Minutes of the
REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 1, 2021

Committee Members Present: Chair David Fenley, Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen, Christopher Bates, Patsy Murphy, Ken Rodgers, Kari Sheldon, Heidi Myhre, Claudia Fuglie, Patty Thorsen, Diane Graham-Raff, Trevor Turner, Erik Henricksen and Richard Rowan.

Committee Members Absent: Jeffry Dains

Committee Members Excused: Sam Jasmine and John Clark.

Council Staff Present: Doug Cook, John Levin, Adam Mehl, Kimberly Malone, Jason Tintes, Andy Streasick, Christine Kuennen and Alison Coleman

Public Present: None

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:32 p.m. on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

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

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Myhre to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2021 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. Metro Transit App

Adam Mehl, Senior Marketing Development Specialist, spoke to the TAAC committee. It has been a little while since we talked about the app here. Back in July, we launched a new version of the app that is following around five years previous to approval. A company that changed hands a number of times. it went out of business and was saved by another company and then was our vendor for awhile too. After five years we felt that it was nice to go out for a new RFP both to be a good steward of the taxpayer's money, but also, we have been with the vendor for five years. The market has changed a lot since then. This vendor was the first one to the market with mobile ticketing. During the time we selected them there were not many viable options beyond them. Now there are dozens of options out there. We received a wide range of proposals and with input from people at the Council, Metro Transit and outside advisors including members of this committee. We ran down the new app. Which I can talk about now. From our new vendor Token Transit.

Next slide. So this is the next phase of mobile tickets and for our mobile app. Back when we signed on with Mobile, back in 2016, we had different views on what our mobile app would look like and what our road map ahead would be. Back then, the general idea was to make it an all-encompassing transportation app that provided transit information and tickets. But also, eventually, integrated other modes of transportation. Really trying to hone in on the shared mobility aspect. So, offering people access to things like ride hailing services share and scooter share and whatever else might be on the market. Including potentially other Metro Transit services. That may be on the regular bus or train network.

Over the years though, we have seen the market shift a lot and we are trying to be more responsive to that. So we want this app to be designed for flexibility for everyone. We want it to be primarily a mobile ticketing app. There are a lot of ways to get transportation and transit information out there. But there really needs to be one source of record for the ticketing and that starts where the Metro Transit ticket app lives.

We provide the tickets. And you can download through our app. But one of the reasons we selected this vendor is they offer a lot of great options for apps other than the Metro Transit to sell our tickets while we still maintain control of those tickets. We will talk a little bit more about that in a bit. This app is also a little bit regionally focused. The previous ticket and app design were really built around Metro Transit's branding. Our colors and the images of our vehicles and things like that are built into the ticket itself. And really it is part of the regional fare system that is used not just by Metro Transit, but the suburban providers like Minnesota Valley, Southwest, Maple Grove, etc. We wanted to make sure that this version reflected the regional fare system better than the previous ticket. This one now, featuring colors and the logo of the GoTo card, now the GoTo system, where basically the regional fare system is the GoTo system. Even though these two tools don't talk to each other, i.e. you can't use GoTo value to buy tickets. It is still part of the electronic fare collection system. So now basically anything within that bucket will have the GoTo logo on it.

As I mentioned. The ability to sell tickets on other platforms is a big part of that too. As the regional providers bring online their own apps. We want to make sure that the ticket experience and the regional system is maintained. This version, this app provider, allows us to have, say MVTA. They could pick one app, the transit planning, they could still sell our ticket in the app and without having to handle that themselves.

Next slide. New features on this one. I will just start with saying this primarily the app was launched to mirror what we had available in the mobile app. Part of that was just to make sure that we were able to launch on time before our mobile contract ended on July 31. We launched on July 16 with this new app. It was kind of down to the wire. We wanted to make sure we launched on time. So we really just replicated the previous version of the app. With a few notable features. One of the key features is improved screen reader compatibility. This was something that we had the app vendors all over the top vendors. I believe there were four top vendors demonstrate that for us. This one was one of the better ones for sure. We also are now able to now do full native translations of all the Title VI languages.

Previously, we relied on the phones native translator programs. So, Talk Back and the one for Android. But basically, the phone's native language support. We were reliant on whatever Google decided to support. That did not include all of the local languages that we support including one that is a small population and it is not well supported with those phones. So now we have the phones set so that everything was manually translated by native speakers. We are not relying on computer program to translate them. So hopefully having much better experience for those who don't use English as their primary language using our mobile app. So support for third party apps. There is more coming on that. We haven't done much with it now, but we are in the process of moving part of that.

Next slide. So mobile ticketing is all about reducing barriers to ride. We know that it is an easy way for customers who don't have exact change or don't have a GoTo card. Or maybe they don't even carry cash. To access transit easily. You can go from having no app on your phone to riding the bus within a matter of minutes if you download our app.

We also know that customers are using many apps to access transit these days. Some of them are Google Maps, Transit App, Move It App and things like that. One of the things we are trying to do is reduce the barriers that customers have from even having to download the Metro Transit app. If they are already using the app that they prefer, we don't want to make them download an app to simply buy a ticket. We want to move to where they are, meet them where they are. The philosophy that launched the mobile app five or six years ago, is that we knew customers were on their phones doing everything. Paying for things, planning trips, etc. We wanted to make sure that we are meeting where they were there. This is the next step in that. Without supporting their apps, we are giving them an extra step. We would like to reduce that.

So this vendor allows for easy implementation of mobile ticketing across those platforms. It is really about keeping it easy for our customers. So that is something that we are working on now. Currently, making sure that everything works well from a contracting thing like that. Hopefully, in the fall, we will be moving to having our tickets on their apps.

Next slide. So this is part of our shared mobility strategy as an agency. It will allow us to be on any platform. Not just Metro Transit. It also means that it opens the door to other shared services. Metro Mobility is a service, MaaS/ticket bundling and things like that. For example, there are not a ton of options here in the US right now, but in Europe, there are a lot of options where you would pay, say, a monthly fee kind of like your cell phone bill and you would get "X" number of transit trips per month. "X" number of rides on a ride hailing service and "X" hours on bike sharing. This app would allow for that if we were to go down that path. It does look like that is

close to becoming a reality in the US. It is important to note that regardless, the ticketing data will be staying with Metro Transit. It will still be managed within our customer portal and things like that. And we will be able to see the data that we need from those.

The other big advantage of this verses Metro Transit becoming a mobility aggregating app. We have all these vendors on our app. It avoids having to pick a winner. Say like we decided that we are going to pick Lyft for our ride hailing service on our app, that would by nature exclude Uber, potentially. It also protects us, and perhaps customers want to use Uber. We want to make sure that the customers are using what they want. It also protects us in terms of some liability as well. If Lyft would have a scandal of some sort or did something that ran afoul of what we thought was good business practices, and we took them off of our app, that could leave our customers stranded without a shared mobility option for an app. So really, what we are going to do then is you will be on other apps. So, if we pull off of the Lyft app, we could pull off of a single app but still be on a Transit app or Google or what have you. And not leave the customers high and dry. Verses if we were the aggregator.

Next slide. Are there questions?

Myhre said my question is for people who have learning disabilities. You know the process and to do things. Is this app really easy to download and to follow? Because Covid has changed on the web. When you go to the internet and look for bus stops. They are making it a little bit more complicated. I need a few people. Maybe a few friends and at this meeting to teach me how to use the new system. Because Covid is changing how we ride the bus. So is this app easy to use and follow the download and I can do all the steps. I don't always need somebody to help me.

Mehl said we think it is very easy to use. It is very linear.

Myhre said what does that mean?

Mehl said I will speak to what I know here. The process of purchasing a ticket is a fairly linear process from when you download the app to where you sign in. You follow a flow that allows you to first pick your rider type. Whether it is an adult rider, senior Medicare rider or a mobility rider. Once you choose that, you have your ticket options. You would have what service you would like to ride. Bus metro, Northstar or express and it would branch off from there.

It presents you with one choice at a time so that you could select the proper ticket. Part of the reason we are keeping this simple is so that it is focusing on ticketing and not much else. I have information on transit similar to our previous uplinks to our website. But yes, we wanted to keep it straight forward and simple for everyone to use.

Myhre said is that including the reading because some people have a hard time reading words and certain things and they don't have the proper tools to do that. Have it read to them. Does it make it easy to understand? Or is it just a lot of fancy words?

Mehl said it is literally just our tickets. So it would say everything you would see in any of our tickets. Whether It is an adult full fare, a rush hour fare. It doesn't have anything extraneous other than a few explanations like when rush hour is and things like that.

Myhre said If I make a mistake, will it let me fix it? Because I am trying to figure the process out.

Mehl said until you purchase a ticket, there is nothing permanent. You can always go back.

Turner said is there a Bata version of this app? If it is not functional, is it something you can play around with?

Mehl said we do have test versions but that is generally reserved for the development staff. The app is out in the wild right now and you could play around with it up until the ticket purchase if you were to download it today. It is available in Google Play and Itunes and Ab Star currently. Just look for a blue and red circle T with a blue border.

Sheldon said so this is a different app other than what people are already using? Because I see other people just showing the phone to the driver. So am I to assume that they already paid the fare and that is what this app will do?

Mehl said yep correct. The app is out there and it is being used today. It is the same processes as the previous app. You show the driver or the police officer on the light rail or the fare inspector on the Northstar after you have purchased and activated a ticket.

Vice Chair Paulsen said on the new app, do you still have the ability to look at the route and everything and know when the next bus is coming? I know my wife has used the new app before with the drivers and they really like that because that touch list environment is coming back in a lot of different areas and one way to do this is that app. Can the app be transferrable? Can it be useable on Metro Mobility? Because if it is another system or a totally different system, I think that is a waste of effort and a waste of money. Because at one point we have to be able to use that same type of service throughout our whole transit system and not just use it on the mainline or on the light rail. Can you use it throughout the whole system? Including Metro Mobility.

Mehl said the first question regarding information on transit like planning tools. Those are in there just like the old previous app. There are links to our website tools just like in the last app where you could see the trip planner and the next trip schedules, etc. As far as Metro Mobility at this time, there is no Metro Mobility ticket on the Metro Transit app. There certainly could be. It is not something that is brought forward yet. It would have to be a decision by Metro Mobility.

Vice Chair Paulsen said here is also my concern. What if I pay my Metro Mobility fare on Metro Mobility? But I don't take my return ride. I am going to take the bus home. Because I changed my schedule. Is there any way for me to tell that bus driver: "Hey, I already paid on Metro Mobility and I have that two and a half hour window if I am jumping on the light rail or jumping on the bus home?"

Mehl said that is a little out of my area. Assuming you are paying with a GoTo card, you would be able to ride home. Beyond that, I don't know. I only really function in the app world here. The app doesn't offer a Metro Mobility ticket currently.

Myhre said does the app know I am disabled? And so I get the discount, do you know, if I use it? Or do I have to enter something extra on top of that? If we do decide like Darrell was saying, make it across the board for all transit including Metro Mobility, will you be working with Human Services and the Counties? Because that is where I get my GoTo card for Metro Mobility and transit as part of my waiver services. So there is a bigger picture other than what Darrell is talking about that you have to look at. Because there are people who get it through the County and still can be independent in the community and use Metro Mobility and the city bus.

Mehl said so, the first question is when you select your fare type, and that would determine which fare site you see. So if you were to pick the standard adult, that is the standard regular price fare, senior, youth and Medicare fares and mobility fares have different fare sets. You would select those. There is no proof needed within the app. There is a popup that explains the ID you may need to present if asked for it. But we leave that up to the fare inspectors, the bus drivers and the police department to ask for that should they deem it needed. Otherwise, you are free to purchase the ticket that you want.

As far as the County goes and things like that, that is something this app can support. That is not my decision to make that happen. That would be a larger fare policy conversation with Revenue Operations. I would say that we are currently to test something out like that, exploring a transit assistance program pilot for this year hopefully. That would be something where a rider would have to opt in and there would be a validation process. And they would see a different fare set than your regular user offering them those one dollar rides the transit assistance program offers. That is in the works. We are trying to figure out the best way to do this. This is a new service that we didn't really have available to us on the previous apps. So that is another great thing that this new vendor brought to us. So I am hoping, yeah, that it is expansive. We just need to make sure we get it right in the pilot before we start expanding.

Vice Chair Paulsen said has Matt announced the new change that happened this morning from Metro Transit? They are dropping all the Metro Transit fares to $1.00 from now until the end of October. Why doesn't that same type of discount apply to Metro Mobility? Because you are impacting the most vulnerable people. Their fares don't get reduced. Metro Transit gets to get those reduced fares for two months. That sounds a little strange to me. I wonder if anybody else has looked at that or has heard about that. The news just made a big announcement about that today.

Mehl said I don't know anything about that. I have nothing to do with fare policy.

Streasick said I am wondering for people who do use the mobility fare, either for an "L" on their ID or because they are paratransit certified, does the app allow for some sort of sign in or authentication that would allow

them to identify themselves without needing to present an ID? So that they can still just show their phone the same way a full fare rider would? Or are they going to need to in the long run? Or can they continue to show a physical ID in addition to their phone?

Mehl said at this point, that is not how it works. They are just open for anyone to purchase. Obviously, there is an honor system reliance on that. It is certainly something that we could do. Again, that may be a fare policy conversation. It could be handled similarly to the tap stuff I talked about earlier where you could have an authorized list of people. The challenge you would have there though, is that you would have to have someone take some steps beforehand. You would have to register with us and we would have to keep you on that list and if someone were not on there could they still buy one? It might exclude people like travelers who might be something like that. They may be coming from out of town. It is not a no or an impossibility. It is just something we could discuss more. Obviously reducing the barrier of having to show my ID is good. But what is the tradeoff? That locks off people who don't register if they are not a regular rider or something like that. I just need to weigh those things.

Chair Fenley said. If anyone wants to go to the app and check it out. If you have any questions, you can send them to me and I can forward them to Adam.

Mehl said unlike a GoTo card where you have to load up money, this is a true pay as you go system. If you buy your $1.00 mobility fare, you just have to buy $1.00 worth of rides. You don't have to say: "If I put $10.00 or $5.00 on your card, and then use it, I don't have anything left over. To me, that is one of the bigger benefits. Especially from folks that maybe don't have a lot of spare cash lying around that they got locked up on a GoTo card. I think this is a good benefit for those folks as well.

2. Metro Transit Strategic Initiatives

John Levin, Director of Strategic Initiatives, spoke to the TAAC committee. My goal today is to provide an overview of the Strategic Initiatives Department at Metro Transit.

Next slide. So Strategic Initiatives has been around since around 2014. It is a relatively new department within Metro Transit. It was really created to address cross-functional challenges and cross-functional ideas within the organization. There is a specific expertise around data and analytic and technology. But that is not our only focus. On this slide here, you can see that we have a group that focuses on research and analytics, strategic planning, performance management, business technology management, and our shared mobility program. Part of that shared mobility program. You heard Adam describing elements of that earlier. And I will talk about that more in a moment.

Next slide. So the committee has actually heard from some Strategic Initiative staff before a couple of times. One of the times before from Eric Lind. He is the Research Manager and Analytics. He presented in August of 2019 on some of the types of data that we have, about our transit services and our vehicles and our customers. And how we use that data to inform some of the work that we do. I think this is a great example of the key role of our group and the work that we do. One of our focuses is using data to inform decisions that we make at Metro Transit and the investments that we make with staff and funding resources. What we are doing is we are taking the raw data that comes out of many of our operational systems which could be very complex, sometimes very difficult to get that data about vehicle information and passengers or maintenance activities. And we are extracting that data. We are manipulating that data and we are generating analysis information. So how we understand how the service is being used, what the experience of our customers are, etc.

We are creating that information. but then we take it to the next step, which is really into what I would call performance management. Which is how do we manage performance or progress to our goals? And how can data help us again and inform our decisions and so if we make a decision, for example, service design or shelter location, or snow clearance or maintenance to our facilities. It is all of these types of activities. What our group is doing is specifically take the data that we have and using that to inform the decisions.

So what Eric presented a couple of years ago now was, for example, how we use the lift, ramp deployments, data and the mobility fare tags. How we use that, for example, for inciting of shelter locations and in the maintenance of snow clearance at our facilities and how we prioritize. How we prioritize and how we share that information with our partners in the cities, and they can use that data to prioritize their decisions and their investments. So this work around data is a significant piece of what our department does.

Next slide. But I will say that we are starting to focus not just on data, but on using other information beyond just the numbers to inform our decisions. This is really an evolving approach both within our organization and really across the industry. But really trying to understand what the individual experiences of people are. Of our customers, of our employees, and others who interact with our service. Seeing them not just as numbers, but as people who have an experience with our system.

This involves a lot of collaboration. I will say that across the entire Strategic Initiatives Department and the work we do, we do everything in collaboration with other departments. So a lot of what you hear me talk about, is the work of other departments that we are supporting. So this is a great example of where we support surveys, where we support customer engagement, we support understanding the texts that are collected from customer contacts and from surveys. Helping to use that information to inform decisions and discussions. This is a growing part of our work. it is a more difficult and different kind of our work. but I really see this as an important part of our future of making good decisions within the organization.

Next slide. I mentioned already the idea of performance management, making sure that we are focusing the decisions and the actions that we make on our outcomes. That is reflected more generally within our department in three different efforts that we have underway. The first is around strategic planning. So strategic planning where you establish what are your goals, your long-term objectives, outcomes that you are trying to achieve. And then what is the work that we want to do as an organization? Do you try to achieve those goals? So we do strategic planning at an agency level. For all of Metro Transit. We also do strategic planning at a department level or a working unit level. Again, having the conversations about how we connect the work and the decisions that we are doing to the outcomes we are trying to achieve.

We are working right now on a new strategic plan. I think that the hope is to roll that out in the next several months. We are finalizing some of the details that I think will help provide a very strong sense of where Metro Transit is going in the next few years. And how we think we will get there and make progress.

Once we set those goals and we have identified the work we want to do, the next piece of this connection is measuring and monitoring our performance. Are we making progress towards our goals? We do that at Metro Transit through using a lot of data. But we have key performance indicators that we collect and monitor regularly. And we are also starting to set up a little bit more of a formalized approach to this in our performance teams. It is something we are just getting off the ground now. But hopefully, I can come back and report on that in more detail later.

The idea of performance teams and the idea of performance management in generally is that you identify the outcomes you are trying to achieve. And then how you want to monitor performance towards those outcomes. So what is my measure of on-time performance? Or my measure of providing good customer information. And then collect the data and monitor our progress.

Performance is also about identifying the work that we are trying to do. So work that we do to improve customer information or work that we do to improve on time performance. And monitoring our progress on that work. What we call the input into our work. The performance teams will be monitoring again, and both our on-time performance but also monitoring our progress on the actions that we are taking.

The final piece of this effort is communication. So we are communicating our progress, not only externally to stakeholders, but also internally. It is really important that all of us as Metro Transit employees, try to understand what we are trying to achieve and the work that we are doing. And also understand the progress we are making. This allows us to work together in a performance-oriented culture. So part of our roll in the department is to try to establish communication about our performance, both internally, but also externally. We are developing and I hope we will be launching early next year some performance dashboards at transit that will help the general public see our progress but also have internal tools to report our progress for staff.

Next slide. The last piece I will talk about is a little less focus on data. It is focused on an important part of our work, which is fostering innovation. and leverage in technology. The two tend to go hand-in-hand. You heard early this year in fact from Meredith Lakodkar in June. She is the Shared Mobility Program Manager. Talking about the Metro Transit pilot project. So this is a new on-demand service that we will be piloting. The initial pilot will be in the North Minneapolis area. You can see a general service area in the bottom picture. But it is roughly bounded by I-94 on the east and I-394 on the south. Golden Valley Road and Broadway on the north and Theodore Wirth Parkway on the west.

This will be a service we had hoped to launch in the fall of this year. We have had some difficulties with the contracting and getting everything set up. We are planning to launch this service now in the spring of next year, 2022. I will say the delay is allowing us to do things a little differently than originally planned. I think it will ultimately be a better service. This micro transit service is just a great example of leveraging the innovations that are occurring in the industry. Bringing those to bear locally to solve our challenges and achieve our goals of increasing mobility options which is one of our goals and increasing the connectivity with the fixed route network and the other significant investments we made with fixed route services in the region. We will be launching that microtransit service pilot. But really, it is a great example.

The microtransit is again, Is an intersection of two broader efforts. So the first is leveraging new modes of what is going on in the industry. Providing more options. Part of that work of leveraging new technologies, new modes, is minimizing the negative impacts, minimizing barriers of those local services. So part of our conversation around microtransit is making sure it is accessible to all. And part of our conversation is about shared mobility, which includes things like bikes, scooters, and making sure that those services don't impede the movement of others using the transportation system. So lots of conversations about leveraging new ideas but also mitigating things.

The second piece of the shared mobility work is around technology and technology innovation. Part of the role of our group is to try to make sure that innovation that occurs in the industry and the innovation that we are creating, that we are doing those projects effectively and efficiently and monitoring whether they work.

There are some words on the screen here. The Aira project, beacons, annunciators. These are not projects that my department is leading. I think they are good examples of us as an organization bringing new technology to bear to meet our needs. And the types of projects that I want my department to help us do more in the future to facilitate new ideas.

Next slide. This has been a quick summary of the work that when you hear strategic initiatives at Metro Transit, you will know the work that we do which is around data, around analytics, around performance measurement, around shared mobility, around innovation and leveraging technology. So with that, I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Fuglie said I do have a question about respect. Do you have any plans for the future that is something about respect of passengers? Especially folks with disabilities, for people to move. And also respect for the passengers and bus drivers. Because I have been seeing a lot of crap going on lately on the buses that are not respecting the passengers or the drivers. And the drivers always seem to get in trouble for trying to protect the passengers. So I don't know if that is part of the future or not. Thank you.

Levin said I certainly hope it is part of the future. As a regular transit rider myself, not so much in Covid, trying to reduce the demand. But before and after of a rider of many of our services, I agree that the sense of feeling like you belong and feeling like others around you respect your presence is critical. I wouldn't say that that is a specific area of our departments' work, but I do know that in Metro Transit, it is a critical question that we have right now. So we have worked in the past on a variety of efforts to increase the awareness of the importance of respect and create a more welcoming environment in transit.

But I also know that that is a focus now, going forward, the future of bringing on additional staff on to the system, to increase the formal staff presence on our vehicles. Particularly light rail. But I think across the system. As a way, as one tool, to try to make sure that we have a welcoming environment for everybody. I won't speak in great detail. There are others in transit that could speak with more detail on that question. I would think that would be great to have them come and talk about that work. But I will say that that is very much on the minds of folks at Metro Transit and is something that we are working hard on.

Chair Fenley said that leads on to my question. So what determines what lands on your plate? Or what determines what data points you are taking into consideration?

Levin said I will say this. In some ways what falls on our plate. We act a little bit like an internal consulting group. So a lot of work that we do is being done by others in the organization. But oftentimes when things are becoming a more difficult project or a more complex project, we will be asked to assist because we have the staff or technical expertise to work on the more difficult challenges. This is particularly on the data side.

When it comes to the strategic plan, and the performance teams, our work is to coordinate, to create the big picture, plan and vision for that work. But then to bring all the voices from across the organization into the picture.

If your question is: “Well, how do we decide what our goals are? How do we just decide how we are going to measure our performance?” Those are questions we are bringing the other staff to the table on and ultimately asking leadership saying: “This is staff’s perspective.” Perhaps we have gathered information from our external stakeholders and then asking leadership; to agree on that is how we want to measure our performance going forward. I don’t know if I answered your question, but our role is to create the space within which we can have that conversation and bring forward the decisions.

Chair Fenley said it sounds like it is capacity building. Then collaboration.

Levin said at our core, we are Metro Transit, which is an operating organization. We purchase, maintain and operate buses and trains. So sometimes when you are doing something beyond that, you need to build that capacity for that other type of work. And so, that is a significant portion of what our group is doing. Making sure that we are able to do the type of activities that are critical. But that may not be what you think of as the traditional functions.

Henricksen said watching the conversation, I was curious what strategic initiatives are being looked into using the data driven approach to accessibility and what data points either quantitative or qualitative used for those types of initiatives focused on transit?

Levin said I will say that some of the work that we have done in the past, and have reported on, particularly for example on really trying to understand where those who use mobility fares or those who are using the ramps or the lifts to access our vehicles. Where they are using the system. So the geographic perspective and then maybe the time of day as well. Making sure that that information isn’t forming other decisions that we are making. That is a significant example of how we have achieved that.

So we create a regular data set with that information combined with two data sets combined. Provide that to our facilities maintenance groups as well as to our city partners to inform the decisions. We also then help with the conversation: “How best do we use that data to make those decisions?” One other group we provided to is the group that is working on station siting locations for bus rapid transit, for example.

So we also helped them with the analytical question: “What is the best way to inform decisions with that data?” So we will get into the weeds with how do you merge that data in with all the other data we are looking at with those decisions? Certainly, that data is an important part of it. I am sure there are other examples. If there are other questions that folks think we should be looking at, I am sure I would be happy to look at that.

Part of the work that we do in our group is looking at what we refer to as “Access to Destinations.” It is using the word accessibility a little bit differently, but it is: “Where can you get to using the fixed route transit network?” And part of what we have looked at there is making sure we are looking at a variety of different destinations that people may want to get to. Medical facilities for example. Shopping is a good example. So that is an example, not specifically looking at accessibility or mobility users, but trying to look very broadly about how people are using the transit system to reach a variety of different destinations. I think that is a really important piece. Just recognizing how different people are using the system for a lot of different trip purposes. And trying to make those work effectively.

Myhre said my question is do data of maintenance and I was wondering, because of West Saint Paul, there is a shelter, and it has been more than two months since the glass has been replaced. It has been damaged. Do you look at data and how much shelters and buses and ramps and certain things that checked? Or are they just like I know that Covid right now might be slowing down and somethings like it could be hard to get glass. But does the data show that you have the really certain problem in certain areas of maintenance? Like in the wintertime that shoveling in front of the bus stops correctly. So wheelchairs can get to it. I was just wondering do you look at maintenance like data? That is real important. But then you don’t end up putting more money into the system when you might be able to fix it in other ways. And it will help the people with disabilities because they can then help you guys formulate other ways to save money too.

Levin said that is a great question. I know the presentation is not up right now. But one of the slides that I showed had an image of a graph that showed an image of a couple of comments. They are actually, specifically, information about shelter conditions. It is slide four or five.

So this slide shows our customer relations dashboard, which is an internal tool that we use. So that staff across the organization have access to not just individual comments that are made from our customers, but we can see them as data. We could see how many complaints or contacts that we get about certain issues. We

could also map those. So the geographic part of those. We also can see the detail. The bottom of the screen shows the specific texts that were coming from a phone call with a customer.

So our group is helping to get at access to this data. We created this tool so that people could see the data much more easily. And see it in aggregate, not just as individual contacts. But certainly, if there are departments that say we would like to do more analysis of when or how incidents occur or how long does it take to repair? We certainly would get and engage and support those types of questions. Again, a lot of this has to come from business. And a lot of this has to come from our Strategic Planning and Performance Management activities to identify where we are going to go.

We come at this from several different angles, but I think fundamentally, my answer is yes. We are using maintenance information as data. We are using that data to inform the decisions that we are making, from staffing and around the work that we do. As you suggest, it doesn't always mean that things get fixed as quickly as they should. I know that getting glass has been an issue, in terms of getting on the supply chain. But it is really important for us not to lose track of those issues and try over time to improve our performance. And again, that is what our group is all about.

Rodgers said something that you were responding to in the previous answers, tripped a question in my mind. You mentioned the fact that one of the features that your group serves as is kind of a consultant ish approach in bringing the right people to the table to help direct the dialogue that is taking place. One issue that we seem to experience time and time again, is the fact that the decisions have been made about a pending route bus stop location. Route location. Then we are presented with a concept that is complex and difficult in terms of accessibility to that particular location. My question relates to: is there capacity or opportunity in having those types of discussions about trying to develop criteria for identifying appropriate locations for future stations? If that could involve people with disabilities or people from our committee so that we could have some input in helping make the decision about where a station goes instead of then the decision being made based on not having our input. And then having the challenge of us having to acquire or push or force extra costs related to making that initial decision a safer option for people with disabilities.

Levin said I admit I am a little out of my depth in terms of what has happened in the past in terms of the sequencing and the timing of those past efforts. I think what you say makes sense. And I think that overall, it is an effort of our organization to make sure that we are doing genuine engagement on the front end of the projects. Whether it is with the general public or with the advisory committees or with the policymakers. Doing that genuine education on the front end to inform the discussions and decisions that are being made.

I can't speak to this specific issue or the specific resent projects. I think the intersection of my group is that when those questions come up, and we want to put some measurable numbers behind it, I think that is where we come in to play. So I do know that, for example, when we think about the Bus Rapid Transit stop locations. Staff is trying to look at potential locations. The data about where there are mobility pass boardings or where there are ramp deployments. The data is part of what informs the initial planning that goes into that work.

What I can speak to is what happens with the engagement part you are talking about. The committees input that process. I am really not as prepared to discuss that.

Rodgers said just a follow up. I don't want to imply that we are not being part of the engagement. We are. And we really appreciate that. And it has spurred some interesting conversations. And oftentimes more full conversations. My concern is that I realized that you deal in data and data points. Sometimes, looking at some existing data points that you mentioned, the pattern of people previously using a particular location, with a disability, is part of the process. And an important part of the process.

But it is not the end all, be all, part of the process. Because if that site gets developed, based on criteria that was given previously, of how it was used before, does not allow, if it was not built with accessibility, does not allow them or a person with a disability to use that spot in the future. That really curtails the usability for somebody. I just noticed that when we are engaged, often times we are engaged after decisions have been made about accessibility. Then we bring in the perspective from an engagement perspective of why that may or may not be a good idea. From a safety issue, from a person with a disability perspective, from a mobility issue. And oftentimes that then has to change. And that creates some additional cost in restructuring, redeveloping and reemploying ideas.

If there was some way to develop the concept of the inclusion of the data that may not be a point that has already been measured, earlier on in the process, that might help reduce some of the expenditures and costs and get us to a more streamlined system. It is just a thought.

Levin said I really appreciate the comment. I understand. I don't know if you were here for the slide I had, which said we use data, but we don't only use data. What you just said is exactly the point. An individuals' lived experience. And understanding of complex situations. Is sometimes as important or more important than the data. And as you said, the past data verses the future knowledge that we have. It is a great point and is something that we are trying to do better. Both from an analytic side on my perspective and I know something that I think we are striving to do better as an organization on the engagement side. I can't speak directly to the engagement piece of my group's work. but I understand the issue you are raising.

Turner said I was curious about the microtransit program you mentioned. Is that something that would be equitable to Uber Pool or a Lyft shared rides program or anything like that? Is it an on-demand where it goes on a route or it travels based on a computer picks up passengers based with similar requests or something like that?

Levin said I think there are similarities to Uber Pool or Lift line shared ride on-demand services. I think a difference would be that the microtransit services are micro from a point of experiences is the vehicle is smaller. Also, the service area is smaller. So we are going to operate in a two to three square mile service area. And really not outside that area. And so we will provide a point-to-point service so somebody can say: "I am here and I want to go there." We will schedule those rides, picking up multiple people along the way. So there may be multiple people in the vehicle going different places. But we won't take you anywhere in the region. We will just take you somewhere in the service area. And then, it is also a different vehicle. So a lot of the time those services are smaller vehicles we will be using. For this pilot, we will be using a retired 10-passenger cutaway vehicles. Then also, the fare is going to be great. The fare is going to be hard to beat. It will be a regular transit fare for the service with a transfer to fixed route, which I think is going to be a better fare than you would get on other private services.

Turner said do you have multiple micro regions that cover the entire metro area? And then you just have to stay within your area. if I live in downtown Minneapolis, and If I just need to get to the light rail stop, do I go all the way to Saint Paul? I could just use this. Get me to the light rail. Then take it over. It could help me get through the neighborhood. Especially if your neighborhood is less serviced.

I guess the answer would be this is a pilot. So it will be one service area. in a very big region. Covering one area. Our hope is to identify other areas in the region. I don't think our plan is to cover the entire region. We do still have Transit Link service. That is general public dial-a-ride where we don't have fixed route service. I don't think our plan is to cover the entire region. I think our plan is to cover those areas that have specific benefits, from a mobility perspective. For specific gaps, for example, in the fixed route service that we want to identify service we want to fill in a new way. So, it remains to be seen. Obviously, it would require funding to implement these services.

So right now, the purpose of the pilot, is to see how does it operate? Do people understand it? How does it fit within our system? Hopefully, once we get through the pilot, we get feedback from the customers. We see how it operates. We can then make some decisions about where we even stand on service. That will be some hard decisions to make about where we would see the most benefit. I can't commit to have it covering your specific neighborhood or any specific neighborhood. But certainly, we want to focus on the area best serviced.

Chair Fenley said, Trevor, I can chat with you offline about the pilot project. It was introduced to us a couple of months ago. I believe you were not here. We will have them back once they have more information on what the project is.

Rowan said I had a question about, has there been any research, gathering of data, that you are aware of in regard to the transportation needs of the senior population? One of the things that made me think about it is I live in Roseville. There has been an explosion of senior housing here. I don't know if that equates to more need for transit. How many of those people would use transit? Or still use their own cars. But there certainly hasn't been any increase that I have observed in transit options for people that are there. I guess my question is around that.

Levin said I know we have not done specific research. I know we looked at research that others have done in the area of senior transportation. I don't think we have done anything specific. I will echo the challenge that you

raised. Which is that land use decisions, development decisions are often being made disconnected from transportation network resources and decisions. We say that public transportation is a great option for those who don't drive. And then you have senior facilities going in where there is not great public transportation. There must be a disconnect there. I am speaking a little bit less from my formal roll of a transit supporter and advocate. I may be more admiring the problem that you are identifying and saying it is a definite issue. I don't know if we have great data. It is actually a question that we perhaps could apply analytical resources to. And ask question is where is that development occurring and what is the level of transit that is nearby?

Myhre said my question is do you look at old data and new data? So sometimes you don't repeat yourself, or maybe look at some old data that had some really good stuff and newer stuff doesn't have. Sometimes the past can tell you somethings about the future that you don't want to repeat or maybe you do need to repeat. Do you have that record, do you know? Because sometimes, somewhere along the way there might have been a good idea, but it never really got off the table. Because I remember in the early 2000's, mostly in the 1990's, we were in transportation left or right in the community. If it wasn't Metro Mobility, it was the city bus. Then they would put it in places where a lot of people couldn't use it. So do you look at that stuff to make good decisions in the future to help you guys? Not only for people without disabilities or with little disabilities. But the whole community: the elderly, the blind, the disabled? Even people who are coming into the United States. Because of the war. So they can learn too. Do you look at that kind of stuff?

Levin said part of what we do in our group is to try to find as much data as we can that we think would be useful and relevant to the question at hand. We do have a lot of historical data. We have great historical data of our service we have offered over the years. And about ridership that we have had. We also collect new data. The newer data we have is much better data. So, for example, we are collecting better and better data about the demographics of the riders in the system. The onboard travel behavior inventory and the onboard transit survey data we collect. We collect data about not just where people want to travel and where they get on and off. But what is their trip purpose and some of the information about that. The more information that we have, specifically around demographics, we can apply that data to the decisions we are making. We don't always have the best data in the past. There is much more data now.

Myhre said is it because of technology? Because our technology has gotten better. You can archive things better. Or figure a new way to do it. So is technology helping that?

Levin said technology helps but I think we are asking better questions. We are understanding that if we want to know something, we have to ask. We are doing a better job with designing our surveys. Asking questions that are actually going to be useful to make decisions. So one of the roles of our group that I mentioned is about surveys. We do a lot of work helping others design surveys and implement good surveys. We analyze their survey data to make sure that when somebody says: "I want to do a survey" to understand some travel demand, for example, making sure that it is a good survey. And we will be able to answer the questions that we are really asking.

For example, if we want to understand how seniors or people with different mobility challenges are travelling in the system. Let's make sure that we are asking the right questions so that we can address that. I don't have a specific example, but it is partly technology and having a lot of data, but it is partly also really being smart about how we approach those questions.

I would be happy to come back at another time. I would probably bring with me some of the staff who actually do the detail analytical and conceptual work here because they would be able to answer these questions better than I can.

Myhre said when you were talking about data. Do you have people on your committee that actually live it every day? Like elderly people, disabled people and people from around the world. So they can tell you how your data sucks or how it works or really good or really making a difference.

Levin said I will say that it is one of the challenges of my staff that we don't have a lot of diversity. I wish we had more within our staff. Because we don't, I think we understand that. One of our goals is to make sure that we are reaching out more on the front end to make sure that we understand broad perspectives of what we are trying to achieve. I think part of the benefit of coming here is this meeting and introducing myself. I think it opens up options for the future conversations. I said I have heard some really good questions today that are spurring thoughts of mine that the work we might do as a group. Unfortunately, from the staff level, I can't say that we have the full diversity to benefit from. But I think your committee and other groups like your committee are a really important resource to help us understand what we should focus on.

Henricksen said when you were speaking to Richard about that topic of land use and being able to identify that kind of stuff and build it into your strategic initiatives and finding the data. I would recommend looking at the 2040 Top Plans for Cities. They all have data and write ups about that kind of stuff. If that was on your radar.

Thorsen said I am wondering if you have anything. You talked about seeking stakeholders. I am wondering if you have anything in that area where you had a question like a checklist for yourself. Are there people with disabilities like that? What people with disabilities and types of disabilities are involved in the evaluation of whatever you are doing? Does that make sense?

Levin said I think so. The thing I want to be clear on is that some of the decisions that are actually being made. So therefore, I think the thinking about different subpopulations is work that is being done outside of our group by some of the operational groups. So honestly, I can't speak to what they do. We are not familiar with it. And how they look at those questions. But surely, they do. But I can't say it. I just know that what we are really able to help doing is when the data exists, it really helps to answer the questions that they have. I am not giving you a very satisfactory answer.

Thorsen said I have been very excited by your presentation, and I look forward to talking with you again. And exploring that further.

3. Priority Seating

Doug Cook, Outreach Coordinator, spoke to the TAAC committee. I am going to be talking about two things, here. First thing is priority seating. Then we are going to be doing some outreach next week. Priority seating has been an issue with this committee for a long time. There have been a lot of frustrations. Recently this year, we formed a group, formed out of TAAC. That got together and we discussed the issues. We pinpointed two initiatives going forward.

One was to inform the public. The other was to have better training for the operators. So as inform the public, we decided to do a series of videos. In the end, we just did one video. But it is going to show the standpoint of boarding the bus and using priority seating from the various types of disabilities. From their standpoint. That is going to be happening sometime soon. September 14, is going to be a video shoot. If we get it all done on the 14th, it will be good to go. But on the 15th, we are going to save that day for any additional shooting we might need.

I did have a list of volunteers that volunteered for that. I had seven individuals. I want to thank those who got back to me with that availability for the 14th to do that. I did send out an email to the others. I am still waiting for their response. Get in touch with me and then we can figure out what we can do as far as other individuals that need to be included in the video.

So, it is going well. Also, for the instructional part for our operators. So I teach all our operators Customer Service. I see all our new operators. So I have included that in our class in the past. But they are breaking it up into two sections now. So part of my first section that I see the drivers were including that in the second phase of seeing me for Customer Service. We are also going to be including that again. It will be a reinforcing thing because drivers forget and may need retraining. That is also going to be going out to the garages in some kind of form too. So we are working on that too.

The big thing now is the Priority Seating video. It sounds kind of cool. It got written and approved and I think everybody is onboard and when we do that it is going to be entertaining but informative as well for the public. And for me to use in my "How to Ride" and for my operator training as well.

Are there any questions on that?

Myhre said I have an important question I wanted to ask. This happens in Human Services and Social Services. You know, when Human Services goes the program. They don't do a good job of sending it out. Are you going to have for each garage they have to do training all over the Twin Cities? Are you going to have very strict guidelines as to how you are going to follow it? So no matter what bus or train you get on, everything is working the way you are telling us today? Like you hope the working group put together.

Cook said right now we do have strict procedures that they have to follow. It is just that the instructional piece we are going to enhance is going to reinforce that. Right now, it is a procedure. It is in a book. Text. Now do this and this. There is no human component to that.

So what I do in my class is that we bring up stories. We have pictures. We have videos. So that it brings in that human aspect. It is better to retain for the operators. So they are more willing to remember that. We want them to empathize with people. We want them to walk a mile in their moccasins or shoes. So that is the piece we are trying to bring into it.

Myhre said it doesn't matter what garage it is. Say I get transferred to another garage. And I have to go through the training again. And I say "I was over in the other garage and they told me this and you tell me that." So, what happened here? So it is not going to be that kind of thing?

Cook said they will all have the exact same training. If there is an alteration in the training. It won't be in the training, it will be in the operators themselves. So if that operator goes outside of that procedure, then you call Customer Relations and we get involved. And we can get that driver talked to by their manager and be retrained.

Rodgers said I know you are focusing on the Priority Seating campaign relating to the video component of presenting to the public. But we also identified print campaign posters and other print materials to also address the same priority seating concepts. Can you give a little update on where you are with that?

Cook said yes, you are correct. Unfortunately, I am not the person to talk to about that. You would talk to someone in the Marketing Department, and she is not on this call. We could definitely bring her in nest time. Or I could have her send out an email to everyone.

Rodgers said I am assuming they are both proceeding along the same level. If you could do something about that. It would be great to update us. But I understand.

Cook said next week, there is going to be an outreach effort for the Downtown Saint Paul area. starting next year there is going to be some construction starting downtown and then a year after, up until 2025. Wabasha, Robert Street and Minnesota. So it is going to affect a lot of our bus routes. Three routes from Wabasha are going to move over to Minnesota for a year. And then when Minnesota construction starts, they are going to move over to Robert Street. After all is said and done, we are siting, with the city's help, if we want to move all the routes that we did move prior, the ones that are on Minnesota and Wabasha, to leave them on Minnesota or move them to Robert Street. It will either be one or the other.

We are going to be starting a campaign next week with a survey to let us know the feedback as far as what their preference would be. So I am going to be sending out information on that to all of you. I just wanted to give you a heads up on what that was all about.

Myhre said how are you going to reach the disability community? There is a lady who works at the airport who is disabled. When they were going to make changes, she needed to learn how to do all that. There was a sign that you posted on where the bus stop was. But then she has to do all the processing and figuring it all out because she still wants to work at the airport. So how do we get the word out in different ways?

Cook said so this is specifically for downtown.

Myhre said she was downtown. She was taking the 54 into downtown and getting off right in the heart of Saint Paul. Because she had gotten from the airport. I had to tell her how to do it.

Cook said the 54 will not be affected by this. The routes that will be affected by this are Routes 3, 16, 67, 62 and Route 75. Basically, the ones that run down Minnesota and Wabasha right now. the 54 will not be affected by that.

How are we reaching out? We are doing social media, emails, rider alerts, people who subscribe to our rider alerts. There will be posters at every bus stop. We will be doing downtown, in person surveying and information, and handing out flyers, which I will be sending to you guys. For all the organization you are in touch with, you can repost or resend the information I am going to send you. To any disability organization out there, that would be helpful.

Myhre said are you going to do training with the people when we call in?

Cook said when changes are made. This will be next spring. They are going to move those routes to Minnesota from Wabasha. When that happens, all that transit information and marketing people will know that information. So when you call, they will have that information. Just like any change in information. What we are looking for is feedback. Do you want all things on Minnesota? Do you want things on Robert? Or a mix of the two. That is what the ask is.

4. Metro Mobility Online Booking Update

Andy Streasick, Customer Service Manager for Metro Mobility, spoke to the TAAC committee. I am going to give some background on our app for online trip booking. Where we got. Where we are. Where we are at in terms of current usage and what is to be done.

So I will start by saying those of you who have been certified for long enough may recall that we had an old version of online trip booking years ago. We ended up needing to take that down because an incident occurred where someone logged on using their own login info and found themselves looking at someone else's account. And the folks that owned that particular version were never able to tell us why that was. And weren't able to recreate it. So obviously, given that Metro Mobility data is private, we needed to take that down until they could figure out why that happened. They never did.

So we ended up starting from scratch, with our goals being to do everything with regard to accessibility and usability that the old one did. Plus be secure. Be mobile friendly. The app-based version where people are using their phones and tablets mostly for that kind of thing. And allow for the booking of standby rides outside the ADA service community. For trips to be put on standby.

For those of you who remember the old version, you may recall that that was for the ADA service area only. And if you tried to book a ride outside of the ADA service area, it just told you to call in to reservations.

We were testing in a test environment with some customers in the middle of last year for several months. By late October, I think on October 24, we started to see testers book their first real rides live on the system. After a couple of months of that, in January, we rolled out sort of a soft roll out to everybody publicly, where they could register to use online trip booking if they wanted to.

So I looked at rides by real users, not just our test ones that staff did. But if I look at real users' rides. From October 24 of last year when some testers started to book real rides up through yesterday. We have had 7,307 rides within the ADA service area, with an additional 3,077 non-ADA rides booked online.

What I like about those numbers is that is roughly the same percentage of our typical ridership. The relationship between ADA and non-ADA. In the bookings, pretty much mirrors our relationship between ADA and non-ADA in terms of overall trips booked. Which tells me that it is usable for folks outside the ADA service area. Again, that being one of our goals to improve on from the last version and that we are seeing roughly the same percentage breakdown as we are for reservations calls.

One of the things you can do besides booking rides is of course cancel your rides online. If you don't want to sit and wait on hold, and you have got a standing order, so you don't have to book your rides. But you want to call and cancel. And we have seen 2654 rides within the ADA service community cancelled online and 1305 non-ADA rides cancelled.

With regard to testing for accessibility. As we were putting together this site and testing it. we used our contract with WeCo to take a look at that and go over it and in addition to our own internal testing. Then of course, use our customer feedback that we got through testing. Through WeCo, we kind of reordered the menu drop down. Fixed some things for folks that can't use a mouse. So for keyboard only navigation and compatibility. And then in customer feedback, we changed some Alt Text labels. Took out things that might have made sense if you were a web developer, in terms of what it might mean. But otherwise, if you hover over a box that said something that sounded an awful lot like gobbledygook to someone.

So trying to put all that in language for anybody to understand the Alt text. The other neat thing that came out of there is that through that testing we found some buttons that we didn't really know existed. They were what just looked like an icon, and something was actually a button. We never knew that as sited users. Until someone was actually tabbing through it with a screen reader and came across this thing that we had to go and try to find where they were and what they were looking at. So that helped familiarize us and get things improved.

Certainly, the biggest thing that came out of our testing was that we learned that users that were using a screen reader, when they tried to add a PCA to their ride, it was just freezing on the most current web browsers. So the new version of Edge, the new version of Chrome, it would just lock. If they were still using Internet Explorer or Firefox, it went through fine. What we ended up learning was also an issue with JAWS itself. Where JAWS wasn't playing nice with the most up to date screen readers. We were able to reach out to them and that got resolved on their end and we were up and running from there.

Since launch, I am pleased to say that I haven't gotten any negative feedback with regard to accessibility itself, with regard to contrast, or much with regard to ease of use. Most of the feedback we have gotten has been positive. There are still a couple of things that we need to do, I think. That come up from comments. We do have meetings set up with Trapeze to try to address this. One of them is if you book a ride with an appointment time, this is true, whether you book it on the phone with a reservationist, or if the trip is initially booked online. You will have no way of knowing that it has an appointment time other than talking to a human reservationist. You are booking neither on the automated phone system, nor on the pass web online trip booking software. Does it say any place you have an appointment time of 6:00. It just shows your negotiated pickup time. Not the appointment time that drove the negotiated pickup time. So the only way a rider could currently confirm the time is to call and talk to a human reservationist. We would like that to be addressed so we can just put that line right into that booking. You can go online and look at your calendar, click on that ride, it will say: "Here is your negotiated pickup time. This ride has an appointment time of 6:00."

The other piece of feedback that we have heard is that for some users it is overwhelming for them to look at their calendar and see all of their cancelled rides. We have a variety of customers with a variety of disabilities, and oftentimes the same people who get overwhelmed emotionally, and frustrated with seeing all those rides and find that difficult to navigate. Are some of the same customers who frequently call and cancel a lot of rides. Because they change their mind or because their disability is fluctuating, or they are triggered in a way that requires them to cancel a lot.

We also understand that some of our customers want to see their cancelled rides. So that they can take a look at what they had booked and make sure that nothing was accidentally cancelled in error, etc. So, right now, anything on their file shows up in that calendar online. One hundred percent of the cancels.

We would like the option for a customer to be able to filter the view. Where maybe by default it does not show cancelled rides. But you would have the option in the calendar to show those upon request.

The one thing we are talking about is taken out for everybody is currently showing up in there is cancel errors. Those are things where the reservationist cancels a ride because they either screwed up. They either miss booked it or double booked it and caught it and cancelled it. Or they are midway through a booking and then the customer changes their mind at that point. So the ride never actually exists as a true ride it is aborted before it gets to that point. Those are called cancel errors. And they show up in people's calendars. I don't think there is a good reason to have those there. So we are talking about hiding those for everybody and checking to see if that is possible.

I am really impressed with the ridership so far and the usage on this. I think it is a great story. Possibly because, given the pandemic, we have been pretty silent on it. We put something out briefly. The newsletter, and that was about it. We have not done a mailing, which is something that we would have done in a more typical environment. We didn't do a big list, serve blast beyond just the newsletter. The reason for that, quite frankly, is that we don't want still to promote a lot of unnecessary ridership. We want to try to encourage the possibility of physical distancing as much as possible.

Up until recently, when we got rid of health care worker rides, we were right around 100 percent of our normal capacity. With a very diminished driver pool. So we really weren't looking for anything that was going to possibly trigger a big increase or what would be back to traditional ridership plus all of those health care worker rides.

So we haven't done a lot of advertising around this and the adoption rate has been a significant success rate for people's use and satisfaction rate has been very good. I think it is a good story overall. Certainly, if people are interested in doing it, you can call Customer Service and they will set you up with a password. The site is available right at Metromobility.org in the book a ride section. You will see it right there.

I think that that is most of what I have. I do want to say that I was privy to some of those discussions around paratransit not being included in the reduced fare for the next two months. So if people want to know the Metropolitan Council's view on that, and why that led there, I would be happy to speak to that briefly.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I just have two quick questions for you. 1. I use the automated service on my voicemail, on my phone. I tried to cancel the ride. It did not get cancelled. Then I had to call in and speak to a live person in order for it to get cancelled. 2. Then the other thing. It had to do with fare reduction. Maybe someone else will bring it up if they have questions.

Myhre said when you go in and do all of this. Is that really easy for a person that has processing problems? The reason I gave a thumbs up is because I really like how you are trying really hard to clean it up. That I am amazed. We need to take you and place you in other services. Is it easy for somebody to set it up with little help in your life and you have processing problems? Like in reading and understanding. You said I have to call them at Metro Mobility to get that password. I don't know how they are going to give me that password. So I first have to write that down correctly. And then do all of the steps. Can you walk us through that a little? You did an excellent job in telling us how you cleaned it up.

Streasick said I am very pleased at how easy it is. It is one of the things I have been asking people for feedback about. For folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities, I have heard some really good things in terms of setting up passwords, and logging into the system. Your username to login is always your Metro Mobility ID number. So, most of our riders know that. A lot of our riders have it committed to memory. And even if they don't, they have it on an ID card, a lot of them, or have it written down someplace handy. And the password. Even though we are setting you up with it out of the Service Center initially, you can make it up and give it to us. You can tell us what you want it to be. There are very minimal restrictions with regard to complexity. I think it might have to be like eight characters and include either a number or a special code. It can't be the same as your ID number. And maybe can't contain your ID number. Since that is your username.

If you called up and said you wanted: "Heidi is the best!" to be your password, we would make that your password. And then you could go to Metromobility.org and login. Once you have the password, and you are in, I also have been pleased at reports back on how easy and intuitive and natural it is to go in and book a ride. It really walks you through it step-by-step in language that anybody could understand. It keeps the things that you have to type and spell to a minimum. Pretty well. The only negatives that I really heard from people with any intellectual, developmental or psychiatric disability is that we have been around that calendar and are still being able to see those cancelled rides. Cluttering up the screen and being overwhelming for some folks or confusing for some folks. So that is the only thing I have heard.

Myhre said I am glad that you mentioned mistakes because I was worried about the calendar doing something funky like I cancelled but then it didn't get cancelled. You are trying the best you can to explain that there are errors and then so some of it is on you guys. Like you screwed up and now you have a no show. I liked how you talked about that.

Streasick said what I should add there is if you do go through all the way to the end, to book a ride and then you are offered three different solutions. If you don't pick any of those, no ride will be booked. But there will be evidence in Trapeze, our software, that you got that far without selecting a ride. So, either reservationist staff or staff at the Service Center can go in and see. Because we have had a few people who got to the end there and then got distracted and didn't end up clicking on a ride to choose. Or sometimes all three solutions had exactly the same negotiated pickup time. We had one person that didn't know that they had to pick one. Since they all happened to be. We had three options that could have picked them up exactly at their requested time. Since they all had the same exact pickup time, they figured that they didn't have to pick one.

You still do have to click on one particular ride that you are picking at the end, saying: "I choose this one." If you don't, we will see that that is what happened in Trapeze. So we are able to tell folks: "We see here that you were trying to book a ride online. You just didn't end up choosing one of the solutions that was offered." In the future, you will need to do that in order to get a trip booked. That has been about the only error or complication that we have seen come out of this is that people start but don't finish the booking. And if they meant to, that trip will never come.

We had to train our providers repeatedly because those un-booked, unfinished trips were going unrouted. And then were getting placed on a real run. So if people didn't choose a solution, because they didn't mean to, low and behold a bus that they never booked, will show up at their house. So we needed to train the provider to know that they should not place the unfinished bookings on a bus. But I think we got that through.

The other thing unrelated to that that I should say. I wrote this down with my notes but didn't mention it. This was never, is not meant to now, and will not be used in the future, to justify cutting reservationists. This is an alternative for people who would like to not wait on hold, people who maybe have a speech impediment as related to their disability, or a language other than English as a primary language so that they struggle with verbal communication that way. Not interested in having our contractors cut jobs as a result of this at all. And not interested in having people who want to communicate on the phone with a human. Loose that option or have less experience with that or less availability for reservationists as a part of this. So, every time I talk about

this publicly, I want to make sure and state that outright. It has been my key priority that I brought up all throughout the development here, That that be the understanding.

Myhre said I do have one question. Does the ending, when I am done, tell me if I goofed up or if I did anything. Or did I pass, so I know I have the ride, that I set it up correctly?

Streasick said yes. It tells you that you have got the ride and then it shows you that you have the ride so that you can confirm it. Then even after you confirm it. if you go back later and look and say: “Shoot, that is wrong.” You can always go in and cancel it right in the app and rebook it. So it does walk you through it and you have multiple chances to change it.

Myhre said and I still get my five-minute calls and I still get my other junk I signed up for?

Streasick said yes.

Vice Chair Paulsen said, my question to you is you said the worker rides program ended. So does that mean if I booked my ride to my clinic or my pharmacy, you no longer will wait for me to get my meds? So, you will no longer have that wait time?

Streasick said good question. Only the health care worker ride program ended. Where we were giving rides to people who were not Metro Mobility certified riders. To keep clinics open. All the other supplemental services that we were doing as of last month, are still in place. That includes the curb side rides. A Metro Mobility customer can still book a ride and we will wait up to 20 minutes.

Vice Chair Paulsen said for example, my daughter, yesterday, had an issue. So if I had to go and pick her up from school, you would wait for me for 20 minutes so we could get back on the bus and come home. Right?

Streasick said yes.

Vice Chair Paulsen said but then if she is not scheduled to be with me, that is a whole other issue. How do I get her on the bus if I am at school and I have to get her somewhere?

Streasick said a curb side ride is two different bookings. So you would book a curb side ride as alone on the go. And with you as a guest on the return.

Bus Priority Seating TAAC Work Group

This item was presented earlier.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Blue Line**

   Rodgers said we had a cancelled meeting last month. But have reestablished our meeting schedule. We are about to finalize a final route for the Blue Line Extension. We are working hard on that determination.

2. **Green Line**

   Nothing to report.

3. **Gold Line**

   Vice Chair Paulsen said we do have a meeting coming up tomorrow. So I will be able to give a report on the federal monies that we made in the beginning because of our new Transportation Commissioner.

4. **Rush Line**

   Nothing to report.

CHAIRS REPORT

This item was not presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MEMBER COMMENT

Vice Chair Paulsen said I understand that Andy said that they had given a lot of thought to the reduced fare related to Metro Mobility. Given the fact that Metro Transit has just reduced their fares down to $1.00. We have not heard the reason why Metro Mobility didn't get it in that play. But I wanted to go on record saying that I think there are two things here. I think we should have done a better job with the state fair issue and the buses that were out there. Because there were a number of buses and a number of shuttles that were eliminated due to the bus service or due to the State Fair. I think it was our duty as citizens of transportation to make sure that those messages were conveyed. To travelers that were traveling back and forth to the State Fair. That message fell on deaf ears. I have been watching reports at the State Fair and watching people that need accessibility issues out there and they look to us to have some of those answers before the State Fair. Because they didn't have those answers, they went out there anyway. I think we should do a better job next year in making sure that we get them on our schedule way ahead of time so that we can convey the message correctly to the riders that use the mainline service as well as Metro Mobility.

Bates said David, I just have a quick question for you. I haven't seen anything lately in the minutes of what is going on with the Transportation Committee that you sit on for us. Could you just update us with stuff for the October meeting?

Chair Fenley said yes, I am happy to. I will update you on that in the Chair's Report in October. I will give other members a chance to chat now. if we have 30 seconds I can give you a real quick rundown about that. Do any other members have a comment?

Streasick said Chair, did you want me to use a minute to describe briefly the Council's decision-making process around the reduced fare?

Chair Fenley said you are more than welcome to. Yes.

Streasick said so the first thing that we did was to check and see whether we needed to. As part of the fact that we can't be any more than twice the fare for fixed route on a regular route. When it came back that no, it was a temporary thing for two months, that we did not need to. Then it got to: "Well should we?" And executive leadership at the Council ultimately decided that just because of the size of the existing subsidy, in a $25.00 subsidy per trip, that it was not appropriate. That was the shortest possible version. All things considered. Because the subsidy per passenger is already so much greater on paratransit, that it was not appropriate to bolster the already large subsidy.

Vice Chair Paulsen said people in the disability community, people are suffering right now because they don't have the money to use the service that they need to use. They are not going to buy it.

Streasick said the other thing that my boss just texted me to add, is that while fixed route is a situation of needing to try to promote ridership in order to continue to exist. Paratransit obviously is in the opposite boat. At the time that this was announced, we were already at our normal levels of ridership. Including the health care worker rides with a diminished driver pool. So increasing ridership would hurt our solvency rather than improve it. So it wouldn't make sense for paratransit to employ promotional endeavors that were aimed at increasing ridership.

Sheldon said I just wanted to ask Andy: "Does that mean that we are supposed to ignore people who are not paying their fare?" But people who have Metro Transit tickets still have to pay?

Streasick said what is going on is that Metro Transit, for everybody for the next two months, is reducing the fare for all trips, the regular fare is going to be $1.00 on the regular city bus and light rail for the next two months. The question was just whether or not Metro Mobility was also going to do the dollar fare thing for everybody. And the answer is no. Metro Mobility is keeping it's normal fare structure in place for September and October, even though Metro Transit has dropped down to a dollar for everybody.

Vice Chair Paulsen said if they extend that you guys might look at another option, right? If they extend it more than the two months, then would you guys look at considering maybe a reduction, or not?

Streasick said yeah. We have got to look at what is a short-term promotional structure. So that would be something that we need to consider.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary