

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

**Committee Members Present:** Chair David Fenley, Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen, Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Patsy Murphy, Ken Rodgers, Jeffry Dains, Kari Sheldon, Rachel Garaghty, Heidi Myhre, Claudia Fuglie, Patty Thorsen, Diane Graham-Raff, Trevor Turner, Erik Henricksen and Richard Rowan.

**Committee Members Absent:** None.

**Committee Members Excused:** None.

**Council Staff Present:** Jason Tintes, Doug Cook, Andy Streasick, Christine Kuennen, Guthrie Byard, Brooke Bordson, Met Council Member Phillip Sterner and Alison Coleman.

**Public Present:** Robert Hobson, DEED

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:32 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, 2022.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Dains, seconded by Bates to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2022, regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

## BUSINESS & INFORMATION

### 1. Maps

Andy Streasick, Manager Customer Service, Metro Mobility, spoke to the TAAC committee. I am a white guy, pushing 50 years old, with a beard. I have got Cerebral Palsy. I am wearing a black shirt. Folks tell me I am a cross between Charles Atlas and Paul Newman. I think that is about it.

I am here to talk today about Trapeze Maps. Because Patty Thorsen suggested it as an agenda topic some months back. So I have it up here on the agenda. As many regular riders will know, an up-to-date mapping system has long been on a wish list for Metro Mobility functionality. The challenge essentially is the software that we use, Trapeze, is primarily utilized for booking and tracking and scheduling paratransit rides. Those are the primary functions. It has got some secondary functions like managing a database of customers and dealing with suspensions in that it has got some tertiary functions. Maps would probably fall around there. It does its primary functions and secondary functions quite well. When you get into its tertiary functions, you start to find it takes a little more hand holding to try to get it to work optimally the same way as a Tomtom Google Map would.

So, we have been exploring options for some time. We originally looked into the use Google Maps, which didn't end up being a starter for a couple of reasons. 1. The Google Map usage would require that we move away from the Rangers that we have on the bus, to a tablet solution. And the tablets that we found, even the other ones were flimsy by comparison to the Ranger. They don't last. There have been updating issues with them. We did try some for our recent pilot on Transit Link at the Council. They weren't really successful. So that was one reason that we felt we weren't able to reliably pursue a Google Maps type of solution. 2. The other one is that Google recently did away with its bundle licenses. It started doing only an ala cart licensing deal and it became cost prohibitive very, very frequently.

Also look at a non-Trapeze solution on a pilot basis. Ecolane is the pilot we did on Transit Link where we utilized some tablets. In addition to the fragility of the tablets, Ecolane didn't quite deliver on everything that was advertised. It wasn't a very satisfactory conclusion to the pilot. That Transit Link for us. So operationally, Ecolane, also at this time at least, is not a great option.

With that in mind, we doubled down on the existing Ranger solution on a hardware front. So right now we are probably wedded to Rangers in the Trapeze system for four years at least. So the question becomes what can we do to improve updated mapping within that existing model?

We have partnered with Trapeze to talk about that. They now have a relationship with Tomtom. They recognize themselves. It is a new arena for them. Trapeze is the industry leader in paratransit software. But again, mapping has not been a chief function. I have been at the Council for 15 years. And for a number of years, when I started here. The mapping solution was a King's Map book. In the driver's side door of the vehicle, they would be put on every bus. It would be the expectation that you would be familiar enough on how to get around and use the map book when needed to go on your run.

So in the scheme of paratransit and Trapeze's role within it, you would use this whole mapping thing that is relatively new. And they have now partnered with Tomtom to try to explore better options with that. Unfortunately, when you look at the Tomtom solution, it is mostly about real time traffic, which is something. Not the whole thing. So it will tell you about accidents, road closures, But it won't tell you that out in this third tier suburb, There is a whole complex and there are a lot of new addresses that weren't there when the map was put in.

We recognize that this Tomtom solution is not everything that we want. But it is a chunk of it. and then, talking to Trapeze, they told us if we pursue this Tomtom package, they will come in and update our maps at that time. Then going forward, they will come in once a year and update maps for us. In the Trapeze system. In order to give new updated addresses, changes to street names, etc.

In addition to that, we have gotten approval from Trapeze to manually go in and update maps ourselves. We just did that last week as part of layering in some new ADA service area changes. We updated maps, so there should be some approval seen there based on the most up to date maps that our GIS folks have.

All things considered; we have decided to go ahead and pursue the Tomtom solution or at least recommend to the Council. Obviously, there is a price tag involved. But the MMSC has decided to recommend that we pursue that option to pay for this Tomtom solution with Trapeze that will give on time traffic and offer manual map updates from Trapeze upon request. In addition to that, we have now operationalized these Polygon updates that we did last week to happen at least once a year ourselves. It may happen more than that depending on if there are major changes to fixed route that happen more than once a year. Every time we make one of those changes. Being once or twice a year manually, we will be updating the maps system to our most up to date maps that are GIS maps.

So all that is essentially a long winded way of saying we are aware that we have been pursuing things for years without much movement at all on the map front. We feel like we are finally seeing some movement now. And that both in terms of where we are at this week. I think we are in a better place map wise than we were the week before last. We have a plan in place to receive updates to addresses, street names, etc. at least annually, if not more. And the process of trying to pursue an option that will give a real time traffic solution.

So that, I think is it. I would entertain any questions from Patty since she was the one who brought this up. Does this answer your questions from the email you sent? Is this what you were looking for?

Thorsen said it is good progress. It is good to know where it is and what the issues are. I am glad the manual update has been done at last. It was labor intensive and there were issues there. Metro Mobility customers/clients contribute in the notes field. Even when they first appeared, applied to Metro Mobility or when at some point be able to say "I live at 1095 Everest boulevard." I use my own address as an example. One time that I had a reservation taken, it was worded slightly differently, Everest. It actually worked to my benefit. It is encouraging to hear what you have to say about progress, and I guess I would continue to ask what we can be doing as customers. I can understand serving on the committee from what you are saying. Even if we could be helping other people, they use Metro Mobility to convey how they can help you, if it helps everybody.

Streasick said I think one of the things that people certainly can do is if there is something peculiar about or an address that can be routinely, uniformly applied, we could absolutely put that into your address comments.

Thorsen said one of the issues that you want is people read the notes field. Different drivers will adhere to. I know that some of that is human behavior that you can't control. So I am just trying to throw ideas out there in hopes that something sticks.

Streasick said I see Claudia put a question in the chat about trip routing and yes, the real time traffic, which sounds like it is going to start in the 50 bus pilot will help that. But then also, across the fleet immediately, map updates will help with routing because new streets may be available. But this old maps in Trapeze, street names may have changed. You may have a new driver, using the route Calhoun Parkway. Trying to figure out where that is. And if that is in the address in Trapeze where that will be challenging, and those types of things. So yes, any types of updates and changes that we can do both in real time traffic and to maps and do have the side effect of improving trips.

Chair Fenley said I am going to ask just a quick follow-up from Patty's question. Then I will go to Ken, then to Chris and then to Sam. So, update from the manufacturer, once a year. We have notes being put in by drivers, based on wheels on the ground verses the environment that we are working in. I can see those notes helping but not necessarily being the most efficient way to the kind of systemwide map being updated. Is there a possibility or is it too costly? Say there are so many notes in the system. Now it is time to have an update. Maybe we are six months away from the yearly update. Is there something that could happen on a more regular basis to ensure that drivers don't have to refer to the notes as opposed to an updated map as the scene on the ground shifts?

Streasick said so a couple of things. Drivers cannot put in notes. That is my staff that is putting in notes. Secondly, we can't use notes as a trigger for updating maps. Probably for a variety of operational reasons. The chief of those are we use note fields for a variety of different things. There is somebody who is willing to share that they are a person who is blind and they need the driver to make sure they announce themselves at the door. It will go into the notes that somebody has an escort waver on file. The driver should escort them. It is in the notes. Somebody is on the spectrum and gets triggered by loud noises. We could put a note in there to be as quiet as possible. All of those things. The same notes where we might say "when approaching from the west, turn right on such and such a street." The number of notes can be a trigger Stuff like that.

Rodgers said I have two very different questions. The first question is if you can help clarify so that I have a better understanding as logical to extrapolate that. When a ride request is made, and addresses are put in, there is a preliminary route established that identifies ETA's and that kind of stuff at the time that it is created. With updated traffic information, how does that influence the routing? How often does that update the routing? Is there a review? Is there an update map that gets established with more correct times closer related to the pickup time? Or how does that work?

Streasick said I will preface this by saying the real time traffic stuff that we haven't launched yet. So I can't say for sure how it plays. But I know that this is within the Trapeze setting and I can tell you how that works now. You are exactly right with the first part. You book a ride and Trapeze puts it in and there is an ETA. Then the GIS system pings it every couple of minutes and updates the ETA. Based on a number of things.

Right now, that doesn't include traffic information. What they put in includes where the bus is verses the street scene for that time of day in Trapeze. But it can change dramatically. Most notably, for example, if it is looking like we are going to pick you up 31 minutes after your negotiated time, they may try to yank another passenger off of that run. So all of a sudden, your ETA goes from being 31 minutes from now to two minutes from now. based on the fact that they removed a customer off of their run. Those changes, when we incorporate the real time traffic, based on my expectations, because this is a Trapeze product. That information will feed into that ETA data that changed on our itinerary every few minutes.

Rodgers said another question that I have, and it is different. In relationship to the ADA Polygons. We have heard recently in the news that Metro Transit has had to redo service or eliminate some routes because of a lack of drivers and other operational issues that they are encountering. Have we encountered any reduction in our ADA footprint in recent times?

Streasick said no, is a short answer. We recognize that our existing footprint is not accurate. That it is too big overall. We are not interested in pursuing cuts that are related to Covid and resulting in either demand-based cuts or driver insufficiency-based cuts. We really want to try to make sure that if we cut, it is going to be based on a quasi-permanent long-term decision by Metro Transit to cut routes. We know that we do have some cuts that we aren't reflecting in our service area that predate the pandemic. It would be what we implemented potentially. We always give six months of notice regarding that. But the changes that we just put forth are

expansions only. Related to new fixed route service that meets ADA paratransit triggering criteria. It would not have been reflected in our service area. Woodbury is one big example. There are more substantial cuts of Woodbury that are now overseeing the ADA area rather than being put on standby.

Rodgers said I appreciate that. And then one thing I will comment on in closing. Is that when or if there needs to be a reduction in the service area or ADA footprint and the need arises that users get notified in advance that it is coming? I would request that that information be shared with TAAC. I would like the opportunity to be able to help influence any decisions about reduction of service that I believe TAAC should have input in to. I think that just being kept apprised of any reduction of service and the reason for that decision really needs to be shared with TAAC. I would hope that that is part of the normal process. I would just like to put it out there in the ethernet so that we are all kept abreast of what is going on so we could have input into those changes.

Streasick said absolutely. The other thing I should put out there while we are talking about this sidebar. I think I mentioned this previously. At least in the chat. In response to a concern that Sam brought forth. When we talk about cuts in our service area, really what we would be talking about is things that are currently within the ADA service area going to the non-ADA service area. We are not talking about removal of paratransit service, period. Your point is still valid. You should still bring any service cuts before the TAAC, certainly. But I need to clarify that what we are talking about is not you are not getting any Metro Mobility service. It would be that your service was federally mandated and now it is not.

Bates said speaking of technology, when we start doing things like changing the systems or upgrading the systems, there is always a fiscal cost list. Is there a fiscal cost to what you are proposing doing?

Streasick said yes. I could have Christine answer if she were here. She got the numbers before she weighed in on Tomtom. For the manual stuff there is staff time. But yes, there is a fiscal cost associated with this Tomtom package. It was decided that it was certainly worthwhile. Christine, do you happen to have that right now? If not, I could shoot it off to folks later. She must have stepped away. The answer is yes, there is a cost. It was weighed prior to our decision to move forward without recommendation to use the Tomtom solution. I can get for you guys what it is.

Bates said thank you.

Jasmine said this is a request for you to touch base with me after the meeting if you can in regard to awhile now. And our earlier discussion last week. But I do have a question in regard to that the Trapeze that we have for a while now. So you said we are required to be with this for four years. Four more years from what date? This is my first question. And then the second question is the live traffic that you presumably are going to implement. When will that be implemented? Will it truly be live traffic or how often will that be refreshed? Will they need to wait for something? Then the third thing is that drivers often never read the notes. I can't emphasize that enough. There are notes that are put in there for a reason. This is one of the top. At least three or four comments that I get when I speak to people outside of TAAC, in regard to Metro Mobility. The notes are never read. I can identify that that has happened to me often. But one thing I want to ask in regard to that I know that we do get transferred often if the drivers' load gets too heavy or for whatever reason. Are those notes not transferred with a ride as well?

Streasick said I may need you to go back over some of this. I am in meetings after this for the rest of the day. So, I will have to give you a call tomorrow morning with a follow-up. In the not reading notes part. Notes get transferred when a ride gets transferred. It is attached to the booking. So when the booking moves, the notes get moved. We are aware of a human failure point. But I can tell you that in every single driver training meeting, they happen every other week or weekly. They are told about the importance of reading notes. That is something we hammer on. We do recognize that it is a failure point. The real time traffic is going to be actually real time. I don't know whether it is going to ping every 30 seconds, or every two minutes. So where it is expected. So, that is real time. It is essentially like everybody's phone or GPS unit would do.

We have been with Trapeze since 2002, based on what was uploaded into the database. Probably before that. We are wedded to them strongly because of the Ranger purchase four years from January 1<sup>st</sup>. for this next four-year period. We will continue to be not only with Trapeze, but with Trapeze using the existing Ranger hardware model. With software changes over that time.

Chair Fenley said we do have an answer from Christine, in the chat. I will read it. There is a follow-up statement from Patty that I will read as well.

Christine said the cost is roughly \$50,000 for the pilot. Not \$500.00. Then an annual subscription fee of roughly \$125.00 per vehicle. So that is the cost of this upgrade.

Then Patty made a good observation here. The efficiency of whatever system is being used, is essential to the cost. Even know it is not a dollar sign. If we are systemically unable to provide accurate location information. Then the dollar cost savings contribute are added to the huge added cost that diminishes the value of the system. Essentially if it makes providing rides more efficient it makes it worth it. if it doesn't it is not. That is what I am getting out of that statement.

And then, will this translate into a fare increase? From Claudia. That is a question for Andy.

Streasick said no fare increases associated.

Myhre said I have had the same problem where the drivers don't read the notes. I don't know always whether it is the person in customer relations or is it the driver? Or is it both? Or is it a combination? I have had it where it was both. If I am sitting in the front or the back. There are people in my building that like the back. Then there are a few of us that like the front of the building because there is no need to go all of the way to the garage to go out. You can put it in the notes, but it may not get heard. Sometimes the driver goes to the back of the building and the person is in the front. The notes may have information that the passenger is bringing a cart and they need help.

If I have an appointment, I have to use Metro Mobility because the city buses are not available. I cannot use the city bus to get to Gillette because the shuttle bus isn't there anymore. I have to use Metro Mobility.

Murphy said I just wanted to ask a question of Andy for clarification. Are we talking that the Ranger is the actual piece that sits there? But there are the other two items having. Are those the system software problem or I am lost when you said you were bringing in Tomtom. I hope I made sense.

I think so. And I think the answer is yes. The Ranger is that hardware that sits on the bus. That looks like a big GPS system. It has the drivers' notes. It stores the electronic manifest. It will be attached to the GoTo card readers to pay. That hardware is on the bus. The Tomtom suite. My understanding is that what we are talking about here is software that will interact with the existing Rangers. It is not like there will be an additional GPS unit that is that. the Ranger, which already functions as a GPS unit to some extent, will do so more effectively utilizing real time traffic just like if you got on your phone app or a Tomtom dashboard system.

So it will be a software system just like a hardware piece.

Murphy said the other thing I was going to comment on. I heard you, Andy, saying your system checks the status and how far away a bus is from picking up somebody. And it made me chuckle because numerous times when I was going to the capitol, and I was sitting there waiting for Metro. I would be on it and all of a sudden, my phone would ring and it was a recording saying "your bus is five minutes away." And I was already on the bus. How often is that thing checking in? Also, I have gotten it and it said it was five minutes away and it was really 10 minutes away.

Streasick said it updates every two minutes. Even an arrival call can get backed up in the que. Particularly during peak times. so you could be told your bus is coming in 10 minutes. But that call could get triggered. It is waiting in the que to send that call out. If everything stays as scheduled, you are probably still going to still get it at about the right time. But if a driver takes somebody off of your run, who was going to get picked up, so that you get picked up earlier than expected. After that 10-minute call got generated, the updates that happen every two minutes, won't impact the status of that arrival call that is already waiting in the que. So even though I could probably look in the software and see that you were on the bus. That call was waiting to go through and will still go through. Just like the phone calls. If you call to find out what an estimated time was, you should be aware of that is a moment in time. So similarly, you could get a call that the bus is 10 minutes away from you. But then if the dispatcher adds another pick up, it can go from headed to you for a pickup to picking up somebody else. Then obviously, it will be more than 10 minutes to pick you up.

It looks like they can still do that and get you within the 30-minute pick up window, they will utilize that. so, the 10-minute imamate arrival, or calling and asking for an ETA is a useful tool for a snapshot of a moment in time But it shouldn't be relied upon or something that is set in stone.

Rodgers said just a logistical question. So, I assume that a route is selected. A route is created. When the dispatcher makes a change. Adds or deletes someone from the route, there is a new updated route that gets

created automatically for the driver. Does the new process of looking at real time information have that same effect? Will that reroute appropriately to save time or is it just an ETA trigger?

Streasick said we reroute to save time.

Thorsen said any way we can help as customers is very much appreciated. I appreciate knowing the system aspect of it. it is very helpful.

Rob Hobson said my name is Rob Hobson and I work with State Services for the Blind. And I have been getting some complaints from some customers. So I thought I would call in and observe the meeting. But also, I just signed up for Metro Mobility and so I am a new user. My question is, first of all I wanted to say I think it is awesome you are updating the maps. I know my wife has been using it for a few months now and has voiced some frustration with some of the maps. Part of it is that we reside in South Maplewood. Apparently, when dispatch looks at Maplewood, they assume we are in North Maplewood. So some of the maps can be really strange. At least for some of the routes. Some of the other complaints I have had from some of the other people were that people are that drivers are not necessarily indicating when they arrive. Even though it is a blind person that is using it and have no idea how to find the driver. There is not really a good mechanism to communicate directly with the driver. So that is something that I just wanted to point out.

And then another thing I have noticed is in the last few months with this new app, that came up with I Hail (Taxi), is that it is very wonky. It doesn't work very well. And it just seems like there are some glitches along with it. In fact, someone just used it today and the driver who dropped them off, said that the information wasn't put in correctly in the app. I don't know who does that but when you order it, through the app, it is supposed to do that automatically. But when that happens, apparently Metro Mobility will not pay their portion. So the driver loses a portion of the ride. There have been several occasions where that rides, where drivers would accept the ride but not that. There is no real mechanism to correct this. At least on the customer end. I just wanted to bring that up.

Vice Chair Paulsen said thank you Rob, for bringing that to our attention. I used I Hail a couple of years ago and I have experienced some of those same issues then. Generally, they experience a lot of those issues where drivers don't pick you up or they will not accept the ride. If you are a wheelchair user or somebody like in your case, that is visually impaired and uses a cane. A lot of times those drivers will offer to pick up those rides because they are required to pick up so many of them within their period of time. Another time they will get called or they will get a ride pushed at them. Similar to a Ranger, they will get a ride pushed at them and their mechanism and they will decide "I can pick up this person because they are paying cash and these guys use a wheelchair or a mobility device so I am not going to honor or agree to that pickup. When that happens, you should report that immediately to Metro Mobility and to I Hail. They need to know that. I go there sometimes. The evening drivers are a lot different than the daytime drivers. It is really a crap shoot depending on the time of day you are traveling.

Streasick said first of all, even though someone may say they are bind on their application, and we have their reservation. We won't share any disability related information with the driver without permission. So please, if you want the driver to know that you are a person that is blind, call my staff at 651-602-1111 and let them know that. Otherwise, the only way the driver would know that is if they have transported you before and they recognized your name. Whether it is the driver's contractual obligation, literally to just get out and physically go to the first door. Unless we notify them that there is some kind of auditory announcement is necessary. Please do that to prevent that from occurring. Where people don't announce themselves and someone is stuck. While most drivers do. You don't actually contractually have to. That is a reasonable modification.

The second thing in regard to the I Hail app. If the subsidy didn't go through, most of what I have been running into is that there was a challenge with registering for the application and that is a little more complicated than we would like it. Mostly because the Metro Mobility ID number isn't actually the ID number it is asking for. The ID number for the I Hail app registration, always starts with an 8 and is 7 digits long. and then contains your Metro Mobility number, which is up to six digits. So, if your Metro Mobility number is 123456, the number for registration using the I Hail ap would be 8123456. If your Metro Mobility number is 12345, the registration number would be 8012345. If your Metro Mobility number is 1234, your I Hail number would be 8001234.

There is a video online that you can watch on our website. Our staff can walk you through that at our 651-602-1111 number. Or I can walk you through it.

## 2. Legislative Update

Brooke Bordson, Government Affairs Liaison, spoke to the TAAC committee. A lot has been going on since the last time I was here. I am going to back up and get us up to speed. It is kind of crazy that we are already into March. The Legislative session convened on January 31. Last year was a budget year, so the Legislature and the Governor set the state two-year budget last year. So typically, the even numbered legislative years are focused on capital investment and the bonding bill. However, pretty much most everything else these last couple of years is a little bit different these days.

So I will start with the budget. The Minnesota Management and Budget is passed with putting together the state budget forecast. That is kind of a two-step process. There is a November forecast. Then that is followed up by a February forecast. That February forecast is the one that legislators and the governor use to set the budget. Or in this case, the supplemental budget.

The November forecast was historically large. And then just this week, the February forecast was released, and it is even larger. So that February forecast showed a budget surplus of \$9.253 billion for the 2022 – 2023 fiscal year excess. That is incredibly, historically large. Nine billion dollars is very significant. And as you can imagine, there are \$9 billion different ways that people can think of to use that money. That makes this year a little bit different than other years where there is just a small surplus or a small deficit where they need to even out or supplement or zero out the budget from different years. This is quite different.

Regarding transit. In the Metro area, the governor's budget recommendations included \$200 million for the Blue Line extension. This will be available for designs, analysis, right-of-way, in addition to construction. The governor's budget also recommended \$3.2 million for Metro Transit's accelerating zero emission buses plan. The differential between the regular diesel bus and an electric bus is about \$800,000 per bus for the bus itself. And then there were charging equipment that goes with it. That appropriation would help to get more electric buses at Metro Transit.

So those are the two items in the governor's budget that would have to do with the general fund surplus. The governor also has a capital investment proposal. And the governor is recommending \$60 million in state dollars for the Busway Capital Improvement Program or BRT as it is commonly referred to. That appropriation would accelerate the development of the F-Line, the G-Line and the H-Line. Which are the next up in the queue.

So, given the size of the surplus, and the fact that this is a bonding year, most of the discussions at the capitol right now is focused on those two things. A lot of hearings. Budget proposals, the capital investment. They meet quite often. The budget is the dominating topic of conversation. But I will just update. I know this committee was interested in the policy initiative that the Council has been working on for a few years now that would let the Council set up an administrative citation program for fare enforcement. We are still working on that. We actually had a hearing on that bill in the Senate Judiciary Committee last week. It may have been a week ago. I kind of lose my sense of time this year. So that was good. We got a little more attention, and we are hoping to see that get a little more attention and hopefully move forward. That proposal, of course would allow the Council to have non-sworn personnel which means they could be called Transit Agents. Something like that. Like police officers that could inspect fares and direct customers on the service, and just be a presence on the system. And that would allow them to write an administrative citation instead of a judicial citation or criminal citation if a person didn't have a paid fare.

That remains a work in progress. I just said that the budget was the main topic of conversation at the Capitol. But I would also mention that this is the redistricting year. Pretty much every legislator's district changed a little bit. Some got redistricted out of the district that they are currently serving as part of a big shuffle right now. Because everybody at the Capitol, from House members to Senators to the governor will be on the ballot in 2022. So that is just sort of an issue. Not that they are debating it at the Capitol. But it is looming over the legislative process for sure.

The last thing I wanted to note is that the legislature has to adjourn by May 23. So, we are already in March. It is going to be a busy 2½ months. With a lot of work to be done or not to be done. Because the budget, as I mentioned before, the budget has been set. So that is just a high-level overview and a lot of information. I am happy to answer questions if I can.

Bates said talking to legislators and some of the folks out here, it is the overrun. The Southwest Light Rail. Are we really going to have an audit? And is the state going to bail out the deficit?

Bordson said there is a bill that is currently moving through the House and the Senate that would task the Office of the Legislative Auditor with doing a special review of the Green Line Extension Project. That is expected to pass, I would say, in the relatively near future. I think it is already on the floor in the House and in the Senate Finance Committee. So that is likely to be passed soon. That will be something that the legislative auditor takes on. I am not sure what the timeline for that is going to look like. They have already started collecting information, anticipating that that bill is going to pass.

As far as the finance goes, in previous years state laws have been passed that essentially removed the state from paying for the capital or operating costs of the Green Line Extension. That sort of has been shifted to the counties. The county responsibility. I haven't seen any changes proposed to that and I don't think that the state would jump back into that at this point. It has been settled in the law that the state has essentially removed itself from the financial piece.

Bates said I have spoken to some folks at Hennepin County. And Hennepin County doesn't feel like they have to be bailing out the SouthWest project again. They have already done that once.

Myhre said last night, Channel 4 did a piece on electric cars in Minnesota and what works and what doesn't work. and how many miles. How are the electric buses going to stay on schedule and do things? Have they thought about how they put the money and how does the money for the maintenance? This is all a whole different kind of world we are living in. And if it is electric, do we have it because if Covid and what we have seen normal technology and the world we are having right now things are going to be changing. Have they put that in the budget or are they going to get Buses and we are going to be happy with it and go with it? I am glad that you are thinking about the future, but I also want it to work with the Minnesota climate. And I also want it to be pretty accurate so we can teach people with disabilities how they use the bus. And it also can go the distance back and forth from this time to that time. Or does it take a break and a new one takes over? Have they even talked about that? Or are they getting electric buses because our president said that electric cars have to be on the street in the future? And he is not thinking about all the ins and outs that we are running into because Covid didn't help it and the war is now not helping it.

So I don't know if you can answer those questions or not. Because I am a little concerned about the future of it. it is different than gas and I know right now gas is becoming an issue too. In one sense you might be solving it and another sense you might not be. I don't know if you can answer.

Bordson said electric buses is something that Metro Transit has been working on for years and as we have seen there has been some sort of two steps forward, two steps back. We worked really closely with the manufacturers when we had those setbacks. So to figure out how to move forward and get things working again. As far as route planning goes, we know that it is better to focus on electric buses for the 40-foot busses. They have better reliability. That is taking into consideration as well as you mentioned, how far an electric bus can go for a really long route, that is not a viable option in many cases. So it is something that is under a lot of focus at Metro Transit. Actually, in legislation, last year the Council was responsible for putting together a zero emission bus transmission plan. In the idea of that, we worked with the House and Senate offers who wanted to be a little more aggressive with the electric buses. And we landed on putting this report together so that we can do it in a smarter and more thoughtful way.

So that report was actually finished at the end of February. So that is hot off the presses. And that plan sort of maps out a course, for zero emission fleet transmission. They are looking at 20 percent of 40-foot bus replacement purchases being electric between 2022 and 2027. That is taking into consideration the capital requirements. It is just different with an electric bus. It is not just diesel. There is charging equipment that has to be functional and space for that. And how those buses fit into the operating plans. That is looked into as well. So that is a new plan just this last month. In law, it has to be updated every five years so that this is something that the Council and Metro Transit are going to be continuously working on because we want to move into zero emissions for the fleet. But our focus is serving customers efficiently and getting people where they need to go reliably.

Myhre said when you think about the new buses can you think about them being handicapped accessible? There is more to it than just putting an electric bus on the street. We worked hard on getting ADA accessible buses on the street.

Chair Fenley said that Brooke is not an ADA professional nor an electric bus professional. But in short answer, yes. This is a subject that should be an agenda item on the agenda. I would guess that the features inside and outside the bus are all ADA accessible. Instead of having gas for fuel and combustible engines, you have



batteries and powertrains. We should have a Metro Transit staffer who knows this to be on the agenda. It is good to make sure that accessibility is our number one concern.

Henricksen said I do not understand government funding. It is like electricity. It is just magic. This works, I guess. But hearing that there is this large surplus of funds, \$9 billion. There are going to be a lot of people that want to spend it in a lot of different ways. I am curious about who or how does lobbying occur to allocate funds? I am wondering if there is anything specific to use some of that surplus specifically for accessibility. Within matches. How we look through it in TAAC or anything specific to the state in general. I don't know if that is something that TAAC should be involved with. Or if there are entities out there that are already looking to allocate funds. Because a lot of the problems that just construction projects or ADA accessibility improvements. Something we could say is now we have this surplus where there is a perfect opportunity. We could lobby for those funds to be specific to accessibility. I guess how that goes about.

Bordson said the Chair of the Met Council is a member of the governor's cabinet. So, we function in that way like other state agencies. So what the governor's proposals are that is our position. So we are supporting the \$200 million for the Blue Line. We are supporting the funds for accelerating our zero-emissions bus plan. In terms of the larger atmosphere of lobbying, advocacy organizations are very plugged in with legislators on the committees that cover the areas they are interested in. You know the last 2½ years have been a little bit more difficult because we haven't been at the capitol. I don't remember the last time I was at the capitol.

It is starting to open up now to go in. The Senate has had some hybrid hearings. The Senate has opened up to have more hearings that you can attend in person. They are also streamed. The House is still streaming all of their committee meetings. So access is a little bit different. But those advocacy organizations are as I said are very connected, very skilled at connecting with legislators and providing information and providing testimony. And legislators themselves are open to meeting with their constituents. It might look a little bit different, but that general concept hasn't changed.

Chair Fenley said in regard to the role that TAAC can play here, there is a kind of wonky timing issue that is unfortunate. The timeframe with which we would need to have a proposal. Whether it is to spend more money on accessibility, which we can agree upon and vote upon and get put forward to the Metropolitan Council Chair. But that would have to happen long before we would ever know about any budget surplus. For it to be included either in the governor's supplemental budget or in the Metropolitan Council's requests to the governor. So we would need to be operating more on foresight or just general principles of our committee. So that the short answer is yes, but it would be something we would have to be decided upon early on in the summer before session to really get into any sort of proposals from the Metropolitan Council or the governor.

Please correct me if I am wrong, Brooke, on any of that.

Bordson said that is accurate for the governors' budget process. Of course, when I mentioned the advocacy organizations. They can work with the legislators who can drop a bill at any point for funding. So that is not to say that the only route to report any particular initiative. So direct contact with legislators. If you are involved with any organization, that that is always an open door as well.

Henricksen said from what I am hearing, there might not be any benefit attached to formulate a quick letter in the next week or two to send it to the Chair or whoever is part of the governor's office. Just at least ping them on the topic. It is impossible to see the future to see if there is a surplus or not. But there is a lot of people that are trying to figure out how to spend this surplus. I think we would be remiss if we did not at least get some form of communication just so they know. Or is it kind of what I am hearing about? This may not be the time to do this.

Chair Fenley said In short, yes. This is not the time.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I wanted to see if I could get back to Brooke about my question about removing the criminal element out of the fare evasion situation and bringing that back to the table. Yes, I don't know what committee it got referred to. Do you know where it is in the process, or did it get laid over for possible inclusion? Do you know what happened to that particular bill and where it went to committee?

Bordson said the status update on that bill. In the House, it is on the general register. So it has passed through the committees that it needed to be passed through last year. So that has been returned to the general register. When the hearing was that you mentioned, that was the Senate Judiciary Committee. They discussed the bill. Took testimony on the bill and it was laid over for future consideration that could potentially go in a

larger omnibus bill. They could pick it back up and move it as a standalone bill and that has not been determined yet. But they did hear it and laid it over.

Vice Chair Paulsen said where did they hear it in the Senate?

Bordson said that was the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee.

Vice Chair Paulsen said was that the one on Monday?

Bordson said yes.

Vice Chair Paulsen said but the House. Are they just waiting to take it up on the floor of the House?

Bordson said that bill is on the general register so the next place it would go would be on the House floor unless it got picked up in a larger omnibus bill.

Vice Chair Paulsen said congratulations on that. Hopefully that will get some movement on the Senate side. As far as I go, there are a couple of other issues that I am concerned about. Related to issues that more or less are some customer experiences stuff. But I think it might be best if I take those questions offline.

Chair Fenley said I have a question regarding the status of the bill. The Administrative Citation verses the Judicial Citation. What is the Council's confidence that that is going to go through? Is there any pushback from folks for any particular reason? Is there anything that we as TAAC members can do? To speak a little bit to Erik's question, we can take positions on things as a group and then represent TAAC at the legislature. By all means, tell me what is going on with that and if there is anything we can do to help.

Bordson said TAAC support for that bill would be great. That would be very much appreciated. You know it is hard to say what the chances are on that if it got pretty far along with end of session negotiations last year and then last year just couldn't get past that final hurdle. It does sort of get enmeshed with larger public safety discussions and debate. It is hard to push through that. This proposal is supported by a really broad range of stakeholders. Metro Transit Police support this proposal. Advocacy organizations support this proposal. We think it just makes sense to separate fare enforcements in this way. But I never made predictions about what the legislature was going to do. I would be wrong 90 percent of the time, I think. It is absolutely a good sign that the Senate had its hearing. We got more traction in the Senate this year, than all we did all of last year. That is a positive sign, but I am not really sure what will happen next with that proposal.

Vice Chair Paulsen said if a piece of legislation like this how small or how complex this is. This that one of our members comments about trying to get something in the governor's budget takes months ahead of time before the legislature starts and we know that we have been talking about fare evasion and those kinds of things. Talk about taking and making more of an administrative citation rather than a criminal element. We have been talking about that for four or five years now. Is this something that if somebody did have the ear of the governor or some legislator. Is this something that they could be talking to them and saying "Hey, yes, this is the time to do it." Because we have a bunch of surpluses. I'm assuming that there is going to be a cost to this. Or a cost shifting somewhere. So, is there some way that we could use the fact that there is a surplus today would make more sense to do this than to do it a couple of years from now. Or to do it in the next session.

Bordson said that's a great point to bring up, the cost. That is always a consideration of the legislature. The Council's position is that we would assume those costs as part of operations. So we are not asking the state for general fund appropriations to fund this program. It helps that we are not asking for the funds for it. All support is good, and it does help make some attention around this. Keep it at the top of legislators' minds so they don't say that they had their hearing and then don't come back to it. There is a specific question. We are not asking for state funds for this bill. The bill number in the House is House File 1306. Our author is Representative Elkins. Then in the Senate. It is Senate File 1513. That is authored by Senator Dibble.

Chair Fenley said I do want to make a proposal here. If we do want to have a discussion and make a decision as a group as to our position on House File 1306. That was the bill that Brooke was talking about. I would be open to doing that today. If possible, I would like, if possible, for Brooke to stick around to answer any clarifying questions that the group might have about that. I can't see it not taking too long. I would appreciate Brooke staying if she can. I could probably pull the bill up and fill in. But I just wanted to put that out there. I will take questions from Heidi now.

Myhre said the fare evasion, when people get on the bus and don't pay. Is it just the bus? I see it on the trains every time I take it. So how do you enforce it in a way? Also, you need protection because I see this for real.

Are you thinking about the driver who has to take the brunt of whatever they throw at them? When they start having an attitude. Has that been written in there? Has Metro talked about it or has the legislature? Because I actually saw it at one time. I think he had a bunch of different problems of his own about the world. I sat right next to him. I was already on the bus, and he sat next to me. So a lot of us were keeping our distance to be safe because he wouldn't be quiet. How do you work with that because it happens all the time? Some of the drivers don't say anything. Some do say something and refuse to let them on the bus if they don't pay. How do you get it to work? I just wanted to bring this to your attention when you are writing the bill or talking about it.

Bordson said that is a really important point that did come up in discussion when somebody came up with it. It is something that came up in the hearing. These would not be police officers doing this inspection. How do we provide safety for them in those events where somebody was belligerent or something? To your first question. The transit agents, or whatever they may be called, who are doing fare inspections would primarily be called on those proof of payment systems where there is offboard payments. So that is obviously light rail system. But also, BRT and where you buy your ticket before you get on board. And then it is sort of an honor system where you could provide proof of payment if somebody were to ask you to show your fare. So that is really the focus of this proposal. Looking forward, a lot of the projects that are being talked about and developed are those proof of payment systems. Additional BRT line. So this is a good time to get this program going. As we are working to expanding those on the BRT lines. But we recognize that safety has to be an issue for these non-sworn personnel as well.

The bill would allow the Council to set up the program so that is not to say this bill would pass and then tomorrow we would have transit agents inspecting fares. There would be a public process. There would be a lot of careful consideration about who these transit agents were and how they are trained in de-escalation. It would probably work closely with Metro Transit Police so there is a relationship there if they needed to call an officer. They would be able to do that quickly and do that response that way. There certainly are a lot of these kind of issues to work out. But we can't really get that process going until we get the authorization to even have a program like this. So it is a work in progress, but those are good points that are being considered very carefully.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I would like to make a motion to support House File 1306 in its original context. We stand by and be advocates for this legislation if needed.

Chair Fenley said I will interpretate your motion as TAAC supports House File 1306, Senate File 1513 in its current form.

Dains seconded the motion. What is the opposition we are getting from the legislators? I don't really understand. It sounds like it has gotten lost in the process of the legislative process so to speak. Are there some specific reasons why it is being opposed?

Chair Fenley said we have a motion, and it was seconded. I think I can speak about what Brooke said. The legislature's overall public safety concerns. I would imagine that a similar opposition, whether founded or not, would come to this particular bill that it does come to the larger public safety discussions that are happening in society and at the legislature. Brook, is that accurate?

Bordson said that is a fair assessment, yes.

Bates said the question on who is opposing it. My history is I was a lobbyist years ago. It gets into a Metro verses urban debate on costs. It makes too much common sense to pass this bill in this environment

Chair Fenley said is there a fiscal note attached to the bill, Brooke?

Bordson said there is not a fiscal note on this bill. The Council has said we would take on the cost of the program and incorporate that into our operating costs.

Vice Chair Paulsen said does that mean that you would draft a letter supporting this bill?

Chair Fenley said yes.

Rowan said my question is why the particular position on this?

Chair Fenley said we don't have to take a position on this. We can vote the motion down. There has been a motion in the way that this process works is someone can introduce a motion. Someone seconded it. We have a discussion about it and then we vote. I am open to folks who are not necessarily feeling comfortable about

this to express their opinion. Then their colleagues here on TAAC. But the way that it works is we will eventually vote on this.

Rowan said what is the argument related to TAAC? That is my question.

Chair Fenley said so the way I interpreted it as it relates to TAAC. It is both a safety issue onboard the buses and the trains. You have a little bit of preventative issues here. But relating to the bill, you also have. It is essentially making it not a criminal offence to not pay the fare. Is that not a representation?

Bordson said you are correct. So this would remove the judicial citation and let us have a program that is administrative. So instead of an initial citation that is referred to a county prosecutor. We would set up a structure internally at Metro Transit to process these citations outside of the court system.

Chair Fenley said so, I would say there are a number of reasons they don't pay the fare. I would imagine that there are a number of people that have disabilities. So they would fit into our community. Also, I see this as a potential measure on behalf of Metro Transit. Where if something like this happens, you have people that are specifically trained to address this particular issue. Not the whole panacea or any single issue you could have on a bus or a train. So it is just a quick, "Here is an administrative ticket, move on. I am not here with a gun. I am not here to accuse you of anything else." But then if things do escalate, then the individual has the responsibility to bring in another enforcement entity. Is that correct, Brooke?

Bordson said yes, these transit agents, that is what we call them, would not be police officers, but we imagine, as we develop the program, that they would process this and have some relationship with the police department so they would be working cooperatively together but they would have different transmissions and duties in their job description.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I don't want to put words in Brooke's mouth. I envisioned this program similar to the embedded social worker program that cities are doing with local police departments. So, they are not swearing in social workers to be police officers. But they are embedding them within their organization. So that when folks have an issue or something that arises like a mental health issue or something in that regard. So they can go out in plain clothes situations and not create the triggers that a police officer would trigger when law enforcement come out with their full gear and handcuffs. I assume that is the long-range vision of this program. And I would fully support it.

Chair Fenley said from my understanding, it does sound right.

Bates said I call the question.

Chair Fenley said so now we vote. We support House File 1306 and Senate File 1513, which pertains to the placement of administrative officers who would issue administrative tickets for fare evasion on light rail and bus. This will also be accompanied by a letter on behalf of TAAC to whomever would want the letter. This will allow TAAC members, if they so desire, to reach out on behalf of TAAC to legislators and tell them that yes, we do support this. This is important to the disability community. This is important to the overall culture and ridership on Metro Transit services.

Vice Chair Paulsen said Chair, a point of clarification. Will this typically apply across the board to Metro Mobility? Or any of our opt out services? Or Dial a Ride services? Or does it apply just to Metro Transit and not to Metro Mobility?

Bordson said the program would be designed for Metro Transit, to really cover those proof of payment system where there is offboard payment and not anything like Metro Mobility, which operates differently with a fare payment system.

Chair Fenley said so discussion is over. The question has been called. I will repeat the motion. TAAC supports House File 1306 and Senate File 1513, which allows TAAC members to speak in behalf in support of this. Also, a letter will be written and provided to the Chair of the Metropolitan Council. A copy of that letter will be given to the TAAC members as well, if you want to distribute it to legislators or community members.

So that being said, I would vote.

Vice Chair Paulsen said can you go ahead and send that letter, if we approve the letter, to the authors of the bill? And can you send the letter to the Chair of the committee?

Chair Fenley said I can work out sort of the logistics and get tips and tricks from you all. And I will send out an email after this. I can't imagine the letter would be more than three or four sentences. I will send it out to folks for feedback and for tips on who should receive this letter.

I will start roll call for the approval of House File 1306. I am looking for a yes or a no. if you support this, say yes. If not, say no. Folks can also abstain.

Rodgers said I would like to move to split the motion. I would like to split it to sending the letter for acceptance. That second part, that seemed to be about allowing TAAC members to speak up on behalf of the bill. I don't agree with that. that is separate and it changes the intent of the motion. So I would like to separate those two. I move to split the motion.

Chair Fenley said anytime TAAC decides to support something, it just gives us members the authority to then speak on behalf of TAAC to that specific issue.

Chair Fenley said there is another motion on the floor to split the two. One is sending a letter of support. The other one is just a general support from TAAC.

Fuglie seconded the motion to split the two.

Chair Fenley said the discussion is open. Does anyone have something to say?

Vice Chair Paulsen said to Ken's point. The motion I made is to draft a letter from TAAC in support of House File 1306 and the Senate companion of 1513. What I heard you say, Chair, because when we vote this up or down, this gives us permission to speak on this verbally. When this issue gets voted on, then we as members know our rights and responsibilities. So I think to Ken's point, we should just leave it at I am going to draft a letter and we are going to send it to these people in support of it and I think we could move this forward and take a vote.

Chair Fenley said so Darrell, are you amending your initial?

Vice Chair Paulsen said My initial motion was amended by your comment, which I agree with your comment, so I don't know if it was amended at all. I just know that we do have the right to speak on those issues if we vote on those issues. And we support those issues.

Chair Fenley said that is true. I would agree with you, Darrell, but given that Ken has a motion that has been seconded. If we vote yes on the letter, we send the letter. If we vote no, on giving TAAC members the authority to speak on behalf of this, for TAAC. Then that essentially, all we do is send a letter. Then if someone says "Does TAAC support this?" Then you can't say if we do, or we don't. We just hand them the letter. I understand what Ken Rodgers is splitting of this.

Rodgers said for clarification, that is not the intent of my comment or my motion. I do not want any one of us put into the predicament of speaking on behalf on what we each thought about when we passed this motion. To support the House File and the Senate File. All we are able to do is say "Yes. We voted on that, and I agree to that. But I don't want anybody speaking on my behalf. Guessing on why I voted on that. If it wasn't shared in the discussion, I don't know that that same belief is held by everybody. So that puts that individual TAAC member in an unfair place to make a comment. If we were really going to do this properly, we would need to develop talking points and have some guidance that people would have in order to direct that conversation. But it is too wild without. I think the original motion that I heard was to send a letter in support. Then that other stuff got added. I don't know where that other stuff got added. So I will remove and withdraw my motion if we clarify the original motion.

Chair Fenley said the way that I see this is that no one has to talk to anybody at any time. If you desire to.

Rodgers said I want to speak to the motion.

Chair Fenley said so we have two motions on the floor. One is for us to write a letter in support of how HF 1306 and SF 1513 allows TAAC members to express heir support of House File 1306. Is that accurate?

Rodgers said a point of clarification. If the original motion gets clarified, as to what Darrell actually spoke about, and that gets clarified, then I will withdraw my motion to split. Because we have only one motion on the floor.

Chair Fenley said maybe I was putting words into Darrell's mouth. So I will clarify what I was saying. I am not saying that if TAAC decides to support any particular issue that TAAC members have to go out and know all the ins and outs of the issue or even if they necessarily agree with the issue at hand. It just says that. So,

without a motion that has been voted on by TAAC, TAAC members can't represent TAAC on a particular issue. So if somebody supported this issue and went to their legislator, they could say as a constituent, "I support this issue." They can't say "As a TAAC member I support this issue."

When TAAC decides to support a particular issue, that then allows the TAAC member to say, "As a TAAC member, I support this."

Rodgers said the next logical question from a legislator would be "Why do you support this and why does TAAC support this? We do not have authorization to share what we believe somebody else's thought process should be. I don't think that is fair. I think that gets into a very slippery slope and all we really have the authority to do is say "Yes, we voted on this and we voted to affirm it." End of story.

Chair Fenley said how do you feel about that, Darrell?

Vice Chair Paulsen said I hear both points of view. I do think you are splitting hairs with what the realities are. Once a piece of legislation gets voted on, it gets approved in a committee. Most of our committee members don't go up into the Capitol and say: "I am representing TAAC, and this is what we talked about." But in this particular issue with fare evasion and the administrative issue that the Council is trying to do. I think it is a very worthwhile topic. And I think TAAC members could play a very instrumental role on whether or not this gets passed or not.

To Ken's point, I understand that if you put members there that don't fully understand or maybe cannot articulate it so that the Legislature could understand it doesn't mean that they don't have the right to speak in that realm. It just means that what Ken was trying to say is if you are going to go speak to someone, we should be more prepared. I believe that is what he is trying to say. To my original point was to draft a letter in support of TAAC members being supportive of House File 1306 and companion Senate File 1513 in support of the concept of that legislation. That was my only motion to that issue.

Chair Fenley said Darrell, I do apologize for adding on to your motion. Ken, does that clarify things for you? The motion as it stands. We will write a letter that shows TAAC supports House File 1306 and Senate File 1513.

Rodgers said absolutely. I withdraw my motion to split.

Chair Fenley said roll call on TAAC support via a letter. House File 1306 and Senate File 1513. I will go down my list. The TAAC members voted. The motion carried unanimously.

Thank you everybody.

### **3. 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Discussion**

This item was not discussed.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

These items were not discussed.

- 1. Blue Line**
- 2. Green Line**
- 3. Gold Line**
- 4. Purple Line**

#### **Bus Priority Seating TAAC Work Group**

This item was not discussed.

### **CHAIRS REPORT**

This item was not discussed

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

This item was not discussed.

### **MEMBER COMMENT**

This item was **not discussed**.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary