

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

Wednesday, August 6, 2014

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Ron Biss, Rozanne Severence, Kjensmo Walker, Margot Imdieke Cross, James Williams, Bob Anderson, Robert Platz, Heidi Myhre, Darrell Paulsen, Mark Hoisser, John Lund, Nichole Villavicencio and Patty Thorsen.

**Committee Members Absent:** Mark Hoisser

**Committee Members Excused:** Chad McGuire and Robert Platz

**Council Staff Present:** Dave Hanson and Pam Steffen from Metro Transit, Clare Schleichert from OEO, Clay Stenback, Andrew Krueger, Andy Streasick and Alison Coleman

**Public Present:** Roslind Sampson from MIAH, Kari Sheldon and Claudia Fugile.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Biss called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:31 p.m. on Wednesday, August 6, 2014.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES**

It was moved by Lund, seconded by Thorsen to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Villavicencio, seconded by Thorsen to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2014 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

## **INFORMATION & BUSINESS**

Paulsen stated that he would like to see the State Fair presentation done earlier in the year. He would like to see this presentation done in May or June.

### **1. New State Fair Transit Hub**

Dave Hanson, from Metro Transit, spoke to the TAAC committee. He is the Assistant Manager of Street Operations. He has been part of the design of the new transit station since January. The old transit station was south of Como Avenue. The new transit station is located north of Como Avenue to the West of the State Fairgrounds where the old Heritage Square was. The new State Fair Transit Center will have two transit hubs. The first one will be operated by Metro Transit, Minnesota Valley and SouthWest. There will be a second transit hub directly to the north of that where Lorenz will be. Everything that was on the South side of Como Avenue with regards to the express sites and the free ride shuttles will be located to this new location just west of the State Fairgrounds and North of Como Avenue. Midway Station will continue to operate as such and Lorenz has relocated some of their sites between the two to balance out their service.

This will bring us right into the fairgrounds and minimize the traffic. The bus patrons and fair patrons will be able to exit the bus and go right into the State Fairgrounds itself. The fair goers will have no need to cross Como Avenue to get to the fair. The buses will not have to mix with the regular traffic. The express and free shuttles will be located within the same transit station operating within two separate terminals. Midway will continue to operate as it has in the past. Lorenz is balancing out their service to meet their staging needs.

The patrons will be funneled directly towards the gate, eliminating passing through the terminal. Folks will get off of the bus and go right through the main gate. The new gate will be the largest gate in the State

Fair. It is even larger than Midway. Tickets can be purchased at the gate. Those who have tickets go through the turnbuckles into the fair.

This year's set up will be temporary with the pedestrian gates and port-a-potties. At this time there is no funding for permanent structures.

He discussed the map of the State Fair Transit Center. Passengers will be picked up where they are dropped off. The Lorenz drop off area will be north of the Metro Transit drop off area.

Route 84 will continue and remain on Snelling as it has in the past. The Route 3 will remain on Como. They will not service the new station. They will incorporate the express sites at one terminal and the free ride park and rides at another terminal. The service that was previously in the street will remain in the street.

The State Fair staff brought the State Fair Transit Center information to Metro Transit in January to help design it.

The boarding area is concrete and all new pavement and 30 feet in length for the banner. The incline from the pavement to the bus is the same as it was at the Como station. Metro Transit staff asked for curbs but the State Fair staff said it was not in the budget at this time. Anything that is permanent will adhere to ADA requirements.

Streasick asked if there was an open gate next to the turnstiles for the wheelchairs to pass through. Hanson will get back to Chair Biss with the answer.

Chair Biss said that the parking area across Como Avenue will have some handicapped parking spaces. Crossing the street will be traffic controlled and signalized.

The finalized version of the maps came about in June and early July. The station will be formalized, paved and striped next week. There will be way finding directions on site from the Marketing Department that will guide folks from the bus to the State Fair and from the State Fair back to the bus. There will be a marketing campaign to inform people about the new information.

Imdieke Cross said that they should get a media release to the public immediately.

Pam Steffen said that as soon as the lot is striped and ready to go they will have a media event. They will invite the media to come and see it. Steffen will take the TAAC member's suggestions back to Drew Kerr, the Acting Public Relations person. She will have him add the disability community to his list of media persons or have him contact Chair Biss to get the information out.

Steffen will send the press release to Imdieke Cross and Chair Biss to distribute. She will take some of the other concerns (accessible port-a-potties, turnstiles, train State Fair staff to give accessible directions in and out of the fair, etc.) to Steve Grans. She will mention in her email to Steve that if they move forward with a permanent structure that TAAC would like to be involved as it relates to accessibility.

Imdieke Cross said to extend the invitation to the State Fair staff to come to the TAAC meeting in May. Chair Biss suggested they come in January.

Paulsen made a motion to have State Fair personnel come to the TAAC meeting close to the first of the year. Villavicencio seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

## **2. State Fair Metro Mobility Transportation**

Clay Stenback spoke to the TAAC committee. The Metro Mobility drop site at the fairgrounds is not changing. Metro Mobility has used the Como Avenue drop for a long time. It is called the "North Loop". It is the primary location. Most of the traffic will be rerouted so it will be easier to access. There will be an alternative Metro Mobility location. It is on the north side of the fairgrounds on Hoyt Avenue. Because of traffic concerns they will try to keep most of the Metro Mobility pickups and drop offs at the Como Avenue location. Metro Mobility staff will be there to make sure everything goes smoothly. There will be wheelchair rentals at the Transit Hub, Como Avenue and Hoyt Avenue locations.

Imdieke Cross asked Stenback about drop off at the Capitol. It is on Aurora in front of the steps. Metro Mobility drivers will escort the passenger under the steps into the building. It would only affect the Metro Mobility vehicles.

### 3. Metro Mobility Go-To Card

Andy Streasick spoke to the TAAC committee. The launch for the GoTo card will probably be the first quarter of next year. It has taken longer to procure the hardware. They have to install it after that. There will be one card reader per vehicle. It will be up by the driver. For those with mobility devices, they can give the card to the driver like they do with the fare ticket. The driver would then tag the card. The card will say how much money is left on the card, which the driver then would relay that to the passenger. Regular GoTo cards will work on Metro Mobility buses. Only stored value will work. "All you can ride or 31 day passes" will not work on Metro Mobility buses. You can do "Auto Load" to add more money to your card. Most Cub Food stores can issue GoTo cards and add money to your card.

Metro Mobility will at some point stop issuing tickets. It should be three to six months after they launch the GoTo card. The agency contracts with Metro Mobility will continue on the way it is currently going. Agencies who provide tickets now and do demand service under the demand contracts, will be able to buy and load GoTo cards for folks just like they currently buy and distribute tickets.

There has been a pilot project going on now in Anoka County. All of the Anoka County buses are equipped with GoTo card scanners. The results have been mostly positive. The feedback from those who read about it in the newsletter has been both positive and negative. As long as someone registers their card ahead of time, if they lose their card they can take all of the value off of it and put it on another card. If you lose a book of tickets it is like losing cash.

If you call in to the IVR system you can check your GoTo card balance. It is separate from talking to a reservationist. It will be on your 16 digit card number. Similarly, if you go to the Metro Mobility website they can offer you a link where you can check your balance online at Metrotransit .org

Streasick has notified TAAC members who use Metro Mobility to enroll in the IVR notification system. There is one issue they are trying to address. The imminent arrival call will not happen until the start of the pickup window. If someone has a noon pickup, if the bus gets there at 11:45, the auto call won't take place until noon. The earliest it is calling is the start of the pickup window.

### 4. Metro Transit Update

Pam Steffen spoke to the TAAC committee. She handed out a State Fair Bus Service brochure. It has information on the Blue Line and the Green Line as well as bus information.

August 23 is the next round of service changes. They will be coming out on the buses and the website soon.

Heidi, Patty, Chad and Kari helped with doing an operator testimonial video after last month's TAAC meeting. It was part of Customer Service Operating Training at Metro Transit. Steffen was able to view a draft of that video. With their permission, Steffen will bring the video to the TAAC meeting for the members to view in September.

Chair Biss asked for a platform announcement on the Green Line to say "Please allow people with disabilities to board the train first." Steffen passed the request on to Kelci Stones in Marketing.

Severence asked for a wheelchair sign to be placed outside the door that is next to the wheelchair spaces on the Blue Line. Steffen suggested sending a letter to the folks at rail asking for this.

Paulsen made a motion that the letter say: "Any designated spots to a particular car must be visual from both the inside and the outside of the vehicle."

Indieke Cross seconded the motion with a friendly amendment that the entrances directly leading to the accessible seating on the type one vehicles be identified from the outside.

Lund said that the word "must" be changed to "highly recommended or should".

Steffen said that the sign would not be transparent.

Villavicencio said to use the current sign that is on the inside of the vehicle and place one on the outside of the vehicle. **The motion was tabled until next month.**

Clare Schleichert said that they are working on the announcements on the Green Line to announce both the next stop and which connecting bus routes are at that stop.

Steffen said that the goal for the Green Line is to take 48 minutes from end to end (St. Paul to Minneapolis). They are getting closer to doing that. If you have something important to get to give yourself a little more time. Metro Transit is closely working with the City of St. Paul to perfect the synchronization of the traffic lights.

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

Walker recently toured the Red Line and performed an informal accessibility analysis. She saw several things that concerned her. Independently of her connection to the TAAC committee, she contacted Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council staff to share her observations. They invited her to meet with them. They asked her to lead them on tours of facilities to help them better understand and identify potential accessibility issues. The staff that she met with saw this as an opportunity for the region to meaningfully advance the Thrive MSP 2040 Equity outcome.

The first tour will be of the Red Line on Thursday, August 14, at 12:30 p.m. with staff from MTS long-range planning, at their request. The second tour will be of the 46<sup>th</sup> Street/I-35W station with staff from both MTS long-range planning, the BRT Small Starts project office, and Metro Transit Service Development on Tuesday, August 19, at noon. She asked if anyone was interested in joining in on the tours. These are not TAAC sponsored. If members are interested, tour attendees could prepare a brief summary of the tours consisting of key observations and photos for presentation at a future TAAC meeting.

Schleichert said that the type one vehicle is a Bombardier vehicle. They purchased 27 vehicles in 2000. The set up is a triple flip seat that remains in the reclined position and a completely opened designated wheelchair area. Adjacent to that there are two double seats that remain standing. There is a double bike rack next to the triple flip down seat.

The type two is the Siemens S90 vehicle of which they purchased 56. They will probably stick with this one from now on. Ninety-seven percent of the country uses the Siemens vehicles. They have two triple flip down seats and a bike rack on either side. What is happening as a result of TAAC's commentary and Margot working with the legislative office they will be removing the two triple flip down seats at each handicapped access area at each door for a total of six seats. They will be making a designated wheelchair area. They will be taking out one of the bicycle racks and putting in two companion seats. They will have a designated wheelchair area with a designated companion seating area.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Schleichert went to a presentation with maintenance procurement for buses for the fixed route service. This was in regards to the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the potential rear facing passive restraint. It is not legal yet and they are looking at changing the law. It is one thing they are still exploring. They talked about a letter from TAAC exploring that option. They are continuing to talk with the Highway Commission on it.

Walker read from the July minutes regarding the motion that was made on this issue.

Schleichert said that maintenance is looking for a letter from TAAC.

Chair Biss contacted Katie Roth about this. She said once the minutes were approved at this meeting that she would use that as the official notification to move forward.

She will speak with Rob Milleson, who is the maintenance director, and see if that is sufficient. If they do order this it will take a few years to get the rear facing restraint. New Flyer makes these. She talked about bringing one for the TAAC committee to see.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary