

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 7, 2019

**Committee Members Present:** Chair David Fenley, Patsy Murphy, Jeffrey Dains, Darrell Paulsen, Kari Sheldon, John Clark, Heidi Myhre, Claudia Fuglie, Patty Thorsen and Diane Graham-Raff.

**Committee Members Absent:** None.

**Committee Members Excused:** Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Ken Rodgers, Margot Imdieke Cross, Erik Henricksen and Richard Rowan.

**Council Staff Present:** Yumi Nagaoka and Erik Lind from Metro Transit. Mitzi Kennedy, Richard Koop, Andy Streasick, Christine Kuennen, Susan Duffy and Alison Coleman.

**Public Present:** Bob Platz from Lifeworks, Jae Halverson, Sheila Holbrook-White, Donald Becchetti and Rick Cardenas.

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:35 p.m. on Wednesday, August 7, 2019.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Graham-Raff, seconded by Thorsen to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Paulsen, seconded by Thorsen to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2019 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

## BUSINESS & INFORMATION

### 1. Equity Framework

Mitzi Kennedy spoke to the TAAC committee. She is the manager of Equity at the Metropolitan Council. I want to deviate a little bit from the framework. When Andy first invited me to come, he indicated that you all had requested that I come to talk about the difference between equity and equality. I have been here at the council for a little more than six months. I am serving as the third equity manager at the Council since 2015. Even though I was willing to come and talk about equity and equality and the framework that I have been working on, I also wanted to really have you talk to me.

As an equity manager, I think there is probably a lot of overlap in the work that I think that I am supposed to be doing here at the Council. Perhaps the work that you do. Many of you know that we have the equity advisory committee. That committee is the committee that we in the Office of Equal Opportunity call the Equity Implementation Unit.

We talk a lot about equity in that committee. Your committee I think is a really critical and important committee. I am wondering, myself, how do we overlap? What are you working on? How would you like to see us begin to work together around equity issues for which I believe you are a part of? I would rather have that conversation. A more meaningful conversation. Because I believe that probably some of you could do a presentation for a talk about the meaning of equity verses equality. That we ought to be having way more meaningful conversations about the work that you are doing and the overlap with our office.

Guthrie is doing accessibility work for OEO and has always been involved. I still think that there is way more opportunities. Just because things have evolved the way that they have in terms of position of the equity

manager does not mean that we can't move forward in a different way. In a way that we believe is important for the Council as a whole.

I am hoping that you all will talk back to me a little bit today about what you are doing and then about how we work together. I am happy to talk about the differences between equality and equity. Equality assumes an equal playing field and does not recognize that there are communities that benefit marginalized communities. Whereas equity work centers communities of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ people and immigrants.

With that, would you talk back to me about your work and what you are doing and how we overlap. That is what I want to hear going forward. We don't want to miss any opportunities to move forward together.

Chair Fenley said I greatly appreciate your willingness to engage in this conversation with us. We have never had any trouble talking back to folks who come before us. Can I ask you a couple of questions as a base to move this discussion forward? Could you tell us a little bit about what the equity committee engages in and what it does? Just so we know where you are, in terms of your understanding of disability. Tell us a little bit about where you think it fits into the equity discussion. I heard a saying a few months ago that disability is at the back of the diversity bus. It is always the last in the list of protected classes that you see. I don't think there should be personally a ranking of protected classes. I think that that is pitting folks that have been historically oppressed against each other. That is the power dynamic that folks in power lay out. We are not that far apart in our definitions.

Tell us what the equity committee does. Maybe you can tell us more about what your role at the Council is. I can promise you that there will be no shortage of comments from these committee members. Just so we know what the base are talking back to you on.

Kennedy said as I said, six months ago, in the dead of winter at the Council. My job description is around coordinating the Council's equity work. Facilitating around the five different divisions that the Council has. Trying to help folks understand equity. To develop a framework where we have some shared understanding and meaning around the issues of equity.

From my perspective, it is taking Thrive from its aspirational place where it exists to a more operationalized place. So Thrive is a beautiful document, in my opinion. When I applied for this job, that is what I looked at to have a frame of reference of the work I would be expected to do at the Council. It has all these beautiful statements about equity and about what needs to happen in each of the divisions as equity outcome. That is what I believe that I was getting into is the furthering of Thrive. Having the opportunity to further and operationalize those goals and statements. Ideas that the Council has. Developing this shared framework so that we have this understanding of what we mean by equity.

I have been really trying to look at each division and the work that it has been doing in each division to see where we are as a baseline to moving forward with equity. The Council is quite complex. It has done so many different things. It has so many different committees. So many different work groups. So many different goals. Equity indicators. Will statements and change teams. It is different people doing different things. There is no consistent understanding of what is equity.

As a part of getting ready for this work, I try to view other jurisdictions across the country. There are cities, counties, states, regional planning organizations, school districts all trying to advance this thing we are calling equity. Trying to read up on what other jurisdictions have done so that we don't have to start from ground zero. We can learn the lessons that other jurisdictions have already moved forward and about the "how to" of moving equity forward. What were the components that had to be within an equity framework in order for you to really have an impact on outcomes in the region? That is where I started. What I have been doing in the past six months is looking at all those things. Having a deep dive look into the Council and what it has been doing and a deep dive look into what other jurisdictions, especially those that are as close to ours as possible. What are they doing to advance this? So we can learn from that and move forward.

As part of our role, we staff the Equity Advisory Committee. Similar to your roles, I think, they represent the 17 members. They represent different districts. They are here to collaborate and be a part of the decision-making process. In terms of giving feedback to the Council in its policy decisions. They don't make policy. They don't set policy. But they provide advice. The whole goal is about people having something to say. You don't develop something for people. Allow people to be a part of the decision-making process. From there, backgrounds, their experiences, what can they offer? They can offer a lot. That is the whole point, I would say. In that committee we have had a lot of changes. We have had some people move up. We got four new

members. Council members are also a part of that. I have a lot of diversity, equity, inclusion, experience. I have a lot of work experience in the area. But this kind of work where I support these kind of committees that are set up in these ways to where staff come and provide presentations like this and get feedback are pretty different for me. I am used to if there is community involvement and community engagement where in communities, I would see more of a dialogue going on where there might be different people from different parts of the organization coming together to have some discussions. But that it isn't so to present feedback and go about your way. More of a dialogue. More of getting to know people. More of understanding of what the ultimate goal is. How do we get there?

