

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: August 3, 2022

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 390 Robert Steet

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

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

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

Attending From Home

Ken Rodgers, Jeffrey Dains,
Trevor Turner, Doug Cook,
Guthrie Byard

Excused

Christopher Bates,
Sam Jasmine, Patsy Murphy

Absent

Rachel Garaghty

Staff Present

Kimberly Malone, Adam Mehl,
Meredith Klekotka, Joe Barbeau,
Greg Tuveson, Alison Coleman

Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:32 p.m.

Agenda Approved

It was moved by Fuglie, seconded by Sheldon to approve the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Henricksen, seconded by Thorsen to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2022, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. Correction: Henricksen was excused at the July Meeting. **Motion carried.**

Business & Information Items

1. State Fair Presentation

Adam Mehl, Senior Marketing Development Specialist
Greg Tuveson, Assistant Manager Street Operations

Adam Mehl and Greg Tuveson spoke to the TAAC committee.

There was no recording for the initial presentation. There was a powerpoint that they shared. Metro Transit State Fair Express Service – 2021 in review

There were 104,741 rides given. There were only three sites available. It was a 9:00 a.m. weekday start time. It was an 8:00 a.m. weekend and Labor Day start time. There was no Route 960.

2022 Service. Fares.

- Focus on contactless
- \$6 Round trip cash fare
- Discounts for online and app tickets
- MVTA using their own app
- SWT using their own app
- **Express Sites**
 - 3 Metro Transit Sites + Suburban providers
- **Start times**
 - 8am Weekdays
 - 9am Weekends/Labor Day
 - Last bus 10 PM on Labor Day
- Regular Route Service
 - METRO A Line
 - Routes 3

Overview of 2022 Marketing

2. Transit fleet advertising

3. Digital marketing

- Emails to previous customers
- Social media
- Metro Transit Public Relations

Reaching Out at the Fair. There were booths at the Grandstand and the Eco Experience Kick Gas.

State Fair Transit Center. They showed the layout of where the buses come in and out and layover.

Rodgers said there has been very little, if any, accessibility for blind fare goers at the fair. This year, they are increasing their accessibility for blind travelers. And there will be audio description at a few of the shows throughout the fair. It is a first step in the right direction and eventually I am hoping that we are able at some point to have AIRA to cover the fair. So that it can be seamless from Metro Transit. Someone using AIRA with Metro Transit can just blend into AIRA at the fair. But that is a hopeful future possibility.

Chair Fenley said AIRA is essentially a wayfinding.

Graham-Raff said looking at the map. Since here isn't an express site for the north or east. I am assuming that you are aligned primarily on the regular routes and then connecting with the A-Line at Rosedale. In the past there has been issues with city bus verses the State Fair buses in terms of the stroller issue. Because folks don't have to fold up on city buses, but they do on the State Fair buses. Is there some sort of education or combination planning ahead for the fact that that is really the only option for people who use mobility devices to get to the fair from the north and the east to



hit the A-Line? That the A-Line needs to make sure that they maximize the spaces for those folks.

Tuveson said the securement area for devices cannot be used for strollers. When I was a driver, I would say: "This person needs to get in here. You find another seat." That is the way it should be. Now we know that we can't physically, or anything you know. It is more of a stern request. "I have someone with a chair or a mobile device that needs to use this." That is not just State Fair. That is all of our services are supposed to be that way. We can only do what we can do. If the operator doesn't do anything, you should call customer service/customer relations and say: "There was someone with a device and someone wouldn't move." That is the way I would have looked at it.

Before there is another question, do you want to make a comment about Southwest Transit? They are operating only eight days of the fair. Thursday through Sunday. Both weekends. And they won't have Labor Day service either.

Henricksen said if you have priority seating and someone doesn't move, does the same procedure where it is called in. Does it get logged in?

Tuveson said I have handled a lot of customer relations complaints for our department and sent it on to the supervisors. I have seen, put into a customer relations complaint. And then we address that with the supervisor and hopefully, the operator's manager will make sure that they can't just say anything. If you say something and do the best you can to get that space released to a person with a device.

Myhre said you really need to make this very clear on the website. Don't even think about laptops and computers. Think about the mobile phone and how easy it is to get that information. You are throwing a lot of stuff that we have to learn. After the pandemic, I have to relearn how to get things done. I want my phone to be able to process that information. So if Ken and I want to meet up, we can meet up. He does his part and I do my part. How can we meet at the same spot? I want the website to be really accessible enough to get different people with different disabilities where we can actually use it.

Streasick said now Jeff, to your question. It is important to point out that it is public transit and ADA rules that may still apply. If somebody has a stroller and that is why there is not room for a chair. The same rule does apply that we have at Metro Transit. They have 30 minutes to get another bus there that does have a verified seat available for somebody with a disability. If they can do that with a next scheduled trip, that is fine. But if they can't, they do need to dispatch another bus. Customer Relations is intimately aware of that requirement.

Kimberly Malone said any of those customer complaints that the customer relations calls that you make. If it is about an ADA issue, it doesn't just go to a supervisor. It goes to my team for review as well. So we are looking at that from an ADA perspective. This is a point of clarification that beyond the customer service element of that. That when they are ADA issues that are brought up that it is still coming to our team for review.

Chair Fenley said I think the overarching point is to definitely call that stuff in when it happens. Metro Transit and the Met Council need that information to address it.

Tuveson said one last thing. This is likely my last go around with the state fair. I am looking at next year to retire after 39 years. It has been a pleasure addressing you guys for the last decade. Except for the Covid stuff. It has been a pleasure and thank you.

