

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting date: December 4, 2024

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

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

- ☒ Michele Severson, MCD
- ☐ Erik Henriksen, MCD
- ☒ Diane Graham-Raff, MAAA
- ☒ Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- ☐ Heidi Myhre, MCCD
- ☒ Claudia Fuglie, MCCD
- ☒ Richard Rowen, AARP MN

Ex-officio:

- ☒ Andy Streasick, Metro Mobility
- ☐ Cheryl Schmidt, Metro Mobility Service Center (interim)
- ☒ Douglas Cook, Metro Transit Customer Advocate
- ☐ Anjuli Cameron, Metropolitan Council

☐ = present, E = excused

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:30 p.m.

Agenda approved

It was moved by Vice-Chair Paulsen, seconded by member 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 Vice-Chair Paulsen, seconded by member Thorsen to approve the minutes of the September 4, 2024, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Business and information items

1. METRO Gold Line BRT Update

Alicia Vap and Liz Jones from Metro Transit presented an update of the upcoming Gold Line opening. Most of the construction has been completed. March 22, 2025 is the scheduled

opening day. The Gold Line will be running 75% of the route on its own bus lanes and right of way. All day service approximately 5am-midnight with 10 minute headways during weekdays.

The Kellogg bridge closed to traffic on July 29th, will reopen in late 2026 or early 2027. The Gold Line will open on a detour.

What to expect now through opening day. Travel time testing and a mock schedule to trial out. Landscaping. Integration testing communications and systems. Making sure real-time signs and cameras all work and are connected. Driver training will take place in early 2025.

Goals for opening day include spreading awareness about BRT and how to safely ride and interact with the bus guideway. Partner with agency stakeholders, corridor community organizations, businesses, school districts, and colleges and universities. Host grand opening events that celebrate the opening of the lines and get some media attention.

Vice-Chair Paulsen asked if rides will be free the first couple of weeks like other BRT openings. Answer is not as of right now.

Vice-Chair Paulsen asked about any issues or changes with the heating elements in the stations, it always seems to be an afterthought. Wants to know how to get it closer so folks with disabilities, children, and people with strollers will be able to use them. Answer was there are somewhat closer, but not sure on exactly how much. Hard to balance needs of them being close and out of reach of vandals. Vice-Chair Paulsen stated this is an issue that needs to be fixed, also urged their operation to be open earlier in the season like October 1.

2. Metro Mobility Program Overview

Andy Streasick from Metro Mobility presented an overview of Metro Mobility. Due to pandemic supply line disruptions, buses were kept on much longer than their normal use. This should be rectified by Q1 in 2025. Streasick stated that approximately 1/3 of rides are considered “non-ADA” rides by federal standards. The ADA does not permit transit agencies to have any capacity constraints in ADA paratransit.

Due to some legislative changes, the premium on-demand service as seen a significant increase in use. The pilot allows use much later than normal service in some areas.

A question was asked about a non-ADA rides being requested during the peak time window. Streasick answered that it may be moved to a non-peak time.

Metro Mobility is piloting a new routing and communication system for its drivers with real time traffic and weather information. There are numbers of issues with tablets being connected to the router and to the tablet staying plugged in. A bumpy street will disconnect the tablet from the power source. Not looking to move further into that technology until those issues are fixed. However, the current system is obsolete and will need to be replaced.

There was an issue is a Metro Mobility driver refusing service to a client with a service dog. That particular operator bluffed her way through the required training and is no longer a driver with Metro Mobility.

A question from member Sheldo about not being able to use the online system. Streasick replied that some users will need to clear their cache.

Member Jasmine had a comment about regarding issues with payment, service times and Transit Team asking if they are traveling with a service dog. She expressed concern that they are using it to deny people service on the next available vehicle. Streasick replied that the next contract language with providers will tighten up bonuses for providers. Nobody has the ability to deduct money from a GoTo card after the fact. The reason providers ask about service animals is to plan for capacity issues. Due to varying size of dogs, they threat the animal as the size of a person for capacity planning.

Member Rodgers expressed concern that there is a trend of premium on demand providers denying service animals.



Vice-Chair Paulsen stated that some Metro Mobility vehicles have little black boxes that intrude into the stairwell and some vehicles do not have adequate heat. Streasick stated that the box is for cash payments. This is the second place we have had it. The previous location led to several customers injuring themselves. There is a issue with the pump for the rear heater. Metro Mobility and Ford are working on a fix.

Member Fuglie stated that some drivers are saying they are told not to listen to passengers on how to be put on the lift. Streasick answered they contractually do not have to follow a customers direction but should consider it.

Subcommittee Reports

Blue Line – Ken Rodgers. They are narrowing down the actual platform design. An alignment tour was taken by Chair Paulsen, Member Rodgers, and Member Fuglie. Displacement came up a lot as well as accessibility concerns. Member Fuglie and Member Rodgers stated a lot of work has gone into those issues.

Public invitation

No Public comment

Member comment

Doug Cook requested feedback regarding electronic signage at bus stops. He asked if it was preferred to have a dark background with white light or a dark background with yellow light. He believes that the white light would be higher contrast and easier to see. Vice-Chair Paulsen expressed preference for white light. Chair Fenley and Vice-Chair Paulsen will look into it further.

Chair Fenley stated that the January meeting will not be held due to the federal holiday.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:30 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 December 4, 2024.

Approved this 4th day of June 2025.

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