

# **Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Patty Thorsen, Darrell Paulsen, Txiabneeb Vaj, Kari Sheldon, John Clark, Diane Graham-Raff, Margot Imdieke Cross and Vice Chair David Fenley.

**Committee Members Absent:** Ken Rodgers and Heidi Myhre.

**Committee Members Excused:** Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Robert Platz and Lukus Zuker.

**Council Staff Present:** Chad Loeffler, Clarissa Schleichert, Doug Cook, Jan Dietrich, Tracey Jackson and Nick Jelinek from Metro Transit; Dana Rude, Christine Kuennen, Heidi Schallberg, Claudia Fuentes, Matt LaTour and Alison Coleman.

**Public Present:** Joe Russell

## **CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Thorsen called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:32 p.m. on Wednesday, May 2, 2018.

Chair Thorsen made an amendment to the agenda to add the approval of David Fenley to be the Vice Chair of the TAAC committee.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

It was moved by Paulsen, seconded by Sheldon to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Imdieke Cross, seconded by Fenley to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2018 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

Chair Thorsen asked for the approval of the TAAC committee for the appointment of David Fenley as the Vice Chair of the TAAC committee. Paulsen moved to approve the appointment and Sheldon seconded the motion. The **motion carried.**

## **BUSINESS & INFORMATION**

### **1. Text for Safety**

Chad Loeffler, Manager of the Transit Control Center at Metro Transit, spoke to the TAAC committee. Text for Safety is our interactive text service that we launched in December of 2017. It is also called Text for TCC (Transit Control Center). We set out last year on this project with some goals. Our goals were Metro Transit's basis here of safety, innovation and equity.

Safety. We are trying to increase our customer's ability to report unsafe situations to Transit Police. Interactive two-way text messaging service can discretely, without calling attention to yourself, communicate something to us of a concern that you have while riding one of our vehicles, (buses and trains) or at our facilities. Without fear of retaliation or of being called out.

Innovation where it is moving beyond our traditional means of communicating from our passengers via telephone or from our own employees reporting things to us.

In Equity, we are using a simple text messaging service. You don't have to purchase a smart phone to have this. You don't have to have our app to have this. You do have to have text messaging on your cell phone service. It is not going to be free. It is part of your plan.

Our timeline. Way back in 2017 we thought we had a product that was going to work for us. We were all set to go but after we tested it, it determined that it wasn't going to work for us. We went back to the drawing board last year. In quarter two of 2017, we completed our request for more information. We wanted to know what was out there. We put that out there. We had only two responses on the market. From those two responses we developed a request for proposal to send out in late quarter two. We got our feedback. In quarter three we made a recommendation on a vendor. Then we got our notice to proceed. Then in quarter four of last year, (last fall) we implemented our texting service on December 18, 2017.

Contacting Metro Transit via text message. You can do it two ways. There is a tentative phone number 612-900-0411. Or you can use the Metro Transit app. If you are an app person. On the screen he showed what the phone would look like if you texted on your smart phone. He also showed what the app would look like.

Customer outreach. On our vehicles (trains and buses) you will see placards and signs with the phone number on them. It also says for all emergencies, call 911. We don't want to replace the 911 as the primary means of contacting for public safety police, medical, fire for emergency response. You still need to do that. If you feel unsafe, see suspicious or threatening behavior you can text. It shows you the phone number 612-900-0411. This is on all of our vehicles right now. It talks about inappropriate behavior as well. The service is for immediate police response. If it happened 10 minutes ago or an hour ago you can call in to our customer relations or police department. You could call in and talk to a human being. It is about that immediate response where you won't want to call out yourself "Hey, there is someone doing something." You would feel uncomfortable. Something that needs to be done right now.

He showed graphics of call volume per hour. When are the most riders riding? The a.m. peak or the p.m. peak. We see a big spike in the a.m. peak. As you go through the day it quiets down. Less vehicles and less passengers. It picks up again during the p.m. peak. After 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. it is lower. In March there was a spike around 10:00 p.m. It went down again in April. Occasionally there will be a text after midnight, 1:00 or 2:00 a.m.

The second graphic is calls by days of the week. Sunday has the least amount of texting. Less people on the road and less vehicles. Friday was the highest day for the month of March. It goes down a little in April. It just shows an increasing usage from January to February to March as more people learn about this service.

Why are people texting us? They are texting us for a lot of reasons. Smoking has been a popular text. People are smoking on our trains and people are texting it. One would call 911 normally. Now this gives them an avenue to somehow contact us, which is really good. The rail lines are the major activity generators of the texting service. Possibly because you don't have a physical operator there. With the bus driver on the bus at least you can talk to the bus driver. On the train you may be in a second or third vehicle and you want to get some info to somebody. The Blue Line and the Green Line are the greatest generators of the texting service.

There is also disorderly contact. People may be yelling and screaming and bothering you. You may be afraid someone may assault you. Maybe they are emotionally disturbed.

He read a scenario of a texter to the Transit Control Center and the TCC person is texting back to him. He also is monitoring Twitter and Facebook. This complaint is someone spoking on the Green Line. The TCC person asks the texter for information about the person smoking: What do they look like (race, age, type)? What are they wearing? What is the train and car number? Where is the train now? The TCC person sends the Transit Police to the train. Then they close the conversation.

They are four months into this.

This is a web-based interface. The TCC person has that on his normal Met Council network. Then he has a police cam next to him. The police is notified once he has a location and a basic description and knows what is going on.

In the situation where there was a person on the train who had a gun. The police were dispatched, and they are still getting additional information along the way.

Each vehicle has an ID number. It may be 208A or 208B. Then 208C for the middle car. They do ask if they are in the first, second or third car. Or asked where is the suspect?

The person texting does not have to give their name.

The Mall of America has about 90 phone numbers to text to. Each number indicates a location at the mall so they can find the person texting. Metro Transit doesn't do that. They have just one phone number to call and text to. It is the same service that the Mall of America and the airport uses. They are based in Minneapolis.

People are allowed to take a gun on Metro Transit. If Metro Transit is notified of a gun on a vehicle they are going to send a police officer to determine if the gun is there legally.

You can text to 911 in Minnesota. It came online last fall.

The TCC person usually answers the text in less than a minute. If the call center is busy the TCC will send a second message saying they will get to you momentarily. The TCC person has help if he gets busy. They average 9.5 texts in a day. There is one person in charge that has the responsibility to answer the text. If he leaves the room, he has to have someone replace him while he is gone.

## **2. Blind Awareness Training**

Clarissa Schleichert, Equal Opportunity Consultant II, spoke to the TAAC committee. The video she was going to present was not available. She continued with the powerpoint. This is a new piece that we have started recently on March 14, 2018. Here is a little history on the training that our office does. It is the Office of Equal Opportunity. Jan Dietrich is my supervisor. There are three of us in that department. Between the three of us we provide training for all new part time operators and all operators transitioning from part time to full time. In that training the operators review the Operator Handbook. It is two inches thick with lots of rules. We also have speakers come in. Someone from Chad's group will come in from the TCC and someone from Street Sups. Then we come in to deal with the disability and harassment piece.

We provide 90 minutes of training, which includes harassment. We talk about wheelchairs. How to strap them down. Scooters. We talk about Segways. This has been an issue in the past. When you have 1,500 operators, it is hard to get a similar message out to everyone. So we would like to say that our new part time operators are better trained than our old 30 year operators because they are getting the most new information. They are getting the best stuff out there. They are getting the updates on the policies.

We talk about service animals. We talk about comfort animals because Metro Transit does go above and beyond the law with the ADA. We do allow comfort animals. We talk about calling streets and announcing routes. The use of the lift. What is required for a PCA and to let people on even if they do not have the information for a PCA. The thing that we emphasize throughout is asking once and letting it go for being an informer not an enforcer. That is something they talk about with the fare. But we talk quite a bit about disabilities as well.

There is a lot of documentation to say: "Here is my Metro Mobility card and my PCA can ride for free." We do try to explain to them that people don't have the correct information. If informed let them know what number they can call that will still allow them to ride. One of the things that makes our presentation more colorful is. Jan's number of years here have resulted in a number of interesting stories. They come through Customer Relations and we use them oftentimes to teach a lesson in these events. Because it is not just a matter of our public perception. But it is also a matter of that we could face litigation, or we could be sued or pay out money. That is tax payer dollars. We explain that to the operators as well.

Then the part time and fulltime operators. We do the 90-minute training. The new part time operators are not the same as before. It just changed a couple of days ago. We have incorporated a piece that is an audio clip. The drivers are asked to close their eyes. Imagine that they are blind. The audio clip plays. The manager at the Instruction Center likes to say it sounds like a MPR clip. It will start with complete silence. Only a person talking. They go through walking to a bus stop. Hearing the birds. Hearing the trucks pass. Is it a bus? Is it a garbage truck? Then playing those sounds through. Trying to give our operators an intimate feeling of what it is like to not be able to see that bus approaching and what obstacles they have to go through.

The clip is about 30 seconds long. It starts with "What if you could not see or hear?" Then we talk about that. We talk about this as a group. We give people an opportunity to reflect. That is a small piece that we are including in our part time.

The big piece I am here for today is the Blind Awareness Training. The research that we did on this training that the Instruction Center put together was these talks with the State Services for the Blind. We talked with the Saint Paul School District. We talked with the Low Vision Resource Group. A lot of people gave us a lot of good information. But nobody had the time to commit to come in and train. It is whether it would be a school

schedule or summer schedule or whether it would be the legislative session that they are in. They didn't have the time to commit. That is when the Instruction Center said we need to take this on ourselves and do the best job we can. Because we can't pull in an outside resource based on what we had. From there they started to develop a curriculum. There is a multi learning approach in this. Being that you are not just going after slides. You are not just based on reading. This is an interactive personal experience. They are actually getting out on the bus.

They are watching videos. They are having classroom discussions. Then they are writing or reflecting on this group. Hopefully the goal is that it really sinks in. In the end one of our biggest goals is to have our operators empathize with people and understand what it is like to potentially be blind or deaf or have a disability. I feel like one of the best ways we can get them to treat people with respect. Our trial run was on March 14. We are expecting up to four classes in a year. This is training from part time to full time. These drivers have had at least four to six months of training. Some have been here for 20 years. To the most part they have been here from four to six months. They have some driving time and have seen some things. This is really an opportunity for them to reflect on what they have learned and add to their toolbox.

We start of introducing the team that is doing this training. Because we couldn't get outside resources, it takes a number of inside resources to make sure we are doing this safely. And that everyone is getting the attention that they need. Individualized attention for learning. Our office is either Jan or myself or both of us will be there depending on the size of the class. There is a fulltime instructor or two. Dan and his assistant Jo are generally there. Then Mohammed. He works as a Business System Analyst over in the Bus Operations side of things. He is actually blind himself. He has been an absolutely invaluable resource to the Met Council as a whole. Because he is our go to person oftentimes on these issues.

We introduced everyone then we tell everyone: "We will split up into two groups, Group A and Group B. Group A follow Jan. Group B follow Claire." Then we head out to the buses. Outside there are two buses waiting for us at the stop. Which is not that far away. Every student is handed a blindfold. When they get to there they will line up in a group and one by one we will have them put a blindfold on. One of the reasons we need so many people is falling. We are worried about ice and snow. It is something that a person who is blind deals with every day. You are putting a blindfold on someone who is normally able to see. It can get harry very fast. So we give them a blindfold. They put the blindfold on. Then we have them carefully walk down the side of the bus. From there they swipe their ID badge on the bus as if they were to pay on the GoTo card reader. Keeping their blindfold on.

We do this one-by-one for safety reasons. It is very interesting to watch. To see how scared people are. Because that vision has been taken away from them.

Scenario B, the students stand up and hold on to the overhead stanchion. We take them on a little tour around the block with their blindfolds on. The driver is not a master Metro Transit driver. We are doing a lot of jerking, go around the corner a little bit fast, maybe hit a pothole or two. We are trying to show people what it is like when you drive carelessly out there. When you drive poorly this is what the person without sight is experiencing.

We were not able to access the video she was going to present. If she can, she will send it to the TAAC committee at a later date.

After we have taken them out on the bus, we bring them back in and do a debrief. What did that feel like? The next time you are driving what will you try to do to accommodate people with this disability better? How did that make you feel?

Some have a friend or relative who has this disability. Some say this is really scary. I had no idea that taking off from the stop so fast could be so scary. I could lose my balance and fall and hurt myself. It is an epiphany for some. Others have always emphasized. But it is still enlightening.

Then we go into a series of now that we have created the empathy, then we go don't go too far. Don't treat people like children. Don't patronize them.

In the video we show three brief clips of Mohammed getting on the bus. Mohammed is our star. The first one, the bus driver says "Let me find a seat for you." She tries to grab him by the arm and walk him over to a seat. He continually says "No, I am fine." The next one she says "Sir, would you please sit down. You need to sit down. It makes me uncomfortable. Please sit down." He says "I am fine to stand." She says "No you need to sit down." For the last one, she yells behind him as he walks by. "If you need any help, let me know."

The drivers said: "I never realized I made someone feel small or like a child or I was patronizing them." We talked about that. What did the bus driver do wrong? What could they have done differently? Then we show one last example. Where Mohammed gets on the bus and the bus driver says: "If you need anything, let me know." He says: "Thank you." So then we discussed that.

It is very interesting to hear some drivers who want so badly to help. They want to call that street so often for someone that is blind. Then we talk about how this could potentially be a safety issue. Maybe we don't want the bus driver knowing where he is getting off. Because if somebody else is going to follow that person and potentially take their wallet or something to that effect, it could be potentially dangerous. We talked about the safety aspect. Then we talk about the fact that they just want to be treated like everyone else. There are many people out there who are self-sufficient and they don't need your help.

Jan always gives an example of an attorney she used to work with. She was completely self-sufficient. It drove her absolutely bonkers every time someone tried to hold her hand and walk her across the street or tell her how to do something. We talk about that. And the drivers get a sense of don't do too much or you can't make somebody do something.

Deaf customers. After we have talked about the blind, we transition into the deaf. In the videos we have three scenes that we have shown. In the first scene that is shown is an instructor looking away. Not articulating very well. And saying three phrases. They watch the whole video in the class and we stop and we say: "What did you think? What did you hear? What was he saying?" Most people say: We have no clue. It looked like a bunch of mumbling." Many might have guessed. They might have seen a word or two.

In the second video he is facing the camera directly. He is enunciating and articulating, and people are able to pick up a lot more. Some of these phrases we have noticed that people may have picked up a word or two and they piece things together. One of the examples is Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. So someone would see fetch a pail of water and they will put it together. It is the context. We talk about that. We talk about the need to look people in the eye. To articulate. If a pen and paper is provided or you have one. To write something down. We talk about how we can better assist the deaf community.

Finally, Mohammed comes up. He is someone who has blind since birth. He has a genetic condition. Everyone's blindness is not the same. He has one perspective that we are able to give the operators. He talks about growing up blind. He talks about growing up in the Minneapolis school system. And how he was taught to read Braille and how to use the bus system. One point that he drives home. At the end of it all he says: "None of this matters if I can't get on your bus. If I have a cane and I'm flagging you down midblock because I can't find the bus stops, stop for me. Ask me if I need your bus. Because if I can't get on your bus, everything else you learn today doesn't matter." He opens the room up for questions. He makes himself very approachable. So people are able to ask questions that they may not normally ask. The whole thing is about two hours by the time we got done.

I just wanted to tell you what we are doing. I would welcome any questions that you may have. We put out a survey after we did this the first time. We wanted feedback from the operators. We have those survey results. We will be reviewing them next Friday. At first glance they seemed positive. But that is from an operator's standpoint. We would like your feedback.

We have never told drivers not to call streets. Oftentimes when people will get on our bus. A person with a disability has the right to request a stop anywhere on that line. We refer them in this industry as sweetheart stops. Many operators will ask "Is there a specific street, other than the ones that I normally call you would like called?" That is where people have expressed that they are fearful that someone will follow them off of the bus. What they have said is call the streets like you would normally do, and I can navigate just fine. That is what our operators do. That is what they are trained to do. They understand that that is the law. We are not deviating from that.

Indie Cross said disability simulation is a very tricky thing. When you put a blindfold on someone who has never had mobility training it is the same as someone in a wheelchair. They are going to generally have a negative experience. It is really critical. The emotions are there. They are afraid. They don't know what to expect. I know that a lot of folks who do wheelchair disability simulation. They will come away with bruised toes, with aching joints, where they have sprained a wrist or something. Not knowing how to push the chair, how to steer the chair. Coming close to tipping the chair over as they try to negotiate inclines. Generally having a pretty negative experience. It is really great that you process that afterwards. I want to underscore the processing their feelings. Processing what happened. Making sure they understand that this is not generally

the experience of the person with the disability. I have used a chair for decades. I don't even think about using the chair. Most people reach for their glasses in the morning. I grab my chair. It is a natural part of life. I don't want the bus drivers to come away with feelings of anxiety or anxiousness or over concerned. Keep processing it. If you can bring in more people with low vision or blind to help with that processing, please do. Mohammed is great, but he is just one voice.

Schleichert said when we hand out the blindfolds, we make it very clear to the operators that they do not have to participate. If there is a fear of claustrophobia or they are not good on their feet, this is not a required thing. If they feel uncomfortable or unsafe at any time they can take their blindfold off. There was a great fear around what if someone trips? What if someone falls? That is why we have so many people watching over them as they are trying to navigate the bus. I'm not saying it is perfect. There is probably some room for improvement. Mohammed is with us throughout the entire training. He is one of the people that helps us unpack when we get back to the room. Mohammed does this every day. He is used to this.

### **3. ADA Transition Plan Update**

Tracey Jackson, Interim Assistant Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, and Nick Jelinek, Intern in the office of Program, Evaluation and Audit, spoke to the TAAC committee.

Jackson said we are here today to give you an update on the ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Planning. Wanda Kirkpatrick who was the former Director in the Office of Opportunity. We have a little transition in our office. Aaron Koski is now our Interim Director. In 2017 Wanda Kirkpatrick and Luis Morales came to update TAAC on where we are with the transition planning. Nick and I are the new Wanda and Luis. We want to update you on the progress where we continue on with their work.

This is a Council wide effort to make sure that the Council is being compliant. It is not just our transit, it is Council wide. We will talk to you about each division. We are moving forward with that.

Jelinek said I am going to start with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It protects persons with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Specifically, we are looking at Title II of the ADA which applies to public entities. Title II describes our responsibilities as a public entity. Two of those requirements are that Title II requires a self-evaluation and a transition plan.

The self-evaluation is an assessment of of all of our current public programs, activities, services, facilities and basically it is searching for a physical procedural or program barriers to accessibility. This self-evaluation was due by 1/26/1993.

After you complete the self-evaluation, you are supposed to have a transition plan. It says how you are going to come into compliance and make your program, services, activities and structures ADA accessible. A couple of items that are contained in the transition plan, a list of the physical barriers, the methods you are going to take to remove barriers, the schedule for removing the barriers, and designated personnel. That transition plan was due on July 26, 1995.

Jackson said we know the importance. We want to be ambitious. This is consistent with our Thrive 2040 outcomes, equity and livability. We know it is required through Title II of the ADA that we must have the self-evaluation and the transition plan. With that being said, we have asked for help. We have met with a few of you in the room. Margot, thank you. Ken Rodgers is not here. And David. Though we met with the three of them and others. Counter parts from the City of Minneapolis and MnDOT as well. Where are you at with your transition plan? Looking for any type of guidance. We appreciate that.

Jelinek said I will move into the implications of this. The self-evaluation and transition plan for the Council are overdue. The Transportation Advisory Board, of which we go to for our funding for entities like Metro Transit and Metro Mobility. They have required us to either have a self-evaluation and transition plan or be making progress towards one. These are going to be a part of the 2020 requirements for regional solicitation. The implication is that our funding is at risk for our transportation services.

Jackson said next is the Council Roles and Responsibilities. Nick and I have been busy meeting with our partners here at transit and the Council to gather information and to find out where we are at. What facilities do we have? What are the areas we need to look in to?

Our first division is Regional Administration. I am with the Office of Equal Opportunity. We are responsible for the ADA accessibility policy and we have the Council's authority to insure the compliance with the ADA and accessibility standards.

Jelinek said my department is Program Evaluation and Audit. We identify requirements, regulations and identify what programs and services should be included in the original scoping of the self-evaluation.

Jackson said the three other ones are Communications, Information Services and Procurement. Communications and Information Services work closely together. They are responsible for the public facing websites, which would be [metro council.org](http://metro council.org) and [metro transit.org](http://metro transit.org). We meet monthly. IS, Communications and the Office of Equal Opportunity talk about accessibility with the website.

Procurement is a smaller portion, but we work with them and make sure anytime they have a request for proposals and invitation for bid we make sure that that language is in procurement documents.

Our largest, we will probably be more focused on transit here with TAAC. We will talk a little bit about what facilities and we will talk about the information that is gathered to give you an idea of how large. We are talking about thousands of bus stops and if you look through the facilities. We have our park-and-rides and transit centers, light rail and with our system growing. Those numbers are going to continue to grow. But those are existing numbers now. Just to give you an idea, we did have some funding. We did some self-evaluation on 35 park-and-rides. There is an initial start with that and that will continue.

The next slide is a little more detailed. We have some unique facilities at Metro Transit. So some of you who read this, the Vikings Stadium at the US Bank Stadium we have a pedestrian bridge. We own that. We have a movie theater in Woodbury that is one of our park-and-rides. We have not just transit centers and we have park-and-rides in joint-use facilities. Churches and Running Aces are a couple of unique facilities that we have.

In addition to Metro Transit is Metropolitan Transportation Services (MTS). We have Metro Mobility. Historically they have exceeded ADA minimum requirements. Then we have our sub recipients and others. So that adds another 2,000 bus stops and some buses. And more policies and procedures we have.

Jelinek said going on to Community Development. They have parks and metropolitan housing in the redevelopment authority. For parks, the Metropolitan Council acts more as a passthrough entity. We don't have a direct oversight function for our 11 partners. We partner with some counties, such as Hennepin County and Ramsey County. We are partnered with a couple of cities as well. Ramsey, the City of Minneapolis and Bloomington. So the responsibility for the self-evaluation and transition planning fall on those entities if they are public and have over 50 employees, which most of them do.

For Metropolitan Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the Council owns 150 units, which we are getting an opinion on from Legal, if those 150 units need to be ADA compliant.

We also have Environmental Services. We have eight treatment plants. Those treatment plants have tours. Back before the Council had acquired ES, they had done a transition plan. For them it would be a matter of abating them to reflect the current capacity. They also have maintenance facilities and office facilities such as Robert Street where we are now. All that information that we gathered from the different divisions. We have put together what we are calling a draft final of an assessment. That is all in this document. It is currently in review at our General Council right now. This will be available to TAAC next month. We will be sharing that information with you.

This gives us a stepping stone to start on our next steps to prepare the scope of work. What we will be doing is going out for a request for proposals to hire a consultant to help us do the self-evaluation. We plan on completing that in quarter two. We will be meeting with a different group. We have anything from Communications to our IT department to Metro Transit, which has our public facilities and our support facilities. When I say support facilities that is like one of our bus garages or this facility that we are in today. We are looking to have a consultant to help us do the self-evaluation and help that move the project forward.

Then you will see Luis Morales, who was in this position before. We are looking to hire a new specialist. That will be taking place in quarter three of this year. That person will be the point person who will be able to monitor and manage the consultant that we hire. This project we will have a full-time person who will be able to do that. That will give us more resources to help with the project.

Our goal is to complete that self-evaluation in the fourth quarter this year. Once we have that done, we will begin the transition planning in 2019. Then implement the plan and complete that by 2020. You will see where

we have tentative with the amount of bus stops that we have and the facilities. Per our budget what we have in the funding on what we will be able to make sure that these facilities are compliant.

Graham-Raff asked if this is a redo of an original plan or are we 25 years behind?

Jelinek said I have not been able to find any record of the Metropolitan Council's transition plan.

Graham-Raff asked when you are looking under Environmental Services, are you looking at this strictly from the vantage point of visitors coming through or are you also looking at it from the vantage point of employees?

Jelinek said Title II applies to the public facing elements. So we are primarily focusing on elements that are public facing. That would be the tour routes. We do have a number of facilities that would benefit from being accessible for all. We cannot discriminate on the basis of disability as well. While it is focused on the public facing element, that would be a place to continue the plan.

Imdieke Cross said following up on Diane's question regarding the tours. The routes clearly are part of that evaluation. But you also need to be looking at policies for sign language interpreters, policies for when audio description is provided, if it is provided. If it is not provided how is that information going to be conveyed to somebody who is blind or has low vision. It is more than just making sure that the tour itself is physically accessible there is all sorts of other elements that play into that.

Jelinek said the tour routes is an example of one of those programs or activities or procedures that the Council would need to evaluate. While we specifically call those out there the other examples that you provide would be something that needs to be evaluated as well. Those resources would be part. If you look at HRA, the housing, we would need to look at the reasonable accommodation procedure, if there is one. Make sure that it would be accessible. Is there another format for communication? It could be for housing. It could be for transportation. It just like the Text for Safety presentation. Those are examples of things that would be included in the self-evaluation as part of the programs, activities and the procedures.

John Clark said they say that there is self-evaluation and transit planning. The funding is at risk. I am wondering about the implication for the completion and quality of the process.

Jelinek said the funding is not at risk for the self-evaluation and the transportation plan. The risk is for Metro Transit and our transportation services from the regional solicitation. We need to be either completed with the self-evaluation and the transition plan by 2020 or at least making progress towards that completion. That is part of the effort that we are undertaking right now is to begin the self-evaluation process and then upon completion, we set a date for quarter four of 2018. We would then need to begin transition planning afterwards.

Fenley said I have a comment on the implementation slide. A fourth bullet point on the page could possibly be that the implications are that they would be removing barriers and increasing access for not only folks with disabilities but everybody who lives in the metropolitan area and utilizes Metropolitan Council services.

Chair Thorsen said you said that there was going to be next month would be a review available. Was that something that you wanted to come back to us with or was that something you would email to us?

Jackson said this is the assessment. All the information that was gathered to prepare for the RFP that will be going out. It is in legal review right now. In the next two to three weeks it should be complete. It depends on how many changes they would like to make with it. We thought that it would be available to you next month. We can send it out. If you want us to come back at that point, we could.

Chair Thorsen said I was trying to make sure that I understood.

Jackson said when it is complete, and we get the final I will email that to you directly and you can distribute it to the TAAC committee.

#### **4. Metro Mobility Update**

Christine Kuennen spoke to the TAAC committee. I am here to just give a general update on Metro Mobility. I thought for this meeting I would focus on two program elements that we have been talking about. First the agency contract. At the last meeting I mentioned that we were going to be bringing forward the business item to award agency contract to Transit Team. We did that twice to the Transportation Committee. Then again to the full Council. The contract was awarded to Transit Team last Wednesday afternoon. We are pleased with that. What that means now is Metro Mobility staff and stakeholders and contractors will have a lot of transition work to do.



I think I mentioned that the contract was expiring this year anyway, so we took a look at examining the program itself. Wanting to make sure it was ADA compliant per FTA regulations. Metro Mobility prioritized ADA service over our service delivered to non-ADA areas. We have restructured the agency contract to serve agencies that were only in the ADA service area. What that means is we do have a number of agencies, about 15 smaller agencies that are either inside the non-ADA area or small enough to not efficiently fit within the program. Moving those services onto our demand system.

About 57 percent of our agency customers that will be moving from the agency contract on to the demand system. We will have a lot of transition work to do. We have already begun to do some of that work with advocacy groups and stakeholders in the community and working with the agencies themselves to make sure that we are transitioning those customers to the demand system appropriately. We are moving forward with a set of larger agencies that are within the ADA footprint. That will be served within the agency contract by Transit Team. About 20 percent of the customers in those agencies are currently being served by Transit Team on the demand system. But with the new contract they will be within the agency service.

There is work to do. Not just the transition, the provider but to transition the customers themselves on to the demand system. That generated a lot of questions. A lot of concern for managing change appropriately at the committee meetings. There was also some concern about transitioning the service from a provider that has a union workforce to a provider that does not have a union workforce. That was discussed quite thoroughly at committee meetings. That is not in the purview of the Council to award contracts on that basis. That was set aside.

Fenley asked Kuennen to explain the difference between agency contract and the Metro Mobility service in general.

Kuennen said Metro Mobility provides ADA paratransit service for the entire seven county area. We have seven contracts. Four of them are major contracts providing service with the regular bus. We have the demand system. We have three contracts under the demand system. That is the Metro Mobility East Zone, Metro Mobility South Zone and Metro Mobility West Zone contracts. Those are the standard. You call up Metro Mobility one to four days in advance. You get a ride. It is the on-demand system that you are all familiar with. It is about 85 or more percent of our rides are from the demand contracts.

Two of those contracts are currently held by First Transit. One of the contracts is held by Transit Team. Roughly 60 percent of our current service provision is operated by First Transit under that contract. About 40 percent by Transit Team.

Then the fourth largest contract is our agency contract. In that we are serving similar to a school bus contract, where we are taking customers who are going to large day training and rehabilitation centers, adult day care centers each day of the week, Monday through Friday. We are taking them from their residence to their agency. In the morning and back again in the afternoon. We are picking them up in the morning and dropping them off and returning in the afternoon. Like a school bus. That is the agency service. It is roughly 18 percent of our rides. About 400,000 rides a year.

Fenley said those riders are the ones that the payment system changes and also the contract was awarded to a different transportation company.

Kuennen said it is just that contract that we are talking about that was set to expire this year. We looked at the construct of that contract and then went out for a RFP and awarded the contract last week. I didn't mention the overview, the payment changing.

I want to come back to this committee as we move into the transition of customers. I think it is very important that as we frame what our transition plan is going to be I would love the input of this committee. Coming back in June or July as we are really gathering a lot of detail around that transition plan as far as the customers are concerned it would be great.

So far we have met with Leading Age Minnesota, who has seven or eight members, that our agencies that are moving from agency contract onto our demand system. They are going to help us facilitate meetings, provide equipment and help arrange content for a webinar and then host follow up meetings for those agencies. We certainly want more input. We will need more input for the community about how to best transition the service. We will come back to talk about this when we have more time.

Paulsen asked if the drivers on the agency side and the non-agency side get the same training.

Kuennen said I am sure there is training that is specific to the service of the agency contract. But as far as the general driver training it is the same. Having heard that there is a difference in driver behavior, I will take your concerns back to Andy Streasick, our Customer Service Manager, and see if he has any examples of that. Our service quality standards between the demand system and the agency contract as far as how they are trained and what the expectations are, there should not be a difference. The idiosyncrasies of the particular agency, their dropping of and the routings, that sort of thing, we would expect to be different but other than that the general training and the service quality and the service delivery standards are the same. We will watch for that when we move to the next provider.

We will discuss this at a later date. I plan a nice presentation where I can talk to you about how we are going to approach the transition and then gather the feedback at that time.

I also wanted to make sure that you have some follow up information on something I mentioned at the March meeting as part of the governor's task force briefing. We were working on a project to incentivize Metro Mobility's customer use of the Metro Transit system. A pilot project. That is moving along. We have a project team that is advancing towards a plan where we would implement a pilot to begin in June. We are targeting a date of June 18. A six-month pilot through November where we hope to offer pilot participation to about 100 Metro Mobility customers. We are in the process of sorting the list of who we would offer this to. We have identified two geographic regions and two transit centers that would be the focus of our pilot.

The first is Brooklyn Center Transit Center. We are looking at what they call the travel shed customers who live in the region around Brooklyn Center Transit Center in the suburban areas, west and around there. We would incentivize the free ride on the Metro Mobility bus if they transfer to a transit bus at the Brooklyn Center Transit Center. The ride on Metro Transit would be free as well. So their whole trip would be free. That is part of the approach for taking and offering that free ride in exchange for some feedback on our system. We are asking them for participation monthly to answer survey questions and tell us about how accessible or not accessible our system is. To test the viability of a larger pilot in the future.

The other area is Maplewood Mall. We are looking at the customers who live in the travel shed of Maplewood Mall and offering the same kind of service where we give them a free ride on Metro Mobility if your ride includes a transfer to the Metro Transit system at Maplewood Mall. Then a free ride on Metro Transit as well. It is a limited pilot with a well-trained and hand-held group of customers that can inform a larger pilot next year. I would think a presentation on that would be of interest as well. I will be updating the Transportation Committee. Right now we are planning the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting for that. So maybe I can get in front of you at the June meeting as well.

The whole premise of this initial pilot is to gather feedback on our system. Honest user feedback on how well our fixed route system is capable of supporting a broader program like this. So that will be the setup. When we are approaching our customers for an initial ask whether or not they would like to participate. There will be a discussion and some questions too. What their current perceptions are, what their current use is in the system. If they use Metro Transit. Why or why not. I think we are going to set up the point of view of the pilot to ask for honest feedback. We really want to make sure that we are offering a free ride because we need a lot of information and we want a lot of customers to participate.

We would not have anonymous participation in this controlled pilot. We need to issue free passes to be used on the Metro Transit system in order for this to work. We want to have controlled feedback from the first surveys all the way through the end. I don't think it would really work to have an anonymous set of feedback. I am hopeful that people who agree to participate in this pilot will do so because they believe in the feedback portion of it and really want to improve our transit system. That will in the end of the day win out.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **1. Blue Line**

This item was not presented

### **2. Orange Line**

This item was not presented.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

Imdieke Cross said some time ago a person from the public brought an issue to us regarding drivers asking people to move so that wheelchair riders could get on board.

Cook said Mr. Fenley asked that some statistics from the TCC as far as how many pass-ups or how many people we left behind because someone in a stroller were on the bus already. Taking up that spot.

Imdieke Cross said could you please ask staff to report on this at the next meeting? I want a full blown presentation on this. First of all, I want to know what you mean by left behind. Did they actually call another bus? Or was it somebody that was just turned away from the entrance of the bus? This individual has experienced this numerous times. And then in that same week, another person was also reporting that they had been turned away. I don't know if turned away is the same as left behind. I want to know definitions. I want to know numbers. I want to know if it is going to be resolved in any way. I would like you to report that at the next meeting.

I use the LRT where there is an elevator. I think these elevators are being used as sleeping rooms and bathrooms. Could we get some sort of report from staff indicating what kind of surveillance? What kind of controls are being put in place. How regularly they are being checked by Metro Transit Police. I found somebody's clothing in the elevator this morning as I was going to the LRT. Things are getting very interesting. I would really like to know what kind of measures are being put in place to protect the travelling public and to keep those areas cleaned. Especially if they are being used as bathrooms. If staff could report on that it would be nice.

Chair Thorsen introduced the newest member of the TAAC committee, Tzia, from Precinct E.

Chair Thorsen passes out the ByLaws and committee roster to the committee to go over and make any corrections to the roster. She asked to go over the ByLaws and make any changes they would like to see. The committee will address this at the August TAAC meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary