

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, August 5, 2015

Committee Members Present: Chair Kjensmo Walker, Julianne Bina, Christopher Bates, Douglas Moody, Kim Trenary, Bob Anderson, Margot Imdieke Cross, David Fenley and Patty Thorsen.

Committee Members Absent: Adora Sage, Ken Rodgers, Jeffery Smith and Nichole Villavicencio.

Committee Members Excused: Robert Platz and Heidi Myhre.

Council Staff Present: Pam Steffen, Greg Tuveson and Kelci Stones from Metro Transit, Andy Streasick, Brad Utecht, Cole Hiniker, Carol LaFleur, Noel Nix, Luis Morales, Marquell Moorer and Alison Coleman.

Public Present: Kari Sheldon.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Walker called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:31 p.m. on Wednesday, August 05, 2015.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Anderson to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Anderson, seconded by Thorsen to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2015 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

INFORMATION & BUSINESS

1. Metro Mobility Update

Andy Streasick spoke to the TAAC committee. He went over the stats. Metro Mobility is going through a transition, especially through the new South zone. They are at 6.5 ridership growth so far this year. Last year it was at 8 percent. At a recent conference they learned that there are not people across the country experiencing this kind of ridership growth. Revenue hours are up over 10,000 from last year. They told the South zone and the East zone that they would rather see lower productivity and get more drivers on the street so they are a resource if needed. Because of that the revenue hours have gone up a bit and productivity has dropped a bit also. During the transition they want to make sure there are enough drivers out there so they are available.

The on time performance system-wide is still doing O.K. The expectation is 95 percent on time. The average expectation is 90 percent on time. They have been able to do the 95 percent on time during July in terms of arrival times with the new contracts that have already happened in the South zone and will be going into effect at the end of this month in the other zones for First Transit and Transit Team. They have rolled in appointment times to improve what hasn't been acceptable recently. That has dropped substantially recently. The reason for that drop is how we calculate a successful appointment time. When they told all of the providers that they were going to start counting missed appointment times as a failure in regards to on time performance. That it would carry the same amount of financial damages in the new contracts. That arriving outside of the half hour appointment window would count against them. The providers started picking up customers much earlier to make the appointment window. If the customer is on the bus for as long as they can be under the maximum on board time parameter and they pick them up 29 minutes under the window they are still going to make their appointment. As a result, sometimes people are getting to their appointment time two hours early. The earliest a person can get to an appointment and it is considered on time is an hour before hand. It is a failed appointment time if the customer gets there over an hour early. This would make the on time performance

stats drop. Metro Mobility staff told the providers they have to correct this or it will cost them a lot of money beginning at the end of next month.

Complaints per 1,000 rides are way too high. It is up to 1.35. It is much higher than last year. The new service in the South zone and new redesign service for all the zones, however there was another decision by First Transit has led to some complaints they are dealing with. First Transit won the bids for both the South and the East service areas. They have traditionally held the East spot. They moved all of their reservationists from the East zone which is housed in Roseville, down to the South zone in Burnsville. They were offered a raise but most of them didn't want to do this move. Because of this the most senior reservationist has been there only three and one half months. There are two experienced reservationists in the East zone and the South zone. The Council has done some training in a classroom setting. They are continuing to press the providers to do regular trainings with them also. Being a reservationist requires some skills that need to be honed with real world experience. Rides have been booked to the wrong place or the wrong customer or on the wrong day. People's civil rights get violated when this takes place. They are aware of the problem and the complaints show that also.

The average trips per hour are down. Metro Mobility will pay for extra drivers to act as a backup. The accidents are where they expect them to be. They used to count only the ones that were their fault. Now they count all accidents.

For on time performance times, the penalty is substantial. If they don't reach that 95 percent they are not eligible for the on time performance bonus, which is about \$25,000 on a monthly basis. Last month the South zone lost \$66,000. It was penalties and forfeited bonuses that they could have received if they met the service parameters laid out in the contract. The providers didn't hire enough drivers. They don't have enough runs in the South zone to do what they want them to do.

2. Performance-Based Planning in the Transportation Policy Plan

Brad Utecht and Cole Hiniker spoke to the TAAC committee. They are both Senior Planners in the MTS division at the Metropolitan Council. They will talk about performance measures on the Transportation Policy Plan. It was adopted in January of this year. Performance based planning is a framework that MnDOT does a lot. They are trying to establish performance measures that track the outcome of a long range plan. They are attempting to insure that investment decisions are made based on their ability to establish goals and objectives. The TPP already has goals and objectives. They are trying to identify measures that attract how well they are doing to meet those objectives that are already published in the plan. They are trying to answer the question "How well is the region doing in meeting the goals and objectives in the TPP? "

In 2012 MAP 21 was passed. It was the Federal Transportation Bill. That had requirements for performance based planning for states and the MPO's for the first time. Performance based planning was never required before. For the last TPP that was just adopted. There were some preliminary draft performance measures that were included in that document because FHWA was a little bit slow and hadn't adopted their official performance measures that are in the MAP 21 bill. Those have not been passed yet. This process that is going on right now and is looking to adopt official recommended performance measures for the next TPP. They are looking to have complete recommended measures by the summer of 2016.

The steering committee is the TAC Planning Committee. It is the regional overarching body to look at performance measures and see how everything works together. They have also put together some work groups. So highway, transit, bike/ped and aviation are the different modes they are looking at. Those groups are meeting about right now to develop performance measures for their mode and then those measures get brought up to TAC Planning for a more regional perspective. Then they have recommended performance measures out of that process.

The project management team is Metropolitan Council staff. Brad is the project manager for this. Cole is the head of the transit team. For the policy maker involvement they are going to have Council members involved in this process. The modal work groups are meeting right now. The first transit group meeting is this Friday. They will be meeting the next three or four months. They will develop some draft performance measures. After that they will look at bringing those recommended measures to the TAB, TAC and the Council to get some buy in from the policy makers and other staff about what they are doing. In the spring of next year they will reconvene modal groups to present performance measures with data and respond to TAB/TAC/Council comments. In 2017 they will begin the TPP update.

The modal work groups will have participation from local, state and regional agencies as well as advocacy groups. Each group is tasked with identifying one to three measures that would help evaluate the investment in the TPP. They will be meeting once a month for the next four months. They are also looking at developing recommended targets.

This current effort is primarily a staff effort focused on transportation stakeholders. They are including some advocacy groups. There will be more robust public outreach as part of the TPP update. Then the performance measures will be officially approved as part of the TPP update.

Next steps: They are just at the beginning of this. Modal groups will be meeting to develop performance measures over the next few months. Then they will present to the TAC Planning Committee and the Transportation Committee as this process moves along. They are looking to have a list of performance measures by next summer.

TAB is the Transportation Advisory Board. They are policy makers. TAC is the Technical Advisory Committee who is the staff advisors to the elected officials.

They are looking for a TAAC committee member to serve on the transit committee or the bike/ped committee. If someone is interested, contact Chair Walker. They are focused on evaluating a 30 year plan. Not the day to day operations of transit providers. Kari Sheldon is interested in the transit committee once she officially becomes a TAAC committee member.

They are not looking at medical transportation.

3. Metro Transit State Fair Plan

Greg Tuveson and Kelci Stones spoke to the TAAC committee. He is the Assistant Manager of Street Operations at Metro Transit and she is a Senior Market Development Specialist at Metro Transit. The ridership in 2014 was 19.66 percent higher than it was in 2013, with bus rides at 444,295 in 2013. In 2014 they were up to 531,653. It is estimated that Metro Transit had a 14.6 percent share of state fair attendees. Their goal from 2013 to 2014 was a three percent increase. The 19.66 percent was a great increase. The express sites are run at 21 locations. Metro Transit provides 13 sites, serving 12 gates at the SFTC (State Fair Transit Center). Minnesota Valley and Southwest provides service from eight sites and have two 150 foot long gates. They are able to put two buses in at each time.

The Route 3 is in the regular route service. They found out last year with the move from the former Como Transit Station to the new site that they did not need to have the 3 shuttle after three dates. The traffic on Como had reduced so much that the regular route bus was actually ahead of the shuttle. So they were able to eliminate that.

The Route 84 extras that they had will not be running this year. This is due to the Route 84 current service at 10 minute service. The Route 960 is on a 10 minute headway. It will be serving on Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis again. In 2015 they are redesigning the State Fair Transit Center slightly. The markings on the ground in the parking lot are in an oval. It is reduced in size, but is being pushed out more and gives them a bigger footprint and they are adding one more gate. It gives them more onsite storage where the buses are waiting in the evening hours. Each route will have its own gate except for one and the five days of the fair which will run weekend and holiday service. Best Buy and Maple Grove will share that gate 14, which is the furthest west gate by Randal Avenue. The Route 960 was their last year. They listened to the feedback. It is moved to gate 6, which is right at the front of the State Fair Transit Center.

