



Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha

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## Metro Transit Advisory Committee

November 13, 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

*Committee Members: Clarice Dombeck (Chair); Clyde Anderson; Alex Mendoza; Isabelle Dunning-Ward; Joey Yamada; David Baker*

*Members of the Public: None*

*Staff Facilitators: Bridget Battafarano, Nicole Ebat, Alicia Johnson, Lauren Cencic*

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

David: Inclusive Communities Table Talk about transit equity at MCC North on Wed, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>; Lauren and Clarice on panel

Clyde: Clarice elected to RMTA board. Full list of new board is on election commission website. Why were service interruptions so high on Election Day?

Lauren: Interruptions were high in the summer largely due to bus maintenance and parts issues; had been on a downward trend. They are higher again recently due to not enough drivers: drivers calling out, holidays upcoming, using sick and vacation time. We're working on consistently applying progressive discipline where necessary.

Clarice: Old obstructive bench on 30<sup>th</sup> St. by MCC North was replaced with a new metal one on a concrete pad behind the sidewalk

### **Approval of previous meeting minutes**

Motion: Clarice; Second: Clyde

**New Business:**

1. Paratransit appeals – None
2. Metro updates and upcoming events
  - a. RMTAO election results:
    - i. Cornelius Williams – Dist. 1
    - ii. Clarice Dombeck - Dist. 2
    - iii. Yanira García - Dist. 3
    - iv. Daniel Padilla - Dist. 4
    - v. Josh Corrigan - Dist. 5
    - vi. Curt Simon - Dist. 6
    - vii. Tim Lonergan - Dist. 7
  - b. Election day rider numbers were lower than other days. Likely due to OPS teacher day, students out of school
  - c. HR update from last month's discussion: Scheduling is the #1 reason operators give for leaving. We are upfront about it, but sometimes it's as simple as a life event that doesn't allow them to keep their work schedule
  - d. See Instagram for ORBT haunted bus video. Metro will: extend ORBT service for Billie Eilish concert; celebrate ORBT 2 million rides in the week of 11/17; have a table at Christmas in the Village (Dec. 7);
  - e. TAC discussed street outreach options last month: it's a newer idea and we're as smaller agency. Money is a concern, it's not in 2025 budget. It would require structural changes. That said, it's worth exploring
  - f. TAC Application/Selection Process –
    - i. Acceptance letters go out Friday (11/15), individuals have until 11/22 to accept
  - g. Chair and vice chair election at Dec. meeting. Current members express intent 2 weeks before
  - h. Microtransit: Lauren Cencic, CEO
    - i. Metro and a local charitable organization have been working toward a microtransit pilot program for about a year and wanted to come to TAC before pilot starts for input.
    - ii. Microtransit is a last mile extender: connects places the buses cannot reach for land use, infrastructure, and other reasons. Will help fill in gaps as a reliable, convenient transportation service. Will focus on marginalized communities; ties into existing bus routes.
    - iii. Received two proposals from third-party contractors to provide this service. Chosen company will provide all technology, personnel, dispatch, vehicles, maintenance, etc. Required to provide accessible service at comparable rate to non-accessible.
    - iv. All details – pricing, areas of service (zones), etc. - proposed by contractor, negotiated with Metro

- v. It's a largely app-based and call-in ride-share service. Riders request and app matches people to ride together around a central location.
  - vi. Metro is seeking feedback and input
- 3. DEIAJ Plan Development Discussion – Alicia Johnson, Civil Rights and Inclusion
  - a. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice plan requested by current board October 2021.
  - b. Highlighted accomplishments from 2021-2024 available to view in attached powerpoint, but include:
    - i. Published MetroNEXT (April 2022)
    - ii. Instituted paid parental leave, inclusive of foster placement and adoption
    - iii. Began presenting a civil rights overview to all new operators in training
    - iv. Conducted an employee experience survey to assess workplace culture. Found that: Metro has work to do - and has been working on - psychological safety and collective belonging. Metro employees largely support Metro's DEI work.
    - v. Audited all bus stops for safety and accessibility
    - vi. Made major updates/improvements to the MOBY Rider Guide
  - c. Priorities for 2025-26 available to view in attached powerpoint, but include:
    - i. Finalize DEIAJ Action Plan, contextualized within MetroNEXT and in coordination with the new Board of Directors
    - ii. Audit all onboard announcements on all routes to ensure adequate wayfinding for riders who are blind or low vision
    - iii. Ensure microtransit launch is centered on equity
  - d. Request for feedback and input on goals and strategies
    - i. Under the new federal administration, do we see risk for DEI work at Metro? The new administration will likely work to defund DEI work, but Metro administration is funded through state and local funds
    - ii. Do we survey riders? Yes, our next will be by 2026.
- 4. Committee report on public feedback - None
- 5. Discuss communication with board
  - a. Clarice: Plans to be at TAC meetings while on board
  - b. Clyde: Will attend November board meeting 11/19.
  - c. Presentation about bus stop audits so far, updates on Microtransit
- 6. Set December Agenda
  - a. Celebrate the year
  - b. 2025 Chair and Vice Chair elections

**Next meeting:**

- December 11, 2024, 6:30 p.m. at Metro administrative offices and on Zoom

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

# DEIAJ Action Plan Discussion

Alicia Johnson, PhD  
Civil Rights and Inclusion Director

Transit Advisory Committee  
November 2024 Meeting





# October 2021 Board Action



## RESOLUTION:

**Board Action in Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Justice**

## EXPLANATION:

Vision: Metro is a valued transportation choice for all members of our community and a vital partner in Omaha's future.

Mission: Metro connects people, places and opportunities through quality transit service.

We aim to realize this vision by cultivating and investing in a culture of mutual respect, appreciation, and teamwork.

We value care: We care about our customers and each other.

A vision is what we journey toward. We are on this journey together. We strive to always be learning and evolving. Part of this learning and evolving is doing the work to deepen our care of our customers and one another through valuing diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice. This work is important. This work can be hard. This work makes us stronger. We are committed to this work and helping our customers (riders), employees and partners do the same.

The most resilient organizations, communities, and groups of people are ones that are created together with all of the unique perspectives and backgrounds found within those groups.

We are making strides to get better through...

- Accessible services including MOBY
- Title VI analyses whenever major changes occur
- Audio announcements
- Real-time arrival information
- Umo fare payment system and monthly fare-capping
- MetroNEXT planning study
- Investing in Metro's future leaders

These strides are helping us to support this work...and there is still more to do. We acknowledge that we always need to be learning and evolving and we aim to be better.

Because we value Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice and this work is critical to making us stronger and better able to support our employees and customers, we make this motion to direct staff to develop a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Justice plan of action to continue to learn and more fully embody living these values for our customers, our team, and our partners.

**Unanimously approved on October 28, 2021.**

## DEIAJ Accomplishments: November 2021-2022

- Awarded RAISE grant (November 2021)
- Put first electric buses in service (March 2022)
- Published MetroNEXT (April 2022)
- Transitioned to RMTA (June 2022)
- Refined Metro's major service change, disparate impact, and disproportionate burden policies to prompt more frequent equity analyses (October 2022)

# METRONEXT

AN ASPIRATIONAL  
**ACHIEVABLE**  
VISION

TO

- ✓ Address Equity in Our Region
- ✓ Improve + Expand Connections
- ✓ Provide an Excellent Travel Experience
- ✓ Promote Environmental Stewardship
- ✓ Lead Responsibly + Collaboratively

AND DELIVER

BETTER TRANSIT FOR A MORE CONNECTED REGION

# DEIAJ Accomplishments: 2023

- Instituted paid parental leave, inclusive of foster placement and adoption (admin employees November 2022, CBA employees October 2023)
- Hired a Civil Rights and Inclusion Director (January 2023)
- Set up a permanent lactation space for the building – available for Metro, MAPA, and Transdev employees and visitors (April 2023)
- Launched internal ADA Committee (June 2023)
- Conducted an employee experience survey to assess workplace culture (June 2023)



# DEIAJ Accomplishments: 2023

- Hired a Community Development Planner (August 2023)
- Co-hosted NADTC National Symposium on DEI in Transit with MAPA (August 2023)
- Opened applications for a reinvigorated TAC (October 2023)
- Began presenting a civil rights overview to all new operators in training (December 2023)
- Added Juneteenth as a paid floating holiday for all employees (December 2023)





# DEIAJ Accomplishments: 2024

- Launched Metro Leadership Academy (January 2024)
- Established a central information page for accessibility (February 2024)
- Hired a Community Mobility Coordinator (March 2024)
- Completed a Fleet Transition Plan (April 2024)
- Audited all bus stops (2024)
- Major updates/improvements to the MOBY Rider Guide (January-November 2024)

## Accessibility on Metro

HOME | ACCESSIBILITY ON METRO

Metro is devoted to providing high quality, accessible travel options for all of our customers. All Metro services – bus, ORBT, and MOBY paratransit – are accessible.

Drivers for both bus and MOBY are trained to treat all riders with dignity and respect and to not make assumptions about the level of assistance a rider may need.

Please ask for the help you need.



Credit: Capacity Builders, Farmington, NM





# DEIAJ Priorities for 2025-2026

- Finalize DEIAJ Action Plan, contextualized within MetroNEXT and in coordination with the new BoD
  - Launch the train-the-trainer program
  - Increase outreach for and access to the Metro Half-Fare Program
  - Begin developing an expanded reduced fare program
  - Revise MOBY application and eligibility procedures
  - Audit all onboard announcements on all routes to ensure adequate wayfinding for riders who are blind or low vision
  - Ensure microtransit launch is centered on equity
  - Continue strengthening internal controls for civil rights compliance
-



# TAC Input

Focused on service provision ...

- What characterizes equity in the context of Metro?
  - What should the metrics or indicators of equity be for Metro?
  - What actions need to be taken by Metro to achieve these metrics or indicators of equity?
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