It is kind of unusual for me to have these kinds of committees that behave in these kind of ways. I would rather have you talk to me rather than me trying to figure out what you want to hear. Am I supposed to be in this capacity as this expert? Because I am not really comfortable with that. I really believe that we should be working together. I should understand what your role is. As the equity manager, regardless of my job description, of course, I know that people with disabilities are highly valued community members. They should be at the table. They are part of any discussions about equity. We have to figure out how to work together based on what your goals are and what I think my goals are within my office. I think that there is room. Especially the way that I think about how we should move forward.

I think that we all bring our own authorities to the table. Within my little role as a middle manager, I have some authority to be able to move forward in the way that my job description says. I also believe that we all have a level of authority that we may or may not be using as well. You may have this amount of authority, but you may only be using this amount of it in order to move forward with your goals than what I have been saying to EAC members, to staff at various levels and to the leadership here. We need to be utilizing our positional authorities to get this work done. Because it is a whole lot of work. We need each other in order to move forward in terms of bringing equity outcomes to the region.

That is pretty much where I stand with things. I truly believe that we have a lot of things in common. We have to figure out how we move within our roles including you, the EAC and any other positions at the Council. We have to start working together and figure out how we work together to move this equity thing forward. I feel the responsibility of doing this work on my shoulders every day when I come to work. A lot of people are depending on us. I say to the EAC is that you are no longer on the outside looking in. Me, by virtue of taking this position. You, by virtue of being an appointed member of this committee. You are on the inside now. What is your role? What is your responsibility? How do we move forward together? I take that seriously. I want feedback. I want us to figure out how we work together without pitting ourselves against each other.

Paulsen said I have been involved in transportation with the Council for about 18 years. TAAC has taken a number of roles and a number of positions over those 18 years. I am very excited about the Equity Committee. We might want to partner with you. Most of our issues are wrapped around transit and transit oriented situations. Equity plays a part in everything the Council puts their footprint in. You have a big job to undertake. We are just a small piece of that. However, we can be a part of that, I want to continue exploring that.

Dietrich said I have a couple of things we have done, and we are working at for the disability community. We did a manager training. It was a full day manager training with the emphasis on disability. It was very well received. We had one piece where we had wheelchairs and a hard carpet to push it on. So a real hands on experience. People received a richer understanding of some of the difficulties that disabled people have that we take for granted. The reports we got on that were "I had no idea of this" "I had no idea of that." OEO and equity is a piece. I do agree that the disabled can be viewed as the tail of the whole protected class group. Most of us have an opportunity at some point to fall within that group. It is ironic that it is viewed as lesser at some time and it really involves the most people.

There is one other piece that OEO and Equity, that is part of OEO, is looking at. That is hiring for the disabled. Some of you may be aware of the 700 program at the state. An attempt for disabled people who are otherwise able to perform the job but may have difficulty getting through the interview process or making it through the first door. We are looking at the Council coming up with a similar kind of program using that as a model. That is an effort that OEO and the Equity Committee are looking at. I just wanted to say sometimes it all gets mushy but those are two very concrete things. One that was done. How many supervisors and managers were there? Probably a thousand over the time. All of them were given all kinds of information on disabilities that they did not have before. We have done some concrete things. We are working on more concrete things. And the challenges to see what we can actually do that will move equity forward. People in disadvantage groups, move them forward. Whether transportation, hiring, whatever issues that comes up at the Council.

Kennedy said just last week we were, those same managers in transit met again. They took the ideas that bubbled up and started at the management leadership training that we had in October. They brought it to the feds level in transit where they were workshopping some of those ideas for implementation. It wasn't just that one meeting. It already rose to different groups across the Council. Being able to take those ideas and to talk about implementation and move towards implementation.

Myhre said we don't come as one type. People have different ways of doing things. The Asians would do something one way and the Mexicans would do it another way. All different types of disabilities need to be looked at.

Chair Fenley said our role is a little more advisory in terms of accessibility. We do a little not officially but a little more unofficially culture change in disability awareness. But that is not technically what we are supposed to do. My question would be similar to what the Equity EAC. Is that internally and externally based? So the public riders would also hiring and practices and programs that are internal to the Met Council? Do they work in both areas?

Kennedy said they have a work plan that began in 2014. The EAC first was established. Since then they have gone through a lot of changes in terms of getting a structure that works for them in terms of understanding what the Council as a whole is working on. And then how then they, the Council, would bring those items and interest areas forward to the EAC so that they could be heard and moved forward. Or reviewed or providing feedback. So they actually have a work plan based on their 12 months of the year that has their priorities on there. So I know that housing is on there. Transit is on there. So if they have a schedule or a work plan that outlines their priority. Then they work as their staff to work with the different divisions and departments to bring forward those plans or ideas or projects that different divisions or departments might be working on. Of course, they are interested in the equity of specific types of strategies that the Council might be planning to implement. They are trying to hear from everything and everyone at the Council in terms of their specific work around their interest areas.

Chair Fenley said how often does disability come up?

Kennedy said it comes up a lot. We have members of the committee who are disabled. Accessibility is on the work plan as one of the specific areas of interest. Guthrie presented last month at the EAC to engage them in some different areas that he was interested in around accessibility. It is a pretty broad committee. It does include accessibility as well as racial equity. That committee is very broad.

Myhre asked what are they working on? What I am thinking might be different than what others are thinking.

