

# Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



**Meeting date:** September 04, 2024

**Time:** 12:30 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Street

## Members present:

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

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

## Ex-officio:

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

Excused: Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Michele Severson, Diane Graham-Raff

## Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:34 p.m.

## Agenda approved

It was moved by Patsy Murphy, seconded by Claudia Fuglie to approve the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

## Approval of minutes

It was moved by Vice-Chair Darrell Paulsen, seconded by Jeffrey Dains to approve the minutes of the July 3 2024, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

## Business and information items

1. A presentation of **Pocket Schedule Evaluations** by Nathan Bakken, Data Coordinator at Metro Transit. Metro Transit is currently evaluating usage of pocket schedules and what recommendations to take in the future. The questions being asked are should there be a redesign, where should they be distributed, or should they be discontinued.

An issue now is that small changes to a route in between printings and major service changes could lead to a person with a pocket schedule having incorrect information. Bakken asked the committee for feedback and invited them to be a part of a focus group to give feedback in another setting.

Member comments included concerns about the size of the print of the printed schedules. Emphasizing the need for readability and accessibility for those with vision impairments. Other comments included the importance of language accessibility, the availability of information in formats accessible to visually impaired users and that all materials must comply with ADA

requirements. An issue was raised that the information currently on the pocket schedules about alternative formats being available should be more prominent, as many users may not see the small print disclaimers.

There was some discussion on ensuring that information in pocket schedules is also available digitally and accessible via screen readers. Bakken also acknowledged that static maps currently lack alternative text which needs to be improved.

2. A presentation of **Network Now** by Cyndi Harper and Julie Martinez from Metro Transit. Network Now aims to revamp routes and schedules due to change in ridership due to the pandemic.

Ridership dropped significantly between 2019 and 2020, leading to service reductions. Now ridership is growing again, and there's a need to adapt to changed travel patterns, particularly with increased telecommuting.

The project has two primary goals, resolving the status of suspended routes and improving overall service with new routes and redesigns. It plans to increase service hours and enhance coverage.

The draft concept plan will be released for public feedback soon. Proposed improvements include increasing frequency on local routes, expanding service to new areas, and enhancing micro transit options. Scheduling that recognizes the needs of the workforce and to maintain the reliability of scheduled service

The project started in late 2022, with public engagement occurring in 2023. The final plan is expected to be presented for approval in early 2025.

3. A presentation of the **Blue Line Lake Street Renovation** from Jenny Ackerson and Christina Morrison of Metro Transit.

The Lake Street station is nearing its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, having opened in 2004. The redesign aims to enhance accessibility, reduce maintenance needs, and improve customer experience.

The design goals include improving access with new elevator locations, better stairways, and a pedestrian ramp providing an ADA-compliant route. This ramp will also include landscaping and seating areas for users. The addition of the pedestrian ramp is meant as a backup for when the elevators are down.

Planning began in 2022 with a public survey currently active and a public open house planned for September. Construction is expected between 2026 and 2027.

The design changes included a platform design that will prioritize open spaces, improve sightlines and comfort for users. The proposed canopy design will offer better protection from the elements. The elevator will be relocated closer to Lake street to improve visibility and access.

Member Fuglie expressed concern with the elevators being out of order frequently and impacting service levels for those that need them. Presenters stated that more work needs to be done in order to anticipate outages and try to keep them in service.

Member Rodgers asked if the canopy will cover the pedestrian ramp. Presenters responded no. It is a southwest facing ramp and will have lots of sun. Member Rodgers expressed concern that the ramp will be exposed to the elements and therefore could discourage use.

Member Rodgers asked if using the ramp would necessitate crossing the tracks to get to the northbound train. Presenters responded yes it would. Member Rodgers expressed concern for the safety issues that could arise due to this crossing especially with users that have low vision. This concern was echoed by several other committee members. Vice-chair Paulsen also stated that the pedestrian ramp should be covered. With winter weather, an uncovered ramp would be detrimental to seniors and people with disabilities. The ramp should be looked at more intentionally. If there are being put in as a way to not use the elevator it should have the amenities of a primary option and should be clean and welcoming.



Member Hendricksen expressed a desire that the discharge point of the ramp comes further south of the playground. Current route would require a convoluted route through a park and sometimes a farmer's market to use the ramp. If need to use the ramp, the discharge point for the ramp should be near the transit connections and ticket stations and more in line with the current facilities.

## Reports

### **Subcommittee**

1. Blue Line – Ken Rodgers

There has been no meeting for several months due to the environmental study period. Should have an update later in the month.

2. Gold Line – Darrell Paulsen

Expected to open in March of 2025. Vice-chair hopes to be one of the participants to ride during the many hours of test rides. Has requested that the TAAC being one of the groups

3. Purple Line – Darrell Paulsen

Current debate of the purple line is the alignment of the purple line for a section. The debate is between White Bear Ave or the Bruce Vento trail. An issue is that some people are concerned about the tree canopy that would be disturbed due to construction if it was to be built along the Bruce Vento trail. Others state that the trees are going to have to be replaced anyway and the land around the Bruce Vento trail was originally acquired for the purpose of the line.

### **Public invitation**

No public comments

### **Member comment**

Member Myhre stated that on the last Monday of the State Fair there was an issue with gate number 9. It was not accessible for a period of time.

### **Adjournment**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:31p.m.

### **Certification**

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of September 4, 2024.

Approved this 4th day of December 2024.

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