The striping this year will be done to scale. It is surveyed and plotted out so this big footprint will be there. They have worked with the State Fair. They are going to provide more benches. They will be the same type of benches you will see as if you were on the fairgrounds.

An overview of the 2015 service includes the bus bargain tickets they sell in advance. The tickets are now on sale. They have been on sale since August 1 and they will go through August 26. The advance sales offers customers discounts before they regularly go on sale on August 27. A single ticket would cost \$4.50 in advance and \$5.00 during the fair. Tickets for two folks would be on sale for \$9.00 in advance or \$10.00 regular price. The group pass would cost \$15.00 for four people in advance or \$20.00 regular price. The tickets can be purchased online or at the Transit Service Centers in downtown St. Paul or Minneapolis. Tickets may be printed out or displayed on a smart phone. Staff will be at the express sites and can scan the tickets purchased in advance.

The Northstar has a family pass as well. It allows a customer to travel from St. Cloud all the way to Fridley Station and then go on to the State Fair Express Service that serves that station to the fair all on one fair. It is good for two adults and three children. In addition to that every year they have customers that really want to stay at the fair a lot later than what their last train offers, which was 7:00 p.m. On the last weekend, which is September 5 and 6 they are going to provide an early morning trip that will depart from Big Lake at 7:35 a.m. It will arrive at the Fridley Station at 8:10 a.m. The evening trip will leave the Fridley Station at 11:00 p.m. it is only on the last Saturday and Sunday that they will do this.

Metro Transit has two booth locations at the fairgrounds. The big one is at the Grandstand. They are going to promote service on the A-Line that is going to start service at the beginning of next year along with the other services that Metro Transit offers. They also have the Kick Gas booth at the Eco Experience building. This is a sponsored booth with MnDOT and others. This booth specifically promotes a range of sustainable options and resources that make it possible to rely on transit, bicycling, walking and car sharing.

The overview of how they market the State Fair service. They produce over 60,000 State Fair brochures a year. They are distributed on the buses and transportation service outlets such as libraries, hotels and convention centers. The State Fair gives them to advance ticket holders and people who come to the fair to work the various booths and food stands. They also will have skyway ad panels in both downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis. They have two direct mails they have done the last couple of years. Fridley Station came on board the service two years ago. This will be the third year. They have been penetrating that market with a direct mail to remind them that the State Fair service operates in that community.

The Route 960 moved from Nicollet Mall to Hennepin two years ago. This is the third year they have been doing the direct mail ads there. This will probably be the last year since the ridership is starting to rebuild itself again. It is just a postcard reminding the residents that live in downtown Minneapolis that the service is available to them and that it is easy to get to the fair from there. They advertise on the Green Line platform stations to take the service to the Snelling Station and transferring to the Route 84 to the fair. The Blue Line promotes the 960 and then the express service to the various express sites.

They also have print ads in the newspapers as well as online ads. They advertise on the sides of the buses and have brochures inside of buses and trains.

For the number of buses on weekdays in the a.m. there will be 64 buses, in the p.m. there will be 62 buses and there will be 41 articulated buses. On the weekends and the holiday there will be 74 a.m. buses, 74 p.m. buses and 54 articulated buses. The articulated buses have been increased from last year.

The total estimated hours for the Metro Transit staff is 3,184. The total estimated hours of bus operators is 11,363. Express service costs are covered by collected revenues. No subsidy is required. These are the same stats as last year.

Lorenz runs the free bus sites. Metro Transit service is run as a collaborative with the State Fair. The State Fair operates all of the free shuttle service.

Metro Mobility will add another shift to deal with the people who use it to get to the fair. In terms of systemic changes for the fair, there aren't any.

4. Metro Mobility Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Carol LaFleur spoke to the TAAC committee. She is a Metro Mobility Service Center Urban Scholar Intern. Metro Mobility staff wanted to make sure they were meeting the customer's needs. She was tasked to create the survey and implement it. There were 12 multiple choice questions as well as three open ended questions. The survey was implemented via email and she made personal phone calls. They did not assign names, numbers or addresses to them. All answers were anonymous. There were 1666 people contacted. There were 350 total responses.

Question 1: How satisfied are you with the trip reservation process? Very satisfied 49.57%, somewhat satisfied 40.69%.

Q 2: How satisfied are you with Metro Mobility's on-time performance? Very satisfied 41.11%, somewhat satisfied 49.27%.

Q3: How would you rate the professionalism and responsiveness of reservationists? Very professional 68.90%, somewhat professional 29.07%.

Q4: How would you rate the professionalism and responsiveness of Drivers? Very professional 65.29 %, somewhat professional 32.35 %.

Q5: How satisfied are you with Metro Mobility's complaint resolution process? Very satisfied 24.64 %, somewhat satisfied 21.78 %, have never used 44.41%.

Q6: Do you use any other form of public transportation? Please check all that apply. Metro Transit buses 76.79%, light rail trains 62.50 %, Northstar train 8.33% and Transit Link 33.33%.

Q7: How satisfied are you with Metro Mobility's hours of operation? Very satisfied 66.47%, somewhat satisfied 27.65%

Q8: How satisfied are you with Metro Mobility's service area? Very satisfied 56.43% somewhat satisfied 37.72%.

Q9: if you have used or applied for a standing order, how satisfied are you with Metro Mobility's standing order process? Very satisfied 35.78%, somewhat satisfied 13.49, have never applied for or used a standing order 43.70%.

Q10: if you have used taxi services through Metro Mobility's Peak Demand Overflow program, how satisfied are you with the service? Very satisfied 41.32%, somewhat satisfied 40.50%.

Q11: If you have used taxi services through Metro Mobility's Premium Same Day program, how satisfied are you with the service? Very satisfied 44.26%, somewhat satisfied 36.89%.

Q12: How would you rate your overall satisfaction with Metro Mobility? Very satisfied 55.75%, somewhat satisfied 40.23 %.

The last three questions were not given in percentages.

Q13: What is your favorite thing about Metro Mobility service? Drivers 58, reliability 50, allows independence 28, door-through-door 28, price 11, ease of use 9, nothing 9, timeliness 5, service area 5, safety 5, other riders 4, lift-equipped 4, online functionality 3, no more transfers 3, premium same day service 3, IVR system 2, Reservationists 2, other 6.

Q14: if you could change one thing about Metro Mobility service, what would that be? Improve timeliness 35, increase hours 20, reduce ride length 20, increase driver competence 14, pickups for appointment times are too early 13, online system reliability 10, expand service area 10, allow same-day rides 10, shorten 30-minute window 8, nothing 8, rude dispatchers 7, uncomfortable rides 7, improve reliability of IVR 6, implement Go-To 6, Reduce negotiation window 5, increase reservationist professionalism 5, increase reservation hours 5, improve GPS system 3, make it easier to get certified 3, make it easier to get standing orders 3, eliminate transfers 2, eliminate non-escorts 2, improve rider behavior 2, relax no-show policies 2, allow bookings further in advance 2, other 16.

Q15: if you answered "Not at all satisfied" or "not professional" to any question, please elaborate. Stories of tardiness 16, driver unprofessionalism 14, rude reservationists 8, all is well 8, bad PSD experiences 7, too hard to get standing orders 7, unsatisfactory complaint resolution 5, inadequate hours of service 4, inadequate service area 4, poor online system 3, bus did not arrive 2, do not like standby rides 2, other 13.

Metro Mobility has a total of 19,000 active riders at this time. That would be someone who has ridden a Metro Mobility bus at least once in the last year. They used the pool of folks who are eligible for the assured ride home program. That is folks who ride at least six times per week on one-way trips. There are over 6,000 of them that were interviewed for this survey.

MEMBER COMMENT

Christopher Bates made a motion "Be it resolved that TAAC go on record in favor of the use of ramps in lieu of stairs where it is reasonable in future Metro Transit construction projects." He asked that they move this motion to the Transportation Committee and the Metropolitan Council. Patty Thorsen seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

Douglas Moody and Pam Steffen suggested that the TAAC members bring a list of items the committee members would like to see for ADA projects to the TAAC meeting. Each TAAC member should write their own

list and bring it to the group for the next meeting and work as a group to establish an official list for the committee.

Bates asked Steffen for a list that Metro Transit uses with the ADA guidelines to have as a base before adding the TAAC information.

Chair Walker said they are beginning the process of updating the ByLaws. She is not going to hold a forum in the group to have an open discussion on the ByLaws. The committee members are to send any suggestions for changes by email or phone to Chair Walker or meet with her one-on-one. She sent out an email regarding this and received comments from three TAAC members.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary