pandemic. It still is the pandemic era. Things are so tough right now economically, in our region. Especially for those who are already on the edge. We see more homeless people riding than we did before. It has changed the way that we are doing the survey. So, it used to be we would approach someone, and you had to have a place you were coming from and a place you were going to on transit to make sense on this survey. What we found as we were going around. As I was testing it out on the Blue Line. People are using the Blue Line as a shelter and a place to be.

We have added a new question structured to the survey to capture those trips like "Are you going to or from a place or just no particular destination?" We don't need to get into why they are just riding. That can be their own private reason. They could just be hanging out. But at least for those type of trips we have a just riding around variable just to look at. I don't think we have split that out by disability type yet. We probably didn't capture enough trips like that to look at it. But we will look at that for the 2022 survey.

Sheldon said have you gone through all of the lines or just Blue Line or are you going to expand the survey? I would be interested in that.



Asmus said you could look at this data line-by-line or route-by-route. In fact, our online tools from 2016 allows people to do just that. So we will update our 2016 survey tool to allow people to do that with 2022 data.

The routes we surveyed or the data I presented to you today. That is just from a subset of routes. The 10 busiest bus routes include BRT on the A-Line and C-Line and a Green and Blue Line. Two-thirds of all the ridership in 2021. So, they are busy routes.

Right now, we are sampling all routes and all providers and all days of the week. So, the weekend too. For whatever reason, traditionally these surveys are only done Monday through Friday. I think because of a traditional nine-to-five commuter bias. We would like to get around that so that we are accurately capturing how people use transit.

Dains said you caught my attention with the comment you made about more people under 18, are identifying having disabilities. That could have some impact on the future, which I am always concerned about in terms of funding and other issues associated with that. Did they specify what their disabilities are? Were they physical disabilities, mental disabilities? Did you get any data on that? That is an interesting statistic if that is the case.

Asmus said we did not ask that question. Maybe because we came to this group a couple of years prior. We workshopped with you. How can we get at this information in a way that respects people's privacy? We ended up saying "We just need to ask a Yes or No question." That has to be good enough.

So we don't have a follow-up question about disability type. But we can look at national data like from Pew Research or the census to get a little bit more information about that.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I am a regular transit rider. I am alarmed by a lot of the data because it clearly shows that if you are out there riding the system, even during the pandemic. It is highlighting the different ethnic groups. The different economic impacted groups. I am happy folks are identifying their own markers that either allow them to use transit for social reasons or for reasons that they need to. I think what that tells us as transit advocates and leaders at the table, it tells us that those factors, we need to partner with groups in the community that also have those same interests and the same likeness. We can't put a bunch of money into transit in these particular areas and assume that everybody else that doesn't agree with public transit, is going to buy into it. Because they are not going to.

There is always going to be a subset of the population that say "No, I have my own private transportation and I don't care about public transportation." If I do care about public transportation, I only want to pay for it during this time or that time. I don't want to pay for it 24/7. It clearly shows that there is need for it. You identify the hot spots of the system. Just like the police do or the paramedics do.

Then we should concentrate in that area to provide either better public transit overall or we can feed into the system by little feeders or little commuter-type buses that feed into a greater system. So we don't have that impact on the system throughout the whole day. We just have it in small pockets.

Thorsen said I live in a senior living community where some people have disabilities. Most of the people are in their 80's and 90's. is there going to be research looking at what potential riders there are in the senior community that know about the options? Because I have had people that ask me about Metro Mobility and another agency: Mobility for All? It is not at the scale of Metro Mobility.

Asmus said I think you are getting at exactly the most frustrating thing about this survey. We're only able to survey people who are on transit. That is our mission for this survey. But what we missed is all the people who aren't there and why they are not there. So, there are a couple of angles to get there. One of them is with our household survey. We can look at general travel for all people. All modes. It's an address-based survey. And another is this new focus group study that MTS has just put together called "The Transportation Needs Assessment." This will be a smaller conversation with small groups of people and individuals to understand more nuanced things that get beyond these pick the box sort of questions. And it is more conversation about "Why are you



choosing this travel mode? Why not something else?"

Thorsen said could you connect with people that are operating the senior communities? Outreach people. Executive Directors might be too overwhelmed. I know that at one point the Outreach and Salesperson where I live, knew that I was involved in Metro Mobility volunteer stuff where I live. I suggested to her the idea of promoting in packets that they put out, about the community trying to sell it. That they involve promotion of it. I don't know if that would be a networking place that you might try.

Asmus said thank you for that. I think I will pass that along to a couple of people during different studies and see what they are doing. Because I know there is some work being done at the level of housing, like housing development and housing communities.

Thorsen said I am thinking of the Ebenezer Foundation and Central Presbyterian. Things like that. Getting at a large enough scale, that you are catching the people that need the service.

Murphy said with looking at the numbers of the peaks. With many people working remotely from home, I will make an educated guess that it really changed those peaks. The nine to five. Because people are not working outside the home. Am I correct with that?

Asmus said yes, that is true. Teleworking can affect these numbers. We did ask about teleworking in this survey. I don't know if we have worked up those numbers yet. But we think about one in five people in general, in the region, are working from home right now, due to the pandemic. It is a long-lasting trend that we are going to see going forward.

Yes, definitely. The increase in teleworking along the professional class people, working these nine to five office jobs is going to have an effect on the time of day. But even more, I think, is a loss of all the other trips or at least to the same extent. Like the social trips, errand trips and things that happen in the middle of the day, too. And park-and-ride is essentially empty, too.

Graham-Raff said you started off wanting to know if our experience mirrored that. My background is I work for The Area Agency on Aging. We have seen a dramatic increase in ride requests from older adults for exactly those types of trips that you are talking about. That stayed steady of just those chores. What we are hearing from our providers is that older adults do not feel safe using public transportation. That in part because the number of riders has gone down. They find themselves more isolated on vehicles and feeling more at risk when they do ride public transportation. So that may be a long-term issue that needs to be addressed in order to get the confidence of older adults to ride public transit.

The other question has to do with the kind of long-standing theme that I have heard from older adults. That is that the current long-standing hub and spoke approach to transit where pretty much the majority of the lines go in and out of the two downtowns. And then you pick up something else to go somewhere else. That this seems even more antiquated now that nobody wants to go downtown. Not just over the past two years. But many of the businesses now are switching to a more hybrid. And so, you have less and less call for folks to go downtown in the first place. Because you don't have the presence of large numbers of people working downtown during the day. Then you have more people feeling vulnerable waiting at bus stops that are not populated by people just in the normal comings and goings of the business day.

So I think as Metro Transit looks at some of these issues that it might be time to really start looking at more of a grid system or something that allows people to reach the resources within their community without having to go downtown or connect with some line that really has no bearing on where it is they are trying to get to.

Jasmine said to piggyback on Diane's comments. In the blindness community. I have actually heard that exact same thing in regard to riding certain bus lines because people don't feel as safe anymore. They can't see what is going on and they feel like things are a little bit shakier in downtown as well. I will say, I myself, don't go downtown as much in the evening as I used to. I can imagine that people maybe with high anxiety might feel that way as well if they don't feel secure.



Thorsen said something else is occurring to me. is the ridership also taking into account the fact that of how we identify stops as being accessible or not? I live in Minnetonka. If I was to take a wheelchair to go distances, I could get an accessible ride. The individual bus stops. I could go to Downtown Minneapolis. But if I wanted to go back home again, the bus stop right near my home is not accessible. This might not be your area, but how are we thinking about, when we talk about an accessible bus stop. Is it accessible just in itself? Or how do you calculate the ride so that if the bus stop is not accessible, how do I get back home? I don't know where to address that. That is something that struck me in the last 2½ years.

Chair Fenley said it is something we can continue to bring up. Especially in the suburbs. There are a lot of bus stops that are just a pole stuck in the grass.

Myhre said I was at the Gay Pride Festival; I know I am in the disability community, and I know we talk about transportation. When I was at the booth for transportation, all they were handing out were the sticker, that had the rainbow, and the buses. I don't really have a sense of what transit does. Because they didn't tell me about trains. They didn't tell me about the buses. They didn't tell me about the survey that you brought to us. The community has no clue in all the different things that you come to the table and talk about. I do know that they need bus drivers. But I knew nothing about how transit works and nothing about anything. They had two big booths and two giant tents, it kind of makes me frustrated and angry that we do all this good work, but then no one shares it in a way that the population can understand that we are doing good work and it is not all crappy and scary. Gay Pride gets people from all over Minnesota and people from outside Minnesota that would love to learn about transit.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I think the survey has momentum, discussion and merit. I am sure on the street you hear a different story. It varies from time to time. I commend you for the work you are doing. Let's continue to do more of it together.

Chair Fenley said are there one or two things that stuck out to you? What have you found the most interesting out of this survey?

Asmus said it is the piece about errand trips. People continue to take transit to just get their life done. That says a lot about why people are on transit. But also, about the kind of transit system that we need. Errands are those little things, a short trip. And you just need to get to the grocery store and back and it shouldn't take you an hour to do it. And it goes back to something said about a grid system. The hub and spoke. We need that same frequent all-day service that Metro Transit is pushing for. That is what errand trips need. I think they are on the right track with that kind of planning.

Metro Mobility Update

Andy Streasick, Customer Service Manager, Metro Mobility. This presentation is a great overview that Christine put together, which is why there is a powerpoint. This is going to be an overview of what we are and how we are doing and why that is and some initiatives. So a little bit different.

Next slide. I guess I should point out for anyone who doesn't know, my name is Andy Streasick. I manage Metro Mobility Customer Service. The first informational slide shows a map of the service area. Our main service area is broken into three zones. Roughly speaking, the West Zone consists of the portion of Hennepin County that has Metro Mobility service. And the East Zone consists of the portion of Ramsey County that has service. Like Stillwater and some surrounding communities and down into Woodbury. Then the South Zone has Bloomington and Richfield from Hennepin County. And then otherwise has the portion of Dakota County that has service. Then into Cottage Grove and some surrounding communities.

If you look at the contracts that are currently in place, we have our West Zone contract, which is in place until 2026. Our East Zone also has a contract that is in place until 2026. And our South Zone, which is in place until 2025.

We also have an agency service, which serves all zones within the federally mandated footprint. That is in place to run until 2023. For folks who may not be aware, the agency service is essentially



a school bus style run. It is all standing order based designed to bring people to either DTNH's or similar center-based opportunities or in some cases, do some mid-day trips. Mostly vocational in and out of those DTNH's type of facilities that has had transitions to more of a community employment model.

We also have our Premium on Demand taxi service, which is in place until 2023 on the existing contract.

I wanted to call out that the Metro Mobility Service Center, or MMSC, is up and running. We are open. All of our services are back up and running post pandemic related closures. So we are doing in-person assessments. We do have some staff on during all of our business hours. Most of our staff is doing a hybrid teleworking on site model. We do have some folks who are or one person at least who is working exclusively in the office. We have a couple of changes at the staffing level. We have a new project administrator, who is the front-line staff person to oversee one of the contracts. He just started. His name is Bill. He just started when I was gone. He is brand new. Then we also have an opening currently. For one of my two ADA Paratransit Evaluators. Who meets with folks to see whether or not they would be eligible for Metro Mobility. We are doing the first round of interviews for that later on this week.

Next slide. By the numbers. That shows 2021. Roughly 83 million in operating expenditures. While 1.8 million in ridership. Which is down from 2.42 million in 2019. This shows the impact of our ridership that the pandemic had. We have 64,500 certified riders. Of whom 17,500 are active riders who have ridden in the past year. We are using 633 vehicles. We serve 94 communities. Our entire subsidy is under \$30.00 for as long as I have been at the Council. That has been a real point of pride because the ADA Paratransit subsidy average nationwide was always around \$50.00. You see the impact on the pandemic of our subsidy, which is now up to \$42.59 per trip. But I would suspect that nationwide there have been similar increases to what the subsidy is per trips. I suspect we are doing quite well compared to the federal average. We would certainly expect that to fall again as things continue to move towards a pre pandemic level of service.

Another thing that is interesting is our average trip length has risen significantly from around 11 miles in years past to about 13.9 miles average trip length. So of the trips that have been taken, they are definitely trending longer.

Next slide. This is just showing essentially ridership trending upwards as we rebound from the maximum ridership depression that was caused earlier on in the pandemic. As was typical of ADA Paratransit throughout the country, we initially fell by about 80 percent of our ridership. It just plummeted. And then in keeping with the national trend, it sort of steadily has gone back up. Essentially, the story here at a glance, is that for most of this year, we have been at about 80 percent of normal ridership. As defined by pre-pandemic levels.

Next slide. This is just showing key performance indicators going back to 2019, pre pandemic. Looking at on-time performance. Meaning did we arrive within the half an hour pick up window? On time performance as it relates to appointment times or drop off times. if someone says "I need to get there by 9:00 a.m. to get to work." Did we get them there before 9:01? Did we get them there less than one hour before hand? And then onboard time. Meaning, per our formula, did the Metro Mobility trip pretty much match in terms of on-board times. What you would expect a fixed route trip to take using Metro Transit or a fixed route system in that community.

The story here, essentially, is that you will see pretty much across the board here compared to 2019. We are feeling the pinch of driver shortage in a really unprecedented way. We, inadvertently, might be guilty of crying wolf here. Not that we would have ever thought that. The bottom line is we are always short of drivers. All Metro Mobility contractors perpetually hire drivers when they are at their peak numbers, their proper numbers. They just keep hiring because they know it is a tough job. There is very significant attrition. If they don't keep hiring, they are going to regret it. So they are always short drivers. It is seldom that they are right at where they would like to be. The reality is that this is really an unprecedented time. I will get to a little bit here what we are doing to respond to that. When you look at where we are at with regard to on time performance compared to 2019. We are still doing pretty well by federal standards. But that black line that is shown at 83



percent. The feds would like us to be at 90 percent for on time performance, 95 percent at onboard time. We have an on-time performance expectation for both pick up and drop off at 93 percent for our contracts. We are well below that on our appointment times. That is the most egregious one we are working on. All of those are related to driver shortages. I can tell you that based on steps we have taken. If we were looking at just the last couple of months, this would be a much rosier picture. Thankfully, some of the steps we have taken are starting to pay off. So, I will get to that in a minute.

Next slide. One of the things that we have unfortunately needed to do. Our least favorite tool to utilize, is we needed to bring back some non-ADA denials. Some denial of trips that are not federally mandated. Right now, in June, we were up at approximately 1,300 denials. That is one way trip denials. We made it through March and April without doing any. But what we found was, given the driver shortage reality that that March and April decision by the providers to do no denials, it was really leading to some suffering for federally mandated trips. So passengers who were taking federally mandated trips were experiencing a worse level of service and we really felt like this was one of the things we needed to remind them to utilize to try to address that.

What I should clarify is that since these are all non-ADA trips, there are a few things that our contracted staff could do when they call people back to let them know that the trip was denied. That they can't do with a federally mandated Metro Mobility trip. Chief among this is negotiate. So Wednesdays is our busiest day. If somebody tries to book a ride at peak time on Wednesday and it gets denied, we could call them back and say "I see you are going to Walgreens at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday. I don't know if you work at Walgreens, but it doesn't look like it because I see a 10:00 return trip. We can't do that 9:00. But Mondays are a much lower ridership for us than Wednesdays. If you can do Monday, we can do that trip. Or 9:00 a.m., our morning peak, is rough. But if you can do this trip at 11:00 instead, then we could do that." So we have been encouraging our contractors to negotiate that way rather than saying "No, we can't do this trip."

For those of you who don't know, for federal rules, we just apply those even to the non-federally mandated trip. If you can't do a go ride or a return ride, then the other one-way trip also counts as a denial. A denial due to a denial. It doesn't do you any good to bring you someplace if we can't get you back. Or it doesn't do any good for us to get you back from someplace if we couldn't bring you there in the first place.

Now, the other part that we have told our contractors is while that will be the rule, if the customer needed a ride both ways. Give the customer the option. Maybe they can spring for a taxi one-way. Using Premium on Demand. Maybe they have other options. Maybe they have support in place that could give them a ride one-way.

The other denial guidance we have given our contractors is "Really try not to nail the same person with denials over and over again. Spread out that pain as much as you can, given the reality that we do want you to deny as few trips as possible. If somebody is taking a 40- or 50-mile trips, they are going to get denied more than a three-mile trip within the non-ADA service area. If we can deny that one trip, maybe that means we don't have to deny six other ones. So we are trying to do that. But we are also trying to temper that. So maybe a couple of times a week, look for some other long trips that you can deny instead of this one over and over again. That is the guidance we have given around non-ADA denials. For people who aren't familiar with Metro Mobility, we don't do any ADA denials. Trips within the federally mandated service area. We take that to mean zero equals zero in terms of an appropriate number of denials within the federally mandated service area. If Metro Transit goes there, you have a civil right to take Metro Mobility there. We don't deny any ADA trips.

Next slide. Here again, we are talking about impact of workforce shortages. This is current vacancies. Essentially, we have got 11 vacancies at Transit Team all together. A combination of West and Agency contracts. First Transit East has 33 vacancies. Beyond what we want to see has the appropriate operator count. But again, that number at the end, "Needed Operator Count" is misleading because they would happily hire above that number. Really what you are talking about is a minimum. The compelling status. That first line. 2021 verses 2020 year over year hiring help down 39 percent on large contracts. In addition to just the number of employees. You have to



remember that in some of our contracts literally every driver got hit with Covid and was out for an extended period of time either because of they themselves getting sick or because someone close to them got sick or they were exposed in the community driving the bus. Overall, we ended at about 25 percent short of available drivers. Where we had wanted to see who was available to work verses who we had to work or who we needed to work.

The most effective tool for fixing that mess, thankfully took place in February, when the Council graciously agreed to raise the rates for those contracts to go to an additional \$3.00 an hour rate for all drivers across the board. It just had a tremendous impact. There are other things that our contractors have been doing. Hiring bonuses, retention bonuses and those types of things. At the end of the day, how much you make per hour is the bottom line for most of us. That tool did go to all of the drivers and has made a tremendous difference. Since that has got up and running and people have heard about it. Hiring and retention trends are improving.

It has gone from a tone of “God, I don’t know what we are going to do.” To “Since that increase in wages, I think we are O.K.” We are climbing out of this, and we are absolutely going in the right direction. I think I am getting to the point where I am O.K. with where we are going. That has been wonderful to hear from the people who are doing this day in and day out and have that expertise.

Next slide. In terms of customer support and engagement. Overall, when you look at it for all of 2021, our hold times were well within our goals and federal mandates. We had 96.8 percent of our calls answered within three minutes. That was partially bolstered because reservationist’s wages also were increased due to a Council subsidy. They went up by at least \$1.00 per hour and up from there. We are well aware that in 2022, one of our contractors had a hiccup where all of a sudden, a bunch of people quit. A bunch of people got sick. And their numbers plummeted for a period. That was exacerbated by the fact that they kept getting no showed for job interviews. But they have now come out of that. Again, the additional \$1.00 an hour really helped with that. Thankfully that is resolved with them. But we are aware that for a moment in time in 2022 that things got pretty bleak for one of our contractors on the reservation’s times. But they have taken steps to address it.

Hard copy newsletters went out in the fall and spring. Digital newsletters go out to anyone to whom we have an email address on file. That is up 52 percent since 2020. One of the reasons for that is we just started automatically. If you share your email address with us and indicate you would prefer contact with email on your application, we are signing you up for the virtual newsletter. So that is helping get the word out. Then also notifying people of events like the Community Conversations, which we held virtually in October. And in this last May. We will hopefully be in a time soon where it makes sense to do those in person. But we are doing those virtually to get customer feedback too.

One of the things that we started during the height of the pandemic. That we are likely to continue to do post pandemic is virtual assessments, virtual eligibility assessments. Obviously, that doesn’t fit for everybody. If our paratransit evaluators who have occupational health background, need to do a balance test with you, that necessitates physical contact. If they need to take you for a walk. If you have a developmental disability that is such that they need to do a simulated bus trip with you. Take a look at landmark recognition and recall skills. Those aren’t going to work. But on the side of some psychiatric disabilities. On the side of any physical disability, that fluctuates a lot. Where what we are mostly going to be talking about is a conversation. We can do those virtually.

If we get applications that indicate a disability where it would be appropriate to offer a virtual assessment, we are doing that now and are likely to continue doing that in the future. As you might expect, if you are familiar with the system and federal law. For folks who required an in-person assessment, over the last couple of years while we haven’t been doing them. They have just had presumptive eligibility. No one was denied access to the service for lack of an in-person assessment. If you need one, and we aren’t doing them, you can just ride until we can do one.

We are back open, and we are back doing those. So we anticipate by the end of the year. Everyone that has been granted presumptive eligibility will have been properly assessed.



Next slide. The Premium on Demand or Taxi Service has been in place since 2004. Much like the rest of our ridership it is heavily depressed by the pandemic. It was at about 50 percent in 2021 of ridership pre Covid. Again, that is in place until 2023. We launched the I hail app with them that will allow us for mobile device or desktop computer-based booking of rides. It recently migrated our reservationists out of the booking process for those trips. So the users of the Premium on Demand contract. Whether they are calling to talk to a reservationist or using the app will totally bypass the Metro Mobility system, which means good things for hold times for riders who are using the core Metro Mobility system.

The service matches the Metro Mobility service area and Metro Mobility service hours. So if you can get a ride someplace by Metro Mobility, those are the times during which you get a ride using the Premium on Demand cab service. There needs to be comparable accessible vehicle service. That is a federal law and that is something that we have been pressing. Quite frankly, if you are ambulatory and use Premium on Demand service, you may see a decline in your service quality a little bit. Because what we have told them is we understand driver shortages. We get it. We understand that you might be struggling. You might be having drivers who can drive your accessible vehicle fleet, in particular. But, if you can't provide an accessible ride on the Metro Mobility contract, don't provide an ambulatory ride on the Metro Mobility contract. We are not saying that you have to come through the pandemic providing the ideal level of service. We are saying that under federal law you need to provide the same level of service for folks that use mobility devices as somebody who is ambulatory gets. So that is our message to them.

How that works on the cost side for folks that might not know about it. It is essentially a subsidized cab ride where the Council will pay up to \$15.00 for a cab ride. So, you call the cab company. You book a ride. The customer pays the first \$5.00. Metro Mobility pays up to the next \$15.00. Then the customer pays anything over that \$20.00.

We are very interested in and will continue to pursue having an additional contractor other than just the one taxi service Transportation Plus. We authorized a reward to Lyft in 2020. Unfortunately, the scope of work that they presented didn't match what they were actually able to do. Lyft was not willing to put in the infrastructure necessary to match our service area in hours. So it likely would have been a bare bones service. Rather than launching a confusing version of Premium on Demand that only worked at certain times. Maybe certain days of the week. We scrapped that and are going back out here to look for other options.

Next slide. Technology Improvements in the Works. Here, coming up in September. We will be upgrading to a newer version of Trapeze. Which is our main scheduling software. One of the cool things about it is the real time traffic that I talked about a couple of meetings ago. Follow that upgrade on a 50-bus pilot. That will also allow in August of this year, our dispatchers will be able to do web-based vehicle monitoring for increased safety. You may have seen in the newspaper recently, some Metro Mobility thefts of vehicles. And this will really help dispatchers easily be able to see where all those vehicles are. All at the same time. This will help with avoiding and mitigating the impact of theft.

We have a service infractions model. This part of Trapeze, we are looking at maybe in quarter four of this year that will help make things easier to monitor with regard to no show activity or customer conduct activity. Trying to make some updates to our customer complaint module or customer feedback module. It can also be used for compliments. That we expect to happen in July to September. It is an ongoing thing that they are working on.

Also, not directly Metro Mobility related. But including Metro Mobility. The entire Council website is being considered for a redesign. I know that you all offered the opportunity to provide some feedback to an external contractor. We also talked about the Council staff including myself, about some potential changes. Then one of the things that we are looking at. At least to evaluate the feasibility and interest in is online application processing. Something we looked at pre pandemic and given the two-pronged nature of our application where part of the applicants fills it out themselves. Part of it, a medical professional fills out. Medical professionals are not real interested in an online format. And indicated they probably weren't likely to use it. Remember, that was pre pandemic by quite a way. And now most of those same providers have a whole different



level of experience with regard to paperless forms and doing things in a remote fashion. So we just want to see what might be possible there as well.

Next slide. I know I talked about this in length at a previous presentation. But I would be remiss if I didn't talk a little bit about service area changes again here. It is a huge change that we don't want to do that often. In February, we added expansions based on expansions to Metro Transit service. So those have been in now for several months and those are indicated by some blue dots on a map that should have alt text describing where they are in some detail. And then we also sent out notification. Then there is also a red area showing that are indicating areas that will go from what is currently ADA service to non-ADA service.

I want to put it that way because it might be easy in shorthand call those service areas cuts. But I want to stress that our footprint of our service area is staying the same. It is just that those areas in red will go from being ADA federally mandated service to non-federally mandated service. Based on changes that were made to fixed route Metro Transit service. I should express that we did not take into account Covid era cuts to Metro Transit. We are really hoping those are short term in response to the pandemic and hoping Metro Transit is going to bounce back with a robust system again. As we come out of the pandemic. So we looked at cuts that were made in 2019 that we had not responded to yet when we were looking at the areas that we were turning from ADA to non-ADA. We didn't send out the notifications for those pursuant to the six months. A notification that is required under federal law. To probably take place at the end of November. That those changes would go into effect.

