



Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha

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## Metro Transit Advisory Committee

March 12, 2025

6:30 p.m.

*\*This meeting was open to the public online and in-person at our offices.*

### Digital:

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 813 6266 2191

*Staff Facilitators: Bridget Battafarano and Alicia Johnson, PhD (Civil Rights and Inclusion)*

*Committee Members: Gab Rima, Clyde Anderson (Vice-chair), Marshall Maurer, Alex Mendoza (online)*

*Members of the Public: Melissa Schop, Raymond Williams*

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

**Clyde:** An individual reported that route 120 has been cut back from 2 trips morning and evening to one trip. When was this done? Is this a productive run? Could resources be put to better use on a different route since it runs so infrequently?

**Alicia:** It has been that way for a few years. We can follow up with the Planning department. Did a review last year and determined that the 120 and 106 did not meet the criteria for Express routes, so we changed the names and created the Connector category. Whereas the Expresses do not have MOBY service around them during service hours, Connectors do. We would have to review the impact on those riders before making changes.

### Approval of previous meeting minutes

No quorum, unable to approve. No corrections from attendees.

### New Business:

1. Paratransit appeals: None; Review of TAC responsibilities
  - a. MOBY Rider Guide available online with eligibility and appeal information. No appeals last year. Internal secondary reviews likely help.

- b. Applicants can be: Approved unconditionally, approved conditionally, approved temporarily, or denied/ineligible.
    - i. If denied, applicants have 60 days to appeal. Applicants receive appeal information and the opportunity to attend a TAC meeting and submit extra information for TAC review. TAC gets appellant application, any supplementary information appellant provides, and the chance to confer with appellant if they attend the meeting. TAC gets final say on eligibility.
  - c. Other appeal process options:
    - i. No- shows equaling 15% of rides and at least 5 rides in a 30-day period can result in suspension of service. A warning is given first and then scheduled suspensions. *No Show*: rider does not show up in ten-minute pick-up window. *Late cancellation*: rider cancels within 2 hours of scheduled trip (also considered a no-show.) Riders have ability to appeal suspensions.
    - ii. We have an internal appeal process but TAC may also receive the appeal
    - iii. Refusal or suspension of service: if rider becomes a threat to the safety or health of driver or other riders and it is a documented pattern of behavior, we may refuse or suspend service for that individual. Riders can also appeal in this case and it may go to TAC.
    - iv. **Questions:** Are riders who use wheelchairs required to have safety securements? How is MOBY affected by weather interruptions? **Answers:** Riders are not required to have securements because they can be costly; we secure devices as safely as possible. We make every effort to pick up clients during weather interruptions. When we cannot make it to rider's curb due to snow, we will come as close to them as possible for pick-up if they are able to get to us. This is a last resort. If we can't get to them or they cancel due to weather, the trip is not considered a no-show since it is out of the rider's control.
2. Metro updates and upcoming events
- a. Attended Completely Kids resource fair – educational event for dozens of families
  - b. Staff presented to International Association for Public Participation – Midwest Chapter, on progress of this renewed TAC model, which launched in 2024.
  - c. Events and parades season is coming up so we will extend invitations to join us as we get more information
  - d. Outreach team is getting increased interest from teachers in coming to see what we do, educating youth, and encouraging ridership.
  - e. Public transit week is April 6-12<sup>th</sup>. We'll have extra outreach events for Metro. Will update TAC, post to social media.
  - f. Last year, we had several departments come to meetings to provide overviews of their work and updates on progress. TAC is welcome to request this again.
  - g. Question: Is K-12 open to students outside of OPS? Answer: Yes, it's open to all
3. Discussion: New TAC requirements under the Open Meetings Act
- a. TAC newly covered by this Act. We are already mostly compliant due to intentional setup of the meetings. Major requirements to consider:

- i. If we had quorum at a social event where no decisions were being made and no public business was being discussed, it would not need to be open to the public.
  - ii. If we had quorum at a subcommittee meeting, that may need to be open to the public.
  - iii. The Open Meetings Act requires that voting members of the committee can only vote on official business via online attendance up to 6 times per year.
  - iv. Current attendance policy in bylaws requires a majority of meetings be attended in-person. There may be exceptions for those who are not able to get to or leave meetings due to service restrictions (i.e. their bus or MOBY service doesn't run as late as TAC), but staff is researching this. If so, and if we were to change the bylaws, TAC would have to review and vote. Changes would not apply to this year's committee because members have already agreed to the standing policy.
  - v. Informational meetings with department updates and/or overviews are considered "briefing" meetings and should be open to the public. Should TAC schedule a time to meet with a department outside of regular meetings, this would apply.
  - vi. There are no requirements that virtual attendance be available. However, if a meeting is fully virtual, there has to be someone available at the usual meeting location (our offices) to facilitate the virtual attendance, in case someone comes in-person.
  - vii. Required to record meetings
  - viii. Agendas need to be descriptive enough to give public advance notice of discussion topics.
  - ix. Emergency declared by government or meetings called due to emergent business must meet specific requirements, which we will abide by.
  - x. Amendments may be posted to minutes online after original posting.
  - xi. When an appeal is reviewed, it will be a closed meeting in order to protect the applicant's privacy. The decision of approval or denial of appeal is required to be announced during public meeting.
- b. **Questions:** Do recommendations to the board have to be voted on in public meetings? **Answers:** If TAC considers recommendations as public business, would have to vote to change bylaws.
4. Committee report on public feedback
- a. There will be a meeting with community leaders RE: changes in speed limits for 30<sup>th</sup> St., which effects rider safety. MAPA has an open comment period through 3/24 for their Safe Streets for All plan: <https://mapacog.org/projects/ss4a/>
  - b. Several recent articles in the Omaha World Herald with good information from Nicole Ebat
5. Discuss communication with board, microtransit pilot
- a. Summary of board meeting: Ridership is up. Aside from bad weather days, service interruptions are down.

- b. Board approved both the equity analysis and the vendor contract for microtransit pilot service. The contract was awarded to Via Transportation, which operates in hundreds of cities.
  - i. Planning to vote on service agreement – details of pilot – in March. Pilot agreements will be written flexibly to make adjustments as needed.
  - ii. Pilot will run for all three zones. Will start with proposed zones first, be sure that this is sustainable before scaling up. Estimated late summer/early fall launch.
  - iii. Performance measures and management in place to track response time of service, equivalent service for those with disabilities, etc. Will receive monthly reports.
  - iv. Minimum age for unaccompanied riders is not yet decided. Metro doesn't currently have age restrictions. In talks about whether K-12 Rides Free will apply to microtransit.

**Next meeting:**

- April 9, 6:30 p.m. at Metro administrative offices and on Zoom

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