

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting date: March 4, 2026

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- Chair, David Fenley, at large
- Vice Chair, Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- 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, MCCD
- Claudia Fuglie, MCCD
- Chris Leifeld, AARP MN

Ex-officio:

- Scottie Carter, Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity
- 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 12:33 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

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

Agenda approved

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

Business and information items



1. A presentation of the **2026 Priority Seating Campaign** by Anj Olsen from Metro Transit. The 2026 priority seating campaign presentation outlined how Metro Transit is redesigning its approach after mixed results from a 2020–2024 campaign that was disrupted by COVID-19 and limited bus visibility. In 2025, the agency paused to conduct extensive surveys across five key audiences—customers, people with disabilities, operators, equity stakeholders, and customer relations—and found that nearly all riders already understand what priority seating is, but often fail to act due to convenience, uncertainty, or situational factors. As a result, the 2026 campaign shifts away from education toward reinforcing behavior through a softer, values-based message centered on kindness, respect, and consideration. Planned elements include illustrated, non-targeted visuals; simplified, more accessible website content broken into focused pages; and clearer, more universally understood on-board signage, including icons that transcend language barriers. The campaign also emphasizes internal alignment, with expanded training and shared messaging across operators, trip agents, and transit police, as well as tools like optional operator-triggered audio announcements when riders who may need priority seating board. Outreach will be more strategically placed, such as ads near bus doors, and messaging will be integrated across multiple touchpoints to gently prompt behavior. Committee feedback highlighted the need for inclusive design that accounts for people with cognitive or developmental disabilities, language barriers, and varying levels of system familiarity, suggesting more visual, simplified, and possibly video-based educational tools. Members also raised ongoing challenges—including inconsistent rule enforcement, crowded buses, competing uses of accessible space, and confusion about broader transit policies—that could limit the campaign’s effectiveness if not addressed holistically. There was strong support for incorporating real rider stories to build empathy, potentially as part of a future campaign phase, and for engaging the committee more directly in content creation. Overall, the discussion emphasized that while no single campaign can solve all accessibility challenges, incremental improvements, empathetic messaging, and cross-department coordination can meaningfully improve rider behavior and the accessibility experience.
2. An update of Metro Mobility from Julie Sellner from the Metro Mobility Service Center. The Metro Mobility update provided a review of 2025 performance compared to prior years, emphasizing both service improvements and ongoing challenges. Metro Mobility, a shared-ride public transit service for riders unable to use fixed routes due to disabilities, delivered over 1.74 million trips in 2025, reflecting a slight 1.8% decrease from 2024. Despite this dip, service quality metrics improved: on-time performance exceeded federal standards at 93.5%, appointment-time adherence reached 92.7%, and onboard time performance was strong at 97.1%, all above required thresholds. Most trips occurred close to their scheduled windows, with many late or early trips deviating only by a few minutes. Notably, the system reported zero ADA trip denials in 2025, meaning all eligible ride requests within the service area were fulfilled. Discussion clarified that “denials” only apply when the system cannot provide a ride at all, while riders declining inconvenient times are counted separately as “client denials,” a metric not currently highlighted in reports but suggested for future tracking. Committee members raised concerns about real-world rider experience, including excessively early pickup offers, reduced premium service hours due to legislative changes, and around service differences between ADA and non-ADA trips. Additional discussion focused on contracted premium providers, with mixed feedback on pricing consistency, service reliability, and driver behavior, including reports of long delays and occasional refusals of service. Members emphasized the importance of reporting complaints to improve accountability and noted that increased usage could help stabilize pricing. Overall, while Metro Mobility demonstrated strong performance metrics and compliance improvements, the conversation highlighted gaps between system performance data and rider experience, pointing to the need for better transparency, communication, and contractor oversight.

Public invitation

Michael Wright spoke about concerns with the Metro Mobility mobile phone app.

Member comment

Member Paulsen spoke about the need and work of a driver recognition program. Member Myhre had a positive comment regarding some driver experiences. Vice-Chair Thorsen also suggested using the online comment form for positive feedback as well as negative feedback. Member Jasmine asked that members wait until to be recognized before speaking.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:25 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 March 4, 2026.

Approved this 1st day of April 2026.

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