Next slide. I will take questions if the Chair thinks it is appropriate. I did want to take the opportunity to point out one more thing. To Richard's question about fare simplification on Metro Transit. If they should simplify the fare system on Metro Transit, to go away from the peak/off peak fare structure. That is absolutely something that Metro Mobility follows suit on.

Chair Fenley said we have about 11 minutes. I want to give folks the option if they want to take their question offline, please do. Otherwise keep it short. I am going to ask one quick question about Premium on Demand.

Is there the possibility to get stats in terms of stand ups or no shows? Anything like that for the taxi service? Or is it just not possible at this time?

Streasick said it is something we can get from them, but I have to deliver it with a caveat that I am really confident in the stats on the Metro Mobility system that I get because I can monitor where the bus is. I can look at how long it was there. I can make sure it was in the right spot. And really, with the cab rides, I am just taking their word for it. I can get you what they tell us, essentially. With regard to performance statistics.

Bates said I have a fiscal question. Since our fiscal year starts next July 1, 2021, and we have had this tremendous increase in energy costs. Do we have a contingency? Because we have to go until June 30, 2033. That we don't run short of funds for fuel costs and have to cut back further rides.

Streasick said the structure of Metro Mobility is such that it has been and will continue to be somewhat protected from those kinds of wild fuel cost fluctuations. We are somewhat insulated from that. It is obviously an impact, and it will impact future prognostication. But in the moment, we will be O.K. with that.

Dains said I have had two calls. One of them in April and one this past Sunday about denials. The person that called me Sunday, stated that they were in a wheelchair, and they were going to church, and they had been taken before to church and they were denied. They called in on Saturday for the ride. Are the denials more frequent now? You did touch on that topic.

Streasick said yes, certainly we met a couple of months earlier in the year without any and now we are up and about 1,300 a month. That is one-way trips. We do absolutely empathize with this. We try to spread that around. But absolutely, our number one priority from a federal law standpoint and from a Council mission standpoint. We need to provide the civil right. That is if a person without a disability can take a public transit trip someplace, then somebody with a disability, who can't take

fixed route, needs to take that public transit trip someplace.

Then, we of course, want to provide more. Beyond where somebody without a disability would be able to get. We did want to bring our entire community of folks with disabilities as far as we can within our footprint. The reality has been with the driver shortage that the denials have gone up. We fully anticipate, from my perspective, one of the absolute best side effects of the increasing success. With driver hiring and retention is that those denials are going to go back down.

Jasmine said I hear a lot of times from order takers that I shouldn't hear from, saying that there are a lot of changes coming down. I wish that we would be told first, instead of hearing from an order taker. One is a question that I don't know if it is true. So I want to clear it up. And the other is a question on Premium service.

Is it true? I understand that if you cancel less than an hour in advance, it is a no-show. Now I am getting told that if you cancel more than an hour in advance, it puts a mark on your record. I think that is not fair or inappropriate for many reasons. But I will let you answer that in a minute. The other one is, in regard to the same days, I and other people have had a lot of problems with this. And I know you said this was uncommon. But having drivers show up. Also having drivers take the ride but then it switches to another car. And then all of a sudden both rides go away. I brought this up at the Metro Mobility meeting and I was hoping to get an understanding of what was going on. I was told you were going to have a meeting with them. And we never heard of what happened at that meeting.

My last comment is so if they are told that they have to do the same number of rides as a wheelchair as opposed to non-wheelchair. Does this mean that that is why we are not getting some of the rides? Because they are not doing those rides so much?

The last on is that if you are telling providers to try to not pick on the same person every time and they are not ADA, that I am in. How are they keeping track of that? That they don't do that.

Streasick said specific to the cancel same days or cancels more than an hour in advance. Those aren't counted against you. And as a general rule, I love our drivers and our reservationists so much. They do so much wonderful work on so many different fronts. Do not expect to go to them for policy decisions, policy changes. Literally, probably, eight times out of 10, those are not accurate. A person is new, or a person has misinterpreted something or maybe a person's boss, a contractor, just told them the wrong thing. You will hear something or at least we will have attempted to communicate something before it comes from a reservationist. There is no penalty for cancelling a ride the same day more than an hour in advance.