Kennedy said the accessibility is listed just like housing and transit is listed as a broad category in their work plan. What happens is that for instance, Wes, the General Manager of Transit, came when they were talking about the Green Line changes. And Erica, who just left, who was an equity manager that was specific to transit, came. When they were doing their kindness campaign for transit. Wes was making his recommendations about the closure of the Green Line. He came to the EAC to discuss that and to get the questions that the members had around those particular issues.

So if there are any housing issues. Any changes in transit. Anything that the Council might be working on that the EAC wants to understand any more about it. Then they wanted to be involved in any decision making about it. They want to ask questions about what that means for the community. Then they can request that someone that represents that particular issue come to the EAC and present to them about those projects.

Paulsen said is this just to match us up with the ability to grab some federal funding and some match dollars? Or is this something that Trump will take a serious investment in and invest in whether it takes dollars or hiring different people and getting a full equity assessment? If they are going to do that then yes, let's partner together. Let's try to make something work. But our role, particularly this committee, is an advisory role as it relates to transit. I know some of the people on the Equity Committee before the last election. I am eager to partner with you. Eager to have those hard conversations. Those hard conversations are not going to be done in a 20-minute conversation. What is going to be done is for you to tell us what the framework is very clearly and say "I want one or two of you guys to partner with me. Look over what we have already done and give me your feedback on that." I think some of us are more than willing and able to do that.

Chair Fenley said I want to clarify Heidi's point. When you say accessibility, do you mean access to housing or accessible housing? I can define what the difference is if you want me to. Like access to housing I see as

important for folks to be able to get into housing. This wouldn't be part of our purview but accessible housing is housing that doesn't have steps to it.

Kennedy said unfortunately I would say that it is all of the above. This probably speaks to the nature of the EAC is that it is hearing about accessible housing and in the same meeting might be hearing from Guthrie, who is talking about accessibility. I think that it really is brought back to the framework. The framework is in the draft stage at this point. I take your idea seriously in terms of I think probably workforce equity. Pieces that Jan has talked about the Connect 700 program. Some of the other pieces of workforce equity that would be in the framework could be very specific components that we could maybe ask for some volunteers to look over a particular piece that we are looking to implement. Possibly to get some specific feedback and be able to come back and say "This is what we think we would want to add to that."

Paulsen said if they can figure out how to integrate technology with some of their drivers and develop that in such a way that it feeds into the transit system that is already robust and growing. So even if that means that they drop you off at a park and ride and you catch the train to your final stop or to your first stop. You don't use it both ways but even if you use it one way. That is going to save us a lot of congestion and a lot of other things we are facing in the next 20 years.

Kennedy said what our office is proposing to do is going into the different divisions like transit, which is one of them. They have employee change teams who have worked on equity throughout the Council's history. They have different areas of interest. Also, the managers and directors have work plans. What we are asking them to do is to include equity goals. Let's say for instance, some of the goals and statements that came out of Thrive. What we want you to talk to us about is what are the specific strategies in Transit and Community Development in the different divisions and about what those equity strategies are. So that we can work with you about making those outcomes real for the Council and for the region. That is the process that we are hoping to bring forward is to start working very intentionally with the divisions across the Council around equity in general, based on Thrive. Let's work together to see if we can move some of those goals to outcomes.

Thorsen said I would like to ask you to consider a distinction. In the time that I have been on TAAC, for about six years, we have had an ongoing issue between accessibility, which is compliance with standards, ADA and other accessibility standards and then usability. Accessibility is just the baseline. It is not the aspiration point. We have people that will come before us and say they have completely assessable services or facilities. I would just like to put that out there as a consideration.

Chair Fenley said it is almost like the people who present to us want us to thank them for obeying the law. We expected that. We want to know where they are going to go above and beyond that. That is a cultural thing too. It is almost like they say "You get what we give you. It is all you deserve." That is implicit bias.

Myhre said when you were talking across the board about transportation I was thinking about Uber and Lyft. I know Dakota County is having problems with transportation to get people to their jobs. So they pilot their own programs. But of it is more for able bodied persons, not for someone with a wheelchair that has to be folded up and placed in the trunk or a motorized wheelchair. Darryl has one less option. He has to rely on others. But with Uber and Lyft, where does the training come? Where does the safety come? How do we expand it so everybody gets to be a part of it?

Kennedy said I will be trying to think about what are those intersections, and where we could come together and do something that is meaningful and moves us all forward. That is my real message. I will be looking for those opportunities. I will be trying to get more information about the kinds of things that you will be interested in. And trying to come forward and identify ways we can work together. Thank you for the opportunity and do call me back if there are some things you want me to know about. I will make myself available as we move forward.

Chair Fenley said I view this as just the beginning of a relationship where we can work together. You have a broad scope. We have a more narrow scope. Any expertise we can bring to the table, by all means reach out to myself, Alison, Yumi or Andy Streasick.

## **2. Lifeworks Van Lease Project**

Bob Platz and Christine Kuennen spoke to the TAAC committee. He is the Fleet Manager at Lifeworks Services Incorporated. She is the Senior Manager at Metro Mobility. Kuennen said we want to share with the committee a recent partnership where we have entered into a pilot program, a subsidy program. It is part of the

Council's mission to be investing in innovative transportation solutions that support our communities and our businesses and the quality of life for all of our residents. In context of this mission, we have initiated this partnership with Lifeworks the Day Training and Habilitation Center. It is a small investment where we are basically subsidizing the cost of their transportation when they are transporting customers who are Metro Mobility ADA certified customers.

The program is the design to test out the impact of a program like that and its capacity to relieve some of the pressure on the growing demand of the Metro Mobility system. Growing demand on driver resources, capital resources that it takes us to provide our services throughout the region. The program is not intended to replace any vehicles that are currently in operation. But instead to enhance their operating capacity with a subsidy from the Council. The contract term allows for Lifeworks to purchase up to three vehicles. In order to qualify for the subsidy, the agency must transport at least three ADA certified customers on average per day. Then we have two tiers of subsidy. Three to six customers per day and then more than six customers per day from two different subsidy tiers.

This is something that has been in the works for a few years at least in concept. But this is really the first time that we organized around an implementation. They implemented in June. It is something that was discussed at the level of the Metro Mobility Task Force a couple of years back. But in that time, it was really just concept in forming around a solution. We are here to talk about that. With that I will turn this over to Bob. I have Susan Duffy, Metro Mobility staff. She is a project administrator that is supporting this contract and working with Bob. She works in my office.

Bob Platz said in my opinion the project has been fantastic. We put two vehicles on the road in early June. We put in the neighborhood of 20 folks in those two vehicles. Ten per vehicle. All of those folks previously were transported on the Metro Mobility demand side contract. In the areas where maybe the capacity was pretty tight for Metro Mobility. The demand outweighs the resource. It has been very positive. We run those two vehicles around the Eagan, Apple Valley and Burnsville area. Then the other one around the Eagan and Richfield area. All folks involved in this right now are ADA passengers.

One of the very nice parts of this pilot is a person tries to get a ride on a Metro Mobility bus and calls in and they are told to get certified and call back later. One of the really nice ways to create efficiencies with this pilot is we can transport folks who are not ADA certified. If someone has a roommate that is not certified, we don't have to send two buses. It is the one bus. The subsidy only counts for folks that are ADA certified. It has been very positive. We have gotten very positive feedback from our riders. Everyone is liking it a lot.

We have done some loops. We would go in and out of Blue Cross one day. It depends on what time people are done with work. And then get them to their destination.

Paulsen said how do you capture the other fare if somebody rides and they are not ADA certified? And they are riding as a visitor or a guest? Do you charge them full price?

Platz said it is set up a little bit different. So a person that is utilizing Metro Mobility uses a GoTo card. Folks that are utilizing the vehicle subsidy bus, they are charged their per diem for transportation through the County. So we will be charging that per diem. There is no GoTo card involved. If it was a Lifeworks bus running out there and we were charging a per diem. Most privately run buses are running in the red. The attempt here was Metro was going to subsidize the vehicles.

So we are billing the per diem and receiving the subsidy for folks that are ADA certified.

Dietrich said and what about the non ADA person who is along for the ride? What do they pay?

Platz said it completely depends on their funding. There are many different funding sources in regards to transportation for folks that received these services. It is billed at whatever rate that is. We potentially would lose money on a person that is of a certain funding. Or we would potentially break even. But it is depending on their funding through their case worker account. So we would be billing the same per diem from the county as if they were on one of our own vehicles. Or if they were on a vehicle subsidized by the Council.

Kuennen said we are approaching this as a limited scope pilot. It is limited to three vehicles purchased. It is very much a pilot approach where we are going to continue with this and then examine the operating experience of the provider. The customer experience. The impact on the overall Metro Mobility demand. And then make some decisions about its effectiveness as it relates to the total program. So it is a test approach with the goal that we are all about improving the mobility in the region at the least cost to the Council.

Platz said it would have to be a win for everybody. One of the great benefits to the average person using Metro Mobility is that we are not overwhelming the system as a DT and H, with all our riders' These serves would free up a person that is not affiliated with the DT and H to be able to utilize more of that capacity.

Kuennen said it mitigates the growth by not putting all these rides on the Metro Mobility system. In particular, we have our agency contract that brings the passengers to the agency in the morning and home from the agency in the afternoon. Midday ridership is tougher to organize. That is another element of transportation needs that is being served by this project.

Streasick said these are not Metro Mobility rides that are operating under this program. These are exclusively Lifeworks. Regardless of whether or not someone is ADA certified. If they are not tagging or paying when they get on the bus, no one is doing that. It is just a regular Lifeworks DT and H ride totally separate from Metro Mobility and not a Metro Mobility service. Not a constraint on a Metro Mobility system. DT and H is Day Training and Habilitation. A day program or work program for folks with disabilities.

Platz said it is not a constraint on Metro Mobility at all. Quite the opposite. It is to give the demand contracts some relief. So these are not Metro Mobility rides. But they all had been. They all came off of the Metro Mobility buses and on to the subsidized rides to give capacity to Metro Mobility.

Kuennen said that is the analysis that we will undertake with this program as it moves along to understand the viability and longevity of something like this would be if we expand beyond not just at Lifeworks but within the region.

Platz said these are newer vehicles. They are not existing vehicles from the Metro Mobility fleet. They are vehicles that we purchased and that were operated.

Kuennen said that was a requirement in the scope. That this would not be to subsidize their existing rides, but to an expansion that we would subsidize. In order to qualify for the subsidy, they would have to support a minimum number of daily customers that are ADA certified.

Platz said we are providing rides between employment sites that Lifeworks contracts with. For example, Lifeworks contracts with and finds folks jobs at Blue Cross Blue Shield. At Best Buy Corporate Headquarters, at EcoLab and others. In the past, Metro Mobility buses were taking Lifeworks clients to those places. Now, this vehicle we are operating, that is subsidized by the Council, is taking those same folks to those places to give capacity back to Metro Mobility.

Chair Fenley said it is the intent of this to be essentially a mini Metro Mobility. What it does is it eliminates the Council as the middle person in terms of funding. Because now you are getting funding from the original source rather than it coming from either the person's pocket or Metro Mobility. Does that make sense?

Kuennen said this is not a mini Metro Mobility or another Metro Mobility. It is really the Council subsidizing Lifeworks' transportation costs. If they are clients of Lifeworks, who are also customers of Metro Mobility. But by subsidizing Lifeworks' transportation, the Council is providing a transportation solution for our customer. Without having them have to go through our main system, which is an ADA paratransit scheduled dial-a-ride system that comes at a high cost to the Council. So we are experimenting with this solution. We think it is a good idea. It has some merit. With a small investment and a pilot approach. As far as what that means for Lifeworks and the costs they receive and where it comes from, I will give this to Bob.

Chair Fenley said does the funding stream, where the money comes from to pay for the ride?

Kuennen said the subsidy is coming from our operating budget.

Platz said we bill the county's DHS the same as if they were receiving services on a Lifework's bus, a Metro Mobility bus or a subsidized bus by Metro Mobility. That same per diem will be coming in to us. Then we provide transportation today? Yes. There is a whole lot behind that.

Kuennen said was that person ADA certified? Did we do the daily allotment on this vehicle to qualify for the Council's subsidy?

Graham-Raff said how does this defer or are you also subsidizing programs like Newtrax? Newtrax provides what sounds like the same service for people and they are a separate operating.

Kuennen said they are not. This is our first foray into this concept. Initiated just as a small pilot with Lifeworks. In order to test out that model, examine the impact on the region and our system, and go from there.

Graham-Raff said Newtrax has been sustainable for with whatever funding verses what they have coming in, however it is they are doing it. So why does Lifeworks need the subsidy or why have we been providing that under a subsidy that pulls from the Metro Mobility budget?

Platz said that is a whole other angle at it. So there are Metro Mobility vendors. There are DT and H folks, us and a whole lot of other people that have to provide transportation. It is not our main objective, but it is a part of what we do. And then Newtrax is an actual bus company. So I can't speak a ton to their model. It is another separate entity. We are two very different types of providers.

Kuennen said in regards to the pilot approach, we have the same questions. We are digging into the same things. We want some discovery. And move beyond concept. This is our approach. Our intent of coming to the committee is to inform you of the approach. Beyond the general statements around the time of the task force, inform of the approach and come back and talk about those impacts and our discoveries. We are too early. We have had one month of full data. And the second month of operating experience. That is not enough to make conclusions about anything. We are fully aware of that. We know of your interest and we will definitely be coming back.

Streasick said in regards to Diane's question, there is an important distinction here. From Metro Mobility's perspective this isn't coming out of Lifework's needing a subsidy. One Metro Mobility ride costs about \$25.00 or \$26.00. We are collecting \$3.50 or \$4.50 for that ride. So if Metro Mobility can shed some of those rides through this program, that not only could potentially lead to a better financial situation for Metro Mobility, it can lead to a better customer experience. To piggyback on Heidi's point, where she is headed down south when she needs to go north, to drop off a group of passengers, who could be very efficiently be served by this pilot, when we have such a market driver shortage, the idea of being able to have people being served without having a Metro Mobility driver spend a shift taking on those rides. This is very attractive to us.

Kuennen said we will have more information in six months. We will come back then.

### **3. Premium on Demand**

David Fenley spoke to the TAAC committee. I think most of the committee members here are aware that we have a TAAC POD task force. POD is Premium On Demand. It used to be Premium Same Day. Premium On Demand is essentially a taxi service where somebody who is Metro Mobility certified can go through the process of garnering a ride with a taxi and pay the first \$5.00. Metro Mobility subsidizes the next \$15.00. Then that rider pays any extra. It is an on demand service that goes through Metro Mobility. There currently is one person that holds the contract for this service. That contract is ending relatively soon. There has been a RFP that has been posted. I think within the last two to three weeks it was posted.

I will talk about what the task force is doing and why it exists. We put it together because Premium On Demand would come up every other month and we talk about the same things every other month. We would never have enough time to dig into things. So we figured we would put together interested members of the TAAC to get together outside of these meetings to work on this issue. We have been doing that. Darrell is on it as is Ken and Sam. Ken and Sam are both avid users of Premium On Demand. They have a whole lot to add to this discussion. I am on it as well. I am more of a facilitator as my role as Chair. We have been making progress. I wanted to let you know that we have been making progress. More importantly is what is going to come up with the new contract and RFP that has been presented.

Kuennen said the current taxi contract is with Transportation Plus. Their contract expires in December of 2020. We have had this same contractor for several contracts in a row now. We have had the service in our system since 2004. We have had a taxi model for quite a long time. The Metro Mobility Task Force was assembled by the state legislature in 2016. It was in place in the fall of 2017. In a report issued in February 2018 was really assembling on the idea of how to make some improvements in the overall Metro Mobility program. Improve mobility, mitigate the impacts of the growing demand, cost and service efficiencies. Detailed in that was the scope of examining a partnership with transportation network companies, the Ubers and Lifts of the world. Then examining the existing taxi program and what that means to the program.

Coming out of that was a recommendation of the task force that Metro Mobility considers to be a good recommendation. That we should explore a partnership and a model of service for an on demand service. That didn't really exist in the taxi program. The more Uber and Lyft experience where you can, through a ride hailing application, hail a need for transportation, get served immediately with several wait times often. We are all generally familiar with that.

The RFP that was put on the street. We call it the on demand services project. It is basically that concept where we are asking proposers to come to us with a solution. Using a ride hailing app-based software. It would be to complement the existing taxi program so it fits within the same pricing model where a customer pays when they use this service. They pay the first \$5.00 of the fare. We subsidize for the next \$15.00. Then if the cost of the trip is more than \$20.00, then the customer is obligated for the remaining fare.

So following the same fare model. Looking at supplementing the taxi contract that we have in place through December of 2020.

A key element of this is we are asking that it serves all of our customers regardless of the need for a wheelchair lift on that ride. So we are asking proposers to come to us with a solution that provides for that. We are open to the market to tell us what that solution should be. So we propose a couple of options in the RFP that they may want to provide their own accessible fleet that would meet our demand. Either through a subcontracting relationship. Basically, the whole solution coming to us in one package. Or they could propose a technology solution where if a customer needs an accessible ride with a wheelchair lift that that ride be shifted off to a third-party vehicle. Maybe even a Council owned vehicle. Then that vehicle and driver performs that on demand trip.

