

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting date: July 03, 2024

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- Chair, David Fenley, at large
- Vice Chair, Darrell Paulsen, Precinct F
- Sam Jasmine, Precinct A
- Christopher Bates, Precinct B
- Patsy Murphy, Precinct C
- Ken Rodgers, Precinct D
- Jeffrey Dains, Precinct E
- Kari Sheldon, Precinct G

- Michele Severson, MCD
- Erik Henriksen, MCD
- Diane Graham-Raff, MAAA
- Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- Heidi Myhre, M CCD
- Claudia Fuglie, M CCD
- Richard Rowen, AARP MN

Ex-officio:

- Andy Streasick, Metro Mobility
- Cheryl Schmidt, Metro Mobility Service Center (interim)
- Douglas Cook, Metro Transit Customer Advocate
- Anjuli Cameron, Metropolitan Council

= present, E = excused

Attending Online:

Ken Rodgers

Absent:

Excused:

Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Michele Severson, Erik Henriksen, Diane Graham-Raff, Richard Rowen

Call to order

Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:32 p.m. and announced that the agenda and June 5, 2024 minutes would be approved if quorum was met later in the meeting or delay approval until the August meeting.

Agenda approved

It was moved by Vice-Chair Paulsen, seconded by Member Thorsen to approve the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.** Note: Approval was delayed as quorum was not met at 12:32 p.m.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by Member Dains, seconded by Member Myhre to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2024, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.** Note: Approval was delayed as quorum was not met at 12:32 p.m.

Business and information items

1. A **Presentation from the Minnesota State Fair.** Presenters were Christine Noonan, marketing director for the Minnesota State Fair, Mike Hagen, operations manager for the Minnesota State Fair, and Blaire Huneke, marketing and guest services supervisor for the Minnesota State Fair.

The accessibility committee meets throughout the year, it is an ongoing process. Recent focus has been on services for guests that are blind or low vision. The Aira app will be free for people to use at the State Fair. Metro Mobility and Metro Transit also use that app. Chair Fenley asked if it is a seamless process, do you need to switch out people when departing a Metro Mobility vehicle to go into the fair. Answer from Huenek is that it is a separate call.

Member Myhre asked if the app can be used by people with sensory processing issues. Huneke answered that it is for anyone who needs assistance. While the people are trained primarily for those with visibility access issues, anyone who needs assistance and use the app.

Mike Hagen spoke on transportation. At one point 50% of attendees came in some form of mass transit. Recent years that has declined to 40%. There are approximately 30 parking lots that offer free shuttle service to the fair. Not all locations will have accessible buses. The Oscar Johnson arena lot is exclusively for people needing accessible access. Other are marked where they are accessible.

Other direct rides have a fee from more suburban locations. Metro Transit operates 6 lots, Southwest Transportation offers 4 lots, MVTA offers 3 lots. All drop off at gate 16 with is the transit hub. There will be transit ambassadors there to assist people with questions about buses. Gate 5 will also have transit ambassadors.

There are four main parts of the public transportation system to the fair. There is the park and ride system, express busses, Metro Mobility will drop off at the north and south gates, and regular route service (3, 6, A Line, Green Line).

There are two ride share lots for Uber and Lyft. One at the north gate near the Metro Mobility dropoff and one at the southern end near gate 7. The fair has worked with those companies to geofence the location, will automatically prompt the user to choose either the north or south lot if the user is at the fair.

There are also self-parking lots. Those are \$20 per car. Right inside each of those gates will be mobility device rental stands.

Question from member Dains. There have been complaints in the past about the frequency of route 3 and 61, what is being done about that? Hagen responded he will follow up with Metro Transit about that.

Question from member Myhre regarding the pricing for express buses and road construction. Noonan stated those fees are set by the providers. Noonan stated information regarding buses and road construction will be linked on the State Fair website.

Member Fuglie had a question regarding people without smart phones. Noonan stated that the fair website has a "get here" section for transportation options.

Vice-Chair Paulsen asked a question regarding the signage issues and traffic issues in the horseshoe near Gate 9. Long lines of traffic have prevented many buses from turning in there. It was suggested there maybe should be temporary signage to direct buses and traffic in that area. Hagen stated he will check with the sign shop at getting signage replaced.

Blaire Huneke gave an overview of all accessibility options. Returning will be the momentum refresh vehicle. The restroom with a hoist will be in the same location. Free entertainment programs that will be ASL interpreted will be on every day. ASL interpreters are onsite if contacted ahead of time. There will be captioning and audio descriptions from some entertainment.

Guests will be able to request audio description for free programming with a 14 day notice. There will be some prerecording of audio descriptions, including crop art. They will be providing addresses for buildings on the website to assist with Google maps. Full size adult changing tables will be on the west side of the fair.

Question from member Myhre, will these new accessibility options going to be on the website. Response from Huneke, yes, the accessibility guide will be on the website. In addition all information booths will have the accessibility guide.

Comment from Vice-Chair Paulsen suggested that QR codes be used to distribute information and to solicit feedback from guests.

Comment from member Rodgers that after years of having little to no accessibility, many members of the public aren't even checking to see if accessible programming will be at the fair. Recommendation is to reach out to communities to help publicize new accessible programming and



activities.

2. **Legislative Update** from Hannah Pallmeyer, government affairs liaison for the Metropolitan Council.

The state of Minnesota does two-year legislative budgeting cycles. The first year the budget is passed. The second year is often set aside for a potential supplemental budget, policy changes, and a capital investment bill. This year a \$450 million supplemental budget bill was passed, but no capital investment bill.

New updates to the zero-emission bus law. Beginning in 2035, any new bus purchased for regular route service must be zero-emission. Anything vehicle for under 15 passengers will be exempt. The plan to transition must be updated every 3 years.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation will begin to review the effectiveness of Metro Mobility. A Blue Line anti-displacement prosperity program was enacted. The transportation network companies regulation bill includes minimum compensation for drivers and preempts local government rates.

3. **Metro Mobility performance data** presented by Andy Streasick, assistant director for Metro Mobility.

Quarterly reports show a 92% on time performance rate versus a federal standard of 90%. 96.3% on board time versus a 95% federal standard. The appointment on time performance is 52.4%. Due to existing contracts, an incentive is for 60 minutes prior to appointments but new federal guidelines state 30 minutes. Next contracts with providers will be for 30-minute appointment times.

No non-ADA denials since the first four days of January. There has been significant increase in usage for premium on demand service due to service hours being later than Metro Mobility.

Question from Chair Fenley regarding the lower denial rates. Answer from Streasick is the bonus limit for providers to not cancel non-ADA rides has moved. The supply line for vehicles has also rebounded since COVID disruptions.

Question from the chair about Metro Move. Is this ridership increasing as well? Answer from Streasick, yes because the service is still ramping up and accepting new clients.

Question from member Dains regarding retention bonuses and longevity bonuses for drivers. Answer from Streasick, drivers are not Metropolitan Council employees, but the providers have some sort of program for that.

Comment from member Myhre. There have been issues with providers not training the reservation specialists well. The online booking system has been problematic. Streasick states the online booking system is being revised and problems should be resolved soon.

Comment from member Rodgers regarding Metro Move being disruptive to some agencies. Late transportation can cause financial and logistical problems for the agency as they are only paid when the client is in the program.

Streasick stated that by the end of September, many will either move to Metro Move or Metro Mobility on demand. On time performance metrics have been pretty good.

The chair suggested that the discussion be moved to a full agenda item at a future meeting when Metro Move will be on the agenda.

Question from Vice-Chair Paulsen. He heard a rumor that providers have a \$5,000 bonus if they don't have any service reports. Is this true? Answer from Streasick is no, however there are incentives for providers with low complaints and service denials.

4. **Metro Transit Curriculum Development** presented by Dan Stoffer, manager – bus instruction for Metro Transit and Maureen Perryman - assistant manager transportation east metro garage.



Professional operator development curriculum is currently being developed for with a cultural awareness and disability awareness component to it. Would like to have input from a committee member. Looking for experience for videos that could be used to show what it is like to be a person with disabilities to use mass transit. Current training is focused on technical areas like how to secure a mobility device. Would like to highlight the customer service aspect of it.

There was some discussion on the timeline and time commitment. The deadline is September 3, 2024, for the training program to be completed.

A comment from the chair is that the culture component and the component regarding people with disabilities should not be separate.

This training will be given to all rail and bus operators, supervisors, and managers.

Reports

Subcommittee

1. Purple Line Update – Vice-Chair Paulsen
There will be some community engagement on July 17 at the Maplewood YMCA. The public will be available to view project boards and give feedback. By the end of August or September, they must give the federal government which route is preferred.
2. Blue Line Update – Ken Rodgers
The draft environmental statement has been updated. Fascinating reading but heavy. Brooklyn Park, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Minneapolis must give municipal consent to the project before the project moves onto the final environmental impact statement.

Chair

None.

Public invitation

No comments.

Member comment

Member Fuglie - there is a rumor regarding a new routing system. Chair Fenley stated that it sounds like a good future agenda item.

Member Myhre – just got a two-year term for a committee for Dakota county, transportation might be a component of that. Encouraged the committee to have someone come out and speak.

Member Sheldon – on July 25th is the 4th annual Stop the Violence cookout presented by Touch Outreach. They are community activists that have been on the train. Member Sheldon praised the group for making the train safer. It will be at Martin Luther King Park in Minneapolis.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of July 03, 2024.

Approved this 4th day of September, 2024.

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