With regard to the overall cab ride performance. We have actually a number of ongoing meetings set up at this point with a provider. But the big one. I have been gone for three weeks. I think that is probably the reason that it hasn't happened yet. They are aware of the performance concerns. With regard to the equal access requirement, that should happen at the point of booking. So, what may happen more for you, Sam, is you call to get a ride and they will say "I am sorry, we just don't have anything available." Because they don't have any accessible vehicles available. We are telling them, "Look, if you can't book an accessible ride, don't book any Metro Mobility rides. That should happen at the point of booking.

The issue around once a ride is booked. It gets moved around or a driver takes it and it gets moved to a different vehicle, is about the driver shortages impacting us and them. But that said, we expect better from customer service and transparency, than what you are describing. I can absolutely come and talk to you here, after these meetings are taking place or while these meetings are taking place. Since it is likely to be an ongoing process.

Jasmine said is there any chance that we can be a part of those meetings?

Streasick said I don't know. I think at some point having TAAC or the disability community as part of some meetings with the taxi company, I think makes a lot of sense. Some of this that we need is about some reporting access. I think we need to have some meetings that are inhouse first. Then absolutely, I think that makes a lot of sense to bring you guys' in.



Last thing that I wanted to mention. You can easily see in Trapeze, our software, when someone has been denied a trip. The trip subtype is listed as a capacity denial. As trips are denied, that is something that dispatchers are looking at because they make the decision of which trips they need to deny. Does this person have recent capacity denials or denial due to denials in their trip history?

TAAC 30th Anniversary

Chair Fenley said we plan on having a work group meeting this month. I have already reached out to the four of you who showed interest earlier. I just want to put a call out for folks who want to join that. Chris, I will add you to the list.

Reports

Subcommittee

6. **Blue Line – Ken Rodgers**

This item was not presented.

7. **Green Line – Christopher Bates**

This item was not presented.

8. **Gold Line – Darrell Paulsen**

I received while I was out of town last month, I received a recognition from Metro Transit and the Gold Line folks for my three years of commitment to BRT and so forth.

9. **Purple Line – Darrell Paulsen**

We are engaging folks in the community. Through the community business advisory committee. We will have our first meeting in the community virtually tomorrow.

Bus Priority Seating TAAC Work Group

This item was not presented.

Chairs Report

This item was not presented.

Public Invitation

None.

Member Comment

Myhre said I took Metro Mobility to the Gay Pride Festival. I wanted to be dropped off by the sculpture garden. I thought you had to have somebody walk you to the park. But there is this thing where they can just drop you off and you are on your own. I didn't understand because it is a dangerous road you have to cross to get there. So how does that work?

Streasick said for people who never want the driver to escort them through the first door of their location, they can sign an escort waiver. Which will be a waiver of a Minnesota law that require that our drivers do that. So if it is an all the time thing, passengers need to sign that and have it notarized. But we do outdoor drops. And obviously there is no door to walk through to meet that legal requirement. To do an outdoor drop, all a customer needs to do is to request an outdoor drop at the time of the booking. If it is not requested at the time of the booking, the driver legally can't accommodate that. if when you are booking the ride, you say "I want an outdoor drop." Then that is fine. That could be because you are going to a park that has no door. Or that could be because you want to sit outside your house and smoke a cigarette before you go in. if you request an outdoor drop, then they can do that.

Bates said can you please send me a contact for the Northstar? I have two disabled friends in Rogers who used to take it to the Twins games pre Covid. Since Covid, the Northstar is not running to the Twins games anymore. If Chair Fenley or Andy Streasick can give me a contact, I



will give them the information.

Sheldon said is there any way you can do an email blast about how to make rides online? The message machine is saying that it is better to make your rides online rather than call in. Because it is either faster or something. If we do that, how do we know that that is going to be provided?

Vice Chair Paulsen said you are going to get a confirmation message. Once you do that correctly and completely, you are going to get an automatic message that is going to be sent back to you and you will be able to see that in real time. When that message was received and that they accepted your ride.

Streasick said for the online trip booking, you will actually be able to see it right in the app. So, you will request the ride and you will get the ride right away within the app. It is in there and you will see it. There is a calendar that will show all your booked rides. If you use that app, you will see that you have this ride, and it is done.

Myhre said when I first heard what Kari is talking about. Can we start in the future when we do those kinds of things, and you want us to know about this? Introduce yourself and then go into the speech? They don't say Metro Mobility on the phone recording.

Streasick said yes, I think in the future we can have the voice actor say first, "Thank you for calling Metro Mobility.

Adjournment

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

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of July 6, 2022.

Approved this 06th day of July 2022.

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