

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday June 5, 2019

Committee Members Present: Chair David Fenley, Christopher Bates, Patsy Murphy, Ken Rodgers, Darrell Paulsen, Kari Sheldon, John Clark, Claudia Fuglie, Patty Thorsen, Diane Graham-Raff, Margot Imdieke Cross, Erik Henriksen and Richard Rowan.

Committee Members Absent: None.

Committee Members Excused: Sam Jasmine, Jeffrey Dains and Heidi Myhre.

Council Staff Present: Met Council Member Chai Lee. Adam Mehl, Greg Tuveson, Pam Steffen, Berry Farrington, Liz Jones from Metro Transit. Brooke Bordson, Guthrie Byard, Nick Thompson, Claudia Fuentes, Yolanda Burckhardt, Ayize James, Andy Streasick and Alison Coleman.

Public Present: Jeremy Rogness, Paida Chikate and Nikki Villavicencio.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:33 p.m. on Wednesday, June 5, 2019.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

John Clark said that he called Fenley to be excused. His status was changed. The minutes with the changes was moved to approve by Bates, seconded by Rodgers to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2019 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

Chair Fenley said that the July TAAC meeting will be cancelled. Rodgers moved to not have the July meeting. Bates seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. Legislative Update

Brooke Bordson, Senior Project coordinator in the Government Affairs Department, spoke to the TAAC committee. The legislative session ended less than two weeks ago. We are still sorting through all the pieces of everything that was passed. Everything was condensed at the end. The entire state budget for the next year was passed in a 21-hour timeframe.

Just to recap the session from a high level. The year 2019 was a budget year for the legislature. This meant that they needed to enact legislation for the state's 2020 to 2021 budget. That required a lot of compromise. There is a new administration under Governor Walz. The Senate is under Republican control and the House has new DFL leadership. Each came in with their own initiatives and budget proposals. They had to work out some kind of compromise in the end. Which proved to be pretty difficult. It went up to one day before the legislature was constitutionally required to adjourn, which was when they reached an overall budget agreement.

After the high-level budget was reached, then the legislators and the administration had to sort out the details of spending and policy provisions and all of the different areas. Which took a few days. It took them beyond the clock, so to speak, on the constitutional required adjournment date. So a special session was required. That was on May 24. They came on Friday at 10:00 a.m. and they worked through the night straight, 21 hours and adjourned at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 25.

I picked out a few points to highlight regarding Metro Mobility. The first thing I will note is going into this session, The Council has always received one general fund appropriation for transportation purposes. That combined appropriation was used for Metro Mobility, the state share of light rail and commuter rail operations and some bus operations. Increasing demand for Metro Mobility meant that that service was on a path to consume nearly all the entire general fund base budget by fiscal year 2021.

What that means is that would leave no general fund dollars available for the other services that I just mentioned. They would have to shift it over to MVST to fund. Which is what really funds the regular route bus system. So, the results of having one general fund appropriation really puts a squeeze on regular route bus. Because Metro Mobility is the first priority for funding. Light rail is required under state statute to be funded. So that was a priority. Regular route bus service got whatever was left at the end.

One thing that we are really happy about that happened this session is Metro Mobility did get its own line item in the budget. That will be specific to Metro Mobility. That will relieve some of the pressure on the bus system for sure. It makes really clear what the need is for Metro Mobility. It shows just in one place, how the demand is growing, and the cost of that program is growing. The legislature and the administration will have to address that. So that is great news.

For this next budget biennium, a new base level was set for Metro Mobility. That was based on current base levels funding and a calculation of what we spent in the last budget for Metro Mobility. That is the new base. We knew that we were going to need more funding to maintain Metro Mobility service. In fiscal year 2020, the legislature and the governor included a \$23 million increase for 2020 for Metro Mobility. In 2021, there is a \$13 million increase. That \$13 million is contingent on the state's final closing balance exceeding the projected balance. When they close the books in fiscal year 2019. It is looking pretty good that that will be the case. Receipts have been coming in above the forecast. So, if we had to guess right now, that \$13 million should be there at the end of the fiscal year. That was one of the greatest accomplishments that we had in this legislative session.

Moving on to the service area expansion. The House and Senate had different proposals. The House proposal would extend service into Lakeville. The Senate had five cities. What was included in the final bill is an extension into Lakeville. They are in the Transit Taxing District. That was sort of the argument of why they should be getting Metro Mobility service. That is about \$2 million a year to add that service. MTS staff is working on that extension right now.

The third thing I wanted to highlight is authorization that we received from the legislature to share certain data between the Department of Human Services and the Council. The purpose of that is to seek federal reimbursement for eligible Metro Mobility rides. That, of course, would relieve some of the funding pressures at the state level. That is another program that will be setting up in the next few weeks or months coming up. This was a recommendation of the 2017 Metro Mobility Task Force that I am sure you are familiar with. It was passed in a bill last year. That was what was referred to as the Omnibus Prime. It was vetoed last year. So we couldn't get this program up and running before this year. But we got the authorization this year, which is also good news.

Then the fourth thing I wanted to mention. This gets overlooked because it has happened every year since 1989. But it needs to be authorized by either annually or now we moved to two-year cycles. Which is authorization for the Council to issue Regional Transit Capital Bonds. Those bonds are super important because that is what the Council uses for fleet replacement. As managing funds for Metro Transit or to replace Metro Mobility vehicles. It is important for that reason. The bill this year authorized about \$90 million in bonds over two years. Those bonds are financed by a debt service levy collected in the transit taxing area. In the metro area. So those are the four things I really wanted to highlight that did happen this session.

A couple of things that did not happen is any new revenue or funding source for the transit system by the whole. That was in the governor's proposal and that was in the House proposal. But, in the end, there was no new revenue or no funding for regular route transit. There was also no bonding bill. It didn't get a lot of attention but if you had a project that you wanted, we certainly paid attention to that.

The Council had a request for \$20 million for the D-Line that we were hoping to get in the bonding bill. There was no bonding bill. We are in the process of looking at what some other options might be for that project.

Looking forward, the next session starts on February 11, 2020. That is typically the bonding year. Odd years are budget years and even years are bonding years. We hope to do a little better in that area next February.

Chair Fenley said this meeting is being filmed. We are putting together a new "What is TAAC film for the Metropolitan Council." If you don't want to be on that film, let me know after the meeting and we will edit you out of the film. It is only going to be a few minutes long. So we are getting some footage now of what we do as a committee.

I have a question. Was Lakeville expansion funded or do you just have to make it work?

Bordson said this is a new base budget for Metro Mobility. The funding will be sufficient for the upcoming biennium. That includes Lakeville.

Chair Fenley said so there was no new funds specifically aimed at the Lakeville expansion. It is just like make it work with your budget increase.

Bordson said yes. They put one new lump sum in with that policy provision.

Bordson said the Senate didn't have any funding increase for Metro Mobility to cover the expansion they included. But they did require that expanded service to Lakeville and then also Columbus, Forest Lake, Maple Plain and Ramsey. Only Lakeville was included in the final bill.

The data sharing between the Council and DHS. What this legislation did was just let us share a very small amount of information between those agencies. Between DHS and the Council. That authorization is required to even start exploring the possibility of federal reimbursement. So this is really step one. The possibility of seeking reimbursement in a federal program, Medicare, Medicaid or some waiver service for eligible rides. So this is step one to figuring out how to set up a program to seek those reimbursements. And then how to set up the structure to get those funds through DHS to Metro Mobility. There are still a few steps left ahead.

Rodgers said I was on the 2017 task force. I can give you a little bit more information about that. As the task force was analyzing all sorts of cost effects that Metro Mobility experienced. We were trying to figure out what are some other options that might provide some additional dollars to the program. It was clear from our research and work that there was potential. We don't know for sure if there is or not a way to recapture some of the shared mobility dollars of reimbursement that the feds provide for Metro Mobility rides. So for every ride that Metro Mobility provides, that is a shared ride. Not a single ride. That is an eligible, reimbursable fare by the feds to the Met Council. I think it is about \$4.00 per ride. In looking at that, it was thought that there might be some Medicare, Medicaid rides that DHS was responsible for. But we would never know that because we could not communicate with them in shared data. That was physically impossible in statute. That was the recommendation that was put forward from the task force and finally agreed to.

2. State Fair

Greg Tuveson, Assistant Manager of Street Operations at Metro Transit and Adam Mehl, Senior Market Development Specialist, Marketing spoke to the TAAC committee.

Mehl said we are doing the same creative as last year. We are really happy with that. It won an award for the Minnesota Government Communications award just a couple of weeks ago. We liked it. It was effective. So we will be using that again this year.

The State Fair is from August 22 to September 2, Labor Day. As it traditionally does. We will talk first about how 2018 went for Metro Transit. We did have a slight decrease in market share. Generally, in previous years we had about 16 to 16.5 percent of all fair goers take Metro Transit to the state fair. Last year we had that to drop down to 14.5 percent market share. Our ridership dropped around 595,524 rides. This was down from over 600,000. The big reason for that was Metro Transit made some changes to our service that were meant to deal with some realities we were dealing with and continue to deal with. One of those being the driver shortage. We had our start time that was originally at 8:00 a.m. moved back to 9:00 a.m. so that we could have our rush hour trips for our regular customers met without cutting service to the state fair.

We also had a couple of other places that were pushed back hourly. Dunwoody was moved back to noon start time at the request of the college. So that also fit into the ridership a little bit. We did have a few sites that were lost as well. The good news there is that while we had overall ridership loss, our per service hour rides for as long as Metro Transit was providing service, whether it was at 8:00 a.m. last year or 9:00 a.m. this year, our per hour rides were actually higher this past year than they were in previous years. Which is a testament to the service that could be executed by our bus operations team. So our efficiency is still good. Still moving in the right direction even though we lost a couple of service hours here and there.

So our goal this year. We are still dealing with that same bus driver shortage. We are still dealing with some site loss as well, which I will talk about in a little bit. But what we are dealing with is that 9:00 a.m. starting time again. Our goal this year is to do as much as we can to maintain our ridership level that we achieved in 2018 while still recognizing that that means we have to be a bit more efficient, more successful at using the hours that we have. Because we are losing a few sites this year. Anticipate some of the reasons we will lose some rides.

A quick overview of this year's service. I will note that since this has been sent out, there has been some slight changes. I will address those when I get to those. The big one we are dealing with here is due to the increased costs of running our service, we have to raise our fare. Our cash fare is now moving up from \$5.00 round trip to \$6.00. We are doing this because we did do a fare increase across the board for all of our riders. We felt that it was important to do that for all of our services. But also, it is critical for us making sure that this service is revenue neutral and we are not losing money on this service.

We are also going to be offering again this year, discounted tickets on electronic forms of payment. So our pre purchase tickets on the internet as well as tickets on the mobile app. Those will be discounted. The presale tickets on the website will be from August 1 to August 21. That is where we have some changes. We have a single ticket now that will be \$5.00 for an electronic format. So two tickets will be \$10.00 and four tickets for a family of four would be \$20.00. The idea here is to incentivize people to not use cash as much as we can. It is a very large challenge for Metro Transit. It leads to things like slower boarding and slower service. It is expensive to count. It is about 10 cents on every dollar that we collect in cash we use to count, transport or provide security, repair fareboxes that are jamming up. Things like that. Not to mention we want to incentivize people to use forms that are easier to accept.

Officially Metro Transit does not make change. But we do make change and it is going to get a lot harder for folks to make change for \$6.00 cash fares instead of the \$5.00 that we had in previous years. We really do want to drive people to be more affordable to get faster service that they can get with the electronic tickets. We also will be having those electronic tickets be accepted by Minnesota Valley Transit Authority. We continue to roll that out throughout our providers.

We are now at 17 locations that will be served throughout the region. Between Metro Transit, MVTA and Southwest Transit. We will maintain that 9:00 a.m. weekday start to deal with our driver shortage. That is a benefit to our regular customers. It is important to us that we make sure that our customers who depend on us to get to work, especially in the morning are not put out by service to the State Fair. If someone is a little late to the State Fair, that is O.K. If someone is late to work, that may not be O.K. It might be a really big deal. We want to make sure that we are respecting that.

Additionally, it is more important now as we move more and more to our own park-and-rides. Meaning that if we start at 8:00 a.m., often times in the past, particularly at our Cottage Grove location, is one that has been a big problem. The fair customers come and take up all of the parking spots and our regular commuters don't have a spot to catch their trip. The nice thing about this 9:00 a.m. start time. All of our rush hour trips from our express service are done. The rush hour customers are out of there. We can use the remaining spots and not have that overlap that has caused some challenges for our customers in the past.

We are adding a new site. It is at 610 and Nobile on weekends and Labor Day only. We won't have to worry about putting out regular customers. That is a new one in the northwest corridor. That is going to help augment the service that has been lost there.

Tuveson said I want to talk about some lost sites due to construction. The Knox park-and-ride in the South Metro is going under due to construction and it will not ever be available again. They only have 150 parking spots when it is all done. The other one that is lost to us is Fridley for a TOD development. It served as an overflow protector. It is only half a lot and we can't put enough cars in there to operate the State Fair service. The same goes for Oakdale. Hadley is under major construction for the next year or so. We won't be able to get into there. Any possible detour routing would take very much time and it is just not operable.

The good news is for that we are going to double our service for Maplewood. Instead of 30-minute service it will be 15-minute service.

Mehl said talking about regular route service. As in previous years there will be great service from our regular routes. Not just the express routes that serve the state fair. The A-Line is a big part of that. Taking the place of what used to be the majority of Route 84. The Route 84 still serves the state fair as well. So customers can

take that as well as the A-Line. The Route 3 also serves the state fair at the various gates. Route 960 will be here again as well. It is a regular route that runs only during the fair from downtown Minneapolis down to the fairgrounds and also drops off at the State Fair Transit Center. It will be moving off of Nicollet Avenue this year because of construction. It was on Hennepin, then was moved to Nicollet due to construction. And then because of more construction, Nicollet is going to be too slow for that service, so we are looking at new locations. Possibly 6th street. We are still sorting out where that is going to go.

Tuveson said due to major construction in downtown Minneapolis we are looking at going back to the 2012 routing using 3rd Street and 4th Street in downtown Minneapolis and going through the U of M for the transitway. We are testing out the running time on that to see how many operators and buses we will need to do that successfully.

Mehl said in addition to providing service to the fair this is also an opportunity for Metro Transit to speak to customers and potential customers. There are two locations at the fair that provide information. One is at the Grandstand booth. Our transit information staff are able to talk to customers about general transit information. Whether it is how do I get to work or where does this bus go to? Being able to talk about larger promotions. Last year we had folks talking about the upcoming C-Line, which launches this weekend. We had people talking about hiring. We will continue to do this this year. As well as our general branding for Metro Transit to let people know the resources that we have for them. Then, of course, we always have a large system map for people to check out.

We also have our presence in the Eco Experience as part of the Kick Gas booth. That is a booth that we run with a variety of ride providers. Whether that is Nice Ride or Our Car. Previously we did things with other car share folks and vehicle share folks. That is where customers are able to learn about ways to travel sustainably whether that is biking, walking, transit or a combination of all those ways to basically live and travel in a way that is sustainable.

State Fair marketing again, we will be doing a large mass media campaign throughout the region leading up to the State Fair. Our State Fair brochure is a big piece of that. Those are distributed throughout the region. On our vehicles at scheduled distribution locations. It is also sent out with folks who pre purchase tickets from the State Fair. People go to the State Fair website and buy tickets from them. You will get a brochure as well. Helping you find your park-and-ride location and all the information you need to get around. We will also be doing advertisements in the skyways between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul. We will be doing some direct mails and direct emails. Really heavily targeting folks who use these closed park-and-rides to make sure that those folks in those regions will know where to go. Since those park-and-rides have changed. You want to make sure those folks have as much advanced warning as possible to plan. So that they don't show up at an old site and look for a bus that is not going to come.

Sidewalk clings at our stations. Online ads we are going to be doing throughout the region as well. With a lot of geographically targeted ads. We will also be doing some advertising via our mobile app called performance marketing, which is a way to target ads to people who are searching for transportation. There is a mobile app and also on the back end of that, to be able to evaluate the ad's success. This add drove X downloads and it generated X revenue for us too. So it is an exciting thing for us this year as well. Then, of course, our transit fleet. Digital billboards throughout the region. Those will be places that have our advertising as well.

Tuveson said our State Fair Transit Center. Due to the changes in how many sites we are operating at adding. We are going to have to do some adjustments. Some of these decisions were made later after we got this out to this committee. It shouldn't have any shared gates. The local Route 960 still remains in the front by the ticketing gate to enter the fair.

Our estimated number of buses. This is a big effort in particular. During weekdays, we will have a goal on weekdays of 60 buses in the a.m. In the p.m. there should be 73 buses. The total of articulated buses should be 58. Then in the weekends and holidays there should be 74 buses in the a.m. There should be 81 p.m. buses and 65 of them are articulated buses.

Our support staff is a big effort as well. Whether it is ambassadors or site captains or operators. The total Metro Transit Staff estimated hours are 5,316. The Bus Operators for all 12 days, total estimated hours are 11,939. Express service costs are covered by collected revenues. No subsidies were required.

I do want to mention that all of Metro Transit park-and-rides are ADA compliant. We did have a concern last year at Signal Hills. It should not have been an issue. What should have happened is the ambassador or site

captain should have brought that individual to the front. Left him on the flat surface. The bus pulls up. They board first and alight last when they get to the fairground. Or vice versa. So we will do a training for our ambassadors and site captains. To make sure that when they see someone in need of ramp usage or lift usage, that is the procedure that they follow.

Bates said why do we not go back to the public access TV? Half of the programs are filled with 26 minutes. They leave two minutes on either end to do local promotion. Why aren't we using that? It is free. It doesn't cost us anything.

Tuveson said it is something we have not explored yet. It is something worth exploring. I, personally was not aware of it. We just haven't gone the route exploring of cable television for a lot of our programs. It is certainly something we can look into. It would fall to our public relations team. I will bring that up to them. They are reaching out to media events. It is certainly worth getting on the list.

Chair Fenley said what about ADA compliance in the parking lots that are being used for the fair? Do you make sure that the proper number of disability parking stalls exist in those lots? Do you need to add some?

Tuveson said yes. Particularly at Bloomington. We cordon off the whole area of handicapped parking. That is watched by flaggers to make sure that only those who can, will be able to park there. They are close to the front where they have easier access to the sidewalk and the bus.

Rowan said has there ever been consideration, some kind of cost sharing with the State Fair, to provide the service? There is no mention of any discounts for ADA and Medicare eligibility.

Mehl said this is a nonsubsidized service. That means we don't offer any discounts. Similarly, we don't allow the use of GoTo cards or Metro Passes. It is across the board. The discounts we do offer are for disabled veterans with a service injury and their attendants. That is the only one we provide a discount for. That group is free.

Pam Steffen said the reason that group is free is that on our regular service they are free. We use the buses on our regular service for State Fair. Every single one of our buses there is a placard that says that service connected veterans are free. We don't want to miscommunicate with any customer that is on one of our vehicles and continue to provide that discount.

Rodgers said in all that you talked about you did not mention people with vision disabilities. I didn't hear anything about how you are reaching out to citizens that can't see the regular marketing materials. I heard a lot about signage and brochures. I would assume those brochures would be in accessible formats. So they are accessible to people who have no vision. I would like to plant the idea that what wasn't mentioned was Access Press, which is the disability newspaper that could be advertised in. Most people with disabilities know about that. There are specific outreach lists for blind users that that information would be very vital to get to.

All of those things need to be explored more deeply. We got the visual covered pretty well. But I didn't hear much with reaching out to people who really need this kind of information.

My second question and point is we mentioned this last year. It was too late to implement it. It was already State Fair time. Last year was the first time we had this large, new transit hub at the State Fair. I'm not worried about people getting to the fair. What worries me is that people can find their bus to get home. When all of the buses are all converging in one location, there was a lot of focus on visual signage for helping people identify where their gate was for their particular bus going home. That is not going to help somebody who is blind. I understand you have investors and ambassadors are to be scanning and looking for opportunities to provide better customer service. The fact remains that we, as blind individuals, should be able to do this independently.

My ask is that we work together, you and I and Dave was in on it and some other people who are part of the committee. That would love to have a conversation with everybody at the same table. Including the State Fair people. The State Fair has never done anything for accessibility in terms with its blind visitors. And offer a shared ability to provide what is called ARIA Services for Blind Individuals. That is a service where we use our smart phones and our video cameras that someone we could connect with to guides us. Tells us exactly what they see in our ear and can guide us. We can be independent. We can find what bus we need to find with the eyes of somebody we are connected to. That service is available for organizations to purchase. On behalf of accommodations for visually impaired people. I want to move that forward. Do I have your commitment to come to the table and help us deal with the State Fair folks and maybe do something together?

Mehl said I can commit to Metro Transit doing everything we can to address that. I will invite the state fair folks. I can't promise on their behalf. The website is aira.io/ It is a paid subscription for people to sign up for. But like at the Minneapolis International Airport, that is a free site. Because the airport provides that service as an accommodation to blind and visually impaired travelers. They pay for the service. When I go to the airport, I use my guidance system and the airport picks up the tab.

The same with The City of Minneapolis. Down Nicollet Mall and in city buildings, The City of Minneapolis picks up the tab for that usage. It would be fairly easy to set up at the State Fair and or the transit hub area as an access site. So people can use that service free and be independent.

Chair Fenley said this is a fantastic suggestion. Instead of discussing this now, we should have the discussion about AIRA at another time. We have some expertise on this committee.

Mehl said I would love to do this This is the first I have heard of this. It is something we are lacking. We will engage with this for the State Fair as much as possible.

There is something I wanted to touch on. The marketing element of the State Fair. While we talked about some visual things and digital especially. Those are just a list. They don't present the percentage of what is what. A large portion of our advertising is auditory through radio announcements as well as electronic, which means that they will be accessible through screen readers as well as our pdf's being screen reader accessible as well. We do a lot amount visually accessible stuff. We do make sure that a lot of ours is electronic, which is what we do to make sure it is accessible to everyone.

3. ADA Compliance Check

Chair Fenley said It has been a year since we began the process of Title II plan. This is essentially part of that. It is a transition plan and we get regular updates from the Metropolitan Council about their transition plan progress. Guthrie, you can tell us what your role is here. And then just take it away.

Guthrie Byard, OEO Consultant, and Claudia Fuentes, Outreach Coordinator, spoke to the TAAC committee. It was February that I was here first to give an update on the ADA self-evaluation work for the Council. I am joined here today by Claudia Fuentes, who is doing community engagement and outreach efforts for the project.

Chair Fenley said since there are new people here, the Title II Transition Plan is what government organizations have to do to analyze their accessibility. And then to develop a plan to remove barriers to essentially make their programs and facilities accessible to folks with disabilities under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Byard said so Title II referring to state and local governments. So the Council fits under that. In undertaking that it is fairly large because it is Council wide and it is a look at our facilities and the physical infrastructure but also a look at our digital infrastructure. In February, I gave a review of our web accessibility RFP that we have going on. So we are insuring that our digital content or web content is accessible and there is some ongoing training for staff on creating accessible documents. There are a lot of documents on our website that in particular are in pdf format that are accessible. So there is a lot of work to be done there. We are also doing work to review our policies and procedures across the Council to ensure that those are in an accessible format. That they don't inadvertently discriminate against people with disabilities. There are quite a few policies and procedures that are long overdue for review.

It is a pretty comprehensive look at our programs and services that is being undertaken right now. As the Chair eluded to this is something that has been slowly in the works for awhile, but we are really getting going right now with this work. And so we wanted to come to you today to share where we are at with the self-evaluation in particular and to field some comments or questions you have about that work going forward now that it is going to be underway and that facility will start to be reviewed. We want to ensure that you have the ability to share that information with the consultant that has been picked and that there is ongoing communication as we move forward.

We wanted to discuss public engagement and what we are doing to support in making this work as clear as possible. As transparent as possible. As visible and understandable as possible. Underway we have an accessibility webpage that hasn't been posted yet but will soon be posted. That is going to be the landing page that will share progress for all of our ADA and accessibility efforts. So whether it is a self-evaluation or that web accessibility work that we are doing. We want to make sure that there is a landing page for that. That is also

shares what our agreements process and procedures are. My contact information. And make very visible what it is that we are doing. So that is underway.

We are also working on finalizing staff and a community self-evaluation survey. So this is to collect as much feedback from staff and from community on the accessibility of our programs and services as well as the accessibility of our buildings. We want to amass as much information as we can because as I eluded to this is going to be a transition plan that needs to be approved by the Met Council board early next year to ensure that we have a process in place to actually address the barriers that come up from the self-evaluation in that we are adequately moving our digital content forward into an environment where content is proactively made accessible and it is not reactively made accessible where we have to take documents down to make them accessible.

The reason why Claudia is here is to discuss some of the listening sessions that we are undertaking to get some of that community feedback. TAAC is one of those internal committees where we want to ensure regular contact and to keep you informed. I can let Claudia talk a little bit about our plan for community engagement here before delving into where we are at with the vendor, a little bit more about the vendor and what the work entails going forward for that vendor.

Fuentes said we have three more listening sessions. Two with community-based organizations and one with the Equity Advisory Committee. Those will take place in July. Community based organizations are Vision Loss Resources. We will be meeting with them on July 30. Guthrie will be with me and we will explain what the process is. Basically, listen to folks and answer any questions they might have. And let them know that we would like to come back and have a conversation with them in the winter. To let them know of our progress. Recap what we asked and what we heard. What we then did. Provide any information about the next steps in the process. So, the goal is to establish a connection. And then follow up with that connection. After some work has been done. And to encourage community members to comment on the plan before it is adopted.

We also have a meet up, a conversation with ThinkSelf. ThinkSelf is a community-based organization that works with and provides classes for people who are deaf.

Then we have another conversation scheduled with the Equity Advisory Committee.

Byard said the point being that we want to establish an understanding of where we are at with this work at the outset before the formal self-evaluation of our buildings in particular that are undertaken. Then to follow up with folks with the results. And share with them "Here is all the barriers that have been identified with our physical infrastructure. Here is where we are at with our policies and procedures after a formal review. Here is what we have interred into the transition plan and a timeline for removal of those barriers. Whether it is digital or physical. To get input on that transition."

We want to be as clear and transparent with this process as possible. But we also want to make sure that we are moving forward and we are getting those sites done. That we are actually getting that feedback so we can make some changes that make our buildings more accessible. So that we are seen as a model for those other few regional governments that are out there as an organization. That is not only in compliance with Title II, but is going beyond that with our work in that we move forward with a greater sense of obligation and understanding of what it means to be an accessible Council.

We do have a vendor in place that is exciting. We want to share that JQP has been awarded the contract. This is a small, women owned local company based in Minneapolis. Really, the subject matter experts when it comes to doing site evaluations and ADA compliance reviews under Title II. We are very excited to be working with this organization. We are really looking to get off the ground with them and have them start to review some of the facilities. We are asking them to do quite a bit of work. We are asking them to conduct reviews of 400 different locations throughout the year.

So, this is our support facilities, our bus garages, our transit centers, our park-and-rides. But also, Robert Street and the Heywood office. That is Metro Transit headquarters. In addition to that, over 250 facility connected bus stops. Those access routes to those bus stops from platforms or from transit centers and park-and-rides. We want to make sure that those are reviewed and that we are aware of barriers and making changes to those accessible routes. We are looking for that work to be done by the end of the year. Because the transition plan needs to be in place with a timeline for removal of some of those barriers. It needs to be improved by the board early next year.

Unfortunately, they couldn't make it to the meeting today. But with an effort on transparency we want to ensure that they are visible and that they are available for comment at as many of our public participation events as possible. We are going to ask that they present to make sure of their findings at the end of the year. At the end of this presentation we are going to ask that you all share comments, share concerns and any sort of guidance that you would offer JQP as they undertake this large project to ensure that they are aware of TAAC's concerns and take that into consideration. We will also share with TAAC the self-evaluation survey that we have created and ask that you spread the word on that. Because we want to have as many opportunities for folks to use to comment and engage on this work as much as possible.

The hope is JQP would be here and sharing this information, but I will share on their behalf. This is a small, women owned organization. It is based in Minneapolis. Really the subject matter experts have over 65 years of experience doing this work. It is an operation of three individuals. Julie, herself, aside from two other folks, she has held the Certificate of Accessibility Specialist in the state longer than the other two individuals. So she knows this work better than anybody else. Her daughter has held that certification for the last 20 something years as well. We wanted to ensure that we had people that not only understood the ADA and the guidelines of the ADA, but in particular, understood Minnesota building code and accessibility code and were able to competently apply that to our different facilities. That was what was really important to us.

We looked at the different proposals. A lot of organizations didn't have a strong understanding of state accessibility code. That was insufficient for us. Their approach to work is confident. They have done these reviews for several multi-facility projects. So that was a big thing for us. We want to ensure that they have gone and they haven't just done a review of one building. They have done a large scope, multi-facility projects. So they have worked with the City of Minneapolis and reviewed over 75 of their facilities. Currently they have an ongoing contract with Hennepin County to be reviewing their facilities as well. We are fairly confident that they will conduct this work in a very efficient and thorough manner.

Not only that but they shared with us that they have an access database of over 900 common barriers. And remediations for those barriers built into it is its initial cost estimates. It is a suggested list of quality products to take advantage of when trying to remove barriers. That was important to us too. Because we wanted to work with these subject matter experts and understand what is it going to take to be in compliance and to do so in a way where we don't get a list of barriers that need to be reviewed and then it is not practical for us to implement. We want to ensure that the implementation plan was something where folks could see greater accessibility at our facilities before year's end. That was really important to us that they had the ability to guide us in those next steps beyond just evaluating our sites.

As I mentioned, they are going to be supporting public events as much as possible. They will make it to the Equity Advisory Committee in July as well as to the meeting with Vision Loss Resources. We asked that they be available at the end of the year to provide an update on the work that they have conducted for us.

We wanted to provide ample opportunity for you all to share feedback. In general, on Council accessibility. What we are doing well. What we could be doing better. How you want us to continually communicate this work going forward. If there are ways that we haven't already identified that would work best for sharing this work going forward. And additionally, information that we could bring back to JQP as they move their work forward. So if there are any concerns, say with types of facilities you feel need to be evaluated sooner rather than later. And that accessibility needs need to be addressed sooner rather than later, we go into these initial conversations with JQP. We want to be able to share with them your concerns and your considerations as they start to really detail out the schedule of the facility reviews.

I want there to be as directed a line of communication between us, this committee and JQP as they undertake this work. It is a lot of work ahead for them. Their primary focus is actually going out and doing those reviews. But I want to take into consideration what TAAC has to offer. Please do share that long list and we would be happy to maintain contact to provide updates as they are made available to the committee going forward.

Rodgers said I was listening very carefully to the language that you are using and language is very important when you are talking about ADA and ADA compliance. You have made a lot of mention about the physical components of what Metro Transit and Met Council is responsible for. While indeed that is a critically important piece of ADA. I didn't hear any mention of programmatic or activities that the Met Council or Metro Transit is responsible for. That is equally as important as facility accessibility.

By programmatic accessibility. I was listening very carefully. Here was no mention of bus stop locations. Those need to be accessible. That is a part of the service activity as provided by the agency. That is a part of the

ADA Title II work. Maybe that is a part of a step that you have under control. It just wasn't mentioned. But I want to point that out. That is a really major component of an ADA self-evaluation of the programmatic and physical aspects of what services are provided.

Byard said I completely agree with that. There are going to be 260 facility connected bus stops that will be reviewed, understanding that we have over 13,000 bus stops. So that is a very large undertaking that we had to have a cut-off point. I completely agree with what you are saying. Phase II, if you will, of a more formal review of our bus stops will be undertaken starting next year. There is sporadic ADA and accessibility updates going on at the bus stops. So familiar with the ADA pads, those we, in package format, in updating frequently. So there is a continual review to ensure that bus stops that can be made accessible are being made accessible. We will start with those flat ADA pads. So your point is noted.

Rodgers said maybe we could have a conversation offline.

Imdieke Cross said I have a long history with Julie and JQP. They do a fine job. But their orientation is in compliance. Their documents, their review is primarily based on code compliance. There is a bigger obligation under Title II. Title II, for state and local government, your obligation is to ensure access. It basically must guarantee that these programs and services are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. It goes beyond code compliance. I want to be sure that in you're working with JQP, that they have a full and committed understanding to the fact that you want to engage in best practices over minimum compliance. Because if the code doesn't call out for a power door opener and the code will not call out for a power door opener, because they are not required by code. They may very well be required by Title II, but they may not be required by code. I want some sort of assurance that before you start this process, that they have an understanding that this is going to go beyond code, and this is going to be more in line with or compliant with Title II obligations.

Byard said you have a good point. We will be starting the formal work with them Monday. As far as the assurance goes, I will be definitely be bringing that up. That has been my expectation all along. That with the facility specifics summaries that they share. And their list of efficiencies that it is not just focused on code compliance but in their work to provide recommendations for barrier removal. That they are going beyond that. I am certainly willing to follow up with you after I have that conversation with them and let you know that they have provided that assurance. Additionally, I will be going to quite a few of the sites with them to learn more about what exactly they do. They take into account what they are writing down. The recommendations that they have. And engaging in a dialogue with them to ensure that their summaries are complete and full and what we are looking for now.

As far as what the Council does to implement those recommendations and the funding required. I don't feel as comfortable to say what is going to be prioritized first or last. Certainly, in the transition plan that those recommendations are going to be listed there and I want to ensure that the Council is seen as a model, which means that certainly it goes well beyond code compliance and just compliance with the ADA. Because as we all know, just adhering to the letter of the law oftentimes means that there are a lot of inequities still. So we don't want to be just in compliance with the law. We want to know what it means to be beyond that. Then concern ourselves with the conversation around funding and prioritization.

Imdieke Cross said I did hear you say that you wanted to be a model. I will hold you to that. Minimal compliance with minimal guidelines means minimal accessibility. I don't think that is what anyone wants to achieve here. Especially with our tax dollars.

Byard said one example that I noticed is at the Heywood location where Metro Transit is located, there is an automatic door that goes into what was formally the HR area and you need a key card access to that. The key card access is on one side and the automatic door paddle is on the other side. By the time you gain access to that door, then you have to go over to the other side and hit that button. I want to make sure that those things are called out. We need to look at relocating that accessible paddle, so it is on the same side as the key card access. Those are the kinds of things that I want to make sure that they are brought forward.

Chair Fenley said who is going to bring the civil rights perspective not just the technical guideline perspective? You are front and center there. By all means, reach out to us. Code doesn't have a requirement for the amount of pressure it takes to open an exterior door. But if it takes 25 pounds to open that exterior door. That is not an accessible door for most people. Not just folks with disabilities. We are confident that you will bring that perspective. If you need to draw on us, please do.

Paulsen said I would like to see some kind of timeline as to what is going to happen by the end of the year versus what is going to happen in the next year or so and going forward. And then maybe be able to review that.

Byard said when we meet with JQP soon, we are going to be completing a comprehensive timeline for their work. But in an addition to that, I want to make sure that there is a timeline made available for you all as far as the transition plan. Because there is going to be a quick turn around on that. Because we are asking for the self-evaluation of our facilities to be done by the end of the year and need to have an approved transition plan by the end of April next year. I want to make sure that there is a solid draft to that transition plan by the end of the year and that TAAC has reviewed it for its completeness and its content in that it is something that doesn't get rushed too much. That doesn't get passed by the board without an approval of an accessibility committee like this one.

JQP is a small team but a very competent team who has worked on projects like this before. We fully expect that they will get the work done by the end of the year.

Thorsen said following up on some of what Margot was talking about and using the handicapped door opener as an example. I would also express a concern that is something that falls both in best practices and usability is that first you need the door opener at a given place. But then, is there someone who is a point person to ensure two things: 1. That the door opener is maintained in proper working order during extreme cold. 2. Is there somebody that is a point person, who can if the door opener is not in working order, that somebody in a wheelchair can say: "Hey, this door opener was not working, and it kept me from getting to a meeting on time." Or whatever. That is something I have found lacking.

Byard said that is taking under consideration that we have maintenance reviews, facility reviews. To your point, as we add more technology. More battery operated. That is going to be required, that there are more reviews. That is more of a channel for sharing feedback on barriers that simply exist because we tried to remove an initial barrier. What it is going to mean is that with this transition plan and the barrier removal process that there is ongoing and varying clear communication with the different departments and different facilities in charge of barrier removal and in charge of facility maintenance. That they have a process for asset condition that is sufficient and doesn't go lax.

Thorsen said that people should know who that point person is. That that is common knowledge.

Chair Fenley said I think these transition plans are meant to be incorporated into general operations of organizations. Not something that gathers dust on a shelf.

Rodgers said I have two points I want to make. I realize this is more of a presentation with communication back and forth. Responding to people and their comments may be appropriate for you at this point. But I hope this isn't the way that listening sessions are conducted. Listening sessions should be listening sessions and not defending what someone brings up. I would hope that when you have a listening session with the public that you hear what they say. You do not have to respond to what they say. Just listen. Write it down and deal with that in the way that you need to deal with that once you have left that area to consider what was said.

That may be a little different from us here. But I hear a lot of defending. That doesn't make me feel good. The other thing that you mentioned. I want to point this out again is it sounds like you are describing this first attempt is a transition plan for a transition plan. Not that is an end all be all analysis, which is what a transition plan should be. If you are trying to cram it into a really finite time period, and you are going to eliminate 13,000 bus stops that are part of the program of Metro Transit, that doesn't seem like a very thorough ADA transition plan in my book. If that is brought forward to us later to approve that or to give our stamp of approval, before it goes to the Met Council board, I am not going to be happy with that.

I just want to again stress to you the importance that an ADA transition plan is not a plan for more transition. It's a whole product. You analyze all of your facilities, all of your programs, all of your activities around ADA and in compliance with Title II. You identify what is wrong. In this snapshot. In this moment. And have a plan. A transition plan to address that. Whether it's giving it a dollar a year for the next 5,000 years or whatever. That is the transition plan.

But if you go to the Council with only: "This is what I have identified so far." That is not a transition plan in my mind. I would have some caution with that.

Streasick said over the last decade or so I have heard complaints about most from people coming into the MMSC on an accessibility front relates to the spotty operation of the elevator on 375 Jackson. Up until recently that has had nothing to do with the Council. But since we are now a tenant of 375 Jackson, I was wondering if that facility was going to be among the ones subjected to the review. We might be able to leverage our status as a tenant there to get more reliable service out of that elevator closest to the skyway.

Byard said that is a conversation with JQP is to conduct a review of Jackson at the same time or a similar time that they are going to review Robert Street, including elevators.

Chair Fenley said I wanted to remind committee members that if they so have comprehensive lists of things that they would like Guthrie to have. Specifics, whether it is a facility that should be evaluated first or have priority or examples like that. Which is a very good example. I am happy to be the gatherer of that information. Then I will send it to Guthrie.

Bates said in November of 2018, this TAAC passed a unanimous resolution to the Met Council requesting an ex-official seat on the Transportation Advisory Committee and nothing has been done in eight months. I think it is time we reiterate our desire to have that seat.

4. Downtown St. Paul Facility Improvements

Berry Farrington, Senior Planner, and Liz Jones, Community Outreach Coordinator, spoke to the TAAC committee.

Chair Fenley said we met with you a couple of times. Some outside of this venue. Sometimes here as well. You are re-fabbing a few bus stops. One of which is right outside the wall behind Ken.

Jones said we were here in March. When we were here initially, we talked about our plan for this year through 2022 for transit facility improvements and bus stop improvements in downtown St. Paul. With a particular focus on trees and bus stops where we are planning to redesign the stops with input from a lot of residents, the community and from conversations with many of you in the room. And other events with other employees and riders from our stops. We are here today to focus on the redesign shelters that will be at Robert and Fifth and Sixth Street. So northbound and southbound.

We will share with you some concept designs that have proven to be most favorable from conversations that we have had including input that many of you in the room have previously given us. We are looking for any additional input and feedback where we finalize these design concepts.

Farrington said there is Robert Street northbound and southbound. There is a bus stop on Sixth Street between Sibley and Jackson. That is one we will be moving forward with rather quickly because the sidewalk is under reconstruction and the City of Saint Paul is moving forward with the project out there. We will focus on the Robert Street pair for now because they are on a longer time horizon. It is beneficial to get your input on these concept designs.

We had three concepts for each bus stop. One for each bus stop. They were very much related to each other. One concept was a shelter that was more enclosed. Pretty similar to a typical Metro Transit shelter. Walls on three sides and a partial wind screen on the fourth side.

Another concept was more like adding on to the outside of the building. So it wasn't a fully enclosed waiting room. But some architecture that was meant to seem like it was part of the building. Mainly glass and metal material.

Then the third option, which is the one that is the most preferred. People like different ones for different reasons. But the one that was the most preferred is a long roof line similar to what we built in 2015 out at Fifth and Minnesota, Sixth and Cedar and Cedar and Fifth Street. So it has the Metro Transit branding on the roof. It has some canopy overhang where if you want to just get cover over your head but not be within a wall. You have that option. Or if it is windy and you want a more enclosed wall space, there is that choice as well.

When we were here in March, you guys gave us feedback about safety and security and the importance of lighting. We talked about the importance of heaters and the placement of heaters. Having them available and accessible. Not just at the roof height. That is information we passed on to engineering and designers. Not just

for this particular location but systematically and programmatically. What are the other options for heaters? I don't have that piece of information to report back. The engineers and designers are looking into that as an option.

The other things you guys talked about last time was very specifically the site and the opportunity for Metro Transit not just to make a better bus stop, but how do we collaborate with staff here in this building about the plaza that is here at the front door. About the Metro Mobility bus stop and the curb cutout. How can we do as an agency better to reflect our values on the outside of our building? How can we improve and update signage on the Metro Mobility bus stop?

I wanted to let you know we brought that information back and discussed with the staff that maintains plan projects for this building and with Metro Mobility staff. In terms of a quick highlight on that. The plaza here is going to be rehabbed and repaired this coming year to deal with more maintenance issues. I do not think as a user you are going to experience a lot of changes. It is not like there is going to be different site furnishings. It is more of a repair situation.

Then the shelter design process will proceed. Then we can look at things like the signage change and what are the incremental steps?

On this design that is the northbound and southbound bus stops. On the opposite side of Robert Street, going in the southbound direction. The shelters would really be across the street from each other. Near the corner of Sixth Street as opposed to closer to the entry to this building. Across the street of the US Bank Building, a shelter would sit in the spot where today there is a planter with an evergreen bush in it. We have been in conversation with the property owner about having that planter go away and the shelter sit in that spot.

The design is a long flat canopy roof with some sheltered area and a small open area. The concept design today, we know needs to be changed based on the information we got which is the canopy is extending too far to the north. It is blocking some windows of a building that was The Buttery Restaurant before. Also, we need to relook at the design in terms of site lines and safety and security.

There is a corner that could be a security concern. It would be difficult to have eye contact with the bus driver or for the bus driver to see the person waiting. It could be a place for trash to collect. That design is still a work in progress.

I wanted to point out that when I was here in March, there were shelters that aren't just the standard Metro Transit shelters, which is something we will continue to have in our system. Because these are places with such a high ridership, and we don't have BRT stations coming to cause changes here later. We wanted to invest in these downtown bus stops with light, heaters, real time signs with enunciator and benches. So above and beyond your typical shelter. Somewhere an enhanced customer waiting experience.

Jones said the concept design option that Berry described, the overwhelming preference was for the one that we were describing today. With the longer roof line to cover more folks. These are very busy shelters. Very busy bus stops. The longer roofline was preferable because it is larger and can cover folks from the elements better than the other design options could. And that they also include a similar design as Berry mentioned. The Fifth and Sixth and Cedar and Minnesota with the branding that would be more cohesive with what enhanced shelters already exists in our system.

With that, we want to obtain other input and feedback before we have a final concept design to move forward to the next phase of the project.

Indieke Cross said with design, details are critical. It was very clear to me that there weren't any details provided. These look like two structures. I couldn't tell where the seating sections were, where people would enter and exit. Where they would wait. Where the heating trigger mechanism was. It was in the relationship of the seating area. To really provide any kind of feedback or comment, we are going to need some very specific design information. If you really want us to provide feedback, then you really need to give us more information.

Farrington said the phase of the project right now is more of a concept design. You are right. We don't have any of those details down. Our goal at this point is to identify where it will be placed. Outside of the building as

opposed to the middle of the sidewalk. How big the shelter will be. Aesthetics and what kind of functionality it will include.

The next phase of design will be that detailed design. And the design that will be back at 30 percent. Thank you for helping me clarify what we are asking you about.

Indieke Cross said by setting it back against the building, how does that impact how you enter and exit? There could have been more information provided today.

Chair Fenley said they have done some community workshops outside of this particular committee where people have been giving feedback on this. Now is your chance to say that rolling into a shelter that is against the wall is good. If that is what you are trying to say, Margot.

Paulsen said the placement of the shelter and the extended roof. I get the concept as to why you are doing it. You are covering more people. Unless we know the placement of some of those items, and those premium sheltered spots that you are talking about, we are not going to know if that extended roof line is extended enough or maybe it is not. Or if it is up against the building. Maybe it prevents a wheelchair from being parked there. Or a stroller from being parked there. So it prevents a mother from accessing her child with that stroller. Those are all things that we can look at. You don't get to see that in a concept drawing. You say in the next phase you can look at more of the placement of those items.

If you are asking us to approve the first phase, without knowing where those other items are going to be. More importantly for me, I need to know where those receptacle bins are going to be. So the garbage can get off the ground and not prevent my wheelchair from moving around. I need to make sure that the heater element is low enough that if I am sitting there more than 20 minutes, or even 40 minutes that I will have some access to warmth, which I have not had access to over the last 10 or 15 years. We continue to tell you guys about this through lighting and heating. If you bring those elements closer to us, you will have a lot happier ridership. You are going to have folks like me be willing to take the bus in the wintertime. That will allow it to free up Metro Mobility so that folks that can't wait out in the cold in the wintertime can use Metro Mobility.

If you just listen to us in the beginning, it would be a lot cheaper than it would be on the tail end if we have to fix these things in the end.

Dietrich said what criteria did you consider in determining that it would be better to have it up against a wall verses have it free standing where people can go in front and back? If it is free standing, you have more flow of traffic. Not all of it in front when people are headed for the bus or getting off of the bus. If it is a busy street like Robert Street, you have a lot of traffic.

Jones said the factors that went into that design was the clear and continuous pedestrian path. So trying to keep where the sidewalk is already clear of street furniture that continue to be clear of street furniture. Some of the feedback that we got was that the shelters today are blocking the paths. So you have to travel around them and then that shelters with an overhang of the roof. For example, in this building, make it feel kind of tunnel like and that gives people safety concerns. On the other side of the street, having a shelter at the curb was basically the shelter is sitting in the middle of the sidewalk. We are looking for a minimum of five feet of clear, continuous path. The design solution to put the shelter more at the back was to try to make up a better pathway.

Fuglie said some of the concerns I have. I do like that idea from the back because if I am at a bus shelter and someone is sneaking around behind me. I don't know who is behind me. The concern I have is if you are vision impaired. Make sure it is easy for someone to get to the shelter. And making sure that we are visible to the bus driver. To let them know that we are there. A lot of times I can be at a shelter and that driver doesn't see me. I want to make sure that whatever you do, it is easy for me to get to there. I have the room. Nothing is in my way. We have the benches. Make sure that there is enough room for somebody with a mobility device get there without any problem. Also, to make sure that I am visible to a driver. So he doesn't leave me.

Thorsen said did I understand correctly that regarding Robert Street, when you are going to be doing this project that you are also going to be doing curb cuts?

Jones said there is a lot of collaboration that we have to figure out. MnDOT is planning a project to fix the curb cuts at the corner. Then with the Regional Administration offices that are working on the Metro Mobility curb cut. I don't have a solution to report to you. I just want to say that we are collaborating to make it better. Not just for the Metro Transit buses.

Bates said I have a sign suggestion. Outside of Metro Mobility. Could we put a sign that says "No Parking, Metro Mobility only." Or put: "No Parking Tow Away Zone."

Chair Fenley said we talked about this on multiple occasions about possibly turning it into a Metro Mobility stop, essentially. Just like a bus stop, if you park there you are going to get plowed out of the way by a bus.

Met Council Member Lee said as a new Council member I am excited to see a full body today. Whatever sentiments and concerns that we bring out of this body, I will bring it to the other bodies I sit on in behalf of the Met Council to the larger Council bodies.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Blue Line

This item was not presented.

2. Green Line

Christopher Bates spoke to the TAAC committee. The Green Line dropped rails two weeks ago. They are doing the clearing out of the lines. So they are on target.

3. Gold Line

Darryl Paulsen said I gave a pretty extensive report last month. Please see the Rush Line info.

4. Rush Line

Darryl Paulsen said one of the things that the Rush Line did is we talked about a number of concepts. We have been attending a number of community events. Several events that I attended over this weekend was we had folks at the Water Fest over at lake Phalen. We had folks at Train Days down at the Union Depot. I sat at both tables. First was the Rush Line. We had about 70 folks the first day come up and asked questions and do some interaction with us. That was about the same for the Gold Line. I do know that they had some real good interaction from Lake Phalen at the Water Fest. From speaking to Chair Slawik over the weekend. I know that the Rush Line and the Gold Line are getting a lot of community traction. So BRT is the way to go. I look forward to meeting any of you on Tuesday's on the trail starting June 4 to the end of the month.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeremy Rogness spoke to the TAAC committee. I was invited by Kari today as some issues came up in my main line ridership of busing. The first of which is clarification of strollers on the bus. What I mean by that is I have been having issues where buses have been passing me up because they say they are full because of strollers on the bus. Depending on what bus you are trying to use. If you have to wait another half hour, that puts us into inclement weather. When I contacted customer service, they said that the policy had changed. That parents are required to fold up their strollers.

I have been noticing also that as they have been retrofitting the buses with the driver safety cages. It is somewhat making it more difficult to get on some of the buses because it puts more metal bars for chairs to get caught on. That the entry and exit spaces are very tight to begin with. It is like getting on and off of an aircraft carrier. It is that tight. If anyone has the answers here that would be great. If someone could bring this to the proper authority.

Chair Fenley said all three of those things are things that we have been dealing with ongoingly. We did evaluate the different advantages of those safety cages. We knew that they would make things tighter. It is good to hear from folks that it is making things tighter. I would suggest in terms of stroller policy and leave behinds. To the best of your ability, keep on calling whenever that happens. We need that documented. Right now, I believe the

numbers that are given to us about leave behinds is because of the new stroller policy I believe are low. I want to have as much of that counted as possible. I know that puts the burden of responsibility on the person with a disability to stand up for themselves.

Paulsen said this happens a lot. We will be addressing this in a more appropriate fashion. We do hear your concern.

Nikki Villavicencio spoke to the TAAC committee. I just wanted to give you an update on something I have been working on. Advocating Change Together. I have been working on a disability integration project on transportation. I want to extend an invitation to you all to come participate with us. We have been teaching folks with disabilities how to use Uber, Lyft and the Green Line in order to expand people's mobility options. We have the desire to engage you guys in being part of our community council, which helps us get folks to learn how to use Uber, Lyft or the Green Line. And also participate with us. So if any of you are interested in getting involved in our project, please email me at Nikkilee1984@gmail.com or I will be here after the meeting and I will talk to you then, too.

Streasick said speaking of the Green Line. At the last Community Conversation, the Fixed Route Incentive Program that Metro Mobility has been piloting has been extended to the end of the year. If you are Metro Mobility certified and capable of taking Metro Transit at least sometimes independently. We will give you a free bus pass that is good for free Metro Transit bus and rail. It is good through the end of the year. If anyone would like one, let me know. You don't have to be on the TAAC to get one. I would ask that if you are getting your Metro Transit fare paid with a monthly all you can ride pass as part of a waiver, please keep going with that. If you are paying any kind of out of pocket, let us know and we can send you a card.

Pam Steffen said I would like to invite you out to our newest bus rapid transit line that is launching on Saturday. It is the C-Line, which substantially replaces the Route 19. We have some fun activities going on on Saturday. One is at Penn and Lowry, starting at 9:30. The other one is at the Brooklyn Center Transit Center from 10:00 to 5:00. There are free rides on the Metro C-Line on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The one great thing about Metro C-Line is that this is the introduction of the rear facing securement system. I invite you all out to give it a try. It is simply wonderful. All of our buses that are dedicated to the Metro C-Line will have the rear facing securement system. As well as the current system that we have.

The last thing with Metro C-Line watching, this Saturday is also our one of four times a year where we have a pick change. Where schedules will change. If you take transit, that you check our website to make sure that your bus times haven't changed on your specific route.

MEMBER COMMENT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary