

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 9:00 am at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W St Germain, Cloud, MN.

The following individuals were in attendance: Ryan Daniel, Doug Diedrichsen, Jill Justin, Steve Williams, Bruce Benner, Brenda Severson and David Williamsen. Absent: Alexis Lutgen, Aisha Bah and Jenny Svihel. Visitor: Vicki Williams--St Cloud APO.

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

Public Open Forum. Open Discussion.
There was none.

Old Business.

Vacant RAC Postitions—Ryan Daniel. Two positions are open at this time. The new members should be Fixed Route users, and will be asked to commit to a two-year term. The RAC committee application has been updated and was distributed to the members. The application is also available on the website. Committee members are encouraged to invite application from anyone who may be interested in serving on the committee. Doug and Ryan will continue to solicit applications while they are out in the community.

Connex Roll-out—Ryan Daniel. The new Connex service was launched 1/2/19. On the first day, there were approximately 30 riders, and there were approximately 45 riders yesterday, 1/14/19. The weekend days have been much slower, with approximately 8 riders per day. At the end of the month, Doug will be able to get a clearer picture of performance from the ridership reports on both the Connex and the revamped route 31 and then will be able to compare that to past ridership on routes 31 and 32. He noted that it appears we have nearly as many riders as we had in the past. Bruce stated that he would like to ride the Connex service, but wondered how to do it and when a good time would be. Ryan advised him to go to any location in the Connex service area, and then call dispatch and request a ride. The service is busiest during the weekdays, so Bruce can choose any day that works for him. He was also advised to identify himself to the operator, so they are aware that he is not loitering. Doug also stated that he has heard positive feedback from riders and local businesses regarding the Connex service. It has been particularly well received from persons with mobility issues, as the service is a curb to curb service. Bruce asked if the service goes to the front door of WalMart or to the bus shelter and Doug stated that we service both locations at the customer's request. Bruce stated that he has received feedback that riders do not like that the route 31 is an hour long, and only runs once an hour. Doug mentioned that adding frequency would cost more money, but if the ridership demands more service, it will be considered. Currently, there are three buses out on the road; two during morning and afternoon peak times and one at midday. Five operators have Connex service on their bids, and there are an additional eight trained operators.

New Business.

- 1) RAC email. There was none.
- 2) Information Technology Update—Steve Williams. Steve Williams is the IT manager. His department maintains our servers, computers and vehicle electronics. He showed us three pieces of equipment currently used in the buses. The Ranger is used in both Fixed Route and Dial-a-Ride buses. It communicates with the scheduling software, and shows the driver pick-ups and drop-offs. It also has GPS, so that we can see

exactly where any bus is at any time it is on the road. Messages can be sent between operators and dispatchers on this device. An MDC is an old style ranger that is used in older Dial-a-Ride buses, and is being phased out. Steve also showed us a T-box, which is used in Fixed Route buses. It connects to the ranger and controls the auto enunciation, the internal one line sign and the speakers in the bus. Bruce mentioned that on route 33, the enunciation is late. Steve will investigate.

Currently, there is a data tower at the Franklin Avenue location. Although Metro Bus owns this tower, it will be phased out so that we can use cellular data. Cellular data will have a monthly fee, but will provide better, faster and more data. Steve programs the messages for the bus destination signs. All DVR camera systems are maintained by the IT department. Bruce asked if Steve was the one to review camera footage. This is an operations function. Vicki asked how difficult it was to implement the Connex software. Steve stated that it was a matter of reprogramming the buses, using Dial-a-Ride technology that we already had in place. The two-way radio system for Fixed Route and Dial-a-Ride uses UHF technology, with each service having their own radio channel. Northstar Link services use ARMER radio technology, which is used by emergency services, as well as St Cloud State and the St Cloud Hospital. This system allows for smaller talk groups, and allows direct communication in the case of an emergency. It provides coverage as far as Minneapolis. Dial-a-Ride and Fixed Route radios will be converted separately to the ARMER system by the end of fiscal 2019.

Open discussion:

Doug gave a quick ridership report for December. The top performing routes continue to be 8,1,2 and 6, with 18 to 22 riders per hour. Routes 32, 33 and 10 are the lowest performers. Northstar Link averages 7 to 8 riders per hour. Dial-a-Ride continues to grow in all categories, with an average of approximately three riders per hour.

Bruce reported an incident that happened on December 20, 2019. He encountered a verbally abusive person at the shelter at Coborn's Sauk Rapids. This person also was verbally abusive to operator Noah. Both Bruce and Noah reported this incident. Ryan stated that operations would have dealt with this report, so he will follow-up and report back at the next meeting.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 am.