

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 5, 2016

Committee Members Present: Julianne Bina, Christopher Bates, Ken Rodgers, Robert Platz, Kari Sheldon, Heidi Myhre, Pamela Zimmerman, Margot Imdieke Cross, David Fenley and Patty Thorsen.

Committee Members Absent: Adora Sage and Bob Anderson.

Committee Members Excused: Chair Kjensmo Walker, Donna Harris and Vice Chair Nichole Villavicencio.

Council Staff Present: Metropolitan Council member Katie Rodriguez; Allison Bell, Jan Dietrich, C Terrence Anderson, Shawn Walding and Pam Steffen from Metro Transit; Heidi Schallberg, Dana Rude, Mai Thor, Andy Streasick and Alison Coleman.

Public Present: Jason Staebell from Hennepin County and John Clark.

CALL TO ORDER

Dana Rude opened the meeting. Since Chair Walker and Vice Chair Villavicencio were both absent, the TAAC committee nominated a temporary chair pro temp for this meeting. Bates moved to nominate Patty Thorsen. Fenley seconded the motion. The motion carried. A quorum being present, pro temp Committee Chair Thorsen called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 2:35 p.m. on Wednesday, October 5, 2016.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Fenley, seconded by Bates to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2016 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. Equity

Allison Bell spoke to the TAAC committee. She is a Project Manager of Special Projects at Metro Transit. She will talk about the concept of equity, the program itself and what they are doing, projects that are underway and next steps.

Equity is a concept that you hear a lot. It has been part of Thrive. She will talk about Thrive MSP 2040, the regional plan. There are different definitions, but this is how Metro Transit defines it. It is just and fair access to opportunity for all. That is different from equality. Equality is everybody gets the same thing. In many cases giving everybody the same thing means that people end up in different positions. So the goal is to give everyone fair access to opportunity. The goal is then for them to break down those barriers that they know, that the customers and the community face. They are looking and identifying those barriers that are out there and how they can take them down.

This is a broad range. They are looking into it internally and externally. They are looking at their business and employees and how they make decisions and service and the broader community. She wanted to bring the language in from Thrive to show how equity was discussed in the document. That is really the direction that they have as they are putting those programs together.

This is the excerpt from Thrive on equity: "Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. For our region to reach its full

economic potential, all of our residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is strong when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity and quality of life.”

That is what they are aiming for. All races, ethnicities, incomes and abilities is the guidance they have from Thrive as to what groups to focus on as they are thinking about equity. There is a lot of language about “all and everybody”. Those are the areas that staff has tried to focus on. In the past year as this opportunity has rolled out, most of the focus has been on race and ethnicity. They are also looking at ways to focus on incomes and abilities.

She has the opportunity to lead this team. It is 12 employees from across Metro Transit. They are in all different positions. They have bus drivers, police officers, analysts, administrative people and janitors. The idea is to bring multiple perspectives in and have that team work and figure out what are the priorities and how they move forward.

This is just one part of the equity work at the Council. This is the Metro Transit wide portion of equity. There are teach teams in every division. Regional Administration has a change team. TS has a change team. So does Community Development and Environmental Services. This is one of five such teams. They all have different teams and they are all working on equity. They are all looking at that Thrive statement and are trying to implement that within areas that they work.

What they have been doing in the past year is getting out there a lot and talking to their employees and helping them understand what equity is because they have to be the ones who understand it and then start to live it and start to see the opportunities and how they can do things differently. A lot of that has been engaging employees and evaluating the progress. They need a good sense of where they are at before they can move forward. How are we doing? How do we compare with others? Where are we strong? Where are we weak? They have done a lot of that assessment.

She is going to be talking about how they are testing new ways of doing business. They have some projects going on. They are talking about this and sharing the story. They are also going to be recommending how they move forward on equity.

There are different pilot projects underway at Metro Transit. These are all different pilot projects. Many of them started before the equity team came into existence last year. It is a broader network of folks who are working on equity. They are trying to look at every aspect they are doing and trying to see how they can do that better and how they can break down barriers. They have fares and how people pay to use the system. Workforce – how they go about recruiting people and hiring them to communication and how they communicate with their customers.

You may have heard about the TAP (Transportation Accessibility Program). This is a pilot program that has been underway and they are headed into phase two. It is an attempt to make transit fares more affordable for low income customers and community members. They worked with their Metro HRA to offer up a one dollar fare to those who are in the Metro HRA system. They are using the pilot to assess does that help people? Does that allow them to use the system more? Could it make it more affordable? In that first phase it was small. So they only had around 300 people. But when they surveyed they found out that absolutely did help them. They were able to get where they needed to go and use the system more than they had in the past. They are heading into phase two, which they want to be bigger. They want to encompass more people so they are building that piece by piece.

On the workforce they have partnered with Metro Transit and the Office of Equal Opportunity to do a program called the Metro Transit Technician Program. There is a huge workforce need. They don't have enough mechanics. They cannot hire enough. There are retirements happening. At the same time they need to have a more diverse workforce. They need to offer more opportunities to people in the region. So this program gets at both of those things.

There was a recruitment effort that happened in the lower income and neighborhoods of color where they were able to go through a selection process. They ultimately got 19 participants enrolled. They are going through a couple of years in an internship training in partnership with a trade school to get an AAS degree. Once they go through this process that is paid the whole time. It is a new way of doing things. They will be on track to step into a full time mechanic position. That will both help those people have opportunities. It will have trickle effects back into their community. It also helps Metro Transit fulfill that need that they have.

On the Communications side. Metro Transit has been sending out communications that they have. There is new bus stop signage all over the system. They have done a lot to improve that. As they were doing that they wanted to make sure that reach many of the customers who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Metro Transit wants to do everything they can to reach them. There is a project manager who has gone out and done interviews with clients of non-profits that teach English to immigrants and other people. They try to help them understand where to get information about Metro Transit and where the buses go and how they change their signs and the information to make it easier for them to get that information. Some of those changes have already been made. It is just the beginning of a larger effort for them to try to bridge where they are now to that community. So those are a few examples.

There are a couple of things that explain what Metro Transit is doing for people with disabilities. They have a survey that goes out every two years to their riders. It is called the Customer Satisfaction Survey. They have paper surveys that are put on buses. People take them. They read it and write answers and turn it in. They know that anybody who has a visual impairment or who can't read English cannot take the survey. Metro Transit does not have any way to do that. They have identified that as a problem. They are now working to figure out how they can change the way to collect the surveys and try to reach people who do have visual impairment or cannot hold a pencil or cannot in other ways take the survey.

The equity team has done visits to every one of the transit facilities and has a list of questions to ask as they go. They relate to everything from diversity to what is the culture there to accessibility. They have been able to identify some of the facilities that need to be more accessible. They plan to share that information with the leadership.

She asked for input from the TAAC as they are putting together the 2017 work plan. They are trying to figure out how to relate to all of those groups (races, abilities, incomes and ethnicity). How can they as a team identify the barriers and what ideas and questions does the TAAC committee have on that?

The equity team is very diverse. It is about 50 percent white and 50 percent people of color. They have several immigrants on the team. There is one from Kenya, one who is born in Somalia and has lived in five countries, someone from Puerto Rico, another who was born in India and has lived in the US all of his life. There are three bus operators who are African American. There is at least one person with a disability on the team.

Thorsen suggested they put the survey online and test its accessibility online with screen reader software.

2. Transportation Public Participation Plan

Mai Thor spoke to the TAAC committee. She is an Outreach Coordinator at the Metropolitan Council. She asked the TAAC members to make suggestions as to this plan. The Transportation Public Participation Plan is a federal requirement. The Council as the MPO, is required to develop a public participation plan. It serves as a framework for public involvement, outreach and engagement and also outlines how they do this work and what the goals are for participation. It also covers how they achieve these tasks and what the goals are for participation.

To give background. The Council has a very robust plan in Thrive MSP 2040, the Public Engagement Plan and the Transportation Policy Plan. There are a lot of very specific outcomes that they want to see happening regionally. From Thrive they have the Public Engagement Plan which forces them to look at community and the people they partner with. The TPP also addresses that. It talks about what roles transportation plays and how everything is connected to transportation. Transportation connects people to people with housing and jobs. Looking at land use from a holistic perspective.

Guiding principles to get people involved. The main guiding principle is that transportation is about people. The work that they do should be meaningful, facilitate discussion and be inclusive, specifically to underrepresented communities. Multiple methods should be used to capture public comments (email, online forums, etc.) Public meetings will be scheduled at times and locations that are accessible by transit riders, people with disabilities and can accommodate people with a variety of work schedules. Opportunities will be promoted widely regarding various planning and outreach efforts. It should be about us meeting people where they are and making it convenient for them. It is about how they are connecting with people.

Goals and desired outcomes of participation. Provide a range of opportunities/venues for public participation. Identify and engage key audiences. Connect with a broad range of residents reflective of demographics and geography throughout the region. It is a changing region. Gather input from audiences/constituencies

regarding regional transportation policies and planning. Educating stakeholders and general public about the Council's role to transportation policies and planning.

Applying to Transportation plans and programs. There is the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and the Air Quality Conformity Determination (AQCD). These are all federal programs. They do that based on a lot of different requirements and deadlines. Some of them are very technical. They have partnerships that are already established.

Strategies for public participation:

- Creating information on web sites and for use fact sheets, handouts and other materials.
- Convening stakeholders around topics of regional scale.
- Sponsoring listening sessions, workshops or conferences to promote policy discussions.
- Organize and host social media events.
- Design and disseminate informal surveys.
- Offer forum, including online forums, to get ideas on regional issues.
- Develop special events to announce – kick offs, project initiatives, news events, etc.
- Offer learning opportunities through open houses, meetings, tours and receptions.
- Host focus groups or small group discussions.

The PPP is an evolving document. It reflects the changing needs of the region.

The effort of specific strategies and tactics. She had broken down the different strategies on how to engage the public. The main strategies include implementing public participation strategies from an early stage of transportation planning and at all levels. Involve other decision making agencies and entities when engaging the public. Use online tools and techniques to enhance or encourage participation. Use and empower Metropolitan Council advisory committees to be involved in public participation within their communities.

Once they offer these opportunities to people in the community how do they know they are actually making a difference? If they want to measure success they come full circle by going back to Thrive. Thrive really does dictate how they should be doing engagement. Be consistent in policy and practices with Thrive MSP 2040 and the Transportation Policy Plan. Build upon partnerships identified in Thrive MSP 2040 Outreach and Engagement efforts. Support key goals in Thrive MSP 2040 and the Engagement Plan. Engage transportation stakeholders as identified in the Transportation Policy Plan.

What is being asked today is for the TAAC committee to make recommendations. After this committee the PPP will go to the TAB. Their job will be to adopt it for public comment. Then it goes to the Transportation Committee and then to the full Council at which point the public comment period will begin. They will start over again once they get comments from the public.

3. C-Line

C Terrence Anderson spoke to the TAAC committee. He is a Community Outreach Coordinator at Metro Transit and the community outreach project lead for the C-Line. Shawn Walding also spoke to the TAAC committee. He is a Senior Engineer at Metro Transit and the project engineer for the C-Line. They are in the two new phases of the project. The first is preliminary design that is the beginning of the final design and engineering of the C-Line in anticipation of construction in 2018 and opening in 2019. They just completed the long term Glenwood realignment study, which is a process of looking at should the C-Line long term run on Olson Highway or Glenwood Avenue which is just about a quarter mile south. They are going to talk a little bit on the recommendation. Shawn will get into the details of engineering and some recommendations and some thoughts. They will talk a little about the A-Line.

The C-Line is the second rapid bus service in the region. The first is the A-Line. That opened in June of this year. The C-Line will substantially replace the Route 19 as the A-Line substantially replaced Route 84. Route 19 currently travels from Brooklyn Center down to about HCMC in downtown Minneapolis by Osseo Boulevard and Olson Memorial Highway. Currently it serves 7,600 people today. Once the C-Line is built they are expecting to serve 9,300 people by 2030. It is the same concept of what the A-Line did. Building better stations and stopping less only at major intersections every half mile to move people quicker. That same concept of the A-Line will be brought to the C-Line.

To talk about the long term realignment study. The recommendation to move the C-Line to Glenwood Avenue. They heard from the community that if they are going to build the Blue Line Extension along Olson Memorial Highway it doesn't make sense to move the C-Line to Glenwood Avenue, which is a quarter mile south. They did a study on that and they are at the point of recommending to move the C-Line to Glenwood Avenue. The reason being does it not make sense to spread that high quality transit service to more corridors in order to serve more people with high quality transit? They are recommending that they do that. The timeline would be if they do go forward with the recommendation. They are in the public comment period for that. If they do adopt that recommendation into the long term plan, once the Blue Line Extension gets completed. Right now it is scheduled to be completed in 2021. When the C-Line stations are completed on Glenwood the C-Line would then move to Glenwood Avenue.

The C-Line is now scheduled to open in 2019. It will open with temporary stations on Olson Memorial Highway. It will be temporary anyway because the street will be ripped up when the Blue Line Extension is going under construction. They don't want to put down permanent infrastructure that needs to be moved around quite a bit during the life of the construction. Right now they are recommending to move the C-Line to Glenwood long term.

The only reason that they would move the C-Line to Glenwood is because the Blue Line Extension now exists on Olson Memorial Highway. If the Blue Line Extension doesn't happen the C-Line would stay on Olson Memorial Highway. It only makes sense in the concept of if there is that service to replace that high frequency or high quality transit service on Olson Memorial Highway. It doesn't make sense to have the C-Line on Glenwood Avenue. So in the case of moving that early there are 400 boardings on Olson Memorial Highway. If they were going to move it to Glenwood prior to the Blue Line Extension, they would be alienating a number of their riders that currently exist that will not have other service to replace it.

They are currently not planning any park and rides for the C-Line or the Blue Line Extension.

All of these stops would be curbside. The fleet would only have right side doors.

The A-Line route has off board ticketing. There is a detectable warning strip at all stops. At many stops they have a raised curb that gets people to ear level boarding the buses not only with the A-Line buses but with all buses that board at these stops like the Route 84. They have real time sign displays and pylons. There is an enunciator on the pylon. At 48 inches there is a button you can push to hear what the sign says on the screen. There is also an emergency telephone that is located within the shelter. Some of the small shelters have lean rails within the shelter.

What they want to hear from the TAAC today is feedback as it pertains to the stations. They have four specific groups that discuss some of the ticket vending machines as well as some of the fleet features that they will bring people to talk about in the future. They are here today to talk about the station design.

They will talk about what they learned from TAAC on the A-Line. They want to make sure that the stations have ADA compliance in every aspect of it. Use consistent designs for station layout. This is a harder thing to achieve than one would think based on the varying availability of right of way, the different contexts with which these stations are seen and access issues. While it was difficult the case for making them consistent was a very helpful thing to hear from the different groups and it strengthened the consistency throughout the whole corridor. This group wanted them to provide benches in the shelters. Where they were able to achieve benches in the large shelters, the shelters come in modular segments. There is either one module, two or three, based on the ridership volume that they saw at those sites. In the small shelters, based on the circulation patterns they saw, they were unable to achieve a bench within those small shelters but there is a lean rail on the back to provide support. At those small shelters where they were not able to provide a bench within the shelter, they did their best to provide a bench outside the shelter if it was needed at that spot.

They also heard that they needed to provide a designated waiting area for people in wheelchairs at these sites. That helped them and they continue to develop some design standards that they design for these stations that they are implemented on the C-Line. They do this to achieve consistency. Talking about the dimensions of the waiting area and they have achieved the spot very close to the pylon and very close to the first opening door of the bus. This is a spot they feel is adequate for wheelchair accessibility and something that they want to see consistent across the board at every station on future arterial BRT stations.

Some of the info they received on the vehicles and the fleet issues on the A-Line that they need to consider alternative securements system on the buses for wheelchairs and to achieve passive restraint systems so

there could be a bit more flexibility and ease of use when it comes to securement of wheelchairs in the vehicles. They are trying to look for greater door width on the buses. What they have today on the A-Line buses, which is what you would see in the future for the C-Line and beyond would be a 56 inch width door on the A-Line buses which is a significant increase from what the existing buses have on the local systems today.

There is also a suggestion and a desire to express for some iBeacon technology in all of the elements of the shelters. That was to be able to locate some of these elements like real time signs, enunciators and ticket vending machines through some interactive technology on phones to be able to locate those more easily. They are continuing to look for opportunities to include that in future technology packages and on the A-Line in subsequent BRT stops that will come down to a decision of priorities on how they develop their technology packages and how that fits in, continuing to look for opportunities too.

There is real time sign information, shelters with heaters and light at every station. There are bike racks, benches within the medium and large shelters, and off board fare collection, which include the ticket vending machines and validator.

The lifts and ramps on the buses can hold up to 800 pounds.

For the A-Line, they have budgeted services for snow removal on their sites to the level which is seen on the LRT lines. There is a bit more interplay with the BRT stations and adjacent sidewalks, private property owners as well as the adjacent roadway. It will be a learning process this winter to understand exactly how and where they place the snow. For security and safety they employed two additional Metro Transit Police Officers to conduct random fare checks in a similar fashion you would see on a LRT line. The A-Line has 40 foot buses. For all future arterial BRT lines they are looking to employ the articulated 60 foot buses that would have three doors.

They are going to see the stations, particularly in the winter, when they have snow everywhere, they are making sure that they are maintaining access to these doors that they have available on the buses.

In terms of time frame, for what they are trying to implement on the C-Line, they are currently in their initial design consideration which includes layouts of intersections, shelters and their pylons. In January and February of 2017, they are going to be developing their final station layout. This is the time to hear input and comments.

In September of 2017 they will be sharing final station designs. They hope to construct the C-Line in 2018. They plan to open with service along Penn Avenue and with temporary service on Olson Memorial Highway in 2019.

This October they are planning to share Glenwood long-term realignment recommendation and gather feedback on preliminary design. There will be an open house October 18 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Harrison Education Center. They will do neighborhood organization presentations, pop-up bus stop outreach, on-board customer outreach and ask for agency stakeholder feedback.

They are coordinating this project with Hennepin County. They will be doing reconstruction between Lowry and Broadway and Lowery to Dowling and reconstruction of the road. There will be mill and overlay and ADA improvements.

They are looking for feedback on the A-Line. What are C-Line considerations they should be aware of? Do you have any thoughts on the long alignment to Glenwood? What are the street reconstruction assessments?

4. Building Access: The Basics

Margot Imdieke Cross spoke to the TAAC committee. She is an Accessibility Specialist at the Minnesota State Council on Disability. She is going to talk about buildings because there are instances when building access becomes part of what we review and part of what we talk about. One of the big projects they recently looked at was the Mall of America and the bus stops there. Part of that brought them into the building. They had a bunch of questions about that.

She is going to cover the basics that are a critical part of accessibility. The first thing is the footprint. Historically the footprint for a wheelchair access is how much space do we really need? Do I need to provide a seating area? Or an area where somebody can pull up. Or an area where somebody can participate. What you are really looking at is a lot of conference rooms become really crowded and areas are really congested. You really want to think of the space that is 30 X 48. That is the general footprint that is historically for somebody using a

chair. So if she wants to make sure in a conference room that somebody has to get around that room she is going to want to make sure that the chairs are pulled out about 12 inches from the table and then she can provide a passageway behind those chairs if she is providing access in a conference room or in an assembly area. That design is changing because of the increased use of scooters. Scooters are a little bit longer so they are building six inches on to that footprint. Before long you are going to find that footprint has evolved to 30 X 54.

The minimum clearance for doorways is 32 inches. You measure that from the frame of the door to the door stop on the other side. Thirty-two inches is all that is required. There are so many chairs out there that are wider. Historically, manual chairs were 24 to 26 inches in width. Electric power chairs were 26 to 28 to 29 inches. The access board says they are not prepared to do it because it is going to cost so much to retool those designs and retool the way they think about doorways. Right now they are more concerned about when you increase the size of the doorway you would increase the size of the room or corridor. It is not just a stand-alone feature. It impacts. If they go to 34 inches, right now they are 32 or 36 inches. They have to start dealing with it and also power door openers. And start requiring them in more locations.

Disability parking. Minnesota has one of the highest standards in the country. When you talk about parking you talk about eight foot access isles. The day of the five foot access isles is being eliminated here in Minnesota. They want better signage in Minnesota. They want eight foot access isles so they don't have to worry about where they are going to park. In 2007 they actually amended out their own building code to require eight foot access isles. Moving forward if there is renovation in a parking lot or if there is new construction or if there is restriping they have to bring it up to current code. Disability parking signage is better and a higher standard here in Minnesota. Not only do they require signage at the parking space but instances where it doesn't disrupt the path of travel they also want no parking signage at the head of the access isle. So people don't inadvertently park there after the first snowfall. What is in code, the minimum they have in code is the least you can do and still be legal. So when everybody says they are code compliant or ADA compliant that says they have done the least they can do to still be legal.

In code, grandfathering in means you don't have to provide an upgrade unless you can do something to trigger new construction. If you do something to trigger compliance then you have to comply. If you don't do anything to trigger compliance then you can stay as you are forever. That is code. There are a lot of old buildings that don't have wheelchair access. There are so many parking lots that don't have disability parking. In code that grandfathering does exist. Once you do something to trigger it then you have to bring it up to compliance. That is the state building code. At the federal level they don't have the grandfathering provision. They talk about the ADA Compliance under Title Three.

So there are walkways and disability parking. Now they are going to get from the parking to the entrance of the building. In that instance they are required to be no greater than five percent slope. They can be as long as they need to be as long as they are not too steep.

The entrance says the doors have to be so wide. They have to provide a clearance of at least 32 inches. Most entry doors are around 36 inches. Double entry doors should have 48 inches plus the swing of the door. You have to have required maneuvering space. If you don't have any of these things then you are required to put in a power door operator. Power door operators are not required by code. There are discussions at the federal level. The agency believes they are required by code for state businesses.

The wheelchair symbol is the fifth most recognized symbol in the world. That symbol was approved in 1968 by the World Congress in Dublin, Ireland. So when you see variations of that symbol you don't want to see that on a sign of enforcement. The access board out of Washington, DC has said it could interfere with enforcement.

Restroom access. Minnesota has one of the highest standards in the country. They require a full 48 inches in front of the toilet. They require that the baby changer not be in the accessible stall. They have requirements for maneuvering space, requirements for accessories and faucet accessibility. They have a requirement for a vertical grab bar. Most other states do not. They have just horizontal grab bars not vertical ones. When you pull up to the sink there should be knee clearance.

Forty-eight inches is the highest reach range for accessibility. They often encourage people to go lower than 48 inches. If you can drop it down to 44 inches more people can use it. Place soap dispensers on the side wall instead of the back wall. That will allow short people and children to use them. Most of these standards are at the federal level. They are established by the Access Board. The enforcement agency for code is the building code official for the municipality.

An accessible path of travel has to maintain 36 inches. It can narrow down to 32 inches for a maximum of two feet. Then it has to widen out to 36 inches again. That is just the access code. If merchandise is sticking out along the isles it is against the fire code. The fire code demands more width (44 inches) than the access code does.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Blue Line

Ken Rodgers spoke to the TAAC committee. The Blue Line just received Met Council's determination of the next formal process of moving the project forward. It is at 30 percent construction and moving forward. The next meeting is Monday.

2. Green Line

This item was not presented

3. Orange Line

This item was not presented

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

MEMBER COMMENT

Patty Thorsen spoke to the TAAC committee. She just started serving on the Citizens League Transit Study Committee. They are studying transit funding in Minnesota to put together a report for the Legislature for January. They just had a couple of meetings and she is the only disabled person on the committee. The committee consists of high commissioners, city officials and mayors.

They discussed Metro Mobility stats.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary