

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting Date: June 01, 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

Excused Christopher Bates,
Kari Sheldon, Claudia Fuglie,
Patty Thorsen, Diane Graham-Raff
Trevor Turner

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

Attended from home
Sam Jasmine
Ken Rodgers
Rachel Garaghty

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

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 Vice Chair Paulsen, seconded by Rowan 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 Dains, seconded by Jasmine to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2022, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Business & Information Items

1. Police Review Action Plan

Leslie Kandaras, Chief of Staff at Metro Transit, and Celina Martina, Senior Manager Equity & Inclusion at Metro Transit, spoke to the TAAC committee.

Leslie Kandaras said together we're going to provide you with an update on the Safety and Security Action Plan. This will actually be the third time you have heard about a portion of this project. I will start with providing a little bit of background and context before turning it over to Celina, who will share with you some updates since the last time we were here.

Next slide. I will begin by talking a little bit about this broader project that the Metropolitan

Council's Metro Transit Police Review. Then Celina will talk about how we have been developing the Draft Action Plan. Some of the key components that are in the draft as it stands right now. But then we also wanted to hear from you as a committee. How do you want to continue to be informed about this work as we move forward?

Next slide. The piece we are here to talk to you about today. This Draft Action Plan is part of a broad project. One that is almost two years old now. So the first phase of this was community engagement work led by the Citizens League. Back in June of 2020, shortly after the murder of George Floyd, the Met Council Chair called for the Council to do the Metro Transit Police Review. At that time the Chair said he wanted the Council to review policing practices, policies and relationships.

To start this work, he wanted to go to communities, and he really wanted to get a deep sense of how people view transit safety before going any further. From mid-summer of 2020 all the way through last summer, the Citizens League was the lead contractor on this project. They worked with a subcontractor, the Twin Cities Innovation Alliance, to really understand how people perceive safety on transit. I will talk a little bit more on that in a moment. But it led to the second phase where the Council also formed the Transit Police Work Group. That is where we have come to this group in the past. We were here in November of last year and heard from the work group Chair, Council Member Chamblis, last February. We are really coming to give you an update on what has happened since that last update.

Next slide. As I started going down this path already. The first phase was this deep community engagement lead by the Citizens League. Through the course of several months, and throughout many different forms, discussions, and surveys, the Citizens League really reached out to people who ride transit, to understand how they perceive safety on transit and also to get a sense of what kind of work we could do to make the experience a safer one.

Some of the themes that came out of that work are on this slide. One of the main things that came out is there is a difference between the reality of safety and perception of safety. A lot of what people reported through the Citizens League process really touched on the fact that their personal self wasn't necessarily in danger, but they were encountering situations that made them uncomfortable.

As this third bullet on here notes to during Covid we had a really significant drop in ridership. Right now, we are hovering at around half of our pre-Covid ridership. At some point, it was much lower. We weren't even at 30 percent for a while. So, certainly if you were to continue to ride transit during this time it is just not at the ridership levels that it used to be. And through the Citizens League work, many people commented at that lack of riders has led them to feel less safe as well.

At the same time, other riders, in particular, other passenger's behavior, impacts people's sense of safety. Part of what came out of the Citizens League work is really a consensus that some sort of authority figure. Some people prefer to the police. Other people prefer it to be a non-sworn personnel ambassador type authority. There wasn't necessarily agreement on what the authority figure should be. The people did generally agree that having more official presence on transit is an important part of increasing a sense of safety. And also, fundamentally that safety is more than enforcement. One of the key pieces of the Citizens League engagement was really to broaden the scope of the police review beyond looking just at the Metro Transit Police Department, to looking at other ways that Metro Transit affects the sense of safety including how well maintained we keep our waiting facilities, how clean the vehicles are, and so forth.

Next slide. The second phase of the work was the Council forming this Metro Transit Police Work Group. Starting in August, this work group met for about six months. I think they had a total of about 15 meetings. The purpose of this work group was to take the information learned from the Citizens League work and really supplement it with some additional information. They spent time hearing more directly from the employees. They commissioned a survey from the Metro Transit Police Department employees. They reached out to other



groups to make sure they had a full sense of what is really operating on our system as it relates to public safety.

And from that, they came up with a set of recommendations that they delivered to the Council at the end of February and presented that at the March 2nd Committee of the Whole meeting. For those of you who were at the February meeting, you might recall that Councilmember Chamblis, who chaired this group, came and spoke about those draft recommendations shortly before they were finalized at the end of February.

Next slide. This slide is the high-level vision statement or statements that came out of the Police Work Group's work. The first one provided quality transit experience for all. Using an anti-racist lens, equity lens, and then an inclusive approach to transit safety, security and policing. The second one addressed systemic issues by fostering community relationships and partnerships. The third piece of the vision is to demonstrate responsive leadership and accountability for results.

Next slide. Each of these high-level vision statements came along with one or more recommendations. So, for the first part of the vision, the recommendation was that Metro Transit should be providing a safe, consistent quality experience for all on buses, trains, and facilities.

Next slide. The second part of the vision had two recommendations. 1. Communicate and engage with other jurisdictions, including law enforcement agencies, to work together towards timely solutions. 2. Continue efforts to pass administrative citations legislation.

Next slide. Then the third vision statement about responsive leadership and accountability for results, had four recommendations. I am not going to read each of these to you, but the main thread through these is really about the importance of Metro Transit reporting information and keeping continuous communication both with Councilmembers, but also with employees and the public. As part of this also making sure that we are evaluating policies, practices and procedures in an ongoing way to ensure positive outcomes and reduce negative impacts.

Next slide. At this point I am going to hand it over to Celina Martina. That was to give you that context that this draft Action Plan is coming from. And part of what the work group asked us to do is they sunset their work last February, was staff to go back and take those high-level recommendations and develop a more specific action plan to demonstrate how much Metro Transit will advance the vision.

So, with that, I am going to turn this over to Celina.

Martina spoke to the TAAC committee. We are at Phase 3 right now. Developing the draft of the Safety and Security Action Plan. That draft should contain the recommendations that were set forth by the Police Work Group of the Council. It should also contain initiatives and work that is underway to leverage and expand what is existing work that Metro Transit and the Metro Transit Police Department are doing.

Next slide. Here are some of the steps that we have taken to develop the draft action plan and building a little bit of the last point of how we are leveraging and expanding current activities and actions that are addressing the safety and security in our system. We inventoried work that is aligned to the recommendations and the goals of this plan. We have identified gaps that needed to be addressed. For example, you will hear later about the opportunity to cross train police department and operators. We are also looking to other agencies across the nation that are working on high-level opportunities or actions that also address very similar challenges that we are facing on Metro Transit.

The Action Plan also includes to ensure that the plan has measurable outcomes. And we can monitor the progress. This is something that our Councilmembers were really intentional about. How are we making sure that what we are doing is really hitting the intended goals?

We have reengaged stakeholders in Phase 1 and Phase 2. For the development of this draft Action Plan. And conducted extensive work. We really were intentionally meaningful in hearing



from Metro Transit frontline employees. We did extensive in-reach where staff had opportunities to provide some concrete feedback and ideas about tackling these issues. They are the frontline employees, and we know their expertise.

Next slide. These are some of the actions and ideas. This is just an example. The draft will be presented to the Met Council's Committee of the Whole later this afternoon. So we divided up the planning to three main areas. 1. Improving conditions on the system. 2. Training and supporting employees. 3. Engaging customers and partners.

Under the first area, some examples of actions we have identified for the draft plan are increased presence by hiring and retaining sworn officers and community service officers or CSO's. improve communications and strengthen Metro Transit's Code of Conduct and communicate it more widely. Expand the use of technology. Live cameras we have on the system. So how are we using those to provide safety and security to our riders and staff?

Under the second area. Expand training on topics such as mental health, de-escalation, and personal safety. Improve feedback loops. We are really great at serving our staff and riders. How do we do that feedback loop when we report back? Regularly survey employees about security concerns and report back to employees on actions taken in response to surveys.

Under the third category. Continue to meaningfully engage riders, customers, and partners. identify contracting organizations. Support the plan and offer services that riders, social services or other services that riders might need for community members. Contract with social service organizations. Further invest in MTPD's Homeless Action Team. Regularly report transit public safety data and action plan implementation to employees and the public.

Next slide. This is where Leslie and I would like to hear from you. What are your thoughts about the draft plan or the ideas for the draft plan? The presentation and what you heard today. What other considerations do you have as we start to develop this? The draft plan will be presented to the Committee of the Whole today. But we will have a little bit more time to hear from the Councilmembers. We would love to hear from you about areas we might not have thought about. How does these committee and groups want to be involved in implementing the plan?

Vice Chair Paulsen said I am concerned about a number of things. I am a transit rider and I do ride the system a lot of different times and capacities. I am aware that you guys are trying to do some changes to the system. Most likely to the fare evasion and make it a non-ticketing offense. Make it an administrative citation. Which I think is also good. I also am aware that other police departments in other departments in government are now focusing on mental health. An embedded social worker that is trained in assessment and then also understands the de-escalation and understands the end result of what we are trying to get to.

What I was wondering is if Metro Transit is looking at this, are they also looking at when to deploy that and who gets the opportunity to make that determination? Is that determination made over a period of time or a situation or is it made on a case-by-case basis? Like in real time. There are really good hot spots in our city and our system that we could deploy something like that. But then in other parts of our city we also need to deal with issues relating to lighting to just the perceived notion of safety. If our area is clean, and the benches are clean and there are receptacles we can put our stuff away in. That also tells me I can ride the bus later in the evening. Or I can ride the system in the evening. Because people in that area value that system. It is like the broken window syndrome. You continue to fix that window but eventually, people around you in that neighborhood don't complain about the neighborhood so much and they start to fix things as well. They start to pick up their trash. So I commend Metro Transit for this. I also think that we are late compared to some of our partners that have already been doing this in other parts of the system and other parts of transit around the country. I think that we need to use some innovative ideas and figure out how to partner with other groups and other inter-agencies that are also doing this so we can share their resources.

Kandaras said I want to both briefly touch on both the mental piece and just the condition of



the facilities. On the mental health piece, you're exactly right. That it is increasingly common to have social workers work with police departments not only in transit, but generally. I am not sure if this committee has ever received a presentation by the Homeless Action Team. But Metro Transit's Police Department Homeless Action Team is really the center of doing that work for us during that time. They are fairly a small team at this point. One piece we didn't share in the presentation. But in retrospect, should have is our police department, like many enforcement agencies across the region and probably across the country, are really down staffed right now. We are down about 60 officers out of 171 sworn officer positions in the budget. That is a way of just saying that our Homeless Action Team, which is a subset of our officers is constrained to grow by that shortage. But that being said, they do currently have a contract with an organization that helps connect people to social services. I am not sure if the person who they work with directly to be on the system with them is a licensed social worker. If she makes suffrage to others. But that is a practice that they have been using for a couple of years and are looking at that contract which expires at the end of this year. They are in the process of assessing that. Looking at how to continue that work.

Also, we work closely with county partners, which really deliver a lot of the social services in our region and have made some neat strides with Hennepin County, in particular, recently, to have some of their case management staff work more hand in glove with their Homeless Action Team to help make that connection.

I don't think we are at this scale yet, that is just the pervading mental health crisis in the region demands. But certainly, it is something that we have been trying to address especially through our Homeless Action Team.

On the facility piece. I will just note that we didn't have this on this slide. But one of the items in the draft plan is continuing to invest in our Better Bus Stops Program, which includes really prioritizing shelters for lighting and heat. A piece of making waiting facilities feel safer. But your broader point about the maintenance of keeping the trash picked up. Needing to keep it in a presentable manner. Just something that has definitely been part of this discussion. I will just note that one of the items that we are working to pilot is having some supplemental contracted security at really high traffic sites. I am hoping that having that additional presence that isn't a police officer, but someone officially there to keep an eye on things, will help us both address issues as they come up. That person can help notify our facilities department and ideally might help deter some of that behavior that leads to some of the facilities being degraded over time.

Myhre said my question is "Are you addressing the homeless on the trains?" I came across a homeless man twice on the same train. He was laying across the seats. Are you addressing some of the people on the trains who are making it their home for a couple of hours until they get kicked off? Some are taking up way more space than they should. I just leave it alone because I don't know what the reactions will be. What about the advertisements on the bus wrapping? What if people don't like it or disagree with it?

Kandaras said we have an advertising policy at Metro Transit. It really lays out the types of ads that are allowed and accepted. So, if you are seeing an ad as a bus wrap on our vehicles, it means it met our standard and our marketing department evaluates these. It is not something that Metro Transit has put on. It is ad space that an organization has purchased from us. When you see wraps that are advertising, it has met our advertising standards. We do hear from people that are bothered or offended by ads sometimes. We have a process for receiving that feedback and acting on it when needed.

