

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting date: August 5, 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, MCD
- ☒ Claudia Fuglie, MCD
- ☒ Chris Leifeld, AARP MN

Ex-officio:

- ☒ Scottie Carter, OEEA
- ☒ 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 12:34 p.m.

Dakota Land, Water, and People Acknowledgment

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

Agenda approved

It was moved by member Fuglie, seconded by member Jasmine 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 Paulsen, seconded by member Fuglie to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2026, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by member Murphy, seconded by member Paulsen to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2026, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by member Paulsen, seconded by member Fuglie to approve the minutes of the

Business and information items

1. **Downtown Transit Wayfinding** presentation from Metro Transit. Metro Transit staff Jasna Hadzic-Stanek and Jacob Brown, along with consultant Zach Lockrem, presented an update on the Downtown Transit Wayfinding project. The project is part of Metro Transit's broader customer experience efforts and is intended to create a clear, intuitive, and accessible wayfinding system for downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul, with standards that could eventually be expanded throughout the transit system. Staff explained that the project grew out of customer feedback identifying confusion around finding the correct stop, determining where and how to transfer, understanding connections between bus, light rail, and BRT, and navigating temporary changes caused by construction and detours. The project builds on previous wayfinding research and pilots, including the 2019 Transfer Point Wayfinding Guide and pilot projects at locations including the Mall of America and West Bank. The current work is focused on Metro Transit right-of-way and infrastructure in the downtown areas and is being developed through a customer-centered process involving research, field observations, customer engagement, design concepts, testing, and ultimately recommendations and implementation roadmap.

The project team described a hybrid engagement process that included an online survey and mapping tool, targeted observations at transit facilities, intercepts, and upcoming focus groups. Rather than relying solely on traditional surveys, the team observed how riders actually used stations, including what information they looked for on signs and phones and how they moved between locations, and then followed up with riders to better understand what information they were seeking. The team indicated that survey responses are being analyzed by factors including transit familiarity, age, race, socioeconomic status, and disability status. Approximately one-third of the focus group participants were expected to be people with disabilities, another third infrequent transit riders, with additional general groups also participating. The team also acknowledged limited success recruiting people with limited English proficiency and planned additional outreach to community organizations to better understand the needs of those riders.

Initial engagement findings were organized into eight areas, including access and accessibility, apps and other tools, finding stops, safety, stop signage, signage leading to and from stops, transfers, and schedules. The team also plans to examine geographically specific feedback along the light rail corridor and other downtown corridors. Consultants identified several existing strengths, including the walkability and density of the downtown areas, Metro Transit's network of transit ambassadors and customer assistance resources, strong recognition of the Metro Transit "T" symbol, and increasing use of trip-planning tools and mobile applications. At the same time, they identified opportunities to improve the placement and presentation of information, reduce the amount of information presented in a single location, make stop names and stop IDs more consistent across physical and digital tools, provide better landmarks and directional information, and address situations where stop signs and shelters are separated, potentially making it unclear where riders should wait.

TAAC members emphasized that accessibility must be considered throughout the project, particularly for people who are blind or have low vision, use wheelchairs, have cognitive or learning disabilities, or have limited English proficiency. Members raised concerns about electronic signs that can become difficult or impossible to read because of glare, brightness, or small text, as well as large maps and schedule information that may be mounted too high for wheelchair users or difficult for people with low vision to read. Members also noted that information can become confusing when different transit modes use different station designs, signs, and technologies. The committee encouraged the project team to involve people with disabilities directly in testing proposed signage and to consider tactile information, Braille,



accessible digital tools, phone-based information, and other ways of providing information to people who cannot rely on visual signage.

The discussion also focused on the importance of making the system simple and consistent enough for people who are learning to use transit independently. Members noted that frequent changes in station layouts, multiple types of signs and technologies, and different procedures for buses and trains can create significant challenges for people with cognitive disabilities and others who need clear, predictable instructions. Suggestions included developing basic educational materials, videos, phone or mobile resources, or other instructional tools that could potentially be used in schools and disability programs to teach people how to navigate transit, identify where to wait, understand boarding procedures, and safely navigate surrounding streets. Members also emphasized that information provided through signage should be consistent with information available through apps, websites, and customer service telephone lines. The project team agreed that the diversity of transit products and the need for greater consistency were emerging themes in the engagement data.

A portion of the discussion addressed wayfinding for people who are blind. A committee member questioned how the project would provide information to non-sighted riders and asked about the consultant's experience with accessible wayfinding. The consultant identified tactile wayfinding, such as tactile strips or other ground-level elements, as one approach used in other projects, while noting that Metro Transit already has digital tools and telephone resources that could complement physical wayfinding. A committee member recommended avoiding reliance on cardinal directions such as north, south, east, and west because portions of the Twin Cities street network do not follow a consistent grid. Instead, members suggested using the direction of the bus, such as referring to the front or rear of the bus or left and right, as well as recognizable landmarks. The project team expressed interest in incorporating these suggestions and continuing to learn directly from people with disabilities about approaches that work well for them.

Members also raised practical concerns about transfers, including buses lining up closely together, unclear boarding locations, the location of ramps, accessible waiting areas, and the need for clear spaces for passengers using mobility devices. Suggestions included clearly identifying waiting zones, keeping areas clear for ramps, providing information about boarding and exiting through different doors, and improving the movement of passengers between stops and across intersections. Members noted that wheelchair users can face difficulty reaching accessible seating before other passengers board and emphasized the importance of public education regarding accessible seating and boarding. The discussion reinforced that wayfinding extends beyond signs themselves and includes helping riders understand where to stand, where ramps will deploy, how to transfer, and how to move safely and independently through transit facilities.

The project team indicated that the project is currently in the research and stakeholder coordination phase. The next phase will involve developing and testing design concepts, followed by final recommendations at the end of the year or early next year. The team hopes to have new signage implemented in the system later next year, although actual field implementation will occur beyond the three project phases. Staff emphasized that TAAC's input is particularly valuable while the project is still at the conceptual stage, allowing accessibility concerns and other recommendations to influence the designs before decisions are finalized. The team also indicated that there may be additional opportunities for TAAC members and other disability community representatives to participate in future focus groups and testing.

One final suggestion from the committee was to consider plain-language standards when developing signage and other customer information, with a member referencing federal plain-language resources as a potential guide. The project team welcomed the suggestion.

2. Julie Sellner provided an update on **Metro Mobility's 2026 service performance**, including ridership, on-time performance, appointment-time adherence, onboard travel times, and capacity. Ridership from January through July was approximately 5.1% higher than the same



period in 2025, exceeding projections and reflecting continued growth in demand. Overall on-time performance was reported at approximately 92.17%, with ADA trips at 92.71% and non-ADA trips at 92.61%. Sellner noted that Metro Mobility was providing approximately 28,721 more trips above the FTA performance threshold than would have been required at the minimum standard.

The committee reviewed the distribution of late trips in greater detail. Of the trips that were late, approximately 38% were within five minutes of the scheduled pickup time, 24% were five to ten minutes late, 23% were ten to twenty minutes late, and 8% were twenty to thirty minutes late. Approximately 2,274 trips, or 6% of late trips, were more than 60 minutes past the scheduled pickup time. Appointment-time performance for 2026 was approximately 92.3%, with about 19,000 trips arriving more than 30 minutes after the appointment time. Sellner said Metro Mobility is examining routing issues and other factors contributing to late appointments and is working to improve these numbers.

Onboard-time performance remained strong at approximately 96.8%, compared with an FTA threshold of 95%. Sellner reported that roughly 34,000 of more than one million total trips exceeded the applicable onboard-time standard.

Sellner also provided information requested at the previous meeting regarding Metro Mobility's premium on-demand service. Premium service ridership increased substantially, from approximately 77,000 trips in 2023 to 150,000 in 2024 and 184,000 in 2025, with the 2025 total representing approximately 9.5% of overall Metro Mobility ridership. The increase reflects greater use of premium service as an alternative transportation option and provides riders with another relatively affordable option compared with paying full fares for services such as Uber or Lyft.

A substantial discussion followed regarding appointment times, pickup windows, and premium service providers. Members reported instances in which scheduled or appointment times appeared to change on the day of a ride, creating confusion and concern about whether riders could rely on their confirmed reservation. Sellner clarified that once a reservation is confirmed, the scheduled and appointment times should not change; estimated arrival times may fluctuate during the day because of operational conditions. The committee agreed that the specific concerns raised should be addressed separately with Metro Mobility rather than taking up additional meeting time, with an offline follow-up planned.

Members also expressed concern that information about the 30-minute pickup window was not being communicated consistently by reservation staff and that some riders were receiving different answers depending on whom they contacted. Sellner acknowledged the communication issue and said Metro Mobility needs to improve how employees explain scheduling and appointment-time expectations to riders. She also discussed efforts with service providers to tighten scheduling windows so riders arrive closer to their appointment times, while ensuring that riders are not dropped off excessively early or at facilities that are not yet open or are closed. The committee emphasized that riders should not be expected to continually move their requested appointment times earlier as a solution to scheduling uncertainty, noting the potential impact on work, appointments, and other obligations.

The committee further discussed the policies governing premium on-demand providers. Sellner explained that premium providers are independent contractors and generally operate under their own service policies rather than Metro Mobility's pickup-window requirements. A five-minute no-show window was identified for premium trips after the driver marks that they have arrived. Members also asked about premium service hours and were informed that, following legislation enacted in January, Metro Mobility's subsidy for premium trips is limited to the regular Metro Mobility service hours for the applicable community; premium providers can no longer offer extended service under the Metro Mobility subsidy.

Because of the committee's interest in the rapidly growing premium on-demand program and questions about provider responsibilities, the chair proposed making Premium On-Demand a dedicated agenda item for a future Metro Mobility update and inviting the premium service



contractors to participate directly. Members supported the idea so the committee can better understand the contractual requirements, service standards, pickup expectations, and responsibilities of the providers.

Public invitation

No public comment

Member comment

Member Paulsen had a comment regarding the route 219. Member Myhre commented that some electronic signs at some newer bus stops are difficult to see in some lighting.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:29 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 August 5, 2026.

Approved this 2nd day of September 2026.

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