

# Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, October 21, 2020

## Committee Members Present:

Atlas-Ingebretson, Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Ferguson, Fredson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

## Committee Members Absent:

None

## CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Zelle called the regular meeting of the Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 on the following roll call vote:

Aye: 15 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Not Recorded:2 Atlas-Ingebretson, Ferguson

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Fredson, seconded by Lee to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2020 regular meeting of the Committee of the Whole. Council Member Chamblis asked to amend the minutes. The phrase "Council Member Chamblis asked if staff had reviewed the draft strategic plan" will be changed to "Council Member Chamblis asked if staff had input on the draft strategic plan." **Motion carried** on the following roll call:

Aye: 15 Barber, Chamblis, Cummings, Fredson, Gonzalez, Johnson, Lee, Lilligren, Lindstrom, Muse, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran, Chair Zelle

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Not Recorded:2 Atlas-Ingebretson, Ferguson

## INFORMATION

1. Metro Transit Equity Update (Wes Kooistra, 612-349-7510)

Metro Transit staff gave an update on equity work. Wes Kooistra, General Manager, Metro Transit introduced the meeting subject. Kooistra added that while this is an update on equity work, it does not cover all of the equity work happening at Metro Transit. This update is focused on new work. Eric Lind, Manager, Research and Analytics, discussed equity in transit data. This data was based on the 2016 Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI), which provided statistically robust data by using trained interviewers and random sampling and was weighted by ridership. The TBI showed that Metro Transit riders are mostly under

35 years old, 41% make less than \$35,000 annually per household, have a diverse set of trip purposes beyond work commutes, and are 45% Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC). Lind shared pre-COVID ridership data for several different bus routes and light rail lines. Lind also shared that BRT and local bus ridership has been more resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chair Zelle asked about B Line and D Line, as the Governor has now signed the bonding bill for both lines. Chair Zelle asked if data has been broken out for other BRT lines. Slide 18 in the presentation shows BRT ridership total. Council Member Wulff asked if any of the data included disability ridership. Lind replied that the data was compiled but was not included in the slides. Approximately 10% of ridership as a whole identifies as having a disability. Council Member Vento also asked about senior ridership.

Lesley Kandaras, Chief of Staff, Metro Transit, gave an overview of 2020 work. Initial equity action steps in 2020 were: charging the Equity and Inclusion Team with gathering employee ideas and developing recommended action steps; strengthening processes for centering the work in public engagement and riders' experiences; developing an equity evaluation of quarterly service changes; developing transit equity metrics; performing budget equity analyses; identifying ways to strengthen programs that improve people's lives; requiring "Equity" to be addressed as part of the Thrive Lens analysis in business items; partnering with Human Resources to improve workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion; partnering with the Office of Equal Opportunity to increase contracting and purchasing with disadvantaged and underutilized businesses; continuing to pursue legislation for administrative citations for fare evasion; and participating in Metropolitan Council's Metro Transit Police Department Review.

Andrew Kimbell, Operator, MJR Garage, and Sarah Berres, Specialist, Equity and Inclusion, introduced the Equity and Inclusion Team and recommended action steps. Kimbell and Berres are both part of the Equity and Inclusion Team. The Equity and Inclusion Team's recommendations were formed by gathering 285 comments and ideas from employees from June through September 2020. They then developed recommended action steps that will be addressed as a part of the Strategic Framework development in October and November 2020. The themes that emerged among the 55 recommended action steps were: accountability and transparency; recruitment, retention, and promotion; training and education; Metro Transit Police Department; workplace culture; leadership commitment; community partnerships and engagement; employee engagement; safety; defining equity; Council collaboration; equity audit; emergency response; investment; and fares.

Robin Caufman, Director of Administration, Metro Transit, discussed listening and learning through crisis. Metro Transit staff set an engagement goal of 1,000 responses to surveys, with 45% BIPOC, and received over 1,800 interactions with the community with 41% engagement of BIPOC. They used a variety of strategies: website, emails, social media, ethnic media, in-person surveys at transit stops, centers and stations, and in-person conversations. Through this work they learned that demographics and responses differ between online and in person; they need to use multiple strategies to engage a diverse community; some strategies were more effective than others; and the community doesn't have a lot of capacity for meetings. Caufman also added that a more detailed analysis will be shared at the next Transportation Committee meeting.

Katie Roth, Assistant Director, BRT Projects, gave an update on advancing equity outcomes through BRT investment. Roth shared that BRT is an efficient investment in access and in service quality. In 2018, 50% of all Metro Transit rides were on eight routes. After the Green Line and Blue Line light rail lines, the highest ridership was on Route 5 and Route 21. Route 5 and Route 21 are planned to be upgraded to D Line BRT and B Line BRT, respectively. More than 120,000 people live within a half mile of the planned D Line. Of those residents, approximately 25% are youth and 10% are seniors. 57% are BIPOC and more than 40% have low incomes. The D Line provides one-bus access to more than 200,000 jobs. 106,000 people live within a half mile of the planned B Line, of whom 42% are BIPOC. 38% of people who would be served by the B Line have low incomes. The B Line would provide access to 131,000 jobs, including more than 50,000 low-wage jobs. The Network Next principles are to: advance equity and reduce regional racial disparities; build on success to grow ridership; design a

network that supports a transit-oriented lifestyle; ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the bus network. Equity as a principle shapes what routes are included and how they're evaluated and prioritized. Equity is core to prioritizing the F Line and beyond.

Adam Harrington, Director of Service Development, Metro Transit, gave an overview of the Metro Transit Service Equity Evaluation. This includes a review of bus and rail service changes; distribution of service/changes by geography; hours of service by route type and geography, bus ridership bus loads and capacity; bus stop changes; speed and reliability projects, new initiatives, community and customer engagement and feedback. Harrington also shared the 2018 Title VI FTA Review, which is a system review of the past three years. They also compared 2020 service levels to 2019 service levels. The service decrease in 2020 affecting residents of color (14.5%) would be 39.9% less than the decrease affecting white residents (24%) on average. The quantitative results of the Title VI service equity analysis suggest no disparate impact to low-income individuals as a result of the proposed service changes effective September 2020. From the Metro Transit Service Equity Evaluation of Fall 2020 emerged future equity metrics to develop or refine: redefining ACP 50; average transit speed improvements; speed and reliability of local service; boarding speed; fare policy and tools; frequency and span investments; bus stop investments; evaluation of bus and train loading standards; financial investment by mode; congestion mitigation and air quality impacts; and disparate impact threshold analysis.

Rachel Dungca, Manager of Strategy and Performance, Metro Transit, gave an overview of equity metrics. Metro Transit equity metrics are in place to understand if the staff are making progress and to communicate to what they are giving their attention. These metrics are from riders, the community, and employees, and are evaluated with goals, metrics, targets, and accountability. Areas of exploration are: service levels, quality and infrastructure; the customer experience; interactions with Metro Transit Police, procurement and budget; and employees. Going forward, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) will guide selection and prioritization of goals and equity metrics. They will be asking the Equity Advisory Committee for input on how they would like to influence development and reporting of equity metrics. They will also be aligning with the Metro Transit Equity and Inclusion Team's areas of recommendations and working with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Human Resources with Council-wide goals. They will be using existing information that can be disaggregated by race to guide development and reporting.

Lesley Kandaras returned to give an overview of equity in budgeting. The initial focus is on transit service, programs to improve transit access and quality, and organizational practices critical to equitable processes and outcomes. 2020 will be a "learning year," identifying process changes to more effectively embed the results of equity analyses into future budget development and decision-making.

Council Members thanked the Metro Transit staff and Equity and Inclusion Team for this work and shared their appreciation for the effort and engagement. Council Members also had comments about on goals for engagement and disaggregating the data and equity metrics. Council Member Atlas-Ingebretson also mentioned the issue of youth equity on busses, and that she would like to discuss this further. Council Member Wulff also encouraged staff to finalize the D Line route with Minneapolis. Council Member Chamblis suggested wording changes for the presentation when presented in the future regarding fare evasion, as well as equity and frequency.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Bridget Toskey  
Recording Secretary