There are a lot of solutions that are available in the marketplace. There is a lot of interest. The change in this marketplace. We are eager to understand what that is. Other things, key elements in this RFP is we are proposing it as a three separate single year options where the first year is very much a pilot. Year two is an option year and year three is an option year. At the end of each year, 60 days prior to the end of the year we are going to be examining the impact, the experience of the program. And then determining whether or not we would option that next year.

Some of the data that would be analyzed would be customer experience data. Wait time data. The providers in this marketplace have driver ratings. They have customer ratings. We would be asking the provider to share some of the information with us about the delivery to our customers because it might compare to the experience of the general public. We are also offering and expecting that the provider would be offering training to any drivers regarding serving customers with disabilities. And the fare structure. Things that are unique to serving customers that use Metro Mobility services.

In general terms, that is the framework of this RFP. We had a preproposal meeting last Thursday. Where vendors came. I described in general terms what is in the RFP. Potential proposers asked questions informally. And then by end of day yesterday they were to provide their formal questions. I will be responding to their questions. Then the due date for their proposals is August 30.

We don't know what the marketplace will bring to us in response to the RFP. It is out there. It is public. Anyone can read it. I provided a copy of it to Chair Fenley and I'm sure the task force has already taken a look at it if they haven't already. That is the status of things as we speak.

We want to equalize and not let it be different for a customer with a wheelchair. The RFP reads something like it is the intent of the Council to provide a comparable level of service regardless if the customer is looking for a ride with a wheelchair lift or not. Also, comparable to the general public.

We need to get beyond concept. Move into some operating experience and start to analyze the impact of the customer experience. Just a general impact on our system. It could be that we have a group of customers that moves straight from our taxi service to this. It could be that we have a group of customers that move from the regular demand system to something like this because they like the idea of this better than the idea of taxi. Or it could be that we are creating a new market of customers. That is fine too because we are investing in mobility then. But we just don't understand what the market adoption rate is going to be for customers. And we don't understand what the market capacity is to meet our needs. None of these solutions will get rid of winter weather impacts on transportation.

What we are venturing into is using an app-based model. Where, in general terms, you are not using cash. The industry doesn't transact in cash. They transact through an account. So a credit card that is associated to your account.

If you are a Metro Mobility customer, our contractor would know that. Behind the scenes in the data, they are transacting that subsidy of that \$15.00 cost. Also, when they present the ride solution to you, they are presenting the cost of the ride. This happens when you request the ride and you accept the ride.

If I were to call up an Uber, and I request a ride from this location over to Heywood garage in Minneapolis, I would know what that ride would cost me. It is based on Uber's pricing model. They have different pricing structures. If they have an event going on the prices are more expensive. From a Metro Mobility's customers perspective, that ride would be transacted at \$15.00 cheaper if the total cost was over \$20.00.

Part of the rub in evaluating the proposal, for me and the evaluation panel will be, what is the technical solution being proposed? And what does that actually mean to the customer experience? There needs to be some good behind the scenes algorithm and matching of data for them to be able to always know the Metro Mobility customer. This is a ride that qualifies for the subsidy by the Council. Therefore, this is the cost that you would be presented.

Andy, the taxi contract doesn't operate the same way as what this is. How do the customers see in advance what that cost is? It is presented to them in similar ways isn't it?

Streasick said it is not quite the same. You would have to ask the taxi company for the precise fare. They can tell you what it will be. When they get a ride booked, it is booked in our Trapeze software that shows the mileage involved in the ride. Then they apply their fare to that mileage. That is the mileage they give regardless of which way the driver goes. So the way that the driver goes on the Metro Mobility rides is irrelevant. Which is different from a real taxi ride. They are going to get paid what they get paid for that ride. So the taxi company can provide you with that. You can pay cash or with a credit card.

Kuennen said but that \$30.00 ride for you would be \$45.00 for somebody else that is not a Metro Mobility customer because they apply the \$15.00 subsidy to those costs. We are basically subsidizing the cost of the ride with the taxi rates. The exact ride being requested by Heidi would be \$15.00 less than what is charged to the general public. We are not constraining the taxi rate. We are not saying we should have a different rate. We are going to tap the customer's exposure and the Council's exposure to that fare. The taxi model has been in place since 2004. Purposely with this RFP and this scope of work, we are trying to follow the same model to avoid confusion. As far as what the customer's obligation would be the first \$5.00. The Council's subsidy is for \$15.00. And then everything over \$20.00 would be the customer's obligation. Regardless of what the cost of the ride is.

We have information on the website that talks about that. The access to the information on that program would be the same as access to the access of information for any other part of our program. We put it in newsletters. As part of the overall effort around launching something like this would be a really robust customer information campaign. We want to make sure people understand what it is. What it is not. And how it works. More so than whatever has been done with a taxi program. It will be interesting to see what the market brings to us when the proposals are due by the end of this month.

Murphy said the GoTo cards and any of these would not be used here?

Kuennen said the GoTo cards are for the Metro Mobility paratransit demand service. These are options that are not fared through the Metropolitan Council. They are fared through the provider and then the customer receives the subsidy. You would have to have a separate account than the GoTo card account.

Thorsen said I wanted to clarify that you cannot use your GoTo card for Premium On Demand.

Chair Fenley said it is a separate taxi service that is subsidized by Metro Mobility.

Kuennen said this is an internal process to develop a scope of work before it hits the street in a solicitation. I would say that the information gathering process to inform this scope of work dates back to most robustly through the Metro Mobility Task Force, and all of the stakeholders including members of the TAAC and members of the Minnesota State Council on Disability who are on this task force. There was a thorough examination of the customer experience, the industry experience, the potential cost benefits of a program like this.

Beyond the involvement of the members of the task force. Since that time, I have not reached out to other outside stakeholders to inform the state scope of work with the exception of doing some marketplace research about capacity of the market. To meet what it is that we were recommended to move forward on.

As to what is available in the marketplace. We have to protect the integrity of the Council, the integrity of the solicitation process and our ability to directly reach out to potential vendors. While we are in a competitive process it is very limited. I do want to make another point though. In the evaluation process, when we select a vendor, it is common, and I would intend to include stakeholders and members subject matter experts.

Stakeholder experts, including members of TAAC if there is interest to sit in on the evaluation panel. We recently did that with the agency contract. Chair Fenley sat in on the evaluation panel. In evaluating the proposals and was a significant contributor in the recommendation to contract with Transit Team. That is part of the process. After it hits the street, we receive the proposals and then we evaluate those proposals. I would intend to reach out.

Chair Fenley said so we will have our representative on that selection committee. And also, one of the roles of committee members here too is also to be an information dissemination person. If you find out about something and you think that someone in the community should know about it, by all means let somebody in the community know about it. Hopefully, people who should respond to this RFP and we think should respond to this RFP will get that information. And they will have the ability over the next three weeks to respond to this request for proposal.

#### **4. Metro Transit Stats**

Chair Fenley said traditionally we have Metro Mobility come and talk to us about statistics. But, as we know, it is not only Metro Mobility that folks with disabilities use. We use regular route service. We use Bus Rapid Transit. We use light rail. So we figured why not have someone from Metro Transit come and talk to us about some of the stats that apply to our community about regular route service, not just Metro Mobility. So we are really looking at this opportunity as a pilot. Since we have been talking a lot about pilot projects. This won't be comprehensive right now. We are not going to have all the stats we want. But what we want to do is get you thinking about what stats we should have. And have it be a very interactive or collaborative discussion with Eric and with other folks who like to dive into this stuff that we can both make suggestions on things that maybe they should look at or things that they should bring to our attention and we can respond to that. This really is what I would view as the beginning of whether it is every quarter, every other month or whatever we decide. Just a way to be exposed to other statistics rather than just Metro Mobility.

Eric Lind spoke to the TAAC committee. He is the Manager of Analytics and Research at Metro Transit. I am also in the Strategic Initiatives Group inside Metro Transit. This would be great if it was the start of a continuous loop with you. What we do is essentially fill in the end of the sentence using data to understand... Our mission is to look at all of the different data that is produced by Metro Transit. I have also collaborated with Andy and Christine on some Metro Mobility data. We are working together on the interface between Metro Mobility and fixed route transit. How people use both systems.

Our mission is to understand how data can help us plan better, create facilities that people need. Just generally, understand the operations of our system. What I wanted to do today is to share, as a starting point, the types of information that might be of interest to you. A few things we think we have learned by looking at this information over the last few months and year. Also talk about how we are sharing this information outside other entities and how that would help us improve the experience of using Metro Transit for people with limited mobility.

We have a lot of data being produced by our system. We have, in the peak hours, 850 buses, not to mention the light rail vehicles that are moving around the Twin Cities. Every eight seconds they are recording their precise GPS location and reporting that back. Everything a bus does is recorded for the most part to the databases we have access to. We have vehicle movement. We have people movement. We are tracking how many people use our system.

We have a lot of operational data as well. So this becomes part of understanding our ability to operate efficiently, how we assign vehicles their operators. We have conversations about optimizing the vehicle mix and be able to provide service that isn't overwhelming. That is the crux of transit. We have to consider the operational data as well.

Just to focus on the vehicle data for a minute. I am going to do for the rest of this talk is to focus on the bus side. We have similar data for the most part for light rail, but as the bus system is two-thirds of our ridership, it is usually where we focus to get a good sense of what is going on in the system.

These vehicles are reporting their location about every eight seconds. So we have really good maps of where they are and where they have been all day long. You can imagine if you know where something is and when every eight seconds, you can also do things like estimate how fast things are moving or how long it has been sitting in one place. That is the delay metric. We are trying to produce information on that for planners to use. We obviously track how well the vehicles are adhering to their schedules. The fixed route side. Making sure

they are not too far behind and there is a whole group of people in our transit control center trying to optimize that.

We count the number of people that are getting on and off at each stop. We have a couple of ways that we are doing that. We also have some other sensors. Some of our buses have sensors that are in the bike racks that flip forward, where people can put their bikes in the front. That is sort of a pilot thing that has been going on. It gives some interesting data about people mixing modes there. Every time that mobility lift, the wheelchair lift, is deployed from the bus, there is a time stamped record and a GPS on it. So, where and when that was deployed.

What we started doing about a year ago, was taking that data on where and when those mobility lifts were being deployed and just starting to get a really high level of when and where this is happening. We also have data on people. When you board a bus, you pay at the farebox. With the exception of the off-board payment rapid transit system. So for most buses you are getting on board and paying at the farebox. Whether by cash or your GoTo card. If you are paying by cash, indicating that you should have a mobility fare, you can get recorded with this key that the operator is supposed to push. That is not the most reliable source of data. Because they have other priorities. Driving safely and so on. We are not sure that that is 100 percent accurate.

A couple of other sources. One is using the smart phone app that we have. It is a Metro Transit app where you can purchase tickets. Then we have our GoTo system card. When those are being tagged, whether it is on a platform or on a bus, we have a record of the time of day and route and whether the program that is being associated with that GoTo card is the limited mobility stats.

The two sources that I mentioned. The limited mobility and the GoTo cards, is what we wanted to focus on as complementary data sources for how people are using our system.

It is really about where and when in this first cut. This is where I would encourage you to absorb the type of data that we have as I am describing it and think about what are deeper questions and more insightful questions you would like to see us ask. We are in the process of making this available internally. It is available internally. It is also a chance for you to develop what you would like to see us to be accountable in a way. Because what I am describing is what we should know as an agency about what is happening where and when. If you have a mission of helping us be accountable for the promises we are making in terms of providing service to all people, there might be things that could help us do that.

The first things that we did with this data was to create maps, tables and charts to figure out what is the general picture of what is going on. On a high level in the calendar year of 2018, there were 186,000 or more of the deployment of the lifts. That is an idea of the scale we are talking about. The limited mobility endorsed GoTo cards are over 2.5 million. Our total ridership was 80 million. That is two to three percent of our ridership.

As an example, to think about, it would be a little more granular example. Route 5 is the busiest bus line. It runs from Brooklyn Center through North Minneapolis down to downtown Minneapolis, South Minneapolis, all the way to the Mall of America. It is a very long route. It is a very busy route. It is the highest ridership route. It also is the route where there are the highest deployments of the wheelchair lift and smart card tags. In general, it is a pretty common pattern.

The activity of limited mobility passengers is not really distributed differently than regular passengers. The more often that there are passengers on the bus, the more often we will see accessibility riders. Some examples of what we have seen in terms of seasonal patterns. There is a strong weather component. If you look across the year, there is a very clear seasonal pattern. Late spring, early summer you can see that there is a lot of activity going on. These data sources in the winter and during blizzards there is not a lot.

We have sometimes seen really high spikes in deployment of those lifts during and after snowstorms. In talking to some operators, it seems like they are using those to bridge those snow gaps between the street and the boarding area and the bus for all passengers.

You will see this kind of weird spike. So at first, we couldn't understand why there would be so many wheelchairs coming out right after a blizzard. Well it is because they are using that to facilitate boarding. In terms of time of day, it is interesting to note both the limited mobility GoTo card usage and the lift deployment are highest in midday. So it is not necessarily a nine to five commute pattern. There are lots of different errands, appointments and travel happening throughout the day.

On Route 5, the scale is about 100 lift cycles per day. Roughly divide that in half it would be about 50 people taking a trip. Then about 350 to 450 passengers boarding with a limited ability GoTo card.

Chair Fenley stopped the presentation because it was 2:25 p.m. He wanted to give people a chance to be heard before the meeting ended. The presentation will continue after Member Comments.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

Paulsen said I wanted to make sure that you are all invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate new accessibility ramps to gardens at the state capitol.

Chair Fenley said I have one comment that was passed along to me by Margot Imdieke Cross. It involves some of the light rail elevators that exist on the West Bank in regards to cleanliness. Specifically, urine which is rolled through on a daily basis. It is a big problem. It is either puddles of urine or a chemical they use that is noxious as well. It is not something that is ideal for the elevator situation.

## **Back to the Metro Transit Stats Presentation**

Eric Lind said we identified the top 10 stops in terms of wheelchair lift deployment and smart card mobility limited tags. The very most frequent place where these wheelchair lifts are deployed is at Chicago and 8<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Minneapolis at the Hennepin County Medical Center. That is also the intersection of very frequent buses.

Maybe more of interest is what we are doing with this data. Not only internally but externally. Internally we are using it with our facilities group is to both facilitate their ADA review and prioritize snow clearing of stations and shelters. Saint Paul and Minneapolis are both interested in doing the same thing. We gave Saint Paul in 2018, a score of stops based on some of this data and we just shared with the City of Minneapolis about a month ago, this same data that they are going to be using both in terms of public works but also for their transportation action plan which is a comprehensive assessment of how people get around in Minneapolis. It includes a pedestrian chapter, which will be informed by the data of where our highest mobility activity is happening.

Myhre said I see a lot of people boarding the light rail without paying. How do you account for that in your data?

Lind said we count passengers using these automated passenger counters. There are light beams as people pass the threshold to enter and exit the light rail. So we know how many people are boarding. We also count fares. So we have a general idea of the gap. When and where that is happening is done by the Metro Transit Police Department. There are also audits that happen. So we have an idea of the fare evasion rate.

Paulsen said regarding snow removal and high priority bus stops. Where I come from the police are doing community mapping. They take that data that you are looking at and those hot spots. Then after they have the hot spots, they can shift their resources to those hot spots where there is snow removal at the shelters and bus stops. Once we define what those hot spots are, does that mean that we can take that data and potentially use that elsewhere in regional planning? Where does this put us on the map of mapping out our communities? How our transit riders get from point A to point B?

Lind said you can look at clusters or hot spots. If you put these on a map. That is exactly what we have done. A lot of them are in high boarding areas in general. The idea would be to not limit it to anyone to particular facilities use. But to put it into planning guidance and understanding about travel. We also have the ability to look at Metro Mobility data in conjunction with this data, which we have not done yet, and ask where are the places at where there is a lot of overlap? Where we might want to come up with a more integrated way of using both systems.

Dietrich said are you tracking the areas where we get calls that due to a lack of snow removal by us or the city that we have problems? I was thinking that if you are tracking that, then facilities obviously can have it and know what is coming up. Are you doing that?

Lind said the Customer Relations Department receives calls and they do connect with engineering and facilities. The way that those calls are routed we don't have a good database of when and where those are happening. It would be a good suggestion to map that. To find out where our efforts are needed.

Streasick said if we could get it by definition, anybody that is using a service connected flash is going to have a disability. If we could also get data that includes the service connected disability free ride, that would be of interest. Then as technology has changed and we have buses that are kneeling, a lot of folks with disabilities that are ambulatory are boarding without the lift because of the kneeling technology. Some drivers deploy it for everybody. If it is possible if we could get some information on kneeling and the frequency of deployment. I think that would be of interest to the committee.

Maybe for the committee and certainly for Metro Mobility, if it is possible, we would be interested in seeing some difference in distribution between the L pass and the A pass. If the software can do that. If we could see somebody who is Metro Mobility certified using a Met Mo card verses people who are not certified for Metro Mobility who are tagging using a limited mobility program pass.

Chair Fenley said I will put the ask out to committee members. If you think of more things that should be tracked or things that are important to us, please email them to me and we can get that information to whomever needs to have it. So the next time we update, we can get that information out of the database.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **1. Blue Line**

This item was not presented

### **2. Green Line**

This item was not presented

### **3. Gold Line**

This item was not presented.

### **4. Rush Line**

This item was not presented.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary