

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, November 20, 2018 at 9:00 am at the Operations Center, 665 Franklin Ave NE, St. Cloud, MN.

The following individuals were in attendance: Ryan Daniel, Doug Diedrichsen, Jill Justin, Scott Stark, Josh Sachs, Nate Ramacher, Brenda Severson, Bruce Benner, Jenny Svihel, David Williamsen and Aisha Bah. Absent: Alexis Lutgen and Suzanne Driessen. Visitors: Vicki Johnson– St. Cloud APO and Jerry Schmitz.

Welcome. Ryan welcomed everyone and read the purpose of the RAC.

Public Open Forum. Open Discussion.

Ryan stated that there is an employee event and lunch planned for December 18, from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. The RAC committee members may attend. Consequently, next month's meeting will be at the Operations Center at 10:00 am on December 18.

Old Business.

Open RAC committee positions. There are currently two open positions. It would be preferable to fill both positions with Fixed Route riders. A policy on recruiting and filling open positions needs further discussion. The committee agreed to continue with past term limits—2 years for riders and 1 year for community members. Ryan and Doug will present a policy regarding terms and recruitment of members to the committee at January's meeting.

New Business.

- 1) RAC email. There was none.
- 2) Marketing Update—Nate Ramacher. Metro Bus will again participate in the Jolly Trolley food drive from December 10 – 14. Last year, we collected a new record high amount of cash and food donations. Event partners Townsquare Media and Royal Tire will also staff this event, with cash and food donations split between Catholic Charities, the Salvation Army and the Promise Neighborhood food shelves. Nate extended special thanks to David and Jenny for their past volunteer time at this and other Marketing events. It was determined that the Trolley is no longer suitable for this purpose due to bus size and excessive diesel exhaust fumes, so a CNG bus will be used. The bus will park at a different location for approximately 3 hours each day during the event. A complimentary dinner is provided to volunteers at the event. A volunteer sign-up sheet was available to committee members, and will be posted for Metro Bus employees. Contact Nate if you would like to help.
- 3) Training Update—Scott Stark. To date, 25 new employees (70% operators) have gone through orientation with the training department in 2018. Employees holding a CDL license went through refresher training on bus operation. All employees went through a customer service and respectful workplace training in September. This training also included a guest speaker who presented on maintaining a positive work environment. 116 Metro Bus employees hold a CDL license. The training department will assist employees in keeping these licenses in good standing through ongoing refresher training. The training department has been actively preparing for the ConneX service in multiple ways, including operator training. The safety committee was recently reorganized to include representation from the entire organization, and will begin monthly meetings in the near future. The training department also initiated and implemented a plan for increased use of safety vests in specific areas. All

administrative employees are required to wear a safety vest when in the garage or on any MTC grounds where high visibility is necessary. This will eventually extend to all employees. Safety signage updates are occurring regularly at all facilities. In 2019, refresher training will continue for all employees. Partnerships with other transit systems and other agencies will continue to grow in 2019. The FTA has rules and regulations that we will need to comply with by 2020, and the training department has begun working on this.

- 4) Connex Update—Doug Diedrichson: The training department and other staff have been conducting mock trials of the ConneX service to identify and correct potential issues. Doug has been answering a few common questions from the public—ConneX is not a Dial-a-Ride service and is completely open to the public, riders must call in for each ride needed, service in Sartell is not eliminated, only changed for the trial period. ConneX will connect to route 31 at the Sartell WalMart and route 21/22 at Country Manor. Route 31 will extend to an hour run, and will include the Sartell medical area. Two more mock trials will occur December 10 and 14. These will focus on logistics and internal software testing. Marketing is advertising the service to the public, and will continue to increase advertising leading up to the service start date. Marketing is targeting potential users by utilizing social media, our website, flyers, and radio ads.

Open Discussion. Doug gave a quick ridership report. Top performing routes are: route 8--29 riders per hour, route 1--23 riders per hour, route 2--21 riders per hour, and route 7--20 riders per hour. Poorest performing routes are: route 32--6 riders per hour, routes 10 & 33, 8--riders per hour for each route.

Doug mentioned that the Metro Bus ADA Transition Plan is now available for public comment. The plan is available at our website, ridemetrobus.com, and at the Mobility Training Center. Public comments should be directed to Doug by phone or email and are due by 4 pm December 17. Specific issues that may impact accessibility will be placed on a spreadsheet for reference during infrastructure updates and ongoing route changes. Vickie mentioned that a specific policy regarding snow removal should be included in the Transition Plan.

Bruce mentioned that at times during the holidays, it is difficult for fixed route buses to pull up to the Crossroads bus stop to unload passengers due to heavy traffic, unloading trucks, etc. He recognizes that there is not much that Metro Bus can do regarding this matter, but thought it was a safety concern worth mentioning. Doug stated that there is a future facility planning study happening, and the possibility of an additional Metro Bus location on the west end of the St Cloud metro area may be considered.

Jerry mentioned that customers have suggested development of some type of GPS app so that customers can see where the bus is, especially in cold weather. Metro Bus would be interested in developing this, but will depend on securing funding. Customers also suggested that the enunciation system announce streets more frequently. This would help customers navigate better in the dark this time of year. Ryan will invite Steve Williams to educate the committee on the enunciation system at the next meeting. Jerry also stated that many customers are unaware of the long bus ride to downtown when boarding the route 3 at the St Cloud Walmart stop. He suggested installing larger and/or more detailed signage at this stop to advise riders of quicker options to get downtown.

Ryan took the committee on a quick tour of the Operations Center facilities, including stops at the call center, garage and maintenance areas.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.