2. TIP Presentation

Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner in Transportation Planning, spoke to the TAAC committee. I am a planner upstairs at the Metropolitan Transportation Services. Every year we produce what is known as a Transportation Improvement Program. I will be honest with you. I don't know exactly how familiar much of this group is. But we presented this to our usual groups. The Transportation Advisory Board and the Transportation Committee. Council Member Sterner suggested that we come to this group.

I think I was here probably five years ago. Which probably means that most of you weren't. I don't

know how much turnover there has been. What I am going to do today is talk a little bit about what this is and how our 500 or more transportation projects over a four-year period get into the Transportation Improvement Program. And maybe take the opportunity for questions that you might have about the process. Stop me if I am glossing over something because I present this to the TAB group every year.

Next slide. I will talk a bit about what the TIP is. Any project that is funded by the federal government or that is considered really significant, needs to be in this four-year list of transportation projects. Really significant is an indication for the most part of a project that would impact air quality. So usually, any project with a lane addition of just a mile, for example. This also includes BRT projects and light rail projects. So any project that would affect air quality. Any MPO in the country does this. The MPO is a region of over 50,000 people. So, a TIP is produced by every small, medium and large region in the country.

This is known as the STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program) at MnDOT. The reason for that is that it has to be there in order to be underway and have federal funding to come into the State of Minnesota. The important piece there is that it really puts the region's eyes using in the form of the Council and the Transportation Advisory Board on the process and on the projects that goes through there to make sure that they are compliant with our policies. Which is kind of a low bar but is the process that every region in the country goes through.

Next slide. So I will talk about the projects in the TIP. Transit makes up almost 50 percent of the TIP. Projects in the TIP are transit projects that Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council produce FTA formula funds. This also includes MVTA projects, Southwest Transit projects and the other Opt Outs. Railway projects that MnDOT programs. Those usually go through various MnDOT processes that land in the TIP. There is not a lot of Council hands on those projects. But we do approve them for this process.

The Regional Solicitation, which you may have heard about in this committee at some point. I haven't been here for a while to talk about this. This is a process that does come through the Council. It is approved by the Council to put about \$200 million every other year toward bike/ped, roadway and transit projects. Then MnDOT projects. Even in Sherburne and Wright County we have small pieces of that that are in our planning area because of census mapping. And even a piece in Houlton, Wisconsin. We are probably going to lose that after this census because that was connected by the old bridge. We haven't had a project over there in years.

So the Council approves the entire TIP and all these project types. It is about 500 projects for a four-year period, typically.

Next slide. So here is the schedule for 2023 – 2026 TIP. Where we are at right now. We just put it out for public review on May 18, 2022. We had about 18 people comment. about 30 total comments. Mostly suggesting maybe more bike/ped projects. We had one comment that just said everything should be spent on roads. Not a lot of comments directly applicable to the TIP, really. In past years we have had over 200 comments. Those are form letter comments. But after getting those comments, TAB is going to recommend approval of the TIP on August 17, 2022. Then the Council will approve it in September and then state DOT approves it in October. Federal approval from FHWA and FTA about November 1, 2022.

Next slide. So we just had our 45 day public review period. The goal is to gather feedback, information about impact, and other community knowledge related to regional transportation projects and from people who are not usually a part of the process.

A lot of the comments are more general and not necessarily about projects that are coming up in the next four years. So those project comments really do sort of affect this. For example, the TPP process that is coming up. So we do gather these comments for different purposes. The TIP itself is a very specific document with a very specific timeframe. And sometimes some of these comments aren't really timing wise in line with what is going on with the TIP. But we did get a lot of participation. We had a number of people that our virtual public meeting providing input. So, it is good to generally get people involved and interested in transportation.



Next slide. So here is a summary of what is in there. It is a four-year program. For \$5.6 billion. Five hundred projects. You can see that it is about half transit. That comes in the form of some of the bigger projects. For the most part the ABRT projects take up a big chunk of that. You can see the source in the box on the left. Federal Highway and Federal Transit make up more than \$3 billion of the \$5.6 billion with local and state taxes making up the bulk of the rest.

Next slide. If you have any questions, please ask.

Henricksen said one of my questions is when it comes to the ped and bike projects. Could you give some examples of what those types of projects are and a follow up would have been is the TIP focused on all new build or is it also focused on rehabilitation and maintenance activities?

Barbeau said I will start with the second question. The TIP is any federal funding that comes in needs to be in the TIP. So there are a lot of maintenance projects in there. In fact, I would say that the majority of roadway projects are maintenance projects. There is not a lot of expansion of roadway lanes. As for bike and pedestrian projects. Most of the projects that are in there for bike and pedestrian come through that station I talked about. We have a multiple trails and bike facilities category and a pedestrian category. A lot of the pedestrian projects are sidewalk fill in projects. Maybe doing a stretch of filling in sidewalk gaps almost anywhere. There is not a lot of big regional pedestrian projects. And then for bike projects. They tend to be trail projects. But they do need to be linear projects that can serve the purpose of recreational trails. They can almost be able to serve the purpose of transportation.

Also, a lot of projects, roadway projects, do have bike and ped amenities included in them. They don't fit that category in the table that you saw. But we do have some of that occurring in primarily roadway projects.

Henricksen said one of my last questions is does the TIP reference the co tracks or any of the ADA transition plans or any of the other type of accessibility plans or programs that are already in place?

Barbeau said not directly. Though the Regional Solicitation that the Council administers. We do have a requirement that the transportation pieces of the ADA transition plan be complete. That is a fairly new requirement. Now we are looking to establishing an amount of time within the x number of years. That is sort of an evolving thing that just happened a couple of cycles ago.

Henricksen said I only ask because if the TIP is a five-year plan to focus on funding of these projects, I think it would be beneficial if in order to get the funding for an ADA transition plan if it is referenced at some point.

Barbeau said I want to make sure I follow. Are you suggesting that the funding of a plan would be highlighted in the TIP?

Henricksen said my idea would be if you had an ADA transition plan. The transition plan needs funding to get off the ground. In 20 years, we need all of these improvements. There is a certain lack of accessibility and the transportation network, and it could even be into a sidewalk or connecting a sidewalk. But then you have this separate plan in the TIP which looks at a five-year funding to get these projects off the ground. But if there is no reference or a marrying of these two plans. It is an opportunity to get funding for those types of needs.

Barbeau said that is a good point. There are various sources of funding that are in the TIP. At least some of those that come through the Council. That is about 15 percent of the TIP could explore that option. So, for example, we have a very arduous scoring process that we just went through. But for next time we could consider a project's appearance in an ADA transition plan to be worthy of points. That is something I will take back and bring up. We won't see any results on that discussion for a couple of years because we are just finishing up the process.

Henricksen said if that was a comment during the review period of the TIP, do you think it may have gotten addressed or been somewhat incorporated a little more than now? Kind of after?

Barbeau said during the TIP public comment process? Probably not. It's more. That is the kind of comment that isn't really as directly part of the TIP as is maybe informing some of the process that



gets projects into the TIP. At least that is how I am hearing it. I think this meeting is being recorded so there are a couple of other people I am going to share this piece with that. Like Heidi Schallberg, who is in our office that is the ADA Inner Pedestrian person. As I am hearing it, it is more of a comment that would be addressing other pieces that contribute to the TIP as opposed to directly at the TIP. Does that make sense? Aside from language, you could put in the TIP about transition plans. But in terms of like really impacting the projects is almost a step removed from the TIP.

Chair Fenley said so, in terms of either like the number of projects or dollars. If you do have this information, how does our metropolitan area compare to other MPO's in terms of their TIPs? Is it relatively equivalent? Where they are spending \$5 billion or so on projects?

Barbeau said I don't know the answer to that. I suspect so. But I don't know for sure. Most federal formulas are based for the most part on population. I wouldn't say that I have ever found the totals in other TIPs.

Myhre said is this only for the Twin Cities or is it for the State of Minnesota? How do projects get picked? Sometimes it feels like the suburbs, or the outer people don't get it. There are different parts of Minnesota that have some ideas. How does that work?

Barbeau said so the Metropolitan Council's MPO planning area is primarily the seven-county region and then thanks to analysis done on the 2010 census. Small pieces of Wright County and Sherburne County. So you will also find urban areas around Duluth and Rochester and Fargo and Grand Forks. They all have their own processes. Much of the state isn't in those areas and that is more directly coming from MnDOT. So MnDOT has a lot of formulas that they distribute geographically and other pieces. Anything that happens that comes into this region from MnDOT, for example, has to be in our TIP. But again, there are a lot of processes statewide and then more for local and regional that populate the TIP.

What we are doing doesn't really address greater Minnesota. But they are privy to a lot of the same funding processes that we are through the state DOT.

Vice Chair Paulsen said you said that the arterial BRT is a TIP project. So, in your words, how does that project benefit verses any other project that we look at?

Barbeau said I don't know if I have a good answer to that question.

Chair Fenley said can I ask a clarifying question? So, are you BRT compared to other BRT projects in the TIP compared to other Transit Improvement Projects?

Vice Chair Paulsen said right overall.

Chair Fenley said like a dollar comparison?

Vice Chair Paulsen said what he said is that certain projects get approved. Certain projects like the arterial BRT. How does that get prioritized verses any other project that is in the TIP?

Barbeau said somebody from Metro Transit probably would be better equipped to answer that question than I am. They provide us with their program and their various funding resources. That includes the high-profile projects like ABRT and BRT where they are getting various funding from various sources. It also includes bus purchases, track maintenance and things of that nature.

Vice Chair Paulsen said so it is a combination because they have other sources, and they have other factors that give them that rating that qualifies them for that funding. Is that what I am hearing?

Barbeau said so they have various funding sources that are to be used in various ways. I don't know a lot about those funding sources. But there are various FTA sources, and some are for bigger expansion projects, and some are for maintenance and things of that nature. For buses. So Metro Transit and our other transit providers provide their own programs and projects and they are sort of constrained by the funding sources that they get. We are getting to the point where probably someone from Metro Transit would answer this a lot better than I can. So I am sorry about that.



Streasick said I just wanted to remind folks with regard to your question, Mr. Chair. How this might relate to other Metropolitan Planning Organizations' TIPs. Remember that the Council is still pretty unique as far as MPOs go in terms of the amount of different communities that we represent and the amount of space that we represent within one large metropolitan area as a unified MPO. So there is a more collaborative and sometimes a contested process in deciding what we fund and how we fund it and where it goes. It is almost similar to like one states' Medicaid service. If you know a lot about one area's MPO, then you know a lot about one area's MPO. But there is a lot that is not transferrable. So it gets challenging to compare one TIP to the other and see how they would match up because so often it is like apples to oranges.

Chair Fenley said I found this quite informative. Thank you Councilmember Sterner for suggesting that Joe come here. I think maybe once a year would be good with a little more detail on process. Then the question about overlaps between the ADA Transition Plan and the TIP plan. I am sure there are projects that are on both of those plans. There is at least one, I would imagine. I could be wrong. But highlighting those and maybe seeing more not super detailed timeline. But a little more like this is happening, this is happening, this is happening. Year one, year two, year three. I think we could learn a lot from more regular presentations on this.

Henricksen said I don't know if as a committee, we were offered or in the know of the opportunity to give public comment on the plan. Obviously, it is open to the public and as a resident of Minnesota I am sure I could have found something. But I am just wondering, in general, not even about this TIP. But in a lot of plans that we might have comment on as a committee. Because it looked like agencies also responded to the TIP. If there is any interest. Just as a committee to know when these things come about. Hopefully a month before. It would give the time necessary for us to introduce comments to these plans that I think are really important to steer dollars in a way that we might want to see certain projects or opportunities funded. I don't know how that looks or what that might be like. I would just offer that for thought for the committee.

Chair Fenley said that sounds like a good idea. More of a formal approach between your office and this committee. I know I did receive an email. I didn't respond or provide comment. I don't know if everybody got the email. I think that is another good suggestion. We can have like "Alright TAAC. Here is your opportunity to comment, and then we can comment if we want to."

Henricksen said I understand, Mr. Chair. It does get a little tricky work. if you are representing the TAAC. The TAAC has to have some formal "This is our position." Or if you are just a resident or you are a member of the public commenting. But just in general, it was kind of a moment where we are remiss. We didn't get a chance to offer any comment for this particular TIP. Even though maybe it wouldn't have had as much impact. I think it is a good opportunity to just at least flag with everybody. There is an opportunity here. If anyone wants to take it, just take it.

Chair Fenley said I think we did as individuals have the opportunity. But it was not presented to us formally as a group. But I think that is another good suggestion.

Myhre said if we are going to get those emails, maybe they could send us to a website where we could watch a video and learn some things about it. If I am a user and use it every day, which I do pretty much with Metro Mobility and the city bus. And when someone sticks me in a car. But beyond that, I want to know a little bit more. If you are not in this committee, you are not going to know all the ins and outs. You might be asking a really good question. But I am missing something in that question. If I can go to that website and read a little bit about it. Then I can go back and answer the question. If you do a survey and send them out. Somewhere we can go and learn a little bit about it. if my name is used again. I recently got an email about transportation and how I use it. Some of the questions. If you don't really know what is going on, you can't really answer it correctly. So I don't know how much of your feedback is really valid or invalid. I don't know if they know the whole scope of what is really going on.

3. Metro Transit Micro

Meredith Klekotka, Shared Mobility Program Manager, spoke to the TAAC committee. We touched base about a year ago when everyone was still in lockdown. I think it was last July that I presented

to this group. We had a lot of developments with the microtransit project. I am subbing in for John Harper, who couldn't be here today. But I have been the project manager of this project for the last year and a half to two years. We incorporated some of the feedback from this group. So, I will get to it in the end about how we address the specific things. First, I will just do an overall project update as a refresher.

Next slide. For those of you who are unfamiliar. We are launching Metro Transit Micro. Which is a micro transit service in North Minneapolis. It is a 12-month pilot. This is a joint project between MTS, who runs Metro Mobility, and Metro Transit because we are both interested in this style of service. Since it is a new style of service, and it fits better a little bit under contracted operations, we thought we would do this jointly.

Microtransit is demand responsive transit. So, the idea behind it is app-enabled so you can kind of see that image. Somebody requesting a similar service on their phone. The routes are dynamically generated, so you don't have to be along a fixed route line and wait there. You can be picked up where you are at. But the idea is that you should share trips with people. So it is very similar to a TNC style service like Uber and Lyft. With the exception that you are sharing rides with somebody else. I should say specifically because it is relevant to this conversation in that the technology is privately managed. So no transit agency in the country manages their own microtransit software. It is always bid out and it is made by other companies. Typically, drivers and operators can either be managed by the same software company or they are managed by the organization or the transit agency that is running the service.

Next slide. So this is our service area at North Minneapolis. You can see on the map it is up at Golden Valley, West Broadway and it is hemmed in by the highways there and the regional park. We are providing some park access. There is a couple of reasons why we chose this area for the pilot. But I think it too stems from the goals the most. The goal for this microtransit. This first pilot was expanding mobility choices specifically for low wealth areas. For communities of color and for people with accessibility needs. The second was expanding access to our high frequency or fixed route transitways.

So this project area kind of hit both of those. And we saw lots of ridership retained along the C-Line on this corridor. Which is really important because we knew that there were a lot of transit riders. People that would continue to ride through the pandemic.

Next slide. As you saw on that map, it is a pretty small service area. So we are about 2½ square miles, which is unusually small. One of the reasons we did it is we wanted to keep wait times very low for users. So it could really work more like a TNC service. Like an Uber or Lyft. So getting people in under 10 minutes. That you wouldn't have to preschedule rides. So the service design is not corner to corner, which is where you have to walk or roll to meet the vehicle. We are actually doing curb to curb service. So that means it will pick you up at your exact location and drop you off at your exact destination. It won't necessarily be the most direct path because you might pick up other passengers on the way. But it is definitely in terms of destination, we will get you where you need to go.

For the service hours. We are trying to cover all or most of the high frequency fixed route in the service area. So, we are running 5:00 a.m. to midnight. Which almost exactly covers that service area. For fares. Typically, microtransit would actually have a higher fare because it is a premium service because you are getting picked up at your destination and dropped off at your destination. But actually, for the purposes of the pilot. We are keeping the fares the same as the bus in all eligible discount programs. So normal transfer rules apply. If you are eligible for TAP, that is eligible student discounts for any of those programs.

It is a very small pilot. So we have five vehicles with two spares. So we will never have more than five vehicles out at a time for that service area. They are Metro Mobility-style vehicles. There are technically three wheelchair spots in them. But reasonably it is two. So the way that we have set up the software. Because it can be hard to maneuver three. To get it in there. We have it set up as accessible for two spots.

Next slide. A little bit about the difference between Metro Transit's role verses MTS. Just to clarify.



So Metro Transit has been responsible for marketing, promotion, service design and software procurement for the microtransit software. MTS is responsible for contracted operations, running the system for the 12 months, and service design.

Next slide. So these are our two vendors for this pilot for the 12 months. This is probably the biggest news for the contracting updates. So the software as a service (SAAS) contract. That is for the Microtransit software that will be in the vehicles. It will be part of the op that people download to request rides. The provider will be Via Mobility. It is one of the oldest providers in microtransit. They have 160 deployments across the country and across the world. They are international as well.

One of the reasons we selected them. They have the most experience in deployment. They also have the most paratransit experience. I think that there is interest on the MTS side, which is one of the reasons that we are doing this in partnership. But Via also delivers vehicles and operators. So they are full service. We are not using them that way this time. But that is of interest, I think, in the future. This is a good vendor for us.

The second contract for the operations is Transit Team, who is one of the existing Metro Mobility providers. So they have lots of experience with the vehicles and the service area because their garages are there.

Next slide. A little bit on the timeline. We are set to launch on Saturday, September 10, 2022. It is five short weeks away. In mid-May, we started a public education and in reach to our garages, so our operators know what to expect when they see these vehicles out on the street that are branded Metro Transit. In mid-July we started some service and software training that will continue into early August. It has been slightly delayed due to the app launch. Then in late August, so about two weeks prior to service, you can expect to see some of the marketing campaign launch.

Next slide. A little bit about the outreach and marketing approach where you can anticipate seeing some of the current materials that we are putting out there. This is a little bit tougher than the State Fair, for example. It is a very targeted service area. So we can't broadly broadcast Metro Transit micro because it is just for the service area.

So we have been doing outreach beginning in May. We are planning on having a kick-off event. So a Saturday precedent. We are going to open at the Open Streets Broadway, which is that same day. We will be sending invites to community members and some of the representatives out there. But most of the external outreach is happening through the neighborhood or community groups through our outreach team.

On the marketing side you will see most of the print materials, etc. are on our own assets. So interior cards on the buses. The pylon on the C-Line and other BRT routes in the area and those types of materials. We are having kind of a small social media presence. And website and any earned media that we get as part of the launch.

Next slide. I just wanted to call out some of the great feedback that we got from this group last time. And how we incorporated things in here. I am actually missing a couple. So, one of the things that I think that I heard this last July, when I addressed this group was that you definitely wanted to see curb-to-curb as part of it. As opposed to corner-to-corner and having to meet the vehicle. So definitely we will be doing that style of service.

The second thing that we asked for that is not on this formal feedback, was for a video of how to board the vehicles and how to use the app. Because that could be a barrier to even people scheduling, which I thought was a great point. We are now working on it. Due to timing, we won't have it exactly at launch. But we have 12 months of service. So we will probably have it within the first month or two of service. To be able to publish that out there.

Some of the other comments that we received was the WCAG. The accessibility content for online. We got the feedback that 2.2, even though it wasn't fully released yet during the RFP process, that that would be ideal. Unfortunately, none of the vendors came back with it. None of them had 2.2. We had about nine respondents. All the major players in the microtransit field. We actually did select Via. They were the ones that were furthest along. Most vendors just had the WCAG 2.0.



version. So they were ready to go with WCAG 2.1. So that definitely contributed in the selection process. The other requests that we received for the applications were fully compatible with the voiceover and talk back. And then a messaging capability to the driver. If there are any issues with pick up or where somebody is going to be. Or there might be a delay getting out of the door.

So, for the results. We do have messaging capabilities. It needs to be put in upon the request. So as you request your ride, you can add notes for the driver for your pick up and your drop off. If there is anything special like going around to the back door, etc. Then we do have a call-in booking option. As far as I know, I can check on this and get back to you because I haven't gotten a response from our vendor yet. But the voice over and talk back I believe does work with the app.

This is one of the most experienced paratransit providers. So I would be really shocked if that wasn't the case. But we just haven't gone over it explicitly.

I am happy to take questions.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I am excited about this project and how quickly it can be replicated across the system. How quickly could it be replicated if we were to be able to do something like this?

Kleotka said this has taken quite a while to get off the ground. But it wasn't necessarily because of the complexity of the project. I think that you would need about a year of headway if I was to guess, from the decision to make it. To do it for a certain area. Maybe a year and a half to launch. The long part, quite honestly, is procuring the service.

There are a lot of vendors in this space, and it takes time to vet them. And I anticipate that the Council will want to test a couple different vendors over the course of deploying.

Myhre said I think this is a great idea. But I have seen this in Human Services. I have seen this everywhere. You get a great idea, but you are still behind on your homework and I am a little concerned when we go out and actually use it. I don't live in that area but an example, I could get stranded. Or something could happen. You mentioned that you are still working on it. Or you haven't got to that point. Or you are not completely. I don't know if all the bugs are out of the picture and if you still have some serious issues you need to look at. I don't want to be ending up. Somebody in that area, say a social worker, says that for 12 months this would be perfect for you. And then there are bugs and stuff and there is no way to fix the problem because you have to use this app that is kind of you don't know if it is going to work or not. You didn't do any test pilot. You didn't ask a group of people here. Put it on and test it out. Let's see if you have a solid plan.

Kleotka said this is something new. This is a pilot. I am absolutely sure that there will be things to work out. There will be kinks along the way. But we do have call-in numbers. We have done our best to make those faint points a lot easier. So we will always have a call-in and a dispatcher that can help if you are stranded and your vehicle is not getting there. So those will be staffed. Your point is definitely heard.

Chair Fenley said I understand that hundreds of these are happening all around the world. Actively. Is that correct?

Kleotka said I think there are three active in the Twin Cities region right now. MVTA and SouthWest primed the services that you saw for the State Fair. Those are microtransit. I am not sure if microtransit specifically is serving the State Fair but they both run their own microtransit service.

Chair Fenley said is the curb-to-curb feature within that zone? Or is it only the pick-up curb and then you can go outside the zone for drop off? Does pick up and drop off all have to be within those two square miles?

Kleotka said correct. It all has to be within the 2½ miles. We do have the expansion zone option. But that will be in part based on customer feedback and what we are seeing on wait times. There is an opportunity to expand because that is one of the benefits of the software. You don't have to do a whole new scheduling route like on fixed route. You can have that little bit of flexibility.

Chair Fenley said for clarification. This is for anybody who wants to ride. Anybody who wants to



participate. Not just Metro Mobility folks.

Klekotka said correct.

Henricksen said you asked one of my questions about is this the service area from drop off to pick up? The follow up question to that was is that a pilot project or program? So you are getting it off the ground to get some data to see if it is going to move forward. What metrics are you looking for in such a small area to make the project kind of maybe to expand to the larger area?

Klekotka said the two goals that I said before. The expanded mobility choice for low wealth, communities of color. Those are part of the metrics. So we turned that set of goals to key performance indicators. So we have data sets that we want to see. Some standards that are set that we want to either hit or go above or go below. And I actually had that slide for the Transportation Committee. I just didn't include it here. So if there is interest, I can include that when I send out the updated stats as well.

Henricksen said you target a certain area. You set your goals. It doesn't work so the program doesn't move forward. Where it could have worked maybe in a different area. So that balancing act, I can understand is probably difficult. You probably vetted this for these particular reasons. I was just curious what those metrics were.

Klekotka said one thing that is absolutely for sure is this is not going to perform like traditional fixed route transit. One of the things I am trying to press and remind everyone. It's not going to perform like our traditional fixed route. So, those kind of standard performance indicators we would be looking at. Like passengers per in service hour are not going to be similar. So we need to be looking very heavily at qualitative feedback from riders.

So we have two survey points through the project that we were working with our survey team at Metro Transit on. to do formal surveying process for riders where we can hear some of that feedback directly and incorporate that into that decision making process.

Chair Fenley said I do have a follow up to that question. Accessible rides provided. And also, the subsidy per ride. I am guessing you are going to dive into both those numbers.

Klekotka said yes. I forget how we exactly captured the subsidy per ride because that is not my area of expertise. But that concept we actually have in there. I can send the whole spreadsheet if people are interested.

Myhre said is there going to be a website? Or how do they learn about all the things that you have been teaching us today? Kind of like the ins and outs and how this works. We got this, but how does it all work? if I am in that area and I am qualified to use it. I can actually use it correctly to the best of my ability. Then another thing is: Did you pick a service area that has a lot of things to do or are just house to house or what? I don't know how the length works.

Klekotka said the service area has a very good mix, I would say. So one of the things that we tried to hit was a mix of residential, regional destinations, and amenities like grocery stores. So we do have a regional park in there. We have included two entry points for park access, grocery store access and residential access.

Myhre said are you very clear about? Metro Mobility is very clear about. I bring my cart and they can put my groceries. Are you going to be very clear that when I go grocery shopping I can only have so many bags or whatever? I don't know how the vehicles are set up. Do you have some guidelines in how this all works?

Klekotka said they are set up exactly like Metro Mobility buses except they will be full point of sale. So they will look interior wise. The point-of-sale setup will be the same as the busses. So you will have a place where you could put in cash or scan your GoTo card where you can visually show a ticket to the driver. So those will be a little different. The interior will look like a Metro Mobility vehicle.

Myhre said If you set up some kind of guidelines like ABC, 1, 2, 3. And how this works and then you can get some really good feedback. If t sucks or if it works. If you kind of know how Metro



Mobility. They are supposed to come to our doors. They are supposed to do A, B, and C. We kind of got the routine. Then if it doesn't work, we can go to Customer Complaint. You want our feedback and so I think it would be very helpful to have some kind of layout in how this works. Including the app. If the app might be a little bit confusing. And then you will get your feedback the way you want it for the pilot. Metro Mobility does this every so often.

Chair Fenley said thank you Heidi. That is actually a very good point. I wouldn't want a Metro Mobility rider expecting it to have the same level of service that Metro Mobility does. So that is a good point.

Streasick said you know, in a simple way, Heidi and members of the committee, what I am hearing you describe is just a service guide. Maybe just framing it up as simply as that, it really, we need to make sure as part of a rollout is some accessible document available online is essentially a service guide that talks about the 10-minute window. It talks about the service area. It talks about the fact that it is inclusive to pick up and drop off. And it is the same fare as the city bus and all the social fares apply.

Myhre said then they come with an app, and you have to download it. At least I know what I am getting myself in to. It could turn out to be a really good project. If it gets off the ground, great. I am all for it. I just need to know a little more before I jump into it.

Kleotka said we might be looking to you for help there. If Metro Mobility has a guide that really works. That is in a format that people really like, we can just replicate that.

Myhre said is that O.K. to do? Or do they do that? I don't know if it is legal or not legal.

Streasick said oh yeah. We can absolutely information share. It is one Council.

4. TAAC 30th Anniversary

TAAC Chair David Fenley spoke to the TAAC committee. We had a first meeting last week. We have scheduled our next meeting in another week. Right now, we are focusing on two things. One of which would be a timeline of the 30 years that the TAAC has been operating. And also, a driver or operator or technician recognition award from specifically the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. So those are two things that we want to do. We did connect with Metropolitan Council Communications Department. They are confident that they can find the box of documents from the 90's that have all of the information about the history of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. So we will be able to put that together. And also put a call out to essentially everybody to nominate drivers and operators. Then we will come up with some sort of process to narrow those down and give those awards away.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I think this was a good first steps. The marketing team really was excited about it. I think Sara was excited about it. That really shows the internal partnership within the system. And the importance that we understand a small bit of recognition goes a long way in the retention of keeping your employees and keeping them happy. I think if TAAC can play a part. That is my goal. To make sure that we play a small part in that. Overall, I think that shows the value that we have to the community.

Chair Fenley said I think that what you were trying to remind me of is we are hoping to have the awards go out by October, which is Disability Employment Awareness Month. Or at least the end of October.

Myhre said I was going to say, we should talk about because I remember being a part of, we need transportation. I think it was the 90's. when we had the old location. I don't know if we are going to talk about when we had to fight to have the transportation. We need to see all sides of the 30 years. How we got to where we are today.

Chair Fenley said bring that to the next meeting. Details. We will discuss. Any TAAC member. If you have tidbits of information or facts about TAAC. You can email me. You can ask to be part of the work group. We had a suggestion to reach out to old TAAC Chairs. And even old TAAC members.



Vice Chair Paulsen said if you know of any former members of TAAC or former Chairs that would like to be a part of this, definitely reach out to David or Andy or Alison or myself. Let us know. I think this is definitely a start of something that we could do at least on an annual basis.

Chair Fenley said historical items. Give it all to us. We will sort it out. I am thinking of some sort of interactive or at least timeline on our page of the Metropolitan Council's website. It will let people know what the history of TAAC is.

Reports

Subcommittee

1. **Blue Line – Ken Rodgers**

The Blue Line Extension Committee. The former existence has retired. And we are in the process of reorganizing and re-appointments to the Blue Line Extension. I have been asked if I would continue representing TAAC on the Blue Line Extension Citizen Advisory Committee through this new, two-year period. I have happily agreed to that. So we will be starting up soon. I think our next meeting isn't until either late August or September as the new team. This is a restart for the last final home stretch of the Blue Line Extension. As the route has been determined at this point. And now, all the really detailed work starts, which is really the exciting part for me. Where we get to have input on station alignment and station amenities and all that kind of stuff. I am happy to be a part of that when it starts back up again soon.

2. **Green Line – Christopher Bates**

This item was not presented.

3. **Gold Line – Darrell Paulsen**

The Gold Line was proudly presented at the Philippine Days in Woodbury a couple of weeks ago. Liz Jones was out there with her staff.

4. **Purple Line – Darrell Paulsen**

The Purple Line formally met. Last month was their first meeting. I am impressed by the caliber of folks that were picked to be on that committee. I serve on the committee as well. I did attend another meeting with local officials about the merger. Some folks from MnDOT were there. It was an overall meeting of how we are going to propose the potential. There are about 12 changes along that route, that we are looking at. Maybe changing now. We are trying to narrow that down. We have not picked our formal structure yet. I assume they will pick it like they did with the Gold Line. That they will follow the same structure. Maybe they don't want to and will do something else.

Bus Priority Seating TAAC Work Group

Chair Fenley said I have seen a few bus advertisements focused specifically on priority seating and what it is there for. That probably came out of the work that group did. It is on the side of the buses.

Myhre said we still need to do some teaching because people are still using the front seats. Just randomly. While the whole back of the bus is empty. It would be awesome if we could do the signs in different languages.

Chair's Report

This was not addressed.

Public Invitation

This was not addressed.

Member Comment

Vice Chair Paulsen said that he was assaulted and robbed while waiting for the train.

Rodgers said I just wanted to mention as a reminder that Alison sent out a request from Doug Cook to complete a short input survey about the recent change in the Light Rail system. Where they are using two train cars as opposed to three train cars. They want you to share what kind of experience that creates for us. I sent in some extensive comments on how that affects me as a blind traveler on the Light Rail. Two cars really do make a huge difference verses the three cars that we are used to. I really acknowledge the reasons why we are trying this for safety and trying to improve the confidence of riders that this is a safe system. So I would just encourage people if you haven't done that, please consider doing that. What affect would that have on just a two-car train system verses the regular three cars that we are used to? How would that affect you? I think it is really important for them to know that affects our disability community.

Myhre said I wanted to piggyback on what he said. When they have rallies. I have been at the Capitol when we could go to the Capitol and speak our minds. In a good way. I have seen those trains so packed you couldn't even breathe. Now that it is down to two, it is going to be a lot worse. He is right. We should give our thoughts and ideas.

Chair Fenley said please do respond to that because the Met Council does take that into consideration.

Vice Chair Paulsen said one of the questions that I had. Because I do ride the light rail back and forth as a connection. I have seen the two cars verses three. When they had three cars, that didn't often mean that two of them were accessible and one wasn't. So I don't know that I noticed a difference other than the fact that people aren't so spread out and maybe people have to learn to be a little bit quieter. Because they are closer together. So they maybe don't have that interaction of a full length of the train like they used to. It actually encourages a different type of decorum and different type of behavior when you are forced to be closer together.

I think it is imperative that we look at this issue. I don't see any reason why we can't go from three cars to two cars. That was a long, positive response to the change. But it wasn't without great thought and understanding of the system. I can understand what could be challenging about this as well. Putting people closer together could cause more harmful interaction. I disagree. I think over time it would greatly improve.

Turner said I just wanted to echo Darrell saying that. I have ridden the light rail recently. I get the concept of the two car trains. With the hope that you will be able to monitor that activity. A driver would be. But I personally think that if the driver is too busy driving the train, he is not going to be able to enforce the rule. I think that having somebody doing a sweep every once in a while. I have been on the train when nobody checks the fares. I haven't seen a fare checker in months. The last time I was riding the train, people were smoking on it. A sign came on that said smoking was not allowed but people were smoking anyway. People were going up and down the train car. Starting fights.

I have to hide my visual cane because I worry that if they see my visual cane, they will target me. They may think that because I am blind, I am an easy target. I think people with disabilities are easy targets for assault on the light rail. On the bus, I feel totally safe. But on the light rail, I have been avoiding the light rail, if possible. Because fortunately for me, our office, the Minnesota Council on Disability office, is on University and Snelling. Fortunately, the 94 bus stops there. So I don't have to take the light rail to get to the office. I do need to take the light rail to the Capitol building, which I do a lot of work at. It is very frustrating having to avoid the light rail.

I am a big proponent of public transit and I love the light rail and the light rail systems. In Minnesota, we just aren't enforcing it enough and the light rail is just ripe with potential assault. There needs to be more frequent fare checks and frequent security on that light rail. Because it just isn't safe anymore.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I do want to clarify one thing. This did not happen on a train or on a bus. It

happened to me in broad daylight in a public space of the platform. So having fare checkers and having police presence available or even having some community people present like a community officer or a service community officer or similar to what we do at the airport. With people coming in and out of the airport. If we had some of those on our transit system, I think our light rail stops would be a lot safer. But let me reclarify. That didn't stop me from riding the train. That didn't stop me from taking the train where I was supposed to go and where I was supposed to be. So I feel completely safe riding our system. Whether it is daytime or whether it is 2:00 in the morning. I do think there is definitely a need for some other eyes on the ground other than video surveillance. Other than the train operator. Other than the local law enforcement police officers. Other than the transit police officers. It was interesting. While I was having my interaction, right after my interaction, they wanted me to go identify the suspect. I didn't feel that that was appropriate for me to do. I was in a safe spot to do that. They wanted me to go to the transit center and fill out a report. They picked up someone and showed me a picture of him and I identified him.

Chair Fenley said regarding Ken's original point during Member Comment, if you have an opinion on the three car LRT moving down to the two car LRT, please fill out that survey. And also, another reminder that this is not technically an official agenda item. So Metro Transit is not taking notes on this right now. if you have issues on the trains or the buses, you have to call it in. What I am thinking is we will maybe have a safety agenda item in September or October. Just a reminder to folks that your comments in Member Comment, are not taken under advisement by the Metro Transit staff member right now.

Myhre said we have to figure out how we can still be in the community and not freak ourselves out so much that we can't do what we need to do. I had it on the bus and Darrell had it on the train platform. Maybe we can talk about this somewhere.

Chair Fenley said I think having an official safety agenda item discussion in the next few months is maybe a good idea. I think it was a few months ago we did talk about it. We can table this topic right now and have a higher-level discussion about safety at another TAAC meeting.

Thorsen said I know I have essential tremors. I know that one of the characteristics of that is that when you are overly anxious, the performance of basic skills. The harder you try, the worse it gets. The worse you perform. I am thinking about how anxiety with some disabilities. If somebody says to calm down, in the middle of a tremor, it gets worse.

Streasick said I would not tell anybody what feedback to leave. But I will say that there are many connections. To make a schedule, those doors on those trains cannot be open for very long. For people with any kind of a mobility difference, there are absolutely connections that I can currently make with a third car train. Where I can just make it to that last door on the third car train that I can't make on a two-car train. People should balance what they think is safer. The perception of a two-car train, potentially being safer or the perspective of waiting 10 or more extra minutes on the platform. As people consider what feedback to leave. I just wanted to put that out there as something to keep in mind.

Vice Chair Paulsen said my point was, is that third car going to be accessible all the time? Or is it not an accessible car? I am O.K. if it is two cars, and they are accessible. But if it is three cars and only one is accessible.

Rodgers said all of the cars are accessible.

Chair Fenley said so we have the survey. The information is not being gathered now. The information is being gathered by the survey. We can continue to talk about this. We have a few more minutes. But you will have more impact by providing this information to the survey. Rather than right here. But we can continue to talk about this if you want.

Myhre said we talk about safety. We talk about people. But we don't talk about when we are out in the community and have to watch our environment. How do we get help when something happens?

Vice Chair Paulsen said we have to manage our own risk. We have different expectations on how we should operate. I think people that are watching us don't often allow us the opportunity to



manage our own risk. And then put the necessary expectations on us and supports with it that gives us the opportunity to shine and succeed.

Myhre said we are talking about being out in the community. More people are coming out of institutions. Minnesota could step up and we could be a really good example. We could teach other states.

Vice Chair Paulsen said we as good transit riders. We have to be good stewards. And good ambassadors of transit and what transit means. When I represent folks that don't use transit at all. They will say things like "Well good for you. It works for you. You should use it." or "Now I know two people that use it." The reality is I have to learn to shift that narrative and say, "How often do you not use your car?" Then we start to think about that. Then they start to say: "I could use my car less on the weekends and maybe use transit." You have to build those bridges. I think people with disabilities often can do that. But we have to do it in such a way that it doesn't look like they are saying: "It only works for you. I understand why these people ride it. but I don't need it." Because we all need it.

Chair Fenley said we will definitely have safety as an agenda item. Maybe even next month.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:29 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 August 3, 2022.

Approved this 3rd day of August 2022.

Council Contact:

Alison Coleman, Recording Secretary
Alison.Coleman@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1701

David Fenley, TAAC Chair
david.fenley@state.mn.us
651-361-7809

Darrell Paulsen, TAAC Vice Chair
darrellpaulsen@yahoo.com
651-455-3013

