

# Minutes

## Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



**Meeting date:** May 7, 2025

**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
- ☒ Patsy Murphy, Precinct C
- ☐ Ken Rodgers, Precinct D
- ☐ Jeffrey Dains, Precinct E
- ☐ Kari Sheldon, Precinct G

- ☒ Michele Severson, MCD
- ☒ Erik Henriksen, MCD
- ☒ Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- ☐ Heidi Myhre, MCCD
- ☒ Claudia Fuglie, MCCD

### Ex-officio:

- ☐ Andy Streasick, Metro Mobility
- ☒ Julie Sellner, Metro Mobility Service Center
- ☒ Douglas Cook, Metro Transit Customer Advocate
- ☐ Anjuli Cameron, Metropolitan Council

### Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

### Call to order

A quorum not being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:32 p.m.

### Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by Member Hendricksen.

### Business and information items

1. **A presentation of the B Line Overview & Underlying Local Service by Cyndi Harper and Alyssia Bell from Metro Transit.** They provided an overview of the upcoming B Line Bus Rapid Transit, which will launch on June 14 with community celebrations at Lake and Chicago in Minneapolis and Union Depot in St. Paul. The B Line will replace Route 21 as the main service along Lake Street, Marshall Avenue, and Selby Avenue. It will operate every 10 to 15 minutes and include dedicated bus-only lanes, off-board fare payment, and all-door boarding. Stations will feature real-time departure signs, lighting, emergency call systems, bike racks, benches, and push-button heating. The new buses will include level boarding at stations to improve accessibility.

The corridor was selected because it is the second busiest in the system with more than

10,000 daily riders prior to the pandemic, but also one of the slowest, averaging just eight miles per hour. The area is home to a diverse community, with more than 40 percent of residents within a ten-minute walk identifying as people of color. Community engagement has been ongoing since 2019 and will continue after launch, with special efforts to reach Spanish- and Somali-speaking riders through partnerships with local organizations. In addition to the B Line, underlying local routes are being adjusted to maintain coverage. Route 27 will connect Uptown to Minnehaha, Route 38 will replace Routes 23 and 612, Route 72 will maintain service north of I-94 to the Midway shopping area, and Route 17 will continue serving Lake Street between Hennepin and France. Nearly all riders will remain within one-eighth of a mile of service, and none will be farther than one-quarter mile.

During discussion, a committee member asked what a quarter mile equates to, and staff clarified that it is about 1,250 feet, typically two long blocks or four short blocks. Another member raised a concern about fare enforcement, asking what would happen if a rider did not have proof of payment. Staff explained they did not want to provide inaccurate information during the meeting and committed to following up. The member expressed concern about potential financial losses due to fare evasion.

2. **Blue Line Lake Street/Midtown Station Update** from Christina Morrison from Metro Transit. The station is being rebuilt as part of a larger corridor improvement effort, with construction expected to begin in 2025. The updated design will expand the size of the station platform, improve safety through better lighting and visibility, and provide additional amenities for riders. The renovation will also address accessibility concerns by creating a more navigable layout for riders with mobility devices. Staff emphasized that the design process has been informed by feedback from community engagement, including input from transit riders and neighborhood groups.

Committee members expressed interest in the design changes and asked about accessibility features such as elevator access, stairway improvements, and wayfinding signage. Staff noted that the project team is working to ensure that the rebuilt station will be easier to use for all riders, including those with disabilities.

Member Hendricksen stated that the ramp still seems to be very far away from ticket machines and the curb. The entrance to the ramp is also not heated like the rest of the ramp. Staff replied that was good feedback and will work with other agencies to determine who owns the land.

3. **Metro Mobility Update** from Julie Sellner from Metro Mobility. She began by noting that the committee had previously requested more frequent updates with statistical information, and while staff could not guarantee this for every meeting, they would make their best effort to provide regular reporting. Sellner provided her contact information along with Cheryl's, emphasizing that both are available to assist committee members with questions or concerns.

Sellner reviewed the broader structure of Metro Transit services, distinguishing between Metro Transit operations and the contracted services that encompass Metro Mobility, Transit Link, Metro Move, Metro Micro, and vanpool programs. Contracted providers are responsible for operations, fleet maintenance, reservations, and dispatch, with costs based on revenue hours. Performance is tracked through service standards that include both bonus and penalty provisions. She also shared the organizational chart for contracted transit services, highlighting leadership roles and providing members with a roadmap for where to direct service-related inquiries.

Metro Mobility was described as a shared-ride public transportation service for certified riders who are unable to use the fixed-route system due to a disability or health condition. It is a civil right under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the program is regulated by both the Federal Transit Administration and Minnesota statute. Trips are provided for any purpose, with 2024 ridership totaling 1.8 million trips. Year-to-date figures for 2025 stood at 531,000 trips.

Customer relations data showed 41,000 eligible customers, with approximately 19,000 active



riders at any given time. About 40 percent are eligible for waived transportation, 25 percent are conditionally certified, and 30 percent of trips require lift-equipped vehicles. Guests and personal care attendants can also be included on trips. Riders may book rides through phone, email, or an online system. The Metro Mobility Service Center oversees program administration, customer service, eligibility certifications, ID cards, and serves as an emergency backup for providers.

The fleet includes 499 cutaway buses, 21 ramp-equipped minivans, and 33 SUVs for ambulatory riders. About 76 percent of vehicles are model years 2023–2025, representing a major improvement. The average cost of a new bus is approximately \$153,000, and vehicles are typically retired after five years or 175,000 miles, though many have been used longer in recent years. Vehicles are equipped with lifts, GPS, internal and external cameras, mobile data terminals, and the Trapeze scheduling and dispatch system.

Service contracts cover three zones: west and east (2021–2027) and south (2020–2026). A premium on-demand taxi service contract was recently renewed through 2029, with Transportation Plus as the current provider. Care Pool is expected to begin service within 30 days, with an additional vendor possible in the future.

Sellner explained the distinction between ADA and non-ADA service areas. ADA service, mandated as a civil right, operates within three-quarters of a mile of fixed-route transit and is subject to strict federal performance standards, including zero trip denials. Non-ADA service, which accounts for about one-third of rides, operates on standby and is not bound by the same federal requirements.

Performance metrics showed improvements across several areas. On-time performance in 2025 year-to-date is 93.9 percent, compared to 91.8 percent in 2024. Appointment time performance is also 93.9 percent, up from 89.2 percent in 2024. Onboard time performance stands at 97.4 percent, compared to 95.7 percent the prior year. Metro Mobility recorded zero ADA trip denials in 2025, a significant improvement over the 111 denials in 2024 and more than 10,000 in 2023.

Premium on-demand service, available through a mobile app, has grown substantially, with January 2025 showing a 46 percent increase in rides compared to the previous year and a 505 percent increase in wheelchair lift usage. Sellner emphasized that more riders are using accessible vehicles than ever before. The service operates under a five-year contract and allows bookings up to four days in advance.

She also described temporary pilot programs, including one-cent fares for certified Metro Mobility customers using fixed-route transit. That program is scheduled to end in June but could become permanent—or even free—if approved by the legislature. Another pilot extending premium on-demand hours beyond fixed-route service is also scheduled to sunset in June unless legislative action extends it.

Sellner reviewed customer engagement initiatives, such as newsletters, community conversations, advisory outreach, and listening sessions. She noted the important role of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee as subject matter experts in Metro Mobility's planning and service evaluation.

During the question period, one member asked whether performance metrics excluded delays caused by external factors such as traffic or accidents. Sellner confirmed that the reported numbers include all trips without exclusions. Another member asked how extremely late pickups are counted if the rider left before the bus arrived; Sellner explained that those still count as late or missed trips.

Several questions centered on the premium on-demand program. Members asked about the pending legislative decision regarding extended service hours and were told the additional hours would end in June without action from lawmakers.

Committee members noted the dramatic improvement in reducing non-ADA denied trips, which staff attributed to stronger oversight and provider incentives. They also welcomed the

increase in accessible vehicle usage within premium on-demand service and requested that future updates include specific ride totals in addition to percentage increases.

Sellner concluded by addressing remaining questions from the prior update, including the Driver Mate project, which would replace older onboard communication devices with tablets. Technical issues are still being resolved, and no launch date has been set.

### **Public invitation**

There was no public comment.

### **Member comment**

Chair Fenley stated there were 3 resignations from the board: Chris Bates, Richard Rowan, Diane Graham-Raff. Committee members shared their kind thoughts on departing members.

### **Adjournment**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.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 May 7, 2025.

Approved this 3rd day of September 2025.

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### **Council contact:**

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