Regarding the homeless people on the train. I really regret not bringing someone from the Homeless Action Team with us today. Their focus is really getting to know the people who are riding our system. And experiencing homelessness. They look for appropriate ways to connect them with services or housing.

Myhre said some of the things you talked about might go with the homeless people. They have a combination of a lot of different things that might not just be "I am homeless." You have



to look at it a different way when you are on the trains and buses.

Martina said at Metro Transit we are very aware and know about the presence of the riders that may be unhoused in our system or homelessness. Certainly, this plan is to provide not only opportunities for our Homeless Action Team, but to work with those riders as we continue to expand that team and bring added capacity. But also, what are other actions we could take such as create more opportunities for operators in the bus to be equipped with information about social services agencies. We continue to work across agencies with Hennepin County to make sure that the issues of homelessness is not only a Metro Transit issue, it is something that impacts many systems and public systems and public spaces. So how do we work together to address it in a way that is sufficient and really brings empathy and provides services that our riders and communities need?

Rodgers said thank you for what you are doing. The work that you are doing is so important. It just so happened that prior to this meeting, I was reviewing some materials for a meeting later on this evening. I serve on the Blue Line Extension Citizen Advisory Committee. I was reviewing comments that were received with the last open comment period for the new route recommendations that have been out to the public to receive their comments. I would say about a pretty good portion, maybe a third of the comments that I have read that were in any way on the negative side were all related to the appearance of safety.

I say appearance of safety is, I am a transit rider. And I am male. I am blind. I use a guide dog. My guide dog is a German Shepard that looks ferocious. He is not. But he looks ferocious. I don't usually worry too much. He would tend to lessen anybody that was going to mess with me on transit. So I don't experience too much of it myself. But I certainly have witnessed loud, obnoxious people on the train that could give the appearance that things are unsafe for riders. So I get where people are coming from. From that perspective.

I personally think that while safety is a really important issue that we all need to focus on, I don't necessarily think that a safety issue is as bad as people make it out to be. But one thing that I am interested in is there has got to be a way that we can use technology with our physical resources in terms of officers. I don't believe we need officers for everything. We could have other, whether we call them ambassadors, whether we call them transit support, or whatever the term is. But we could hire other individuals that are just present and visible for the public that could certainly go a long way in giving the perception of being on top of things and being safe.

I think there are ways to also use technology better. Our cameras. They are only good if somebody is monitoring them. And sending help where there appears to be an issue. Its not good just to have cameras and let them roll and record. It might be useful if we need to look back at something. But I think somebody actually needs to monitor and that needs to be an active part of surveillance. That is one way that we can multiply the advantage of a lower staff that we currently have available, is to be able to use technology and get people where they need to go quickly by having better eyes on the ground. That could also be with other people that are not necessarily officers. But I think again, it is really important that the comments I read from the public about the Blue Line Extension, there is a major concern of the appearance of nobody being there in terms of helping to provide safety. And if we could address that appearance and be more visible. I think that would go a long way in helping to change the image of this safety issue.

Kandaras said I will briefly address a couple of those points. On technology, yes. In fact, in 2021, Metro Transit updated all of the cameras on the light rail vehicles. To make them more high definition. And also funded several new positions to form a real time information centered to monitor those cameras as well as other cameras on platforms. We are moving toward having that same capability on all buses. So, absolutely right. I think there is a lot of potential for technology to help supplement the broader presence. We are going to develop the second piece about ambassadors or other non-sworn staff, is another avenue we are pursuing as well. And actually, in July of 2021, we announced an initiative to expand our community service officer program from about 20 part-time CSO's up to 70 part-time CSO's to be non-



sworn staff that can provide a visible presence on the system.

Unfortunately, we are finding that there is not a lot of interest in those positions. They require people to be still interested in law enforcement and be enrolled in some sort of educational program towards a law enforcement career. The labor market just isn't there for that. So we are actively in the process of evaluating other transit agencies ambassador models to come up with a new approach to that. We should have more to report on that in the coming months.

Dains said my comments were similar to what Ken brought up about what kind of technology. But since you brought it up to CSO's. You are saying the labor market, is it because of the salary, or is it that people don't want to go into law enforcement? Or how are you addressing that particular issue? Because I have a lot of concerns about a lot of the people I talk to say they don't want to ride the light rail because they are afraid to do it. They feel that there isn't enough protection. There isn't enough officers and that kind of thing. Whether it is the appearance of safety or not the appearance is a reality that people are saying that.

When you say the ridership is down, I think that is one of the reasons it is down. There is a lot of bad publicity. So if you are trying to recruit CSO's, is the salary an issue? Is it the type of job? What is the issue exactly?

Kandaras said I think it is an excellent and a difficult question. Some of what we have done is both look at the salary compared to other CSO programs. They are part-time positions. Some people are enrolled in school. But we made it a benefits eligible position, which it hadn't been until late last year. In hopes that it will entice people. I haven't personally researched this but what the police department has shared. Even the schools that offer law enforcement programs aren't seeing the enrollment they were a few years ago. Right now, it feels like the pipeline isn't really there. But we are going to continue to do what we can. Not for just CSO's but for officers as well. We are really evaluating our hiring practices, our wages and really understand we can compete to hire a sufficient number of people.

Dains said is the money or funding there to increase the wages?

Kandaras said I would say that hasn't been our constraint right now. We have more budgeted for this program than we are able to spend right now because of the lack of workforce.

Henricksen said you had alluded to those 60 officers or CSO's. There are vacant spots for what is budgeted. Was the intent of this particular point on improving conditions that you wanted to hire and retain to get to that 160 or increase past that 160 for?

Kandaras said that action item is saying we want to get up to our budgeted level. It is 171 full time officers. Our budgeted level of CSO's would be 70 positions. I don't know our part time number off the top of my head. It is around 80. But the idea is really assessing our, take a wholesale look at how we staff up to what we feel is necessary to cover this system. The expanding system that we have.

Henricksen said but it is not going over the 171.

That is our immediate goal. Now whether that is the right number. Certainly, whenever new transitways are added to this system, there is an evaluation of the needed resources as we bring on more transitways. That number may change over time, but at this moment, the short-term goal is to get to where we need to be today.

Henricksen said I did have one last question. Then I wanted to answer one of the Q and A discussion questions. When you had mentioned that in high traffic areas there was a potential to look in to third parties for either security or non-sworn staff. I am curious who would be responsible for vetting that third party and overseeing their conduct? Would they get the same level of training that we expect from our metro policing forces as well? Just for the sake of time I will Segway into the potential answer of one of the questions. How does the committee want to be involved when we implement the action plan? I think at a bare minimum I speak as one committee member here. It would be an assessment of the metrics when it comes to vision 3.2, which is to evaluate policies, practices and how things are working. To see after the



action plan is implemented to see its performance.

Kandaras said thank you for your feedback. To your question about the contracted security. So, just last week put out a Request for Proposals to test out how this would work at the Lake Street, Midtown LRT station and the Franklin Avenue LRT station. Those have been identified as places that are really top priorities to get 24/7 presence. The contract, it is really a cloud of effort. It will ultimately be a contract housed in the police department. Given their expertise to know really what are the qualifications? What is the training necessary? They are doing that in close collaboration with our Customer Relations and Engineering and Facilities departments as well. It is really to test out how this could work. What type of response we get from firms that provide that service? There are a lot of unknowns right now. I believe the process addresses. I don't want to speculate on what specifically is in there about training. I would have to go back to our police department and see how that is. But they will be unarmed. I don't think there would be a requirement that they be licensed peace officers. There may be some differences between the standards of police officers and the security.

Henricksen said the RFP is live right now?

Kandaras said yes.

Henricksen said the CSO's will be unarmed?

Kandaras said CSO's are unarmed.

Chair Fenley said you did mention mental health stuff. Did any other disability concerns bubble up in your interaction with riders, staff for the community?

Martina said mental health de-escalation with two top feedback we receive from engaging with front line employees, committee members and part of the police review and the work group of the Met Council. So those raised to the top as trainings that should tackle mental health and de-escalation practices. Definitely interested in this committee to give us. If we are missing something. If there is a direction that you can point us, we would love to hear.

Chair Fenley said if I understood Heidi correctly, neurodiversity maybe should be included in that as well.

Martina said yes. A very good point. We can certainly add neurodiversity training.

Chair Fenley said from what I understand. Metro Mobility was not included. It was LRT and bus, right? One of the very first bullet points said to conduct an inventory of current actions. Could you give me an example? What does that mean?

Kandaras said when we developed the action plan, the first thing we did was to bring together several different departments that touched this work in some way. So our facilities folks, our operations folks, our police department and others. We really asked them to take a look at the police work groups' recommendations and what daily work they are doing now that relates to that. So, certainly we can provide more details offline. But that was the exercise.

Myhre said are you taking us into the suburbs? Because West Saint Paul has seen homeless and damage to the shelters. I reported this and it has been taking way too long to fix the problem when you report it.

Dains said I was just wondering if you looked at other cities, Denver, Portland, in terms of safety and security success stories. I can talk to you later.

Kandaras said the short answer is yes. It's an ongoing process. But we can find more information.

Streasick said one quick question on the CSO's not being armed. Just to clarify. Are they required to not be armed?

Kandaras said you know the new expansion CSO's were not armed CSO's. But I should clarify that the initial CSO program that we were building on, they do not carry firearms, but they are trained to use Tasers. There is a distinction between the two. When I answered that



question earlier, I was thinking about the expansion ones. But I wanted to clarify that.

Streasick said with conceal and carry laws being what they are, does the RFP expressly forbid them from bringing firearms in that position?

Kandaras said I would have to check on that.

2. **Blue Line Lake Street Renovation**

Christina Morrison, Principal Project Coordinator, spoke to the TAAC committee. I am a Principal Project Coordinator at Metro Transit, in Engineering and Facilities. I want to thank you for allowing me to present remotely.

Today, I am going to introduce a new project at Metro Transit, which is the planned Blue Line, Lake Street/Midtown Station Renovation Project.

Next slide. This is a location where we are planning for long-term solutions. This slide has a photo of the light rail platform at Lake Street on the Blue Line on a sunny day, facing south. That southbound track and boarding area. The Blue Line stations are almost 20 years old. Metro Transit has identified this comprehensive redesign at Lake Street/Midtown as an internal priority. This station has high ridership. It is the busiest Blue Line station between downtown and the airport. That is true throughout the day and also year-round. This is also the highest weekday boarding location on Route 21. Truly, a critical transfer point on our system.

Those high boarding levels have been more resilient here, during the pandemic, than they have been in the region as a whole or even within the Blue Line corridor. In 2021, this station retained about 49 percent of its daily ridership over 2019.

So this started gathering info for Existing Condition Report in January 2022. As we gathered and analyzed data to scope a long-term project. This data they were gathering was compiled into the new report, which provides the basis for the purpose and need for the concept design work. We are also compiling a list of short-term improvements to be made through Metro Transit's CX-360 program. Some of the safety and security items that were just mentioned are part of that collaboration. We are specifically looking at repairs that can be made at the stations to help improve the customer's experience prior to the renovation.

Next slide. This next slide shows a street level photo of the Lake Street/Midtown station looking east on Lake Street, with the LRT bridge up above. As well as a photo of the large glass and steel shelter structures on the LRT platform and a Photo of the interior of the north tower lobby where the elevator is in this case, taped off due to being out of service. The physical scope of this project includes a redesign of both buildings. The North Tower and the South Tower on either side of Lake Street. Those towers include the customer facing spaces and vertical circulation as well as our maintenance coset and elevator room. It will also look at the elements on the LRT platform up above. So everything from the shelter structures and canopy to the glass, to cameras. Things that are not being included in the scope are the LRT bridge itself. So the bridge will remain unchanged. The track and the catenary or LRT. We are going to be coordinating closely with rail. They do have upcoming track work on the track in this area. But we are not proposing rail scope as a part of this work.

The BRT stations on Lake Street for the planned Metro B-Line as well as the sidewalk and the roadway on the street level are part of a separate but coordinated project being led by MnDOT and Hennepin County. MnDOT's project is currently in design. That is planned for reconstruction in 2024.

Next slide. So to start this planning process we wanted to dig into existing data that we have from customer feedback to maintenance work reports, service information from elevator and escalator repair. Also digging into the Metro Transit Police Department data to better understand and convey the major issues facing this station as a foundation for all of our design work. So the pie chart on this page shows the type of customer comments we have received between 2019 and 2021. We found consistent concerns about customer behavior



which include things like loitering and non-transit use of those lobbies. That makes up 36 percent of the comments we received. Outages of the ADA access. The elevators and escalators specifically make up 24 percent of our comments. And then cleanliness of the station is another 24 percent of the comments.

The other topics in the pie chart include service, the mysterious other category, and accidents or crime. All of those four pieces make up the remaining 16 percent of comments.

I will add that we had an ADA audit of the station in 2019. We are incorporating those findings into the existing conditions report as well. There were relatively few items that mostly focused on the height of push buttons and repairing accessible platform surfaces. We had some tripping hazards and other things that we need to resolve.

Another item that we have received customer feedback on is that while this station does have two portable toilets on the south side, it does not have an accessible toilet. And that is something we are recommending for our short-term list of improvements.

Next slide. So, over the winter, we also conducted an internal staff survey. Major opportunities identified by staff include the street level improvement that MnDOT is undertaking. And to better activate that space, to have additional police and security presence as we heard in the previous presentation. In the interim move, some of that building enclosure. The challenges are also numerous. And we heard that this station is really difficult to clean because of all the nooks and crannies and ledges. The escalators, perhaps, spend more time out of service than they do in service. And also, that loitering and people using the station for non-transit purposes contributes to how difficult to clean and keep clean throughout the day.

We have also found that there are a number of improvements that we can make to the maintenance closets to make that cleaning easier. Things like bringing hot water access, which we don't have today. And to bring maintenance things to both sides of the station. Even sizing the elevators to fit snow brush. The intention is that the improvements that we are exploring as we enter the concept design phase would have multiple benefits. Larger elevators for example, benefit passengers. They benefit emergency responders, and they benefit moving maintenance equipment up and down. This slide shows a photo of these rather notorious escalators on Lake Street. These are on the north side that are a major challenge for us to keep clean and operational.

Next slide. So, all these inputs are leaning towards forming the project's goals. The purpose and need that is going to guide our architectural concepts. And eventually that full detail design process so that we can match up our goals with specific design elements.

Three main topics have emerged in our project goals. First, we want to provide a more reliable and consistent experience for customers related to ADA access. Between the LRT platform and the street.

The second goal is around customer experience. That is a large bucket. It speaks to everything from how the current station entrance is based away from the street and is counter intuitive. People have compared it to going in the back door of someone's house. We know that we can use better technology to improve lighting, cameras, wayfinding, cleanliness, visibility. We have more tools and better technology than we had 20 years ago when these were designed.

Finally, the third goal is around maintenance. When the Blue Line was built, every station had a different shelter design. A different art treatment. That has led us to have some of these very unconventional materials and methods in taking care of these spaces. We have learned a lot about how to design spaces for better maintenance. Even the concept of standard glass sizes. Some of you have worked on subsequent transitways where we have used those. And using materials that are more durable, easier to clean, more graffiti resistant. We can make something to make our work here easier. And focusing more on what is needed for our daily operations. Whether it is a dedicated space for police department to be or providing facilities with the tools and the space they need to complete daily cleaning.



Next slide. The last slide is really about the project timeline. We are in the very early planning phase of this project. That includes in 2022. Publishing that Existing Conditions Report that highlights the challenges and opportunities of this station. We did apply for a \$7million in regional solicitation and grant funds that is to be used for the construction phase of this renovation. We are just beginning that concept design work that is kicking off next week. And then we are concurrently coordinating those short-term improvements through the CX360 program over the summer and beginning our public outreach this summer as well.

Then in 2023, we would be starting the environmental work for the FTA as well as working our way into a full detailed design phase. And I currently have construction here slotted in the 2025 through 2027 timeframe. That is a big window. Because construction funding is still being identified. This assumes that we are successful in securing that regional solicitation grant this year. Which would provide us with grant funds in 2026 and 2027. That is the reason we see the two-year gap between design and construction. I will say that the renovation could potentially move up if something becomes available and there is a lot of interest in continuing that conversation at Metro Transit. So those are the slides I have for you today. I am looking forward to working with you all on this design. I am happy to take questions or comments.

Rodgers said I do have some ADA related questions that you did mention but were not very specific. I know there are some deficits on our stations related to travelers that don't have sight in relationship to finding doors and pressing the blue button on the door to open it or close it when it is really hot or really cold. The shared location of where the door opens has been identified as an issue. I know there has been some pilot project work on the Raymond Street station on the Green Line. To try some things to address those ADA deficits. Are those being incorporated at all into this redesign?

Morrison said I think those are the types of improvements that are really. This is the time to put them on the table and to bring them forward. Not just as a pilot, but as part of our future planning for what LRT looks like. Whether it is retrofitting our system or moving it forward to expansion of the system. So, yeah, we did do, actually on the Orange Line, that I worked on with Alicia, who is presenting later in the meeting.

We added a tactile doormat to the front of the bus stop. That is to identify where the front door of the Orange Line is going to pull up. On rail it should be more precise because on rail, we have a very small tolerance for where the train is starting and stopping at the station. So, I think incorporating more of those wayfinding tools, tactile papers or doormats. I think all of these are appropriate. I would be interested in moving these things forward into design.

Myhre said my question is two things. You said you were going to expand the elevator. That is great. But are you going to keep it from getting damaged? Are you going to keep it from getting all slopped up with junk and whatever? I think it is a great idea to something to think about because I can see some people with disabilities are not very happy with the elevator.

The other thing. Ken brought up a really good point about how to navigate the place. Are you thinking about people with processing problems? I am a good example. Can I get to A and then go to B? sometimes I don't know which side to stand on and where to go. I have to be able to process what the people at Metro Transit have given me. So, I can meet someone at a specific location. Don't just think about the blind community. Think about the hearing impaired and the people who have difficulty processing. If you make it so complicated that we are scared to do the daily things that we need to do.

Morrison said some really good points about the elevator. Keeping the elevators cleaned and designed so that they can be easily cleaned is a top priority. We know that that is key to keeping them functional. When we have things that are getting stuck or liquids or whatever the case is in the elevator track or down below the car. That is contributing to those outages. I think those are good points.

On the question about accommodating people who have processing issues. I think one thing we are going to try to do here is to work with transit riders and you all to try to find the most intuitive way of the future of the site. So, the site is uniquely challenging because it is a grade



separated site where we have the two-story station. Those aren't very common in our system. That we are going to retrofit it to the best of our ability to try to make it as consistent with other platforms as well as some of the locations of the amenities and things like that. Like the fare validator card, the ticket vending machine. Trying to make those as consistent as we can through the metro system. So that people know what to expect and can easily find what they need as they move through the station.

So one example that we heard is just right now people have to travel out of direction as they come either down that staircase or all the way to the end of the platform to get to the elevator tower. In the future, one thing we would like to do is to make it as you are coming down to Lake Street, you are not turned around. I think that helps with wayfinding. I think it helps with making those bus connections and other things. Just shortening that distance. Those are the types of things we are going to be looking at.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I am wondering from when I was there that heating was an issue in the elevator area and the shaft area. Has anything been done to address lighting and heating? We talked about the perceived safety issues. If we make it too warm for them it might make it inviting. We need to have enough lighting they know it is being kept and somebody is watching. If we are doing all that renovation, are we addressing the heating and lighting element for safety?

Morrison said we are going to be thinking a lot about heating. Right now, that station. One of the challenges at that station is that the escalator and the elevator require a fairly narrow operating temperature in order to remain viable and that has been challenging. As anyone knows, who has been to that station, we have a lot of outages of both the escalators and the elevators in dealing with those interior towers. In the summer, they get too hot. They get above that operating temperature. In the winter, they actually get too cold. So we need to really think about the wholesale redesign of the heating system.

I think part of that is just that we have learned a lot in the last 20 years about how to design these systems for Minnesota. For an outdoor setting where you are operating an elevator and you have a better sense of what these challenges are. But I think that is really key to part of this renovation and everything is on the table as far as heating and cooling and managing that space.

The other thing that you mentioned was lighting. Likewise, lighting has come a long way in the last 20 years. We have these very elaborate lighting systems now that are all controlled by programming. We will be looking at, in this location, a full-scale redesign of all the lighting on both levels to allow us to be able to have lighting that is sufficient and is aesthetically pleasing. We hope to make big strides in that work.

Henricksen said as you are in the scoping phase right now, I am curious of which plans of the many that the MCS has commissioned, and the Met Council. Are you pulling out the shelf to ensure their recommendations are being implemented in the scoping phase? I think, obviously, the most public one would be a transition plan. But I know there are a lot of other plans that have either visions goals or specific recommendations that might apply to this stop. So I am just curious which ones you have already started to implement in your scoping.

Morrison said we have been looking at previous planning efforts. A lot of that revolves around the state of good repair and how can we maintain this as a regional transit asset? We also know we need to maintain this as a transit boarding location. This station, we believe, is too important to close during construction. And so looking at rail planning. How we can coordinate with some of the state of good repair track maintenance that is on the books to be planned in 2025 and 2026. We are looking at local plans. Like the City of Minneapolis has a High Lake plan that specifically has some information about the transit station as well as the design work that MnDOT has leading for this High Lake interchange redesign. It has quite a bit of information that the public has provided to us about what they would like to see at the transit station. So we are bringing in a lot of those pieces. There is locally led planning efforts. There is Council planning efforts. But trying to collect them all and really look at them



comprehensively. Because we do want this to be a long-term improvement. And we want to make sure that we are considering all those different perspectives that go into it at the ground level.

Henricksen said maybe it is more of a recommendation. Specifically, I was getting to the point of accessibility. Specifically looking at it through that lens of ADA transition plans and other goals and policies that the Met Council has revolving around accessibility. Going above the minimum. That kind of thing. We have been presented on those plans. So I would just recommend finding those and trying to ensure that those recommendations are implemented in the scoping phase.

Morrison said that's a great recommendation. Thank you. I will look into those more closely.

Chair Fenley said if you want more input from us, maybe we can take it into a smaller workgroup as you progress into design. Or we can deal with that offline.

3. Rosedale Transit Center Designs

Alicia Vap, Project Manager, spoke to the TAAC committee. I work in Engineering Facilities. I am a colleague of Christina's in our Public Facilities group. I am here today to talk about the Rosedale Transit Center. So the image on this first slide, because I don't believe I use this anywhere else on the powerpoint, is a really great one. Just to talk and highlight some things for just a moment before I start. This is a major transit center not quite as big as the project Christie is talking about, with the number of riders and transfers. But it is a fairly large transit center in our system in Rosedale, located at the mall. What you see in this picture is an A-Line bus, pulling up to its gate. You can see in this slide. What I am looking at is a ramp that goes into an indoor waiting space. There is a grade elevation between the sidewalk next to the bus and then a ramp that inclines up into the building. Because the building is a little bit higher and in relation to the sidewalk.

So we have some grading issues at this site. We have existing fare collection equipment, lots of signage, and indoor space and outdoor space.

Next slide. The existing conditions at Rosedale. As I mentioned, there is a pretty small indoor waiting space. We also have a bus operator waiting space in this area. The exterior includes three different gates. We have one island. That is what is highlighted in the slide in the image. So that is one island with a few signs located on it where we have two gates. And then the far right of the image is the actual indoor facility. Right behind that is a taller building that is actually the movie theater. It is part of the mall.

So we do have three bus gates. It serves eight bus routes, including the A-Line. Many local buses and one express bus. And also, we have fare collections equipment. Then we have two real time signs. We have one on the interior and then one on the exterior. Obviously, a lot of concrete out here. A lot of infrastructure. And issues that we want to address.

Next slide. So I have in this photo an image of the island and one of the bus gate signs and those gates identify the different routes that stop at each of the gates. So, eight of the gates. We have the A-Line that stops at Gate A, and Route 65. Gate B serves Routes 87, 225, and 227. Then Gate C serves Routes 32, 264, and 801. One of the gates, the bus stops and passengers get off. And then another gate, the buses board.

Next slide. One of the reasons that we want to take a look at this concept plan. There are a couple of different opportunities that we have. So Metro Transit has been working with the mall. We have a lease for this site. So we don't technically own this site that the transit center is located. It is owned by Rosedale Shopping Center.

We have a lease. So we have been working closely with the mall to renegotiate that lease. And they have been a very supportive partner of doing that work. So we have been working with the mall for the past few years, on a concept plan. Part of that has been driven by. We would like to increase our efficiency in the productivity of our buses right now.

The bus lanes operate in two different directions. We would like to change that, so they



operate in only one direction. We believe that would be a real benefit to passengers and passenger safety. And make it easier for all people to get around.

In addition, the mall is actually changing a little bit. Some of their parameter roads. They have a parameter road or ring road that goes around the entire mall. And so they are doing some changes to that mall. It used to be one direction. Now it is two directions. I think throughout the whole facility. So they are doing some safety improvements and adding medians onto different things and they are changing some of those medians in the design of this location as well. So we are working closely with their staff. That work is actually going on right now.

There is also a lot of development that is happening at the mall. There are a couple of out parcels. Those small, separate restaurants and different buildings that are being constructed at that. So, on this slide, there is a concept plan that was developed in 2016 to address all of these different issues that I have been talking about. This is by no means what we are planning to do. But it is a concept that our designers are building off of and thinking about as we determine what is the best approach. We would like to add additional medians. Additional gates. And just make it a smoother experience for our customers.

There used to be a park-and-ride in this location. That has been eliminated. But the last time I was there, I did see people park there. So that parking area will be removed in this design as well.

Next slide. The Scope of Work. So I identified a couple of these areas. So we are continuing to coordinate with Rosedale and the realigning of their perimeter road. We would like to replace all of the bus pavement. There are some areas where the concrete in the bus lanes is really deteriorated and is a lot of tripping hazards that we want to replace. We would like to replace all of the signage, all the lighting. And then we are talking about more bus gates. Instead of just the three for the eight routes.

One of the things we are looking at is we are going to take a look at fixing, if we can, with the existing grade of the bus lane sidewalks and the building. It is a challenge. But we are going to take a look at trying to eliminate the need for that ramp. It is a very tight situation. It is something that we would really love to not have to put back in.

We also are adding additional space next to the building. Right now, if you are actually on the bus, it can't deploy its lift all the way. So we have some issues that we are aware of too. Then we would like to take a look at what kind of needs we need to do inside the operator break room. To refresh that space.

Next slide. So in terms of accessibility. I did mention we do know that we have a lot of needs in this area. A lot of tripping hazards. And these are things that have been identified in our self-evaluation audit that we are planning to take a look at and address.

In addition, there is one area that is right in front. The first photo I showed with the ticket vending machine on the outside of the building. We have some sloping issues there too that we would love to take a look at and fix. We will replace all the pedestrian ramps. One of the things we would like to do.

The photo on this slide shows the Mall of America Transit Center that was recently renovated. There was a slight texture that was added on one side of the crosswalk. That is something that we are taking a look at as well. We have heard some positive feedback about that. so that is one of the things that we would like to include in our concept plan as well.

Next slide. So, our schedule. This is a project that we just started with a design work. Our consultant just went out yesterday and completed survey work. So we are just at the very beginning of the design. So this is a great opportunity to get some feedback from this committee about things you would like us to take a look at.

We are planning to have 60 percent plan sometime this summer. And finishing our design work by late summer. Right now, we are proposing for construction to happen early next year in 2023. But that is dependent on the negotiation process for the renewed lease.



I have some questions for you guys before I depart. Do any of you currently use the Rosedale Transit Center? Do you have any experiences you would like to share? Anything that we might be missing that I haven't talked about today?

Myhre said I have used it.

Dains said I lived close to this area. It is part of the precinct I represent. I haven't been out there for a while. I used it in the past. But I have heard people say that they are not very well informed about the different connecting routes. I don't remember if there is a map up there or a way to get that information out better to people. Because it connects with several different bus routes. My other question is, is the A-Line doing O.K. in terms of ridership? Because I hear it is doing pretty good. People I know that ride it say it is pretty full of people.

Vap said those are great topics. First A-Line. I have actually been following because I don't know if Christina mentioned it but she and I both worked on the Orange Line BRT Project. So, we have been really following ridership trends just to see how it is doing and how it is growing. I do know that all of our arterial bus routes, including A-Line, have really been performing really strongly. I don't have specific ridership numbers. But I do know that they have been one of the stronger performers. Even during the pandemic. Than even some of the local bus routes. They are doing really well.

Then in terms of connecting routes. We do have several of the really large system maps out at the transit center. On the outside of the building. I think we have them on the inside of the building too. But I will make a note to check the next time I am there.

Then we have two real time signs. One on the outside and one on the inside. But obviously it won't tell you where those routes go. It just lists the route number and when it is leaving.

Dains said I have heard about this from more than one person.

Myhre said I was coming from Saint Paul and went all the way to Rosedale. Because I had to go to a store around the mall. I had to make sure I got to the area where the bus would take me back to Saint Paul. Think about the surrounding area when you are building it so that I can understand how to get back and catch the right bus.

Rowan said I have two questions. Did you say that the park-and-ride lot has been eliminated?

Vap said the park-and-ride lot was eliminated several years ago. I don't know what year. But I do know from talking to my colleagues, we haven't allowed or encouraged parking there. What we tried to do is have folks park at the park-and-ride at I-35W and County Road C, which is just north of Rosedale.

Rowan said we do occasionally park in the mall. I have heard that on the south side of the mall, they are building condos. or is it a hotel? Some kind of housing. Is that still in the plan?

Vap said we were in a meeting just a few weeks ago with Rosedale. They have a lot of different ideas and concepts that they shared at that meeting. But they were meeting with the folks that we were working with, which is a management company for the mall. They were actually meeting with their ownership leader in that week. I haven't heard yet what the full build out plan is. But there has been talk of housing, restaurants and a grocery store. A lot of different out buildings. So they are really interested in maximizing the open space that they have at that facility.

Rowan said would there be bus service to that part of the mall since it is about as far away from the transit station as it can get? Is it too early to tell?

Vap said it is too early to tell.

Henricksen said my two questions are how long is the lease for? What is that negotiation looking like? Because you will be doing some substantial improvements for capital costs that I would assume would be for the life cycle of the facility that you are going to be doing the improvements on.



My second question is the party that you are entering into the lease with, will they have stakeholder ship rites? Are they negotiating what you can and cannot do on the site? And have say about the actual improvements that you are going to be implementing? Like they are one of the approvers of the plans that you are going to be doing? And conversely, does Metro Transit then have any say? Is this a public/private partnership on some of their potential maybe ADA accessibility shortcomings?

Vap said the lease length. I can't recall off the top of my head. It's a longer-term lease. I don't believe we are paying rent right now. Or if we do, it is a very low amount. What we are proposing is to pay a market rate rent. And then with that would come more rights than I think we have today. Those are opportunities that we are still in discussion negotiations with the mall. Previously, the mall actually constructed the transit center. It is the same lighting standards that they have. The only thing different is signage and some other things that we have added over time. So, we will be working with the mall. We want to be a good partner. They have so far been really interested in partnering and wanting to review different designs. They had signed off on the earlier concept design from 2016.

They have also been good about sharing their designs that they are working on. They don't ask for our approval. We have a pretty good partnership. We are hoping to continue with this lease agreement. So these are great things. Great points that you are bringing up.

Streasick said. do you think that everything you are talking about sounds like a nice improvement from an accessibility standpoint? If you could just be vigilant during construction to be aware of sort of the atypical pedestrian paths of travel that get you to last around that area? including folks with disabilities and trying to make as much of that swath while you are doing construction as accessible as possible.

There is a lot of pedestrian traffic that doesn't just stick to the sidewalk. Get at that site. The more you can do to make that all as accessible as possible throughout the construction process. I think would be appreciated.

Then on the Met Mo side of things. If you could work with us to clearly identify where we are going to pick up and drop off throughout construction. Has that maybe shifts to let the service center know. That would be an important piece.

Chair Fenley said from the 2019 self-evaluation. Do you have plans to incorporate as much as possible or all of that and work back from there? What are you shooting for here?

Vap said our goal, Chair, is to address all of the items on the JQP on the self-evaluation audit. The only reason I mentioned the exterior issue with grade in front of the TVM's is that is one that is tied to the doorway area. So, our goal is to address it and to fix it. But our designers are just starting to take a look at that. That is the only issue that we have identified and red-flagged that we really want this to work. But let's figure it out.

4. Legislative Update

Brooke Bordson, Government Affairs Liaison, spoke to the TAAC committee. I will give a wrap-up of where things stood when the timer ran out at the end of the session. As I have mentioned before, 2022 was not a budget year for the state. The budget was enacted last year. So the failure to do anything in this session won't lead to a shutdown of any kind. The government is funded into 2023. That is one comfort, I suppose. The February forecast in 2022 did project a \$9 billion budget surplus, which was historic. Those funds were available to lawmakers. The \$9 billion was for the current biennium. So those funds were available for finance and tax initiatives. Though it wasn't a budget year, is sort of felt like a budget year. Because a lot of supplemental budget proposals were being heard and discussed.

So, with about a week remaining before the adjournment deadline, leaders reached an agreement on a framework that would allocate \$4 billion to a supplemental spending bill, \$4 billion for a tax bill and \$4 billion to remain on the bottom line over this biennium and the next two-year budget biennium.



Then it was left to Chairs and conference committees in different issue areas to negotiate those bills. Some met those deadlines. Some didn't meet that deadline. And where the deadline was met, some bills were passed, and some weren't.

So there are three different statuses where these budget and omnibus bills ended up. The legislature did pass an agriculture, drought relief and broadband bill. They passed a bill that allocated some environment and natural resources. Dedicated funds. They passed a mental health package in the last couple of days of session.

Areas where conference committees reached an agreement. But did not pass the agreements. Included higher education, environmental resources. energy and commerce. The other major bill that was agreed to but not passed was that \$ 4 billion tax bill.

Then the areas there was no agreement reached before the end of session include transportation, E-12 education, and health and human services, finance, housing and public safety. So, those very substantial bills remained unresolved on May 23, when the session ended.

Because of the budget surplus and all the ideas that were moving. What's usually the highest level and most visible work of an even year session is the bonding bill. There was no bonding bill. The House heard hundreds of proposals for projects requesting funding over the course of the summer and the legislative session. They didn't release their final proposal. The Senate had a few general hearings on topic areas. They also did not release their proposal for a bonding bill. So that is on the list of major outstanding or unfinished items.

It is not a great report. I don't want to speculate what might happen next. Even if I did want to speculate, I wouldn't even know what to guess at this point. I did want to mention. In previous updates where this is an election year. There is going to be a 100 percent turnover in the House and Senate. A lot of focus is shifting to elections. But there are a lot of disappointed stakeholders around the state who are hoping to see something in that tax bill or the bonding bill or one of the missed bills. So, you never know what might happen in the summer, here.

In terms of outcomes, I really don't have much to report on the items we have talked about over the past few months. With that said, I am happy to take any questions.

Rodgers said this is a general question. I don't know if you, as a representative of the Met Council Legislative Affairs, have the ability, but there has been a lot of confusion lately about Open Meeting Laws and how public meetings need to be run. We have had a little bit of a waiver during Covid and that we could all meet virtually. That seemed to work for the last 2½ years.

Now we are coming at a different level of how we deal with Covid and there is a lot more in-person meetings being planned. We are not out of the woods yet with Covid. And I have heard from several different entities that because of Open Meeting Laws, we can no longer have virtual meetings. If that is the case, do you have any ability to propose legislation to change the Open Meeting Laws that would give us more flexibility in how we handle perhaps hybrid meetings going forward?

Bordson said that certainly is something that was discussed this legislative session. There were a few different bills moving forward that would amend the Open Meeting Law. I don't believe that any of those made it to the governor's desk that would change those laws. I am not an expert in this area. This is a pretty technical chapter of law. It is something we could look at, offering suggestions on changes that would be helpful. One initiative that did make it pretty far this session would be. I believe existing law allows for members of a government board to miss a certain number of meetings for health-related reasons when there is an emergency order like we have had in the pandemic. The bill would strike that when there is an emergency order. So it would allow a more general flexibility for members of a board to miss a meeting.

I don't recall anything more substantial than that really getting much traction this year. I believe that proposal came from Hennepin County. So it is something that councils,



committees, boards. Entities at all different levels are looking at and trying to come up with what are some good parameters to get into a pretty broad law that applies to a wide range. Obviously, boards and committees. Suggestions can come from anywhere. I anticipate that is something that will probably come up in the next session or in the next few years.

In the case of the state legislature, it has been pretty successful and many ways having the ability for testifiers to participate in committee meetings without having to make a five-hour drive to Saint Paul from the Iron Range or somewhere further away. I think part of the challenge right now is figuring out ways to improve accessibility while maintaining what some members of the legislature were concerned with in described as accountability to the constituents of the committees they are serving.

A lot of people are interested in this, and suggestions are welcome from anywhere.

Myhre said I understand there are rules and regulations.

Chair Fenley said it is an antiquated law. It needs to change. It is definitely designed for times pre-Covid. I think most folks would agree with that statement.

Reports

Subcommittee

1. **Blue Line – Ken Rodgers**

We have a meeting tonight in which we are going to be reviewing the public comments for the proposed new line. So that is the latest.

2. **Green Line – Christopher Bates**

This item was not presented.

3. **Gold Line – Darrell Paulsen**

The Gold Line just completed their final design phase. Their construction manager named Steve Barrett has 30 years of experience and Metro Transit construction projects.

4. **Purple Line – Darrell Paulsen**

This item was not presented.

Bus Priority Seating TAAC Work Group

This item was not presented.

Chair

Chair Fenley asked the committee members if they wanted to cancel the July meeting or have the meeting as usual.

The committee members agreed to have the July TAAC meeting as usual.

Public Comment

None..

Member Comment

Henricksen said I would suggest we get a copy of the RFP for third-party services for security that was discussed. There are some questions that we all might benefit from just being able to take a peek at it.

Chair Fenley said that was the action plan. I'll have them send it to our committee when they have it all released.

Myhre said last month I ended up coming here because I was notified while I was on the way here.



There are drivers who still have masks and are wearing them when necessary.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:33 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 June 01, 2022.

Approved this first day of June 2022.

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