

# Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



**Meeting Date:** June 07, 2023

**Time:** 12:30 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Steet

## 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
- Rachel Garaghty, Precinct H

## Attending From Home

Ken Rodgers

- Trevor Turner, MCD
- Erik Henriksen, MCD
- Diane Graham-Raff, MAAA
- Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- Heidi Myhre, MCCD
- Claudia Fuglie, MCCD
- Richard Rowen, AARP MN

## Excused

Christopher Bates  
Jeffrey Dains  
Richard Rowan  
Sam Jasmine  
Rachel Garaghty

## Ex-Officio:

- Phillip Sterner, Council Member Liaison
  - Andy Streasick, Metro Mobility
  - Douglas Cook, Metro Transit Customer Advocate
  - Guthrie Byard, ADA & Title VI Administrator
- = present, E = excused

## Call to Order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:30 p.m.

## Agenda Approved

It was moved by Thorsen, seconded by Henriksen to approve the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

## Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Henriksen, seconded by Fuglie to approve the minutes of the May 03, 2023 regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

## Business & Information Items

### 1. State Fair

Renee Alexander, CEO MN State Fair  
Mike Hagen, our operations manager  
Christine Noonan, Marketing Director  
Tagan Bowser, Transportation Supervisor

Renee Alexander spoke to the TAAC committee. I am the new CEO of the Minnesota State Fair. I have started week three. Although I am new to the role, I have been with the fair for over 20 years. The last 18 years I have been in leadership. Overseeing multiple departments including booking

the Grandstand entertainments. It is humbling to take on this role. The fair means so much to so many. I am really committed to making sure we keep the traditions of the fair and really celebrate all that is great about our state. But also improving on the operations we have and taking innovation to account as well. Accessibility is certainly something that is a priority for us throughout our campus in getting people to the fair.

About 50 percent of our guests arrive to the fair via some sort of transit. So, today we will talk a little bit about the different varieties. I think here is an understanding of the different ways that people can actually arrive to the fair. So, I will do some introductions. Then I will hand it off to Chris and then to Mike and Tagan.

Christine Noonan is here. She is our Marketing Director. She is also the chair of our accessibility committee that we have at the fair. So it is something again, that we are very committed to. Chris works with our full-time staff. With members of them throughout different departments to work on our accessibility initiatives. I will turn it over to Chris,

Christine Noonan spoke to the TAAC committee. Part of my year-round full-time responsibility is Guest Services. A large chunk of that is making sure that any guest feels welcome and included in all that we do at the State Fair. And of course, transportation is a huge part of that. Accessibility, as you know, is a journey. It is not an end goal. So we are working diligently and persistently trying to improve all aspects of our operation as it relates to accessibility.

So we are here to talk about transportation. As Renee mentioned, a large chunk of our guests come to the fair via mass transit. So there are really four different bus services that feed the State Fair.

The first system, of course, is the regular, Metro Transit bus routes. The primary routes that we highlight from the fair's perspective, are Route 3, and the A-Line. And we also direct people to take the Green Line and hop on the A-Line in order to access the fair.

The second system is what we call our express bus system. Those providers are Metro Transit, Southwest Transit and Minnesota Valley Transit Authority.

The third system is the State Fair park-and-rides system. Lorenz Bus Service is the provider of this service. Then the fourth is Metro Mobility.

At this point I will turn it over to Mike and Tagan because they are the operations key to making those four bus services as well as some other options accessible and improved every year.

Tagan Bowser spoke to the TAAC committee. When it comes to ADA accessibility. Our parking on the grounds. We have two areas that are really very large.

Mike Hagen spoke to the TAAC committee. There are three large parking areas, which total about 5,500 parking spaces. In addition to those 5,500 parking spaces, we have over 800 ADA spots available. Parking is just one small way to get to the fair. Transit is a huge part of that. We have a couple of options for transit that really allow people to get to the fair easily. We have 28 park-and-ride locations throughout the area surrounding the fairgrounds that are closer in. As Christine mentioned, we have those express bus locations that are a little bit further out. Of those 28 locations that we do for our park-and-ride service, one of them is dedicated entirely to ADA. That is our Oscar Johnson and Reno location.

You are required to have an ADA sticker or plate to park there. And that drops off at Gate 9, our loop gate. Which is one of the two locations that Metro Mobility also drops off at. That lot services the ADA needs. So, some of our park-and-ride locations have ADA availability but are not guaranteed to. Tagan knows more about that. He oversees our park-and-ride a little bit. This lot that we have for Oscar Johnson Arena is dedicated to that. It is used constantly.

That is by far, one of our busiest lots. All of our park-and-rides are ADA accessible. Lorenz has provided a scheduled bus on each route. So every route that we have is always an ADA accessible bus on that route. So if someone doesn't make it to Oscar Johnson, they don't have to worry about if they go to a different park-and-ride, they still have accessibility to get to the fair.



We also have it to the point where if someone shows up and the bus just left, our guys have the capability of making a phone call or talking over the radio directly to Lorenz to get a bus to come back. It might take 10 to 15 minutes because one just left. But they will have one put into the system to get there just for that person who just came.

And then, talking with Lorenz, all of their transit buses are ADA accessible. Half of their charter buses are ADA accessible. All of the buses that go to the ADA lot are ADA capable to transport everyone.

Hagen said we do have Metro Mobility that drops off at the fair. There are two different drop off locations. One on the North and one on the South. One of the more difficult jobs that we had with Metro Mobility in the past is that we don't have addresses for those locations. So we work with Metro Mobility to create drop off spots where there is not a physical building address. It is just part of our parking lot. We had a former employee that retired in the last couple of years. He worked for years trying to establish this as a spot where people know where to go. So, it has been established by now. Most of the drivers are familiar with that. Now that there are multiple locations. One on the north and one on the south. Where we can catch Metro Mobility and get that drop off location.

One of those is mixed in with our Uber and Lyft area. It is a dedicated part of a park-and-ride lot. We block it off so there is no other vehicle traffic than Uber and Lyft. That is not very much used by Uber and Lyft. We have a separate Uber and Lyft in the south that is much more used. Then our other spot used by Metro Mobility is Gate 9, which is also going under reconstruction this year, which is nice. We are redoing the gate itself. Not the usual driving area. But the physical gate. Making it wider, making it better, making it more accessible. The gate itself was very old. Old wooden gates. Old turn styles. It would be tough to get a stroller, a wagon, a wheelchair or scooter through there. Upgrading that to be a much better experience because that is where we drop off our Oscar Johnson park-and-ride services. Where Metro Mobility drops off. We also drop off things like our 4-H shuttle. It is a very important gate for us. That is why we are spending the money for an upgrade this year.

We didn't introduce ourselves. I am Mike Hagen. I am the Operations Manager. Tagen is the Transportation Supervisor. I am going on five years. Tagen is going on one-year full time. We have time to answer any questions you might have.

Chair Fenley said so the two drop off and pick up locations are the same ones as in the past. Can people get dropped off and picked up at the State Fair from other locations or just those two spots?

Hagen said we made it to be just those two spots. My understanding is, this is done by an employee who has just retired. My understanding is those are just the two best locations. Otherwise, it would create a little bit of chaos trying to get them to other places. They are close to gates where there are services on the inside. So if you needed to rent a wheelchair, wagon or scooter or something like that, we have those services available right at the inside of those two gates. And you are not going very far.

If you were trying to drop off somewhere else, there is not a guarantee that you would have the amenities needed.

Chair Fenley said that makes sense for convenience and avoidance of congestion.

Streasick said this applies to when the Fair is in session. We are only going to drop at those two spots. If there is a non-Fair event going on. On the grounds. Obviously, there is flexibility to work with the fairgrounds. But while the fair is in session, those are the two spots we are going to drop at.

Hagen said non fair events and other off-season events. We work with Metro Mobility to provide other locations or specific spots to drop off. We have hundreds of off-season events.

Myhre said my question is that I use Google Maps. The picture doesn't work right. I was wondering if you guys could help with that. We could make it better for Google Maps.

Alexander said are you asking us to work with Google Maps? So that when you put in the State Fair, a photo shows up via Google?

Myhre said yes, it is gate number nine. Where Metro Mobility drops us off. They had it really great and then they changed it. Just some reference to help me.

Alexander said we can do a couple of things. We could reach out to Google and find out what our options are there. We also, on our website, have something that we call our accessibility guide. It is kind of our bucket to guide all of our accessible guest services. What we can for sure do there is add a photo. A photo of both of the gates. You could pull up a photo of what the gates look like.

Turner said I work at the Minnesota Council on Disabilities. The Minnesota Council on Disabilities works the State Fair. Last year I worked every day at the State Fair. I take public transit because I am visually impaired. It is convenient and nice that I can take the bus straight from downtown Minneapolis where I live, to the State Fair. But last year, I know that the express bus options were reduced. So there weren't any express buses from downtown. Which means it took me quite a bit to get to the State Fair. But a lot of it was just due to traffic. Just getting in and out of the State Fair.

I am curious if there are any plans to have express buses from downtown Minneapolis and downtown Saint Paul or some way to make the Route 3 faster. It was taking me an hour and a half one way, sometimes, to get to the fair last year.

Bowser said that is in the hands of Metro Transit. I have been in a couple of meetings with those guys via Zoom. This year so far. I know their plan is to get more park-and-ride stops. It had gone out three years. Then after Covid, those guys lost a lot of drivers. They are trying to up their game back. Right now, the talk with them adding in a couple of more stops this year. They have one they are going to do. They will give us four more than they had in the past. Right now, we are still waiting on them to try to get back to us. To let us know what they are capable of doing this year.

Chair Fenley said and Trevor, we maintain an open line of contact with Metro Transit as to what changes might be for routes to the fair. So hopefully in July we might have something in writing from Metro Transit about what the changes in new routes and the same routes are going to be.

Thorsen said even if it is a temporary event, having some signage or some kind of place mark, even if it is not an address, on the Metro Mobility bus, is extremely important. Have the driver say "North lot or South lot" or something that lets people know where they are so they can find their way back.

Bowser said we already do something like that.

Cook said so if I am using a service Transition Plus or Lyft accessible vehicle to get there, they use the North and South lots? Is that correct?

Hagen said we have two ride share lots. One in the North and one in the South. The North Lot is in the same spot as the Metro Mobility lot. The ride share lot is across from Gate 7. Which would be east of our main parking area. There are two dedicated ride share lots. Where you would be able to catch a ride to get dropped off. Either or. We also work with both Uber and Lyft. Where we put up a Geo fence. So if you are inside the fairgrounds, calling for a ride, You can pick and choose which lot you want to get picked up at. It will direct you to one of those two lots. So you can say the north lot or the south lot. The Lyft app is convenient to work with. Personally, I have never taken a Lyft from the fair. I used the app just to make sure it worked. We do have the dedicated lots for those services. We have attendants working those lots to help people match up with their drivers and riders and things like that.

Cook said do those lots also have the rental mobility devices and things like that?

Hagan said just inside the north lot, we work with a company called Hometown Mobility. Inside the south lot you have to go a little bit to the west. I don't think there is one right in front of it. But there is one inside Gate 9, which is not too terribly far. So, that is something that we could possibly put on an accessibility page as well. We could advertise that to let people know that if you need to rent any type of mobility device, to go to the North Lot.

TAAC has multiple services at Gate 9. I am not too familiar with Transition Plus. We haven't contracted with them like we have Uber and Lyft. But I am sure they would have no problem with pulling up to Gate 9.



Streasick said Transportation Plus is a private paid taxi. It is a taxicab company. But it is a contrast with Metro Mobility. So the certified riders can receive an additional subsidy. So if Metro Mobility riders used a premium demand program. They are receiving the ride through a private company, Transportation Plus. Transition Plus is a different thing. It is an educational services program. But I think Transportation Plus is what we are talking about here.

Hagen said so if they are related to Metro Mobility, I would assume that they have that same information to go to gates 2 and 9, where they would have the Metro Mobility vehicle.

Chair Fenley said I know that Metro Transit has been utilizing a wayfinding service called AIRA. It is system wide. It is essentially that if someone is blind or low vision, they can load up an app and use their camera phone. Then be guided around by somebody via live voice message. I am curious if the State Fair has considered to ease that transition from transit into the fair. Have you considered that service at all? Even if not just for the fair. They do a similar thing where they would geo fence the location and then you can provide that service within that particular geographic area.

Alexander said we are aware of that service. I understand that it is being used at the airport. We haven't gotten to the point that we are able to implement it. Some of the conversations we have had are to do with exactly what you have mentioned. The geo sounds like a very small area within the fairgrounds that we could try it out. So I would be interested. I haven't followed it recently, to find out the status of how the pilot went with Metro Transit. And how it works at the airport. I would love to find out more. Then we can see what we can do at the fairgrounds.

Myhre said is it also for Androids?

Chair Fenley said it is an app that works on anybody's smart phone.

Myhre said if I am coming from West Saint Paul, could they go to either gate? Or would I still be going to Gate 9?

Streasick said we can go to either one. If you don't specify, we will go to Gate 9. You can ask us to go to the other one.

Chair Fenley said so when it comes to taxi service drop off. Specifically Premium on Demand, which you all won't distinguish, but Metro Mobility will. Do those all go to either one of the two drop off locations. You can't get dropped off anywhere in a taxi.

Hagen said taxi service is only at Gate 9. That is south.

## 2. 2050 Regional Development Guide Overview

Angela Torres, Senior Manager, Local Planning Assistance in the Community Development at the Met Council. I am here today to talk about the 2050 Regional Development Guide. This establishes the policy and vision for the development of the Twin Cities region over the next 30 years. So here is a little bit of an outline of what we are going to talk about today. I will talk about the regional planning part. The planning for growth and development. My colleague, Mike Larson, will talk about the regional vision and values work that is underway. And our colleague, Jed Hanson, will join us to talk about the Transportation Policy Plan update. We will hopefully have time for much discussion and next steps.

Next slide. It is called the 2050 Regional Development Guide. We do have a 10-year regional planning cycle. So, we do this on a decennial basis. We start with whenever the census is updated. So with the 2020 Census, that kicks off our work at the Council to start doing analysis and work to develop the 2050 Regional Development Guide. We communicate with local governments on the changes in regional policy every 10-years. That initiates their process to do a comprehensive plan update at the local level. Then they start implementation. We talk about the next census, and it starts all over again.

Next slide. State statute actually requires the Metropolitan Council to develop a regional plan for the orderly and economic development of the region.

Next slide. This statute 473.145, we are very familiar with. This directs the work of the Council. In



large part for the Regional Development Guide. Talking about the orderly economic development, both public and private in the metropolitan area. We are tasked with considering the physical, social and economic needs of the metropolitan area. And there are very specific areas in which we have regional system and policy plans. We have three systems, as you probably know. The Regional Transportation System, the Regional Park System and the Regional Wastewater System. Our planning bill encompasses more than that. Because the built environment is impacted by many things. So that includes land use and airports, highways, transit facilities and others as well.

Next slide. We do have a very ambitious path towards the 2050 Regional Development Plans. We do a lot of policy exploration. Talking about policy development. You can see we have a multiyear planning process. The Decennial Census kicks off the work. We get organized internally with our staff and leadership. We start talking about policy exploration and areas where there might be regional concern. Areas of issue like climate change, for example. We start talking about those through 2022. We started working then through policy development. And because we have some statutory deadlines that go along with this work. The Regional Development Guide needs to be adopted by the end of 2024.

Next slide. We have been working to create a comprehensive plan for the region. In the past, we have had system and policy plans follow the development of the Regional Development Guide. We are trying to develop a unified plan at this time. To try and demonstrate for local governments. The regional planning agency can do the work that they are doing as well.

So we have land use policies, housing policies, regional parks, regional transportation and water resources. All working in concert in a parallel plan under a shared set of goals and objectives with a shared values and vision of the Council.

Next slide. I want to talk about engagement efforts. I want to give a broad overview of engagement efforts and this slide goes into more specific engagement efforts. Early-stage engagement, we talk with advisory committees. This is the issues exploration. The work that we have been doing. One of the reasons we are here today to talk about the vision and values and give an update on the Transportation Policy Plan. We work with our local government partners on a daily basis. We take everything that we know in our regular work and apply that to the regional planning process as well.

We do have a new initiative that just concluded with a young leader's collaboration where we contracted with five youth-led organizations to do an intensive engagement process with them.

Next slide. This is just to give a demonstration of the amount of engagement that we are planning. Some of which is ongoing. Some of which is very broad and encompassing of regional residents. Some new efforts, as I was mentioning with the youth collaborative. I will talk about that more with the next slide. But also, other initiatives like a historical cultural study that the regional parks group is working on. The Transportation Policy Plan team also contracted to do a lot of external engagement as well.

Next slide. As I mentioned. We did collaborate with the youth leaders' organizations. They recently presented that to the Committee of the Whole. On March 17, we had an expo of sorts where they were in the lobby areas. Talking individually about their work. But they also presented at the Committee of the Whole. Some of their identified issues, where they were talking about affordability and transportation infrastructure. Pedestrian safety was one of the key takeaways from, the young leaders who often depend on walking or bicycling to move around the region. They were also talking quite intentionally about the lack of community connection in their respective communities. And how they may feel welcome or included in that community. And how they can see themselves in more public places with some support from local governments and regional policy.

They talked quite extensively about the parks. Access and availability of transit to parks and other things too. They were seeing the outdoors as very essential to their well-being in the region. Talking too about land and habitat conservation and how that fed into all of the other things like community, connection and parks being essential. And water resources as well, being very important too. Identified issues from the youth collaboratives that we worked with. That was a very



successful engagement. We are planning on mimicking the organizational structure of that and doing additional outreach for some of the Regional Development Guide policy planning with disadvantaged communities. So we have initiated that second effort. Talking with organizations like ARC Minnesota, Twin Cities Adaptive Cycling We Love to Play, Metropolitan Center for Independent Living, Think Self. We have already had an engagement with Burnsville Community Education and others that we are making phone calls with to see how organizations want to be providing input on this process. And others as well.

So we are doing broad engagement reaching out to a lot of organizations representing disadvantaged communities and working to contract with up to 10 more of those organizations to do another collaborative cohort of organizations as well as doing one on one focused conversations as communities have capacity to do that work. There is a lot of engagement going on. We are happy to bring that engagement to this committee as well. And hopeful that Mike and his presentation will dig into that a little bit deeper.

I am happy to answer any questions on the broad regional planning process.

Chair Fenley said this is a curiosity question, not a judgement question. With the Young Leaders, did Disability Access come up from them by any chance? Did they express interest in that at all?

Torres said accessibility at large was one of the broader issues. Each organization had different specific issue identification recommendations. We are working together now with our research group to put that into a more readable and understandable aggregation of themes and trends. That was the big picture take away that could easily get from their first initial presentations. But we are digging into that much deeper. I assume that there were many ranges of accessibility issues. Especially with parks and the safety issues.

Vice Chair Paulsen said to go deeper with that. There are six areas in the Young Leaders Initiative. Where in those six areas did they speak about accessibility? You probably touched on it. You said outside in parks.

Torres said thank you for that. Digging into that a little bit deeper. It is something that we intend to do more of. I don't want to repeat too much of what I said. But it was largely related to the outdoors and park accessibility. But they were also talking about their positions in the world. Their workforce and job availability and other places as well.

Myhre said I had to show someone how to work the traffic light in Saint Paul. How do you teach that when every place is different?

Torres said this kind of feedback helps us to develop policy that can work to encourage consistency that can work on improving accessibility across the board of many areas.

Rodgers said I just have a couple of comments that I would like to offer as suggestions. I am really focused on language. As we create policy that is going to look out 25 plus years. I want us to be sure that we are reflecting language that's inclusive and not specifically inappropriate. One of the comments I heard that you made regarded walking and biking. I know that you are in a bit of a time crunch and want to get the point across that I am guessing that you meant movement. I think it is always really important. Especially in policy statements and research in such that you are doing it. Leading that using inclusive language. So rolling needs to be included in that because that specifically relates to the disability community. Without that, you are inadvertently leaving them out of the understanding of the conversations. I would just suggest that you watch the language to be sure it is inclusive and not inadvertently omitting somebody.

Then there is one other thing I wanted to point out. You used the term disadvantaged communities. I would like to suggest that we not use the term disadvantaged communities. But maybe underrepresented communities. There is a difference in how that is heard by different people. I certainly don't think of myself as being disadvantaged. I am blind. But I have other skills that I use. I am not necessarily disadvantaged. That is my own perspective. I may be underrepresented. I would like to just point out those things. To be really careful. And make sure that the language that is being used is really inclusive. That is my suggestion.



Torres said thank you for that. We all can have learning opportunities. I certainly appreciate that.

Thorsen said regarding what Ken said. I think that if we change the language. I agree with Ken wholeheartedly. I think it is not just to benefit a group of people. I think if we are conscious about language that we use, we can be more inclusive. The way that we think about and plan for various things. It is not just the way we speak to people that are included in those words. It really is beyond that. Language is very important.

Chair Fenley said it helps people feel seen.

Vice Chair Paulsen said if you use the correct language, it helps people create that understanding, that acceptance of what you are talking about. It is the way we all communicate. There are different ways we take information in. How do we understand that and what do we do with it?

Thorsen said it goes way beyond just are we feeling included? We are included when the concerns that we have about a given. Let's say rolling. I use a wheelchair on sidewalks and curb cuts. If you start using the language, it can help you think about curb cuts. Hopefully, it can help us understand that an individual can have multiple disabilities with multiple concerns that they have.

There are different considerations when I bring my wheelchair to the desk verses when I sit in the chair. Different perceptions.

Myhre said we are a melting pot here in Minnesota. Think of different cultures. One group of people might see it one way and someone else will see it another way. We are a lot of people coming together and want to do the same thing in the disability community. Think about how different cultures will hear your words.

Graham-Raff said hopefully, as you talk to the age friendly council, you will begin to understand that all of these issues transcend all age groups. You have identified from the Young Leaders being able then to help them understand that many of the same, whether it is mobility, barriers or access to services or whatever. Those transcend the entire population. And that they occur at all stages from zero to death. And that all of these things that we can move beyond looking for accommodation. But looking for universal availability. Being able to access anything, everybody, all the time. Then it becomes less of making a special exception to actually building a community that meets all of our needs.

I also hope that you will kind of take a look at AARP. They did a study about 10-years ago called Stuck in Place. They looked at the larger metro area. it is bigger than what the Met Council covers. It showed us moving more and more to outside the core center and along those arteries that have high concentrations of older adults with very poor access to public transportation. I would be curious for you folks to be able to look and see if this played out. Were we able to address any of this? Make it so it didn't turn into this big red splotch that they showed. So, what are we doing right? What did we miss?

- **Regional Vision & Values**

Michael Larson, Planning Analyst, Local Planning Assistance, spoke to the TAAC committee. We are very interested in knowing how you want to be engaged going forward for this process. I have been managing the vision and values process for the 2050 Regional Guide.

What I want to do is share some of our definitions. Our values, our core beliefs are principles that guide our work and our expectations of people we work with. As well as the policy and program development that we are engaged in.

Next slide. Our vision is what we want to achieve for our region through our policies, practices, programs and partnerships.

Next slide. Our goals broadly describe the desired outcomes that we want to achieve for the region.

Next slide. So we have engaged a lot of groups to date. And we will continue to do so. We have included the Met Council in a number of occasions. Our Equity Advisory Committee, our Land Use Advisory Committee, the Metro Area Water Supply Advisory Committee, the Metro Parks and





Open Space Commission, the Transportation Advisory Board, the Transportation Policy Plan Advisory Work Group. I believe you have representation on the TPP, the Technical Working Group and the Regional Planning Advisory Groups. Our biggest challenge is not whether or not there are people to engage, but how to engage people efficiently and effectively and respectfully.

In addition to coming to you today, and our thoughts that we have shared with you about engaging folks from the community that we would like to hear your thoughts.

Next slide. So when we talked to various groups that we tried to identify our values and core beliefs, we frequently hear the following terms. I have attempted to compare these with a presentation I have given to other groups. We hear a lot about equity, justice, cultural competence, respect and compassion. We hear about leadership, collaboration, entrepreneurship, innovation. We hear about accountability, transparency and effectiveness. Stewardship, sustainability and resilience.

I really appreciated the comments you made about the importance of language, the importance of meaning. The symbolic role that the use of terms can play in signaling that we understand, and you are included. We connect with you. This has been as much about that process of conversation as well as identifying what we think of the current terms. I am sure we don't have it exactly right. These are not meant to be set in stone, but to foster conversation.

Next slide. What we have identified is these core values that take the place of these grouping. What we are focusing our language around. These are the core values, and the additional terms are part of our lexicon or our language when we talk to each other. These are terms we can lean on. Back to make sure that we are doing our work with similar values.

Next slide. So we have taken each of these core values and constructed them in a similar way for communication purposes and for clarification.

Next slide. A short form is that we value the people and communities of our region.

Next slide. We also include an acknowledge statement. In this particular case, our region is economically and culturally vibrant. We also recognize, however the harm and disparities that injustices, including racism, have created.

Next slide. When we end with a commitment statement, we are dedicated to creating systems, policies, and programs that repair and heal past harm, foster an equitable future, and eliminate disparities. Communities that have been marginalized in the past will be at the center of this work in leadership roles.

Next slide. Leadership. We value those in our region who inspire and motivate others for positive change.

Next slide. Our region is known for its civic engagement. We need broad leadership to help confront the significant challenges we face around equity, climate change, safety, and other pressing issues.

Next slide. To maximize the potential of our region and its communities, we turn to leadership that is diverse, collaborative, culturally competent, and innovative. We encourage this kind of leadership across all sectors including business, government, non-profit, and education.

Next slide. The third regional core values are accountability. We value being effective in our work and achieving measurable outcomes.

Next slide. Our region is known for its research, initiatives, and collaborations. We must be open to criticism and clearly understand when we are not achieving results or have harmed communities.

We recognize that we can maximize our effectiveness by being in partnership with others. We will also be transparent and flexible so that we can change course when needed.

Next slide. Finally, Stewardship. We value our region's resources.

Next slide. Our resources include our natural, economic, and financial resources as well as our infrastructure. We recognize that these resources may be vulnerable over time to changing



conditions, including from climate change.

Next slide. We must design our systems and allocate our resources in ways that can be sustained over time and support the needs of future generations.

Before I continue, I will offer a pause if anyone has any questions or comments.

Next slide. Throughout our process we identify what we are calling Cross-Cutting Regional Issues. These are issues that cut across various policy demands and by definition really require us to collaborate across different work areas like parks and land use and transportation and such.

These issues form a foundation of our vision work. The first one, not surprisingly are issues relating to racial disparities. And other forms of Equity are front and center.

Next slide. The next one is public, healthy, and wellbeing. This is under Climate. Climate is another cross-cutting issue. Aspects include our ability to adapt to climate change, reduce or eliminate our effect on greenhouse gasses. Ensure that our infrastructure, natural systems and vulnerable communities are safe to changing stresses.

Next slide. So back to Public Health, Safety and Wellbeing. Our region and our country have been under stress lately. We have gone through public health emergencies, Covid. The aftermath killing of George Floyd and civil unrest. The physical and mental stresses in our communities are being felt in many ways including in our transit system. And interestingly, we have had a recent increase in traffic fatalities and injuries, reversing what had been a downward trend.

The fourth is Natural Systems. Important access to our region that might be in distress because of development and climate change. These resources may be experiencing inequitably throughout the region. Ensuring that we can provide safe and reliable water for future generations, is what the heart of what Environmental Services division does. And our Regional Park System is an important natural resource that is at risk.

I will pause here if you have any questions.

Myhre said I know you are trying to clean up everything with the farmers and the water. They are trying to clean certain lakes. Maybe you can work with not just the community, but the farmers and the factories.

Chair Fenley said I am assuming that under Equity, barriers that people with disabilities have faced both physically and culturally fits into other inequity. That is only an assumption. And yes, that was a question.

Larson said I don't think that was an assumption. But I do think it is something that we need to articulate. Even just the term "accessibility" when we use the term "access and accessibility," it can have very many different meanings and different expressions. And so, that comes up a lot in committees and range from issues of ADA transition plan and implementation to "Is there housing located near jobs? Can you get there by transit? Can I walk there? Do I feel safe and included?"

Language is a little tricky and I think we want to further define or articulate these things. Like you eloquently shared before, in a strategic way, helps us shape our work and prioritize our work.

Chair Fenley said this is a great group to ask about language as it pertains to folks with disabilities. So we do want more in-depth stuff. We can do that. The email offline or if you so desire, we can put together two or three folks that can provide and put on stuff like that. You know that everybody can't be an expert in every single-issue area. So that is why you have us.

Vice Chair Paulsen said out of the significant, cross cutting areas that you identified, there are four of them. Out of those areas, the biggest one that you have is what and the smaller one is what. So I am suggesting that your biggest numbers is the equity part of it. And one of those is much smaller than that. Out of those four areas that you identified. Which one of those four areas is the biggest issue?

Larson said I have participated in lots of conversations about what we might be implying in terms of priority. Policy makers that have reflected on past plans and work and wonder are we going to



have the kind of plan that helps shape priorities more clearly so that in contrast to when everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. I think that is something we want to avoid. I do think these imply priorities. They are foundational. I am hard pressed to say. They are meant to be related. Our climate challenges may impact certain communities.

Vice Chair Paulsen said let's go a little further. Let's look at your regional vision. Your regional vision also is meant to work together in collaboration with the top issues that you identified. Out of those spaces, what sticks out in your mind the most?

Henricksen said the language on equity. To take a step back on what was presented before and what you are talking about on how these policies get formed. So you create values and visions, goals and objectives that help inform how these policies are written. Like the Land Use Policy, Housing, Parks and Transportation. So the values and visions that you went over again defined our equity and leadership accountability and stewardship. So when the, let's take the Transportation Policy as looked at. Does every policy have to meet one of these core values? Or multiple core values? Is there a litmus test that we don't want to incorporate this policy in the Regional Development Guide if it doesn't have one of these core values?

Larson said that is a very good question. How I've thought about this is that the set of core values should inform all of our work. We have had conversations with the System and Policy Plans people. So they are always coming at this from a vision "how am I going to address that and respond to that?" There is a significant dialogue that is going on and we will see some modifications to this. We have to do this because the federal government makes us do that. And I think these are broad enough and there is always a way to relate to the work to them. I don't know if that helps answer your question.

Henricksen said I just look at the visualization that you had used previously with the slide that said how you use values and vision. That hierarchy of how we get down to the granular housing actions and all that stuff. It goes back to David's point of the language we are using, and it seems to me that looking at this value that would address accessibility through TAAC and universal design. Addressing barriers and incorporating the transition plan and that sort of thing. It doesn't look like it is as clear under the equity portion as it could be. My suggestion is to look at that. Because if these are the visions, values, goals and objectives that are forming our policies, but we are not stating accessibility as an important vision as just right off the gate or a value. I think that is something that we should really look at hard.

Larson said I do appreciate the challenge to do so. I believe that is something that we need to do and will do as part of this process. I guess I would like to take you up on your offer to help further articulate these things in the dimensions of accessibility. Because again, I want to emphasize that some of these things that are further definition because they mean many different things. We are trying to create somewhat of a shared language. I think there is some struggle, some iteration that has to occur. Sometimes people use the word values and visions. We are trying to make it as useful as possible. It is sometimes hard not to leave out things that are important. So some particular stakeholder groups are a challenge.

Henricksen said in 2022, this is the past. I am not asking to go back and revisit everything. That is the engagement where regional visions and values was had. And the engagement list for the groups you engaged. Maybe we do have some representation on the TAB, the Transportation Advisory Board. But I just don't see the TAAC, the way we look at accessibility, those types of advocacy groups engaged in that. I think maybe that is kind of one of the areas for improvement on this. I know that there are a lot of people who can be challenging. But when it comes to equity and accessibility, there is an opportunity there when we are engaging those groups to take that into account about the values you are seeing. Does each of these groups have a stake in the values you are trying to put in?

Chair Fenley said once you start to list out things, if you don't list out everything. Then you are leaving people out. Whether it is intentional or not. This broad language that you are including. When it is in black and white on the page, people do feel represented. But then again, if you don't list every single oppressed group out. There is the perceived leaving folks out.



Larson said it is a challenge. We start listing people as individuals and then it gets scrutinized and then you lose focus.

Myhre said we have a history of taking people's land and relocating them. Like they don't exist. I am part of the disability community and I want to stay that way.

Chair Fenley said luckily for us, the political will for tearing down homes is all but gone. I think in the metro area.

Streasick said I just wanted to follow up from a Council employee perspective. On one of the things you said, Erik. In terms of explicitly answering whether something that does not directly fit into one of these bubbles might be done. I think that the Council has imparted the notion that rather than seeing any of these goals including equity as something kind of separate. We need to fit everything in. It is much more of a gray area where we are given the responsibility to bring a mindset, a lens that we are looking at each project and each step through each of these lenses. So, we might be hard pressed to say exactly. Now this particular piece of the puzzle is explicitly into our climate concern. What we want to do is make sure that every step is the way we are looking at whether or not something is appropriate through an equity lens, through a climate lens, through a public health and safety and wellbeing lens, etc.

And we want to make sure that none of these tests we take along the way are certainly going to create a barrier. If we need to put in infrastructure. We want to make sure that we are putting in infrastructure in locations that won't be impediments to accessible passive travel. That will not disproportionately exclude disproportionately excluded members of our community. We want to look at everything we can throughout the process to make sure that each step we take. We are running through automatically this internal checklist. But we might have a hard time saying "Oh, yeah, these fair boxes, they are absolutely part of natural systems lens." It might not be quite that easy.

Henricksen said if I just might clarify. Not everything is going to meet every one of those aspects. I think where I was going with that as if we are looking at the values as the lens in whichever one of these bubbles is in part of what we used to evaluate how our policies are being driven. As a member of this committee, I think it is extremely important to clearly indicate that one of the values is accessibility. It does not appear, from what I am seeing in this presentation, that that is clearly called out. It is just one of those things that if I am someone new to the Met Council and I look at the values and I really am trying to incorporate it. If it is not mentioned, it will not look at how these policies and decisions are being made. I will be totally blind to that portion of the lenses. If that was the case. And I think that is where I was going. I appreciate looking at certain things through the lens. I think natural systems is a good example. If it doesn't check that box, so we can't move on that. I totally understand that. I just think it is very important to position our values again, as a committee member here. And included with accessibility universal design.

Thorsen said one of the words that comes to my mind. And I think we, on this committee, have often said we will try to add to the discussions that we have is usability. Accessibility is a base line. It says, "O.K. is this a specific measure that allows somebody with a disability to gain access to whatever service or product." Let's say you take a handicapped door opener. Accessibility is Is the handicapped door opener there? Usability is two things. One, does the button function? Two, if it doesn't function, does the system, whatever organization it is there somebody that is both known to be able to repair it or address it? Both known to the people who need the malfunctioning object to work. But then also somebody that is fixing everything.

Do I know who to go to to get it fixed? I may be the receiving one who receives the criticisms or the complaints. But do I know who to go to to get it fixed? Are they empowered to fix it or address it? Usability is can I use it if I have one disability? There certainly is not a cut in stone definition of it.

Chair Fenley said I am drawn to this page on values where accessibility makes us think of the ADA or building code, which is the bare minimum. There is no pride in saying you are going to be ADA accessible. That is the law. I assume that people obey the law. That is just what we do as a large-scale society that we have laws that we rely on. Usability takes it. If it is accessible, great. The letter of the law is met. Thank you very much for not breaking the law. But now is it useable? Can



our folks actually use these facilities? I think what you are talking about in terms of is there someone that is hard of hearing? My concern is that really draws in accountability and maybe effectiveness on that values page. I think maybe. You all are the ones who put this together. Maybe after engaging with us, you can consider the words accessibility and useability on that values page.

Myhre said so it is not just putting up a push button. Yes, you put it up but does the door open? And do what it is supposed to do. So, it is two parts. And then do you have the proper people that know how to fix it in the system if it malfunctions? Do you have all your groups that know how to handle that?

Larson said we have used those press cutting issues to develop a set of regional vision statements. Our region is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. This is evolving over time. We have had some feedback. Most of the language resonates well with people. It is really interesting when things come up like we may need to be more explicit about accessibility. We don't in this current set of vision statements, we don't talk about the regional economy very explicability. So that is a thing we might see changed. Again, this is about creating language has common meaning and it helps drive the work.

The first vision statement is as worded today is that our quality of life is high by national standards but not all communities share in this. We envision a future where inequities and injustices have been eliminated. And all residents and newcomers feel welcomed, included and empowered.

So, thinking about what you have just said, maybe we need to provide more detail or further articulation of that in terms of accessibility and usability. That kind of thing.

Next slide. The second one is related to public health and wellbeing. As currently constructed is that our communities are healthy, safe and vibrant. The wellbeing of our region depends on the strength and inclusiveness of our economy as well as the quality, safety and reliability of our public infrastructure and services. We envision a future where all our region's residents can live healthy, productive and rewarding lives with a sense of security, agency and wellbeing.

We do reference the economy here. We are thinking on creating a fifth vision statement that teases out the economy. And again, as we reflect on these words, to think about policy development, priorities and programs. And use these different lenses. We think what does that mean? What does quality of life mean? What does it mean to feel safe? What does that mean to have a rewarding life? So, some of these rhetorical questions come up. Some of them are not answerable. Some of them could be further defined. To articulate what we mean.

Next slide. We Lead on Addressing Climate Change. Our region leads on the critical issue of climate change. We envision a future where we have eliminated or mitigated greenhouse gas emissions and have adapted to ensure that our communities and systems are resilient.

If we use our value of equity. I consider the first vision statement. I think naturally, what comes out of this third vision statement is that we would also ensure that vulnerable communities. Communities that might have the most negative impacts of climate change are addressed first and foremost. The language should not necessarily resolve everything but set the stage for a productive conversation going forward.

So, the fourth vision statement is We Protect and Restore Natural Systems. Our region has world class parks and abundant natural resources. We envision a future where natural systems are increasingly protected, integrated, and restored to ensure a high quality of life for our growing region.

I will stop here to get your reaction and input. Again, I think do you want to do follow up? To have you reflect on how this gets further articulated or modified or changed or what comes up in general for us to consider as we move forward. I guess for a more a more accessible, compassionate reason.

- **Transportation Policy Plan Update**

Jed Hanson, Planner, MTS spoke to the TAAC committee. I work in the long-range planning side



of Metropolitan Transportation Services. You probably more often hear from my colleagues in our Operations side. Our side of MTS. We deal with planning for all modal systems in the region. So everything from roadways, transit to aviation, bicycle and pedestrian planning. Today I am going to cover how we are approaching an update to our long-range plan called the Transportation Policy Plan, which sets forth the division for investment in our region's transportation system for the next 20 years.

Next slide. So, the Transportation Policy Plan serves two purposes. It is an investment plan that directs investments and identifies major projects for the regional transportation system, like highways and transitways. It also directs all federal transportation dollars. Even those spent on local projects. There may be a project, say, in the City of Minneapolis. Implements it if it raises to a level of regional significance. Or if it has federal funding involved, it needs to be a part of our plan. This plan also sets policies and guidance for local governments with how they develop their cities and interact with our transportation system and how to plan for land use that supports it. It sets specific guidance for how the regional transportation system should be implemented. So that's arterial roadways, transitways, aviation system, etc.

Next slide. Reverberating what was discussed earlier about what Michel called progressive collaboration, which I called onion layers. I like to go through these definitions just to make sure that we are on a shared understanding of each plan level. Today I am going to talk about two major threads, goals and objectives and policies and actions. And goals and objectives are shared with some plans specificity across our regional system plans. The goals are the broad directional statements that describe the desired end statements for the region. The objectives. They describe more measurable ways that we can achieve those results.

Within the system plans, we have policies and action. Policies, they describe our intent and how we will approach these issues. Then actions are the specific strategies or activities to implement policies and achieve goals.

The Transportation Policy Plan is somewhat different in that our policies and actions might not just apply to Metropolitan Council's goals. While we implement transit, we also have a role in transportation systems that we do not build or own. A lot of these policies, the actions are developed in partnership with other agencies that have responsibility for building these systems.

Next slide. I will briefly run through our project timeline here. This is a simplified version with less details. Although I am happy to detail my very, very complex project plan. If you are interested. Throughout this process, we have stakeholder engagement and then a long reach transportation plan. It is somewhat prescriptive. It has to be more focused on partner agencies. However, I will describe, in a moment, more broad engagement that we have done.

Throughout the course of our planning activities, we also have a number of contributing studies and plans that focus on specific issues that we need to learn more about. We are always doing them. Although the plans. The studies that are occurring through the end of this year are the ones that most substantially impact our plan update.

Right now, we are at a major crossroads and goals and objectives development. And starting to put pen to paper. On draft goals and objectives statements in partnership with others system plans. We are very much hoping to have draft statements. Sometime early this fall.

Policies and actions. Those are more the implementation side of things. Those, we actually started working on earlier. Because there is a lot of work to do. We have to inventory everything that we are already doing. And identify where the gaps are in that. And then also to adjust them to respond to our new goals and objectives. That work is expected to conclude early this winter.

Next to finally is drafting our plan chapters, which started quite some time ago, but is continuing through February of next year. And eventually reaching the point where we go through a formalized review of public comment and adoption process.

Next slide. I will provide detail on two major areas here. In Goals and Objectives, we have just concluded a two-phased engagement project that was focused on determining what our stakeholders' priorities are within a number of potentially competing goal areas. We did this



through listening sessions with the peer governments on implementing the transportation systems as well as small interviews and a few broad listening sessions with a non-profit groups and organizations that we are focused on. Advocacy, equity, climate and neighborhood interests.

Using these early findings, we held two online workshops and a facilitated survey to determine what the priorities amongst the themes we heard were.

Next slide. While we are still waiting, summary work, that will be published later this summer. We do have some early findings to share. Safety and Security is the top priority for most stakeholders. However, there is some nuance in there. For some, this is more of an issue of injury prevention and making sure that people don't die or face life-changing injuries when they are traveling on our transportation system.

But for others it was more about personal security, both in matter of making sure that our transportation system doesn't cause harm to you, itself. And also making sure that you are comfortable and feel welcome when you are using our transportation system. Outside of this more formalized engagement, we have heard this thread through other venues as well. In our Phase One engagement, we had a number of small interviews related to ability and aging. Where the issue of sidewalk maintenance rose as a safety issue. Because if sidewalks are not properly cleared or if not in good condition, it can cause someone to face injury while traveling, even though it wasn't necessarily a crash incident.

But also, in here is making sure that people feel safe when they are waiting for transit. I am sure, many members of the committee are familiar with having to wait an extended period of time for your ride and making sure that wherever you are waiting, is a safe and secure environment.

Outside of the safety issue, we also had four other areas that rose as a pretty clear priority. So there was a wider variety of ideas on these topics. It was where public health, climate mitigation, equity, and resilience were also priorities, though there were a wider variety of ideas on these topics.

Then we had several other statements that had a more variable range of response and support around multimodal opportunity. Modernizing our roadways, timeliness and reliability, natural systems, the economy, and growth had a wide range of responses.

Next slide. So in parallel we are developing policies and actions to implement these goals and objectives. We are taking a three-phase approach to this work. And as I had eluded to you before, those first two phases are mostly done because it was just more so about identifying what the current state is and where we are and where the potential gaps are. We are just starting work to do development of new policies and a reduction of policies that may be redundant or no longer a priority.

As part of this work, this summer we are going to be assembling small teams of partners at the implementing agencies that have technical expertise to draft and recommend policies and implementing actions. And we are going to center those groups on our eventual vision statement areas that Michael had discussed earlier. We will present this later this fall for our technical working group. For further refinement and a workshop between to reconcile differences.

Next slide. This graphic here is a visual description of that procedure that I just described where we are taking that preliminary feedback. That first box, where we are now. We will take it along with our goals and objectives draft language. We organized our policies to fall within the goals and objectives most closely tied to convene the policy development teams. Hold the policy workshops and then arrive at draft language.

Next slide. So, What's next? Goals and objectives will be developed this summer. Along with the other system plans. Policies and actions will be developed through the fall. Opportunity to further engagement with the TAAC on implementing actions and draft language. While we don't include more broad stakeholder engagement at this point, up until the public comment period in the TPP, we are always considering feedback that we receive through other groups. Depending on their time and availability. Plan chapters are written and revised through early next year. Draft plan available for public comment next spring.



Vice Chair Paulsen said I am always amazed when we talk about accessibility. We even write it down; we talk about safety and security on our trains and our transit system. But it doesn't seem to translate into real action until dollars are put towards those type of actions. So with that, I know you mentioned safety and security as being a factor of how people look at the transit system. And I know that we are going to spend an additional \$2.2 million on our safety and security plan. Particularly on our light rail system on the Green Line and the Blue Line as well as some of our hot spots, we call them, and our transit system.

I want to know, is there any talk? Because I know there has been talk about it in the news. But is there any talk in the community about the fact of closing the system? And I know that the government had put additional dollars aside to close three of our stations. Just as a trial run. What we were told in the public was that "Yes, this is what the public wants." But Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council is not ready for it. Is that really the case? Are we still trying to figure that out? Do you hear about that during your conversations?

Hanson said If I could clarify. Are you mentioning more secure transit station areas that may or may not have controlled fare access?

Vice Chair Paulsen said I think it goes deeper than whether or not it is just fare access. I think it goes deeper into the code of conduct that we have strengthened do to this last transportation bill being passed and signed into law. Have you been hearing those things on the back end? It was before and now it is starting to come out to the public.

Hanson said unfortunately, I am not equipped to answer that because I don't work in capital construction. I work more so in prioritization of funding towards projects. However, I can say that from the public side, I have heard that feedback, specifically from the internal implementing side. I don't have a good answer.

Myhre said on the news last night, Minneapolis wants to redesign how to get people to come to Minneapolis. Transportation was one of the things that they talked about. Maybe cutting. Maybe keeping. I rely on public transportation. How are you working with certain counties that are having struggling problems?

Hanson said are you asking how we are working with cities and counties in addition to Minneapolis and Saint Paul regarding their transportation needs?

Myhre said how are you working with Minneapolis and the suburbs that are suffering?

Hanson said our transportation planning process has constant and ongoing engagement with city and county governments. Part of that is we have this program called The Regional Solicitation, which is our process for allocating federal funding to our implementing partners to build and modernize their transportation system. And one of the common threads in that process is the tradeoffs between serving existing communities and also serving areas of growth.

This has been a consistent topic. I don't think we are necessarily at a point where we have a shared understanding or regional agreement on the issue. But this is something that is very strong reoccurring thread in our engagement. We are very much considering it. I will also mention while I am talking about the Regional Solicitation that the Regional Solicitation is heavily informed by the direction that we have in the Transportation Policy Plan.

So particularly, with regard to issues that are of importance to this committee. Now is a good time to hear that feedback so it can lead into those processes that influence transportation, infrastructure and those growing communities as they develop.

Myhre said so if the environment grows, then transportation will grow with it or not with it? or does it go both ways?

Hanson said I would say it is a complex process for allocating the funds that take into account usage. That is some part of it. But also, other needs like we consider a variety of priorities like safety and observe safety issues and crashes. Or we may consider the needs for a transit project, potential ridership changes through that. I don't have a good answer for where it will go, but we are taking that feedback now.





Henricksen said this is feeding off of Darrell's comment about if this transportation policy says this is an investment policy plan. And we are using it to prioritize our investments in the transportation network. I think it was last year, the Council had an ADA transition plan that was complete. Is that correct?

Chair Fenley said yes.

Henricksen said through this policy. If this is the way or the mechanism to direct those funds, what or if any identified gaps in that transition plan have been prioritized through the Transportation Policy Plan and the directing of those funds?

Hanson said so the Met Council ADA Transition Plan primarily concerns a Council, owned and operated facilities. However, that is not the only ADA Transition Plan that is a matter of our planning activities. I believe there are 70 of the cities or counties within our region. There are 189 cities and seven counties. I believe there are 70 of them that are required to have an ADA transition plan due to their size.

And in our funding processes we have recently adopted a policy that requires confirmation that people will adhere to maintaining new assets that are funded through our programs in an accessible state. We do require an ADA Transition Plan for a government to receive funding through our processes.

As far as how our plan relates to our implemented transportation like our transportation system. I am not the expert on that issue. But I am taking note of that.

### 3. Legislative Update

Hannah Pallmeyer, Government Affairs Liaison, sent in the information.

2023 Legislative Updates for TAAC  
Metropolitan Council Finance

General Fund

The transportation bill passed at the end of session continues base level appropriations for Metro Mobility and transit system operations. The appropriation for Metro Mobility is \$55.976 million in FY2024 and \$55.976 million in FY2025. Transit system operations is funded at \$85.654 million in FY2024 and \$32.654 million in FY2025. Of the money appropriated in FY2024, \$50 million is for a grant to Hennepin County for the Blue Line Extension, with \$40 million of that available upon entering into a full funding grant agreement (FFGA) before June 30, 2027. FY2024 funding also includes \$3 million for highway bus rapid transit (BRT) development in the Highway 169 and Highway 55 corridors.

The Council is also allocated \$2 million in FY2023 for reimbursement grants for organizations participating in the Transit Service Intervention Project. By June 1, 2023, the Council must establish the Transit Service Intervention Project to provide coordinated, high-visibility interventions on light rail lines that provide for enhanced social services outreach and engagement, code of conduct regulation, and law enforcement. The Council must submit a monthly report regarding the project.

The transportation bill also authorizes a  $\frac{3}{4}$  cent metropolitan transportation sales tax, starting on October 1, 2023. 17 percent of that revenue will be distributed to counties in the 7 county metro and 83 percent of the revenue collected from the new sales tax is distributed to the Metropolitan Council. Of that amount, 5 percent is allocated for active transportation projects, to be determined by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). The remaining 95 percent will be used for transit operations, maintenance, and capital projects. The Met Council will be expected to spend sales tax revenue for transit on transit operations, capital maintenance, public safety improvements, zero emission buses, and several other items specified in statute. The estimated revenue to the Met Council from the new sales tax is \$300.333 million in FY2024 (the tax would not start until October 1, 2023), \$465.462 million in FY2025, \$479.886 million in FY2026, and \$493.730 million in FY2027.

## Regional Transit Capital (RTC) Bonds

The transportation bill authorizes the Council to issue regional transit capital (RTC) bonds to finance fleet replacement and small capital projects for the transit system. Proceeds from these bonds are used to purchase and replace vehicles for Metro Transit, opt-out providers, Metro Mobility, and dial-a-ride programs. The bill authorizes the Council to issue bonds up to \$51.5 million in 2023 and \$53.045 million in 2024. RTC bonding authority has been sought and enacted since 1989. The bonds are funded by the transit debt service levy collected from the transit taxing area within the metro area. Bonds are generally sold as other bond debt is retired to minimize debt service impact.

## Capital Investment

The legislature passed a capital investment package that included \$72 million for arterial bus rapid transit. This funding will support faster, more frequent and reliable service in our busiest corridors. This funding advances three bus rapid transit projects: the METRO F Line – Central Avenue Corridor; G Line – Rice/Robert corridor; and H Line – Como/Maryland corridor.

The capital investment package also included \$7 million in general funds for the Apple Valley 147th Street Transit Station to construct a skyway bridge over Cedar Avenue. This existing METRO Red Line station, owned by the Metropolitan Council, was constructed to be compatible with a future skyway bridge.

## Metropolitan Council Policy

The omnibus transportation bill includes many policy provisions that impact the Council, including:

- Administrative citations for transit fare nonpayment and transit safety initiatives. The Council must adopt and educate riders on the code of conduct, maintain light rail camera monitoring and public announcement technology, real-time active monitoring of activity, and clearly designate paid fair zones. Additionally, the bill creates the Transit Rider Investment Program (TRIP) that creates a new type of personnel to inspect fares, issue administrative citations, and educate and assist riders. TRIP personnel will receive training as specified in the bill, including training on how to administer Narcan in the case of opioid overdose. The Council must establish an administrative citation for fare non-payment. Administrative citations will take the place of criminal citations. The Council will establish policies and procedures governing administrative citations and can set the fines between \$35-100. Creating administrative citations requires providing a civil process for a person to contest the citation. The bill also changes fare non-payment from a misdemeanor to petty misdemeanor beginning July 1, 2023.

- Metro Transit Cleaning and Repair Standards. The Council is required to adopt standards on cleanliness and repair of transit vehicles and stations by October 1, 2023. The Council must submit a report by October 1, 2023, and then every two years on transit cleanliness and the ridership experience.
- Metro Mobility Enhancement Pilot Program. The legislation establishes a Metro Mobility pilot program that would expand the current “Premium on-demand taxi” program to more hours of each day. The program subsidizes the cost of a taxi fare up to \$15 (after a customer pays the first \$5) for Metro Mobility certified riders. Base Metro Mobility hours relate to underlying bus schedules; during the pilot the program will provide additional travel options in communities without early or late local bus service. The pilot begins in September 2023 and continues through 2025.
- Transit Fare Elimination and Reduction Pilot Program. A pilot program is established that would provide reduced fare or fare free service on two bus transit routes from July 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024. The pilot program would also allow Metro Mobility certified customers to ride free on any fixed route service. A report is due to the legislature about the pilot project by February 15, 2025.
- Transit operator accessibility training. The Council is required to ensure that vehicle operators who provide bus service receive training on assisting persons with disabilities and mobility limitations to

enter and leave the transit vehicle. The Council is required to consult with the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) on the training.

## Reports

### **Subcommittee**

#### **Blue Line – Ken Rodgers**

Ken Rodgers spoke to the TAAC committee. We meet tonight. From our last meeting, we did hear a pretty large concern from residents in the Broadway corridor. About the alignment. The Met Council has followed a really rigid process to determine the alignment, involved the community at quite different levels all along the way. And now decisions have been made and the communities coming forward, expressing some concerns, which confuse a lot of people that are on the committee because their concerns are not really understood.

So, what we have heard is a lot of people are upset that the Broadway corridor has been selected as the primary route for the Blue Line Extension. They are afraid that that decision is going to take away their property because the city and the state is going to come down and declare Imminent Domain to take their properties away. That is not what is going to happen.

So I don't know where the disconnect is. But that is where the community is right now. Met Council is trying to work with the community to provide open feedback.

Our meeting tonight should be really interesting.

#### **Green Line – Christopher Bates**

This item was not presented.

#### **Gold Line – Darrell Paulsen**

Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen spoke to the TAAC committee. The Gold Line continues their construction activities this week. The impacts that I want to highlight are the impacts from Maplewood, Landfall and Oakdale. The crews will be installing underground utilities there next week. Along Hadley Avenue and South along Fourth Street. Going along Oakdale Avenue and private utility relocation work will continue on Fourth Street into Oakdale.

Crews will continue pouring concrete and bridge foundations consistent with bridge walls to the north side of I-94 and the east side of I-694.

#### **Purple Line – Darrell Paulsen**

Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen spoke to the TAAC committee. This goes to Ken's point early in the process. Ken, you were in the same process as the Purple Line engagement. The Purple Line engagement was the one that was supposed to go down the Bruce Vento Trail, but it is now going to go down White Bear Avenue.

All that is is just a study to see if they bring it down White Bear Avenue and making the road smaller. It would actually slow down the traffic and give us the opportunity to still put the bus there. What is more important is that over the next month or so, they are asking the public to weigh in on the Purple Line with several engagement opportunities starting in Saint Paul and spreading all the way out to Woodbury. There is a whole list of them. Starting today through the next month.

I encourage you to join me somewhere along the next month to look at the Purple Line engagement process and get a feel as to what BRT really looks like. And what it could mean for the East Metro Region, which is the area I represent.

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

Chair Fenley said in regard to the Priority Seating TAAC Work Group. We do plan on reinvigorating that. So if you played a part in it, look for an email in the next month or so.

### **Chair**

Chair Fenley said I will keep my report short. As of now, we will be meeting next month. There was not an outpouring of distain for meeting in July this year. If folks are on vacation, that is fine. But we do plan on meeting Wednesday, July 5.

### **Public Invitation**

None.

### **Member Comment**

Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen said I want to take this time to invite you to an event called Disability Pride Day at the Capitol. It is on July 12. Stay tuned on more details on that. We are trying to make Disability Pride Month an annual event. Representative Betty McCollum is leading the way on that. Along with Gillette Lifetime as well as several other advocacy groups throughout our community.

Streasick said I was asked to bring up a couple of things before they go to the Council for ironing out. First of all, the background, you know is the Transportation Bill that passed. There will be free rides on fixed route as a pilot basis for Metro Mobility certified riders, starting July 1. We are going to start at least with a flash pass. Just show your Metro Mobility ID with a valid expiration date when you get on or a state ID with an A on it.

The other thing I should bring up. There will be two inner cities either reduced fare or free bus lines on a pilot basis. Starting at the same time. That will also impact Metro Mobility. There will be two new fare corridors similar to the free fare corridor along Nicollet Mall. We will see if they are true free or just reduced. Subject matter experts are leaning free for a variety of reasons. Just know that whatever gets developed, Metro Mobility fares will follow suit that way.

Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen said when somebody has a GoTo card that doesn't work on the Metro Mobility bus, they typically write down your name and then often it gets debited at a later time. But if I am riding a mainline service bus, and the football doesn't work, I don't get charged later for that ride. So, when do we get to fix those kind of issues? That has consistently been an issue for the disability community, and it happens to be an issue in spring and summertime quite a bit.

Streasick said a couple of things there. It will be a flash pass to start with. Just show your pass. It is not accurate to say that GoTo cards are debited afterwards.

Fuglie said with these new vehicles coming through, will there be a requirement or something regarding how big a scooter or chair can be on these vehicles?

Streasick said as long as a scooter or wheelchair meets what used to be the conventional wheelchair definition in the ADA. It will fit on those buses and drivers are trained to help folks with that. If they are larger, what we currently have coded as an extra-large chair in our system, they may not fit on those newer vehicles that you just saw the other month. In which case, they would not be assigned to those vehicles. We do have an alternate space type that can allow that.

### **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 June 7, 2023.

Approved this 7<sup>th</sup> day of June 2023.

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