

# Minutes

## Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



**Meeting date:** April 1, 2026

**Time:** 12:30 PM

**Location:** 390 Robert Street

### Members present:

- ☒ Chair, David Fenley, at large
- ☒ Vice Chair, Patty Thorsen
- ☒ Sam Jasmine, Precinct A
- ☒ Patsy Murphy, Precinct C
- ☒ Ken Rodgers, Precinct D
- ☐ Jeffrey Dains, Precinct E
- ☒ Darrell Paulsen, Precinct F
- ☒ Kari Sheldon, Precinct G

- ☒ Michele Severson, MCD
- ☐ Erik Henriksen, MCD
- ☐ Heidi Myhre, MCD
- ☒ Claudia Fuglie, MCD
- ☐ Chris Lefield, AARP MN

### Ex-officio:

- ☒ Scottie Carter, OEE
- ☒ Julie Sellner, Metro Mobility Service Center
- ☒ Douglas Cook, Metro Transit Customer Advocate
- ☐ Anjuli Cameron, Metropolitan Council

☒ = present, E = excused

### Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Metropolitan Council acknowledges that the land we currently call Minnesota and specifically the seven-county region is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota Oyate who are present and active contributors to our thriving region. As part of the Metropolitan Council's commitment to address the unresolved legacy of genocide, dispossession, and settler colonialism and the fact that government institutions, including the Metropolitan Council, benefitted economically, politically, and institutionally after the forceable removal of the Dakota Oyate, the Metropolitan Council is dedicated to instilling Land, Water, and People Commitments in regional policy. These commitments support the Dakota Oyate, the eleven federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Ho-Chunk Nation, and the American Indian Communities representing over 150 diverse Tribal Nations that call the seven-county region home.

### Call to order

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:30 p.m.

### Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

The Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment was read by committee Chair Fenley.

### Agenda approved

It was moved by member Fuglie, seconded by Vice Chair Thorsen to approve the agenda. Committee members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda. **Motion carried.**

### Approval of minutes

It was moved by member Sheldon, seconded by Vice Chair Thorsen to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2026, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

## Business and information items

1. The **Blue Line Extension** presented by Nkongo Cigolo and Anna Beth Gunderson from Metro Transit. The committee received an update on the Blue Line Extension from project staff, who reviewed the project's history, current status, and station design progress. Staff explained that the project's original route along the freight corridor was abandoned after an agreement could not be reached with BNSF Railway, leading to development of a modified route beginning in 2020. The current alignment is approximately 13.4 miles and will extend existing Blue Line service from Target Field Station through North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and into Brooklyn Park, adding 13 new stations and creating a one-seat ride to the Mall of America. Staff noted that community feedback played a significant role in shaping the revised alignment, with particular attention given to minimizing neighborhood impacts and addressing displacement concerns through an anti-displacement program developed in partnership with Hennepin County. The environmental review process was completed in 2025, including federal approval of the amended record of decision, allowing the project to move forward with right-of-way acquisition and final design. Project staff reported that design is approaching the 90% milestone, with detailed work now focused on accessibility features, pedestrian infrastructure, station amenities, and construction planning. Updates since the 60% design phase include additional ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps, intersection improvements, and continued coordination with property owners. Staff described two station platform types—center platforms at most stations and side platforms at three locations—with features including sloped accessible walkways, tactile warning surfaces, ticket machines under canopy cover, wind screens, seating, card readers, station markers, and other accessibility elements. Committee members raised concerns about the number of non-signalized crossings included in the design, particularly for blind and low-vision riders, noting that while accessible pedestrian signals and locator tones would be included at certain crossings, unsignalized crossings still present safety concerns. Staff confirmed that nearly all stations will include at least one signalized crossing, with the exception of the Lowry Avenue station due to its unique trail-oriented location. Member Rodgers thanked project staff for their ongoing engagement with the disability community and commended them for listening to accessibility concerns and incorporating meaningful design changes to improve rider safety and usability.
2. A presentation of the **H Line** by Alyssia Bell from Metro Transit. Staff explained that the H Line was selected in 2021 from a larger pool of candidate transit corridors and is intended to become Metro Transit's eighth arterial BRT line. The 17-mile route will connect downtown Minneapolis to Sun Ray Transit Center on the east side of St. Paul, traveling primarily along Washington Avenue, Como Avenue, Maryland Avenue, and White Bear Avenue. The project includes 45 proposed stations, with several shared with the future Metro Transit Bronze Line, and will replace much of the existing Route 3 service while improving east-west transit connections across the region. Staff described key BRT features, including off-board fare payment, all-door boarding, near-level boarding, transit signal priority, real-time arrival information with audible announcements, shelters, seating, bike parking, and heated amenities at stations to improve speed, reliability, and accessibility.

Project staff reported that the H Line is currently in the draft corridor planning phase. A public comment period is underway through early May, with additional engagement planned later in 2026 before the final corridor plan is approved in the fall. Engineering and design are expected to take place in 2026 and 2027, with construction anticipated to begin in 2028. Staff highlighted extensive public outreach efforts, including surveys in multiple languages, door knocking, community events, mailings, partnerships with local organizations, and direct outreach to riders, operators, businesses, students, and neighborhood groups. Coordination is also underway with multiple agency partners, including the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, University of Minnesota, county agencies, and other transportation projects along the corridor.

Discussion focused heavily on accessibility concerns related to “floating bus islands,” where bike lanes are routed behind bus platforms, requiring pedestrians to cross bike traffic to reach transit stops. Member Rodgers raised concerns that these designs create safety issues,

particularly for blind and low-vision riders, and noted that tactile warning strips used in these areas can be confusing because they do not match traditional accessibility cues. He emphasized that cyclists do not always yield to pedestrians and urged Metro Transit to involve blind and visually impaired riders, cyclists, and planners in future design conversations before such features are finalized. Staff acknowledged the concerns, stated that similar issues may arise on portions of the H Line—particularly along Washington Avenue where bikeway improvements are planned—and committed to continuing accessibility discussions and working toward safer, more consistent design standards. Another committee member shared personal experience using similar facilities and echoed concerns about cyclist-pedestrian conflicts. Additional questions addressed construction activity along Rice Street, where staff clarified, that related work is tied to the future Metro Transit G Line and other local infrastructure projects. The presentation concluded with committee leadership commending Metro Transit for its extensive and thoughtful public engagement throughout the planning process.

3. **On-demand Accessible Transportation Across Nation** presented by Alex Elegudin and Judy Shanley. They explained that on-demand paratransit is becoming increasingly common across the country as transit agencies look for ways to improve rider flexibility, reduce wait times, increase customer satisfaction, and manage rising paratransit costs. Unlike traditional paratransit, these systems are typically rider-initiated, often provide same-day or near-immediate trip requests, and may allow riders to choose among multiple transportation providers. Agencies commonly use voucher or subsidy models, where the transit agency pays part of the trip cost directly to contracted providers such as taxi companies or transportation network companies, while riders pay a copay. Presenters noted that many agencies have also built in safeguards such as trip caps, subsidy limits, and tiered fare structures to balance customer access with program sustainability.

Examples from around the country illustrated different approaches. Boston was highlighted as one of the most mature models, where riders can use providers such as Uber and Lyft, with trip allowances based on historical usage. Boston reportedly reduced average trip costs significantly while increasing ridership. New York City was cited as another large-scale example, reducing average trip costs from over \$100 on dedicated paratransit vehicles to approximately \$40 using a mixed provider network. Other examples included Portland, where riders can still book through a dispatcher rather than only through an app; Nashville, which offers riders up to 100 trips per month with a \$5 copay and agency subsidy; Harris County, which uses an account-balance model; and Tampa Bay, where on-demand providers are integrated with first-mile/last-mile and microtransit services.

Discussion then turned to how these national examples compare with Metro Mobility's premium on-demand service in the Twin Cities. Committee members described Minnesota's model as an unlimited-trip subsidized taxi program for eligible Metro Mobility riders, with a \$5 rider copay and a \$25 subsidy cap. Presenters noted that while Minnesota's unlimited-trip model is attractive to riders, many other systems limit the number of trips in exchange for higher subsidies that allow riders to travel farther. This led to a discussion about balancing equity, trip distance, affordability, and fiscal sustainability. Accessibility of transportation network companies was also discussed, with presenters noting that some cities have successfully negotiated wheelchair-accessible vehicle service from companies like Uber and Lyft, while other regions continue to face challenges.

The presenters concluded by emphasizing that on-demand accessible transportation is no longer experimental. Pilot programs funded in previous years have now demonstrated measurable cost savings, operational efficiencies, and overwhelmingly positive rider feedback. They stressed that the primary benefits for riders include greater independence, spontaneity, shorter wait times, improved employment access, real-time trip tracking, and more control over travel decisions. Their key message to the committee was that there is no one-size-fits-all model, but successful systems are built around rider needs, operational



capacity, and a broader “family of service” approach that offers multiple accessible transportation options.

### **Member comment**

Chair Fenley stated there will be a community conversation regarding Metro Mobility on May 11. The committee was also invited to take a tour of the Franklin Station light rail station. More information about that will come via email.

### **Adjournment**

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

### **Certification**

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting of April 1, 2026.

Approved this 5th day of August 2026.

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