



Metro Transit Advisory Committee

January 8, 2025

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

Staff Facilitators: Bridget Battafarano; Alicia Johnson, PhD

Committee Members: Brian Neely; Clyde Anderson; Marshall Maurer; Cedric Ludlow; Gab Rima; Joey Yamada; Alex Mendoza; Leah Keator; Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell; Rose Krekelberg (online)

Members of the Public: Monique Summers Currington; Chris Burbach; Cheryl Weston (online)

Opening: Introductions and statements from the Chair

Open Meetings Act

Approval of previous meeting minutes

Approved

New Business:

1. Paratransit appeals – None
2. Metro updates and upcoming events
 - a. Microtransit Pilot Program
 - i. Overview: Metro will be rolling out a new pilot service called Microstransit. This service will help fill gaps in our system by transporting people from their location to the nearest bus stop or by taking them close to their location where there is no nearby service. There are three

proposed zones of service: North Omaha, South Omaha, and West Omaha.

- ii. Everyone is welcome to public meetings to learn about the proposed service and provide input at the following times and locations:
 1. Monday, January 13th from 5-7pm at the Charles B Washington Branch Library (2868 Ames Ave., near the North Omaha Transit Center).
 2. Thursday, January 16th from 1-3pm at the South Omaha Public Library (2808 Q St, near the South Omaha Transit Center).
 3. Saturday, January 18th from 10am-1pm in Westroads Mall (10000 California St, Suite 1221, near the Westroads Transit Center).
 4. Tuesday, January 20th from 12-1pm on Zoom:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84839999453>
 - b. Open Meeting Act: the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) likely falls under the amended Open Meeting Act which, among other things, requires government bodies to make meetings available to the public. Though TAC is already open to the public, the amendment requires advisory committee meetings be included and this may mean minor changes to TAC procedures and bylaws. Details will be shared as we know them.
 - c. Bridget Battafarano (Community Mobility Coordinator) is launching a program which trains nonprofit staff to teach clients to ride the bus. Suggestions for organizations who may like to receive this training are welcome. (Bridget's information is at the end of this document.)
3. Overview of TAC's Role in ADA Paratransit (MOBY) Eligibility – Alicia Johnson, PhD, Director of Civil Rights and Inclusion
 - a. MOBY service is provided to approved riders within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of any regular fixed route bus stop. Applicants can be: approved unconditionally, approved conditionally, approved temporarily, or determined ineligible.
 - b. It is a primary function of this committee to review appeals. Internally, there is one initial staff review and one secondary review. If an individual is still unsatisfied with the result, they may appeal the decision and TAC will review the application for a final determination. The appeal meeting will not be subject to open meeting laws and will occur with only the Committee in order to preserve applicant privacy.
 - c. Express routes are not required to have MOBY service within the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius like regular fixed routes do. Routes 106 and 120 used to be labeled Express service, but are now Connectors. These routes make more local stops than an Express route but not as many as a regular fixed route. Connectors do count for MOBY service area, so whenever they are running, MOBY service runs within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of them.
 4. Committee report on public feedback
 - a. Please label out-of-service stops in MyRide as well as on the street. It's confusing when some drivers will drop off or pick up at a stop while others will not. Everyone needs to be on the same page.

- b. The stops on 20th and Cuming are still not labeled out of service. One of the stop poles is inside the Creighton construction fence. Please address this issue.
 - c. How can riders access trip planning offline?
 - i. Offline accessibility is available through customer service at 402-341-0800 or 402-341-0807 (TDD). If you call, they can give you details about a trip plan. You can also text 531-200-7005 with your bus stop ID (the 4 digits on the stop's sign) and the route number. This will give you the next 3 arrival times for that stop. If a rider does not have access to a phone, they may print a paper copy of the bus routes at the library. A schedule can be mailed or picked up from our office as well.
 - d. A child was mugged at the North Omaha Transit Center (NOTC) and they and their parent are worried about being there now.
 - i. We have a security contract and field supervisors on site at NOTC, and they should be easily identifiable with security and high visibility vests. The youth is welcome to find one of those people as a trusted adult to stick by. If a police report is filed, we can also share video regarding incidents with police.
 - e. The police station by NOTC does not accept walk-ins. You have to call the police to come get something like a wallet from the transit center.
 - i. You can also turn in anything you find to us and we will take care of it in lost and found. If there is ID information we will make an effort to contact them to let them know we have their item.
 - f. A MOBY was subbing in for the 13 route and a rider asked, in Spanish, whether it was a number 13 bus. The driver told her no and drove away. What is available for language assistance? Some other agencies have a procedure for interpretation services.
 - i. Metro purchased magnets to identify these MOBYs that should be displayed on the vehicle. Drivers have been trained on the language service procedures and we are still working on enforcing this.
 - g. Are MOBYs still on
 - i. We are always working to move away from this. We have 26 new buses arriving sometime this year but, until then, we have to decide whether to put a MOBY out or not run service. It isn't an ideal solution, but it is what we have.
5. Discuss communication with board - **Clyde**
- a. Shared with board in December that Bike/Walk Nebraska issued a report on vulnerable road users. They have been reported as high concern for auto crashes in the state, especially Omaha. Metro Transit should be proactive about pedestrian and biker safety.
 - b. Lauren Cencic reported that October had the lowest rate of service interruptions this year. November was up due to drivers taking end-of-year time off. December numbers likely high due to the ice storm, but Metro did a good job posting updates in the news section of MyRide.

- c. The board made a special effort to update some old policies over that year and explained and made decisions on those.
- d. Alicia presented Civil Rights and Inclusion accomplishments of the last couple of years to the board. They had established her position. Alicia presented this to TAC before the board and the slides are shared online. The new board is elected due to Metro's transition to a regional authority.
- e. Lauren Cencic's contract was renewed as CEO.

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

1. With ridership increasing, is there opportunity for expansion or increased frequency of service? Particularly increased frequency on the 15, 11, and 24 during rush hour.
 - a. Planning is always looking at ways to improve service and we will add this to our tracking of requests. Currently, we do not have the capacity to increase, however, we hope Microtransit and our 26 new buses will help. They will replace older buses in our fleet.
2. TAC agreed with a staff recommendation to reduce frequency on the 15 and 13 last spring, with a request for regular updates and restoration of service as soon as possible. We do not have a deadline, but we will resume service as soon as we can. We are only able to make changes to service up to 4 times a year due to our union collective bargaining agreement and every time we do, we look at where staffing, budget, and other factors align before making changes.

Next meeting:

- February 12, 6:30 p.m. at Metro administrative offices

For questions, please contact Bridget Battafarano at 402-341-7560 ext. 2560