

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 4, 2017

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Kjensmo Walker, Vice Chair Patty Thorsen, Sam Jasmine, Lisa Childs, Robert Platz, Kari Sheldon, Bre Royer, Margot Imdieke Cross and David Fenley.

**Committee Members Absent:** Heidi Myhre

**Committee Members Excused:** Christopher Bates, Ken Rodgers, Dona Harris, John Clark and Lukus Zuker.

**Council Staff Present:** Jan Dietrich, Pam Steffen, Gene Sheldon, Anne Taylor and Dan Stoffer from Metro Transit, Claudia Fuentes, Christine Kuennen, Wanda Kirkpatrick, Luis Morales, Dana Rude and Alison Coleman.

**Public Present:** Joe Russell and Jan Ruby.

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Walker called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:31 p.m. on Wednesday, October 4, 2017.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Thorsen, seconded by Platz to approve the minutes of the August 2, 2017 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

## BUSINESS & INFORMATION

### 1. Presentation

Jan Ruby, Northstar Superintendent of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, addressed the TAAC committee. They operate out of Big Lake, Minnesota. The train goes to Target Field. They have about 3,400 riders a day. They also serve the Twins games and the Viking's games and other special events like concerts. They are regulated by the FRA, which is a regulatory agency, and the FTA, which is the money that comes from operating mass transit. Because of that the regulatory agency requires them to do a certain amount of drills. There are about six to eight per year. They do full scale drills every other year or more. The drills go over what would they do if something happened in various scenarios. The FRA requires them to do drills that are required this year.

On a hot day in June they did a drill that would require them to respond to a gun on the train or an incident where they would have to stop the train because there was a bomb. Realistically they set the groundwork on this where they would have a passenger come to the conductor. The conductor would go to the engineer and say "We have an issue here. It looks like we are going to have to stop the train" verses going to the next station. In this particular case they stopped just short of Ramsey to an open field. Then they got everybody off of the train. They got the police and fire department involved. They got everybody that would have been involved to that location. The engineer would call the FRA and people in Fort Worth.

While waiting for them to arrive, it becomes the conductor and engineer's responsibility to get everybody either to another part of the train or in this case the decision was made to get the passengers off of the train. For smaller boxes they have to be 300 feet away. For larger boxes they would have to be 600 feet away. For a small vehicle they would have to be 1,200 feet away.

This was a hot day in June and Patty Thorsen, Kari Sheldon and Ken Rodgers participated in this event.

His reason for being at the meeting today is to thank Patty, Kari and Ken for their participation. They are freight people handling this. Nine years ago they started the Northstar. The on-time performance is 99 percent. They have had almost 3,000 days injury free as of February 2. He gave Patty and Kari a jacket with a logo and their names on it. Ken was not at the meeting. He will get his jacket at a later date.

## **2. Light Rail Type 3 Vehicle Workshop Update**

Anne Taylor, Senior Project Manager at Metro Transit and Gene Sheldon, Manager, Rail Vehicle Maintenance, at Metro Transit, spoke to the TAAC committee. She appeared before this committee last year when they first announced the new light rail vehicle. They conducted the workshop together in March. She is going to provide background on a feature of the vehicle that is undergoing some change.

To orient folks to the light rail vehicle briefly. They refer to the current contract to the SouthWest project as Type 3. Type 1 was for the Blue Line or the Hiawatha. Type 2 was for the Green Line and Type 3 is for the Greenline Extension or the SouthWest line. Vehicles are described or referenced by section. There is the A section, the B section. In the middle is the C section. What they have been discussing is the C section. The transition point to the C section is the articulated part.

The Green Line Type 2 design has seats that face forward with an isle that is about 26 inches wide. Whereas the Type 3 design has the seats where the backs are to the windows. When they came to us they had not changed the orientation of seats that exist in that transition area between the doors and the C section. The new design offered better circulation for folks because this new orientation provides about 41 inches of isle clearance but there still is a 27-inch pinch point.

In the months since we first presented to you we looked into addressing that pinch point to see if we could further improve the circulation. Many of you here were at the March workshop and we met at the Blue Line Operations Maintenance Facility and worked with the exact configuration and exact measurements using chairs. We moved them around to play around with fixing that pinch point I referred to earlier. We also verified how that new design felt by actually sitting and modeling it. Since then, today's update is to confirm that we have worked with the contractor. They provided this design which shows that they are reorienting the seating so they could accomplish that 41-inch circulation. In addition, that design was approved to our management to go ahead with that change. That just happened a month ago.

By the articulated part of the vehicle, the back of the chair is against the window. Your knees would be facing the isle. The door would be to the right.

Indie Cross said the US Access Board was here in May. They traveled on the light rail transit system several times. They were absolutely impressed with the amount of dedicated space for the wheelchair users and the companion seating. They asked for the statute and the amendment. I sent them a copy. They are convinced that we have the most accessible LRT line in the country. This is only going to add to that and it will make it much more accessible for everyone.

Taylor said for the Type 3 contract they will finish up the design process toward the end of this year or early 2018. Production starts in 2018. The delivery of the first vehicle will be in 2019. The delivery of the last vehicle will be in 2020. There will be integrated testing and new operator training in 2021. They start passenger operations in 2022.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **1. Blue Line**

This item was not presented.

### **2. Orange Line**

David Fenley spoke to the TAAC committee. I was at the Orange Line TAC meeting about three weeks ago. The I-35W construction has begun. That is part of it. They are concerned with what our perspective is. If they have not been in touch with Chair Walker they will be regarding coming back to the TAAC and giving us a more detailed update as to what is going on. They are ready to start building some LRT along I-35W.

### **3. Metropolitan Council Transition Plan**

Wanda Kirkpatrick, Director of Equal Opportunity and Luis Morales, Supervisor of Equal Opportunity spoke to the TAAC committee. Kirkpatrick said here at the Metropolitan Council there is something that we have been working on for awhile now. We now have a visibility, accessibility policy that has been approved by the Council. The accessibility policy needs underneath it the procedure on how to enact that policy. While

the policy was difficult to get through, because there is so much that needs to be a part of it. But the policy is going to be even more so. Within every aspect of the things that we do here at the Metropolitan Council, we must ensure that all of our constituents and all of our employees can participate in what we do here at the Council. There are many steps to that. Finding all of that information. We found that we also need to have a transition plan. An ADA transition plan. That transition plan is what we are here to talk to you about today.

As the Director of Equal Opportunity, I have here at the Metropolitan Council asked the manager in charge of special projects to do all of the research on this. He is going to walk us through some of the things that we are going to do with this accessibility transition plan.

Luis Morales spoke to the TAAC committee about the transition plan. He does special projects. Everything from workforce development to small business compliance. Kirkpatrick asked him to begin to work on the Council's accessibility policy and transition plan and all that that entails. Today he will talk about what this looks like at the Council.

The accessibility policy was passed in front of the Council a little over a year ago. That laid out a lot of requirements that are aligned with the requirements that we see in the FTA and the HWA and a lot of the funders. A lot of those requirements also line up with the requirements for a transition plan. ADA law states all of our services, all of our activities, all of our programs are accessible and identify specific things that we must do.

To date we have engaged in some of those improvements to our systems and our processes. Most recently we have worked with our information systems and technologies group to create a procedure so that any new websites that are developed internally comply with the accessibility requirements that are laid out.

In addition, all of our communications that are posted on our websites need to be accessible. We are working with HR and LOD (Learning and Organizational Development) branch of HR to train employees in how to use things like Microsoft Word and Excel to create accessible materials that we can then post on the websites. So, these would be things that for example can easily interact with screen reader technologies for individuals that need that assistance. In addition, one of the things that we are looking at very soon is having conversations with procurement to not introduce any new technologies or new things that we purchase that don't have accessibility capabilities. The idea is that if we limit what comes in that is not accessible, it will allow us to make progress towards making more of our information and services as accessible as we can make them.

The last big bucket of work that the accessibility policy identified was insuring that the facilities were also accessible. This is an area that more closely aligns with the requirements under federal law, ADA law and the Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation regulations is the facilities piece, the transition plan. What is the criteria that we need to look at to ensure the facilities are accessible? Have we surveyed our facilities to identify what gaps exist? Have we identified a way to prioritize those improvements that need to be made according to schedule? So that in total is the transition plan.

To begin work on this transition plan, we recently organized a group of individuals of staff members from across the Council that will provide their technical expertise. Essentially staff members that are responsible for Metro Transit facilities, Metro Transit bus stops, the facility here in RA as well as individuals that work with facilities in ES. The idea of this group, much like what we did with our Information Services group is to bring together subject matter experts to educate them about the requirements of the law and then together identify a path forward to help address certain questions that we will need to answer to be able to create the transition plan.

These questions include (1) What should this transition plan look like? The Council offers a wide variety of services, programs and activities. Metro Transit is vastly different than Environmental Services. Community Development has a lot of interaction with the park system. A lot of housing work. MTS has a lot of oversight of subrecipients. It is a very diverse set of activities that we engage in. A lot of the questions are: How do these pieces fit together into one articulated transition plan? There will be some commonalities. That is part of what this work will do is identify areas for collaboration. In other areas it will be a very specific Environmental Services twist to accessibility.

Other questions include the types of models that we should use here at the Council for compliance. We have done some research. In speaking with other governmental entities in the area like MnDOT, for example, the City of Minneapolis. And we are trying to learn from what models they have used, what things they tried. It is a little bit different according to the entity. We also examined the Minneapolis Parks and Rec Board. They use a consultant that just specializes in accessibility for parks to help them create a plan.

There are a lot of questions we have to identify, including what are the resources that we, as a Council need to make available for doing this work? We have a lot of physical and structural assets across the area. It would require us visiting all of those locations and do an assessment of all of those facilities to identify a master list of areas of improvement. Then organizing them and setting priorities and setting time lines for them.

Other things that I learned and some of the research that I have done in the area are the resources that each entity has devoted to implementing and developing their transition plans. It ranges from the City of Minneapolis that has one full time employee that focuses on compliance to MnDOT that has hired a team of six or seven employees. Some that focus on compliance, others that are more technically skilled. There are engineers that have a special emphasis on accessibility and then lend that expertise to other groups within MnDOT as they design future projects.

Generally, there is a lot of variety on how you can implement a transition plan. How you develop a transition plan. A lot of the key elements that I found included the support for the effort of completing the transition plan. It required executive support at the highest levels. Also support from advisory groups that can provide guidance and feedback as ideas are presented or as options are available. It is our hope that this group would be able to serve in that advisory capacity as we look at developing this plan.

There are a lot of next steps. Initially, we are at the beginning phases with this effort. We are beginning with identifying staff that is appropriate for a lot of these conversations. We are beginning with the structural components of accessibility. The physical components of accessibility. We are identifying staff that deals with facilities on a day-to-day basis. Train them, help them understand the requirements. Create this group to address the questions of how do we give this a structure that works for us? We will continue working on other aspects of accessibility. Such as training staff that creates accessible materials as well as looking at the services that we provide and ask the questions such as how can we make information presented to them? Say for example on a bus or a train to make them more accessible to individuals.

Fenley asked if there was a timeline for this.

Kirkpatrick said here is what we have seen from the research that Luis has done. It will probably take a couple of years for us to even put down on paper what is going to be a part of our transition plan. We are just getting into this. We would like to figure out most of the things that we are going to have to do to begin with. For example, we had a meeting the other day and I hadn't even thought about the list of all of the things that we do here at the Council. There are so many. We have people that move snow from places that need to be accessible. We have to get them to be a part of this too. We don't even know exactly where they are removing snow. We don't know if there are other places they should be removing snow. That's the kind of thing that we need to put into this plan so that it doesn't get left out. That hadn't even been on anybody's mind until one person in that group said: "How about snow removal?" Those are the kinds of things that we are going to be inventorying and looking at to see what we need to be a part of this process. I would believe, as I said, it is going to take a couple of years for that.

They don't care that we don't have the money. That is not the issue for the ADA. However, they do say you have to have a plan. And if you have a plan that takes the money that you have and puts it in the plan for when it is going to happen, that is what they want to see. They want to see from our office if in five years you are supposed to have done this and you haven't done this, or you have done this, we need to report that. That is another thing that our office is going to be doing.

Jasmine asked about when things would be implemented.

Kirkpatrick said as we go along there may be things that we can do as soon as we find them out. But there are other things that we do have to put in a plan that we have to submit. So, I think that it is going to take us that long and we don't have a list of everything but we have tasked people already to start getting that list of all of the things that we do so that we can start that process. With the 4,200 employees that we have with vastly different kinds of work that the Council does, from transportation to transit, to wastewater

treatment to clean water. Discussions to housing, to subrecipients, on and on and on. There are so many things that we do here that we have to combine to get that information.

I would anticipate, in my professional opinion, that it is going to take two years for us to get it done. But there may be things that we are already doing or will be doing within those two years that we can do that are low that we can take care of right away. But I believe that it is going to take about two years for us to get this underway in a fashion that the federal folks are going to want to see.

Fenley said that the transition plan is a timeline for making the agency and all of its facilities and programs and services accessible. Then the timeline for making the transition plan, for creating it is two years?

Kirkpatrick said you are correct. I may also say our Chair of the Metropolitan Council, and Nick Thompson, who is Director for MTS has already done transition plans at other places and they are also going to be providing us with a great deal of help in how we get this done.

Imdieke Cross said the deadline for this transition plan passed 22 years ago. The ADA transition plan. There are many things you can do now, immediately. You can call the City of Minneapolis and say: "What do you have on your books?" You can duplicate that. You don't have to create the wheel here. You can borrow a lot of stuff from existing municipalities, from existing entities. Every day, week or month that you are without a transition plan you are very vulnerable. Using the disability community as a sounding board isn't an option. It is required. You have to involve the disability community. We need to have input on priorities and on what is missing.

Kirkpatrick said that is why we are here. All of the things you said are possible. The research Luis has done. He has made great friends at the City of Minneapolis, the Parks Board, MnDOT, Hennepin County, etc. So that we don't have to reinvent the wheel. The part that we have to make sure of is that we collect and do things that are here at the Metropolitan Council. That are part of what we do. That's why we came here. To be able to use the knowledge and expertise here to be a part of that. Those here that do want to participate, we absolutely need them. Any way that we can get information to the folks on this body we would love to be able to do that and use them to help us with this process.

Chair Walker said to email my staff they can send it out to the committee. Coming back here for check-ins is critical.

Kirkpatrick said what Luis was talking about is where we have work is in the Information Systems, Communications, Procurement and facilities. Those are the things that we are going to have specific subcommittees in each one of those areas. Then we will have Metro Transit, Environmental Services, etc. So we will have in the big book of our transition plan, sections. The sections will be the things that are common all across the Metropolitan Council. Like the IS kinds of information. The communication kinds of information. The kinds of information that Margot was just talking about that is doable. Then for each of the individual places like the strips along the light rail line. All of those things have to be what this transition plan says. They will have a part for transit. They will have a part for Environmental Services, MTS, CD and Regional Administration.

Thorsen said talking about the tasks and inventory. On that inventory do you plan on putting the names or groups that can help you on that issue that you will consult as a way of keeping yourself accountable for the timeline and making the job easier?

Kirkpatrick said that is a great idea. We will take that as a really good thing to do. it is a big task and we want the people at the Metropolitan Council to understand that this is a big task. We are going to have to have people to help here. You can't say we will do it next year.

We have been to all of the division heads at the Council. We are going to see Wes Kooistra next Thursday. In a couple of weeks we are taking it to the full Executive Team of the Metropolitan Council. After that, I believe that we will have the authority to insure that the answers to all of our questions get done. The requests that we make to all of the divisions will get done. The report will get done in the end. As far as an ADA coordinator, I am the ADA coordinator for the Council. At the moment, I have delegated that to Luis. However, I haven't talked to Wes yet so I can't tell you that we are going to have an ADA coordinator for this work. However, I can tell you that I will probably ask for one. Whether I get it or not is a different story because everybody right now is having resource issues. But we will get this done. By dividing something up or hiring an ADA person who will specifically be doing this.

Fenley asked what sort of training and understanding of the position do you have in terms of ADA coordinator? If it is limited moving forward, what training or understanding will you then gain?

Kirkpatrick said I would say the only things that I know are from our regulations that we have through the FTA and the ADA. However, Luis knows that also. Luis is a lawyer.

Luis said he is attending a certification program for ADA coordinators. They are planning on sending multiple individuals to be more familiar with ADA and how it is to be implemented. There are a lot of individuals that we can turn to for lessons learned. Apart from that there are certification programs that provide webinars, live conferences, national conferences and certifications.

Imdieke Cross asked who is doing the trainings? What organizations?

Luis said I believe the Great Lakes has a lot of role in that. There are a number of organizations that are related to the federal government that provide training, opportunity and resources.

Imdieke Cross said I wanted to know if in fact it is the Great Lakes Disability ADA Technical Center. That would be great. I also know that there are programs out there that really skew the perspective of the ADA coordinator and compliant issues. If you get something that has been approved by, supported by one of the Great Lakes Technical Centers, The Department of Justice, The National Organization on Disability. There are a number of organizations out there that I would trust. I would encourage you to trust them as well. I have also seen programs that I am not sure what they are telling people. I wouldn't encourage you to attend. I will give the names of reputable and disreputable organizations to Kirkpatrick.

Jasmine asked them to return to the TAAC committee every three months to update them on the progress. Steffen indicated February, May, September and December.

Kirkpatrick said you might be hearing from us other than this meeting. I might call or ask someone from TAAC to come to another meeting or ask you to comment on something before we come to a meeting. That's the whole point here of coming to you is to not wait until we have February, May, September and December is to use you to make sure that we are doing the correct and appropriate things in this transition plan. So, don't think that we are going to wait until these four meetings.

#### **4. Stroller Policy Update**

Dan Stoffer, Manager, Instruction at Metro Transit, spoke to the TAAC committee. Christy Bailey, the Director of Metro Transit came to the TAAC committee on December 7, 2016 and gave some updates on our new philosophy on a new policy that we wanted to invoke at Metro Transit that dealt with the Stroller Policy. Prior to 2016 and before, we had a stroller policy that we were asking our customers to adhere to. We were asking them basically to do three things: 1. Prior to boarding they were to fold their stroller. 2. Once they had the stroller folded they were welcome aboard and had to find a place to store that stroller that wasn't blocking any of the aisle ways. 3. While they are riding we wanted them to have their child either in their arms with them or seated next to them in a seat.

We started to look at a lot of different things in our system and we saw some things that we were not happy with. One of which was operator assaults. We started to notice that some operators, because of this contentious policy, we saw operator assaults start to go up a little bit. Because of the operator assaults we started to realize that police resources were being used a lot. We watched these videos of assaults and customer complaints were coming in and we noticed that the customer was getting embarrassed in front of their other customers or peers with these arguments that were happening that were centered around this policy. Customer complaints were coming in. People were unhappy.

We started looking at some other industries and found that we weren't necessarily up with industry standards. We looked at the following agencies around America: King County out of Seattle, Tri-Met out of Portland, CTA out of Chicago. We reached out to Las Angeles, Dallas and finally SFMTA in San Francisco. It was to our surprise that their policy didn't align with our policy. We were different than the industry standard. They had progressed and changed their policy to the one I am about to tell you now.

We generated our new policy that we put into effect and now we are asking our customers basically four items. 1. The customers may board the bus with the child in the stroller, which is different than we used to ask. 2. The child should be secured with a lap belt and the stroller brakes must be set. 3. The parent must remain with the child at all times. 4. The next thing we are asking is the aisle must still be clear for safety

reasons. We want to make sure that the customers with disabilities realize that if they are using a mobility device still has priority in that securement area.

We have trained all of our operators in this new policy by releasing a written bulletin that was put out to them. We also integrated the new concept for the new policy in our annual Right to Know training. Right to Know is attended by all 1,500 bus operators. We did this this past spring of 2017. Then we created this video that he will show the TAAC committee at this time. The customer feedback that we have been receiving has been pretty positive. We are happy with the outcome.

He showed the video. It was audio scripted.

Metro Transit strives to provide excellent service for all who use our system. Passengers using strollers can present a particular challenge in this effort. But just like anything else the situation can be easily managed with a flexible and a courteous attitude on the part of the operator. The other passengers onboard the bus will appreciate the operator's skillfulness in handling it in a calm and timely manner. Metro Transit does not require to take their child out of the stroller to ride our buses. The operator is encouraged to kneel the bus to facilitate quicker boarding or if requested, deploy the flip ramp.

Once the passenger has boarded the bus, most will seat themselves in a convenient open area requiring no intervention on the operator's part. With large strollers, however, the operator may help facilitate the seating rearrangement. Metro Transit has posted expectations of passengers who bring strollers onboard our buses.

The child should be buckled or strapped into the stroller. The stroller brakes should be set while the bus is in motion. The parent must remain next to the stroller for the duration of the ride. It is not the responsibility of the operator to ensure compliance on these issues. However, if you do notice the child is not buckled in or the parent is not staying with the stroller you can feel free to politely remind the passenger of Metro Transit's policy. Lastly, we ask that passengers with strollers allow sufficient space for others to maneuver through the bus. This is something that at times may necessitate the operator's involvement. (Operator lifts up priority seating seats to make room for passenger with a stroller).

If the bus is getting full, and the stroller cannot be stored in a convenient open area, it can often end up blocking the aisle in a way that hinders the efficiency of the route. (Image of a person in a wheelchair and a person with a stroller across from each other and blocking the aisle.) At that point the driver can ask the passenger if they would be willing to fold the stroller and hold the child. At no point can we force someone to do this. Nor is it always possible for the parent. But more often than not, the passengers on the bus find some way to make it work. Especially once the operator has called attention to the issue in a polite and professional manner. There are a few specific things to remember regarding the priority seating area.

The seats in the wheelchair securement areas are designated as priority seating for both seniors and people with disabilities. If a passenger with a stroller boards the bus we can request that someone move to make room for the stroller. However, keep in mind that we cannot force anyone to vacate their seat. The passenger with the stroller will have to find another place for the stroller that leaves the aisle clear enough for others to pass. (Passenger with stroller moves to a different location.) If that is not possible the operator should politely request that the parent fold the stroller and hold the child. (Passenger with stroller attempts to fold up the stroller.)

This is the time when your customer service skills will be essential. Consider offering a courtesy ride coupon to those who have been inconvenienced. (Operator asks a customer if they would be willing to move to another seat and offers the coupon. Customer takes the coupon and moves.) Similarly, if a stroller is occupying the priority seating area when it becomes needed by another passenger, for example, a person in a wheelchair, politely request that the parent vacate the seat, and if necessary, fold their stroller and hold the child. (Screen shows large texts that read "Do not move the bus until everyone is secure.")

If that passenger is not willing or able to give up their seat in the wheelchair securement area, simply notify TCC by priority call that you are unable to accommodate a passenger in a mobility device and must pass them up. Inform the waiting passenger that your supervisor has been made aware of the situation and apologize to them for the inconvenience.

(Summary statement appears on the screen and reads "Passengers are not expected to fold their strollers prior to boarding. Safety guidelines for parents: the child should be buckled or strapped into the stroller's restraints. The stroller brakes should be set when the bus is in motion. A parent must remain with the

stroller. Passengers with strollers are encouraged to find an open area for the stroller that allows sufficient space for others to maneuver through the bus. The passenger may be asked to fold the stroller if no space is available. Be an informer not an enforcer.”)

Bus driving on the road. In trying to provide a safe and comfortable ride for all passengers, Metro Transit operators are presented with numerous challenges throughout a typical day. (Bus pulling up to a stop with a person with a stroller.) Some situations are easier to manage than others. In most every case, however, the operator’s communication style, his or her skillful and deliberate use of certain phrasing, pleasant tone, and sympathetic facial expression will help achieve a successful resolution of any challenge, big or small.

Imdieke cross said if someone was sitting in the priority seating area and they refuse to move, you can’t ask them or force them. Is there anything you can do to get them to move?

Stoffer said there is not. The motto is be an informer not an enforcer. We would offer coupons. We would politely ask. But they would still have the right to say “Sorry, I’m not going to move.”

Jasmine said if you had a stroller that got on and someone did not fold it appropriately and it was really obstructing the aisle, would you make them get off and wait for the next bus?

Stoffer said at that point we would rely on the skill of our operators to try their hardest not to leave anybody behind, especially in inclement weather. Welcome them aboard and work with the passengers on the bus to problem solve and make sure that everybody is taken care of to the best of our ability. If you are in that situation where we have some difficult passengers that refuse to cooperate, for whatever reason that might be. That is one of those things where we would do our best to call priority into the TCC and hopefully get a district supervisor or another bus to that location as soon as possible. Whether it is the mom and baby or the person with a disability. Both people are important customers to us. We need to take care of them in that situation.

Childs said I cannot think of a time when I was on the bus that a driver asked someone with a stroller to break it down. The strollers don’t look like the stroller in the video where they are easy to break down and are smaller. They are very large and 75 percent of the time there are two or three other small children with a person who has a stroller and they are taking up quite a bit of space. What would constitute a mobile device?

Stoffer said you go from the sunshine strollers that are small and easy to fold up and you go to Baby’s are Us and you have the SUV strollers and they have a place for your mobile phone. They are getting bigger and bigger. What I can do is continue to train the operators on the correct policy and will continue to work with the district supervisors and the folks that are out riding the bus. Each person at Metro Transit has been challenged by the General Manager Brian Lamb to ride buses every month. We all have a different amount of buses that we have to ride. When we see issues like that I will encourage the people I work with to address that. We are all managers and supervisors that ride the bus. If we see someone board the bus and the operator doesn’t encourage them to break down the stroller if it is a full bus. At the next terminal we will have the opportunity to say a gentle reminder to remember what the policy says. Sometimes that reinforcement of that compliance issue will help it sink in a little bit.

Thorsen said would it be possible to consult with the other transit systems that you mentioned in your presentation as to strategies that they use? If they have encountered this situation and strategies that they have used either successfully or unsuccessfully as a way of coming up with best practices and strategies.

Stoffer said that’s an excellent suggestion. We can definitely continue to work with Denver and Dallas and Seattle. As this policy continues to grow and we continue to work with our operators and try to figure out the best way to train in compliance and enforcement. I am going out to Washington DC on October 22. I will be with 12 different agencies. I will bring this up and talk to them. I will ask them what are their situations and how are they dealing with them?

Thorsen said do you have the opportunity to network with mass transit facilities around the country that you can say “I am going to go to Dan to help me address this.” Is there a way to identify those people that you would find helpful across the country?

Stoffer said he collects business cards when he goes to conferences. When I have issues I contact them and throw out different ideas. We all do that. One issue I had recently was how we were training on low floor buses because the first forward seat is now pushed back right against the wheel. I ask if anybody has

ideas. Between the DC trip and the ability to send out emails to a lot of different transportation agencies we can continue to improve this policy.

Royer said you said someone has to wait for the next bus and that you would contact the manager and someone would get there A.S.A.P. Do you have a timeframe for what that A.S.A.P. looks like?

Steffen said it is typically within 10 to 15 minutes. It does depend on the weather. If we have some pretty bad inclement weather that timeframe moves up. If it is 75 degrees and a beautiful day it could be five minutes longer. This type of accommodation does not happen very often. It is just not common. Usually our professional drivers are able to negotiate movement.

Imdieke Cross said I would like you to focus on Chicago because the others are fair weather locations. I really want to know what Chicago, Toronto say. What is happening in similar climates. Because of the temperature in the winter it could be a life or death situation. To think that their access to public transportation is denied because somebody doesn't want to move. I want you to pull the bus over, call the cops, the transit police and have them physically removed because somewhere in here it says that people with disabilities shall have priority to that seating area. Are those just empty words? "Customers with disabilities using mobility devices have priority in the securement area." Are those meaningless words or are they words to convey that people with disabilities will have priority to those seating areas? I'm just looking for some assurance here that somebody isn't going to die because somebody refused to move and you have changed your motto.

Stoffer said point well taken. When it doesn't work how do we get that person to move? You want me to talk to Chicago, Philly, DC, Toronto and those places that have similar climate to reach out to them and bring out that hypothetical. The passes work. Have you ever had somebody that said "No. I'm going to stay right here." Then what? And brainstorm with them. I work with Philadelphia a lot. Chicago not as much. I can reach out to them for sure. I will be at a conference in DC this month. I will pick their brains a little bit and work through Pam, Jan and Christie Bailey to say here is what I learned. Definitely, I can do that.

Fenley asked if there ever was a time that a mom or dad with a child in a stroller was ever passed up or told to wait for another bus.

Steffen said she would meet with someone at the Transit Control Center to see if they know of this happening.

Christine Kuennen used to work at the TCC. She said there has been conflict on both sides (wheelchair verses scooter.) The best advise, in my opinion, in a case by case basis, with a policy like this, it to train the drivers as best as possible and avoiding conflict. Accommodating everyone as best as possible. Exceptions like this, call the TCC with a priority call. The call is answered by the TCC within about a minute. There would be a supervisor dispatched right away. Another bus dispatched right away. So that no one is not served. It is very rare that someone would not be transported by the bus. After a few minutes of uncomfortable conversation onboard. I can't recall when someone was left behind.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Claudia Fuentes spoke to the TAAC committee. This Friday we will have the Fall Metro Mobility Community Conversation. From 10:00 to 12:00. At the Creekside Community Center in Bloomington at 9801 Penn Avenue South. I had emailed everyone of the TAAC a couple of months ago. I sent out invitations again via email. I recognize people here who are volunteers. I appreciate their participation.

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

None.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Alison Coleman  
Recording Secretary