



Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha

2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, NE 68102

402.341.0800
TDD: 402.341.0807
Fax: 402.342.0949

ometro.com

Metro Transit Advisory Committee

August 14, 2024

6:30 p.m.

**This meeting is open to the public*

Location: Metro Administrative Offices - Board room

2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68102

Please enter through the front lobby doors, facing Cuming Street at the top of the ramp

Digital:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81362662191>

Meeting ID: 813 6266 2191

Attendance:

Committee Members: Clarice Dombeck, Alex Mendoza, Tamara Dwyer, Clyde Anderson

Public: Andrew Demarest, Monique Summers-Currington, Cheryl Weston, Nicole Ebat (Metro staff)

Staff Facilitators: Bridget Battafarano and Kalechi Chibuikem

Opening: Public comment period (Limit to ten minutes total, please)

- Public and Committee: Good job with downtown layover communication, went smoothly
- Reason for Metro parking lot construction? Drainage problem under the parking lot.
- Concerns over buckling on Metro sidewalk

Approval of previous meeting minutes

- Bus bench at 30th and Fort was mentioned as an “issue” and it is really a safety hazard. Need updates and follow-up with City Parks and Recreation.
- Motion: Clarice; Second: Clyde

New Business:

1. Paratransit appeals – None

2. Metro updates and upcoming events (see ppt for charts and graphs)
 - a. Maintenance:
 - i. Stripping dead bus of working parts is in process; Looks like it will restore 4 buses to the road
 - ii. Only one more bus is in the shop for A/C
 - iii. Scheduling changes have been helpful – averaging 3 more bus repairs completed on the weekends
 - iv. Discussion:
 1. Stripping of the bus will be written off as a loss. 80/20 rule is that we should have 20% buses in reserve in case of breakdowns, accidents, etc. Our reserve is very low - buses in maintenance are considered part of reserve. Will pass feedback to maintenance regarding faulty/sticking bike racks. Maintenance director John Beverage on the calendar for September meeting.
 - v. Operations Discussion:
 1. When there aren't enough buses on the road, dispatch procedure is to pull buses from higher frequency routes so that lower frequency ones don't have unreasonable gaps. MyRide app is showing inaccurate times for bus arrivals due to miscommunications between software in dispatch and software in MyRide app; it's a work in progress. AVL (GPS system) can connect with dispatch even when it cannot connect with MyRide to give live updates. This is how drivers are held accountable to on-time performance. Looking to lower early departures in particular.
 - b. Planning:
 - i. Summary of Service interruptions since January: Interruptions were getting less frequent, rise in service interruptions from 7/31-8/2 seems to correlate with the power outage
 - ii. Fall Bid Changes: Operators put in bids to drive new routes – assigned by seniority; this happens at least three times a year and is the only time we're allowed to make changes to bus routes. Upcoming changes:
 - iii. Routes 4, 15, 18, 30, and 106: Downtown re-routing to 14th & Dodge. This had already started as a detour due to streetcar construction, but will become regular routing starting in the fall since it is an extended re-route.
 - iv. Route 55: Slight timepoint adjustments (2 minutes) based on operator feedback to improve connections at Aksarben TC.
 - v. Route 24: Weekday schedule adjustments to address reliability issues and vehicle constraints (requires 1 less bus on the route). The tables in ppt. summarize the changes. Although we are reducing to 20 minute frequency, it will start earlier in the morning and our hourly service will stay out late.
 - vi. Discussion:

1. Difference between high interruption and low interruption weeks can be attributed to drivers calling out, not having enough buses, etc. The week that maintenance began more coverage on the weekends is when the interruptions lowered significantly – it gets more buses on the road Monday mornings.
 2. How can there be a lack of buses and a lack of operators at the same time? Operators choose vacations yearly and that’s how we predict scheduling challenges. They are allowed 5 call-outs **per month** and we are working on enforcing this better. We are also working to improve staff morale. One reason for turnover is that route bids are based on seniority so new drivers are less likely to get their preferred route and schedule. The driver shortage and interruptions are trends you see across the country.
 3. Member of the public recommends Metro consult with places like hospitals who are having similar problems.
- c. Events/Communications:
- i. July/August:
 1. Pride Parade, Youth Pride: Thousands in attendance; staff from communications, planning, Civil rights and inclusion, CEO, HR represented Metro
 2. Creighton JayPass program: just instated for the school year; Metro now has a pass program with every college and university in Omaha
 3. NOCP/You-Turn back-to-school event: over 1 thousand present, over 200 at Metro table; over half asked for details and education on K-12 program and apps
 4. Wrapping up OPS enrollment days tabling
 - ii. August/September: UNO Durango Days; Fiestas Patrias; committee is encouraged to attend and help engage the community
 - iii. Discussion:
 1. Communications team works hard to communicate changes via social media and rider apps; will follow up on other ideas such as displays on buses. Committee recommends handing out flyers again and making an earlier start to communicate route changes.
 2. Metro continues to have conversations with OPS about K-12 security and is in talks with Riley Protection Group for renewed contract at North Omaha Transit Center. When drivers feel unsafe, they call into dispatch and then fill out a form at the end of shift. Dispatch can review the camera footage. Drivers are only responsible for the safety of customers on board. Field supervisors can come out or police can be called if more serious. Public recommends partnership with OPS to help enforce student code of conduct, see who can be responsible for enforcement.

Recommend more than one community protection service, such as Black Agenda Alliance.

3. Removal of Heartland Bike Share rack at the North Omaha Transit Center due to vandalism. They are working to relocate it.
3. Metro presents – Walt Shumate, Operations Manager
 - a. Refer to discussion above
4. Committee report on public feedback
 - a. Gratitude expressed by public and committee for the smooth transition to the new downtown layover.
 - b. Refer to discussion above
5. Set September Agenda
 - a. John Beverage – Maintenance Director

Next meeting:

- September 11, 2024, 6:30 p.m. at Metro administrative offices

Please call Bridget Battafarano at 402-341-7560, EXT 2560 if you have questions