

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting date: May 6, 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, OEEEO
- ☐ 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 not being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee to order at 12:32 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

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

Business and information items

1. The committee received a **legislative update** from Hannah Pallmeyer, Government Affairs Manager at the Metropolitan Council. Pallmeyer explained that the Minnesota Legislature was entering the final week and a half of its 2026 session and reviewed how the state's two-year budget cycle operates. She noted that the current even-numbered year session focuses on potential supplemental budget adjustments, policy initiatives, and bonding legislation rather than setting the full state budget, which was completed during the 2025 session for fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

Pallmeyer reported that legislators were considering whether to pass a supplemental budget

based on the state's latest budget forecast. She explained that transportation-related provisions are often included in omnibus bills and noted that the Senate transportation omnibus bill contains two Metropolitan Council provisions: one requiring a grant to a local transportation management organization and another requiring coordination with Hennepin County on an upcoming road construction project. She added that the House had not yet advanced a transportation omnibus bill, making the outcome of transportation legislation uncertain as the session neared its conclusion.

She also discussed the possibility of a bonding bill, which would authorize the state to borrow funds for capital projects. Because bonding bills require a 60 percent supermajority vote rather than a simple majority, Palmer noted that significant bipartisan cooperation would be necessary. She stated that bonding bills are often among the final pieces of legislation considered before adjournment and that it remained unclear whether lawmakers would reach agreement this year.

Pallmeyer highlighted a Metropolitan Council public safety proposal aimed at expanding enhanced assault penalties currently applied to attacks against transit operators. The proposal would extend those same protections to other transit employees, including community service officers, Transit Rider Investment Program staff, facilities personnel, and maintenance workers. She emphasized that the bill would not create a new crime but would ensure that all transit employees receive the same legal protections as bus and light rail operators. The bill received hearings in both legislative chambers and advanced through multiple committees, though Pallmeyer noted that the limited time remaining in the session made its prospects uncertain.

During discussion, committee member Myhre shared positive feedback regarding the increased presence of law enforcement and transit personnel at downtown Saint Paul transit facilities, particularly along the Green Line. She observed that staff were interacting with riders and building relationships within the community, which she felt was helping improve safety. Pallmeyer thanked her for the feedback. In response to a committee question, Pallmeyer clarified that funding included in the Senate transportation omnibus bill was directed to the 494 Corridor Commission, a transportation management organization serving the southwestern metropolitan area. She concluded by offering to provide the committee with a written summary of any legislation passed during the remainder of the session that may be relevant to its work.

2. **Website** The committee received an update on the **Metropolitan Council's website redesign project** from Chelsea Mona of Clockwork, the firm assisting with the effort. Mona explained that the project is focused on modernizing and reimagining the website to better serve users and sought feedback from committee members, particularly regarding the Metro Mobility portion of the site. She emphasized that the goal is to create a more accessible, user-friendly experience that addresses known challenges with the current website.

Committee members identified several areas where the current Metro Mobility website can be difficult to navigate. Members noted that important information, such as complaint and feedback forms, can be hard to locate because users must scroll through extensive introductory content before reaching the resources they need. Other members described difficulties finding information about services such as automated ride reminder calls and noted that the website often requires users to understand how the Metro Mobility system operates before they can successfully locate information. Several participants emphasized the need for a more intuitive design that better matches how riders think and search for information.

Staff and committee members discussed challenges related to locating forms on the website. Suggestions included creating a dedicated forms section where riders could quickly find applications, standing order request forms, timetables, and other frequently used documents without having to navigate through multiple pages. Metro Mobility staff also noted the importance of ensuring that forms are current and easy to access, as staff often spend significant time guiding customers through the process over the phone.

Accessibility was a major focus of the discussion. Committee member Rodgers described his

experience using screen reader technology and explained that the current Metropolitan Council and Metro Mobility websites contain a large number of headings, regions, and links that can make navigation overwhelming. He noted that excessive content and navigation options can create barriers not only for screen reader users but also for people with cognitive disabilities or attention-related challenges. Members stressed the importance of simplifying page layouts, reducing unnecessary complexity, and using plain language to make information easier to understand. Heidi reinforced the need for content that accommodates different learning styles and processing needs, suggesting that information be organized in clear, sequential steps whenever possible.

Members also identified several strengths of the current website. Staff noted that information is generally organized under logical topic areas and that users who understand the system can usually find the information they need. The website also performs well in search engine results, with Metro Mobility appearing prominently when searched online. Committee members expressed appreciation that the Metropolitan Council was actively seeking feedback and demonstrating a willingness to improve the user experience.

When discussing the ideal future website, committee members proposed several enhancements. Suggestions included creating a dedicated section for new riders that would provide basic information about fares, pickup windows, appointment scheduling, and what riders should expect when using Metro Mobility for the first time. Members also recommended developing instructional videos to complement written content. These videos could demonstrate common processes such as boarding a vehicle, presenting identification, paying fares, and scheduling rides. Participants emphasized that any videos should include captions, audio descriptions, accessible narration, and consistent plain language to ensure they are useful for riders with a variety of disabilities and learning preferences.

The committee also discussed the importance of clearly explaining the different ways riders can schedule trips, including by phone and online. Members recommended making these options easy to find and understand while ensuring that users can access the same supporting information regardless of which scheduling method they choose. During the discussion, staff clarified that riders scheduling trips online cannot currently enter both a pickup time and an appointment time because doing so previously caused significant confusion and booking errors. Staff noted that riders with appointment-based trips are currently encouraged to call reservations directly, and committee members suggested that this limitation should be clearly explained on the website.

Project staff shared preliminary timelines for the redesign effort. The Metro Mobility website, Metro H website, and main Metropolitan Council website will each become separate sites. Work is currently in the early stages, with the Metro Mobility website expected to launch first, potentially during the following winter, while the larger Metropolitan Council website redesign is anticipated to continue into the following year. Staff also clarified that the Metro Transit website is not undergoing a major redesign and will largely remain unchanged apart from backend technology upgrades.

The discussion concluded with committee members encouraging project staff to continue engaging users with disabilities throughout the redesign process. Members requested opportunities to review draft designs and prototypes before launch, including accessible demonstrations that would allow both sighted and non-visual users to evaluate proposed changes. Staff agreed that ongoing feedback would be valuable and expressed interest in returning to future committee meetings with updated concepts and designs as the project progresses.

3. The committee received an update on Metro Transit's **Better Bus Stops Program**, which focuses on improving approximately 8,000 regular-route bus stops throughout the seven-county metropolitan area. Staff explained that the program's primary improvements include accessible boarding areas (ADA pads), shelters, lighting, and heated shelters at high-ridership locations. Particular attention was given to bus stop accessibility. Metro Transit has conducted a comprehensive effort since 2022 to collect accessibility data at bus stops, surveying more



than 90% of the approximately 6,900 stops without shelters. The data showed that accessible stops and sheltered stops account for 86% of all bus boarding and alighting activity, while approximately 6% of rider activity occurs at inaccessible stops. Staff explained that they created a “constrained accessibility” category for stops that narrowly miss accessibility standards, allowing them to prioritize locations with more significant barriers first.

Staff presented findings on the most common causes of bus stop inaccessibility. The largest category was unpaved stops, accounting for approximately 2,200 inaccessible locations. Other common issues included insufficient boarding area depth and excessive slope. Committee members discussed concerns about systemwide accessibility, particularly situations where one stop in a pair is accessible while the corresponding stop across the street is not, preventing riders from completing a round trip. Staff acknowledged that the newly collected data is prompting a reevaluation of how projects are prioritized, including whether paired stops should receive greater attention. Members also raised concerns about accessibility challenges in suburban areas, the long-standing presence of inaccessible stops, and the need to consider the full rider experience rather than evaluating individual stops in isolation.

The presentation also outlined Metro Transit’s accessibility improvement process, which includes ongoing data collection, accessibility review, project planning and design, and construction. Staff emphasized that accessibility improvements are coordinated both through Metro Transit-led projects and through partnerships with local governments and roadway agencies during reconstruction projects. Committee members discussed the importance of reporting accessibility issues beyond bus stop boundaries, such as damaged sidewalks, and Metro Transit staff noted that they have begun sharing these findings with roadway agencies to encourage corrective action.

Staff reported on accomplishments during the 2025 construction season, including the installation of 152 new accessible boarding pads, 32 new shelters, replacement of 24 aging shelters, and the addition of shelter amenities such as lighting and heat at 41 locations. They noted that roughly one-third of the new boarding pads were delivered through coordination with roadway reconstruction projects. The committee also reviewed the program’s key performance indicators, which show continued growth in the percentage of boardings occurring at stops with shelters, lighting, and heat. Staff further noted that these investments are being tracked to ensure equitable distribution across racial and ethnic groups.

During discussion, committee members emphasized the importance of considering accessibility barriers that may suppress ridership at inaccessible stops, rather than relying solely on current ridership data when evaluating priorities. Staff clarified that accessibility improvement decisions are not based on ridership and acknowledged that inaccessible stops may have lower usage because some riders are unable to use them. Members also raised concerns about the accessibility of Metro Transit’s website and complaint reporting tools. Staff committed to reviewing the accessibility of online reporting forms, while a Metropolitan Council civil rights specialist confirmed that the website is currently accessible and provided contact information for reporting any accessibility concerns. The committee thanked staff for the thorough presentation and expressed appreciation for the new accessibility data, which members viewed as an important foundation for future improvements.

4. Julie Sellner from **Metro Mobility** reported that demand continues to grow while overall service performance has remained relatively stable. From January through April 2026, ridership increased by 4.4 percent compared with the same period in 2025, representing approximately 25,000 additional rides. Despite this growth, overall on-time performance remained strong at 93.8 percent, with ADA trips at 93.77 percent and non-ADA trips at 93.65 percent.

Sellner provided a more detailed breakdown of performance metrics. Fifty-two percent of trips were picked up within ten minutes of their scheduled pickup time. Among trips classified as late, 62 percent were picked up within ten minutes after the pickup window, which staff identified as a key area for improvement. Appointment-time performance remained at 93.1

percent, compared with 93.5 percent during the same period last year. While most early arrivals occurred within 30 to 45 minutes of the scheduled appointment time, staff noted that arrivals 45 to 90 minutes early remain a concern. Among late appointment arrivals, 56 percent occurred within ten minutes of the appointment time, but approximately six percent of late trips arrived more than 30 minutes late, creating the greatest impact on riders.

Performance related to onboard travel time remained strong at 97.2 percent overall, including 96.86 percent for ADA trips and 98.03 percent for non-ADA trips. Metro Mobility also reported zero ADA trip denials during 2026 to date.

Staff highlighted several operational improvements implemented over the past year. Installation of the DriverMate system began during the reporting period and is expected to improve routing efficiency by incorporating real-time navigation information such as traffic congestion and construction data. Metro Mobility also increased its fleet size by 27 percent to 635 vehicles, updated mapping systems used for scheduling and dispatch, improved driver recruitment and retention, and added two additional premium on-demand providers, YouServe and CareCab, alongside Transportation Plus. Staff also reported that the South Zone service contract was expected to be awarded in the near future.

Customer service improvements included bringing complaint investigations in-house, replacing Metro Mobility identification card equipment, and reducing call center demand. Call volumes declined by 3.4 percent, while abandoned calls decreased by 28 percent, which staff attributed to improved staffing levels and shorter hold times.

During committee discussion, members requested future reporting on the performance of the premium on-demand program, including ridership, complaints, and other operational metrics. Staff agreed to provide additional data at a future meeting. Members also asked questions about the DriverMate system and how it differs from the existing scheduling platform. Staff explained that DriverMate integrates with the existing Trapeze scheduling software but uses Google Maps-based navigation to provide more accurate routing information.

Additional discussion focused on rider experiences with premium on-demand providers. Members raised concerns about vehicle cleanliness, safety, and how complaints are handled. Staff clarified that riders choosing premium on-demand providers are using services operated by independent transportation companies rather than Metro Mobility vehicles. While Metro Mobility subsidizes the cost of these trips, the providers maintain responsibility for their own service standards, fares, and complaint processes. Staff agreed to explore adding clearer information to Metro Mobility's website to help riders better understand the distinction between Metro Mobility service and premium on-demand providers.

Public invitation

No Public Comment

Member comment

No member comment

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:33 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 May 6, 2026.

Approved this 5th day of August 2026.



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