

Minutes

Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee



Meeting date: October 1, 2025

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

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

- Michele Severson, MCD
- Erik Henricksen, MCD
- Patty Thorsen, MAAA
- Heidi Myhre, MCCD
- Claudia Fuglie, MCCD
- Chris Leifeld, AARP MN

Ex-officio:

- Julie Sellner, Metro Mobility
- 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 12:32 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 Vice-Chair Paulsen, seconded by Member 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 Rodgers, to table the minutes of the August 6, 2025, regular meeting of the Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee. **Motion carried.**

Business and information items

1. New Fleet SUV Options for Metro Mobility presentation by Jodi Janssen from Metropolitan Transportation Services. Jodi explained that Metro Mobility is looking for replacements for

older sedans and SUVs such as the Ford Flex, which is no longer manufactured. The proposed Sienna is a hybrid, all-wheel-drive vehicle with strong fuel economy and positive consumer ratings. It seats seven, with captain's chairs in the second row and a bench in the third, and provides generous headroom, legroom, and cargo space. The technology equipment required by Metro Mobility would fit in the rear compartment without reducing passenger seating, and the large integrated grab handles near the doors were noted as an important accessibility benefit. The model is manufactured in Indiana.

Jodi clarified that the Sienna under consideration is not a plug-in hybrid and does not require charging. It is also not wheelchair accessible. Previous experience with converted minivans showed that they did not hold up well for wheelchair service, so customers who use wheelchairs will continue to be served by the dedicated accessible buses. These minivans are intended only for ambulatory riders and for single or dual passenger trips. Metro Mobility hopes that adding these vehicles will help contractors better match the right vehicle type to each trip and avoid situations where a less suitable vehicle is sent to customers.

Committee members asked questions about seating layouts, mapping technology, rider comfort, step stools, and available trim levels. Jodi explained that the number of Siennas purchased will depend on availability, since supply is tight. The total fleet order for the year, across all vehicle types, is expected to be about 30 vehicles. A fully equipped Sienna is expected to cost in the mid sixty thousand dollar range.

The committee then traveled to the garage to inspect the vehicle directly. Members tried out different seats, tested legroom, asked questions about entering and exiting with the step stool, and compared the experience to existing Metro Mobility SUVs. Several members raised concerns about ensuring that riders are assigned a vehicle that matches their needs and recommended improving rider profiles or assessments. A member suggested hosting an open house where customers could practice getting in and out of the vehicle, and staff agreed to bring that idea forward.

2. Claudia Fuentes stopped by to speak about the community conversations for Metro Mobility. There will be both an in person and an online version.
3. Regional Microtransit Policy Study presentation by Bradley Bobbitt from Metropolitan Transportation Services. Bradley introduced the study, explaining its purpose, expected outcomes, and the collaborative work program being developed with transit providers. He noted that microtransit services, such as MVTa Connect, Metro Micro, and Southwest Prime, are growing in demand, operate within defined zones, and provide on-demand service via phone or app using vans or cutaway buses. The study aims to provide regional policy recommendations, service performance standards, and guidance for cities and counties to better understand microtransit services.

Bradley clarified the distinction between microtransit and other services like paratransit or dial-a-ride, emphasizing microtransit's fixed zones and on-demand nature. He outlined guiding principles created with transit providers, which include improving customer experience, tailoring service to different communities, and balancing provider flexibility with consistent regional expectations. He described microtransit's main roles, including connecting riders to fixed-route transit, providing geographic coverage in suburban areas, and improving access to local destinations. The study also categorizes microtransit service types using existing transit market areas to define expected transit productivity levels and highlighted the importance of ensuring equitable service for riders using mobility devices.

The discussion then turned to microtransit fares, transfers, and oversight. Members raised concerns about fare consistency, accessibility, and transferring between service zones, noting that cross-provider transfers typically require a second fare. Staff explained that fares are currently set by individual providers, with a universal GoTo card and cash as proposed payment options, and that Metro Mobility tickets may also be accepted. Oversight of suburban providers was highlighted as a key issue, with the Met Council overseeing federal funding but daily operational performance largely self-managed by providers. Two models for coordinating



service across zones were proposed: reciprocal rides in boundary areas and designated hubs for transfers, with examples provided to illustrate each approach.

Accessibility and rider support were a major focus, particularly for individuals who cannot easily navigate app-based systems. Committee members emphasized the need for human support, training, and a consistent contact point if a ride is missed. Staff noted that most providers offer phone booking and would explore additional training or self-guided resources. The discussion concluded with plans to follow up in 6–8 months to address oversight, service continuity, and broader accessibility concerns as microtransit continues to expand across the region.

Reports

Subcommittee

1. Blue Line – Ken Rodgers

60% engineering completed. Looking closer into station design and accessibility.

2. Purple Line – Darrell Paulsen

Purple Line is being reimaged. They will be here in January to present.

Public invitation

No public comment.

Member comment

No member comment.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 2:36 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 October 1, 2025.

Approved this 3rd day of December 2025.

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