

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 at 9:00 am at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W St Germain, Cloud, MN.

The following individuals were present: Doug Diedrichsen, Jill Justin, Bruce Benner, David Williamsen and Jenny Svihel. Absent: Alexis Lutgen and Aisha Bah. Visitors: Vicki Williams--St Cloud APO, Leif Spore and Paul Thomas.

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

Public Open Forum. Open Discussion.

There was none.

Old Business.

Open Committee Positions. Doug stated that two RAC committee applications have been submitted by Dial-a-Ride customers. One is awaiting a background check, and if that is acceptable, we will likely offer the open position to that candidate. Two open Fixed Route positions remain. Doug asked that committee members continue to assist in recruiting to fill these positions.

New Business.

- 1) RAC email. There was none.
- 2) Ridership—Doug Diedrichson. For the Fixed Route core services, the top performing routes were: #8 with 23 riders per hour, #1 with 20 riders per hour, #2 with 19.95 riders per hour and the #6 with 19.86 riders per hour. #91 remains the top SCSU services performer, averaging 74 riders per hour. Connex is the lowest performing route, with 2.5 riders per hour. Ridership for this route has been trending up during the trial period so far. Doug pointed out that in the past, a rider who rode from the Transit Center to a Sartell medical location needed two buses (#31 & #32), which would register as two rides. The same trip today on the expanded #31 only counts as one ride. This has an effect on the overall ridership. We are also seeing an increase of new riders on the Connex service. Dial-a-Ride is increasing across the board, as has been the trend. 1,500 additional rides were provided in March 2019 as compared to March 2018. There have been fewer PCAs and companions on DAR—but this is just a note, as these do not affect ridership. Jenny stated that she is continuing to use the Connex service, and has noticed that the wait times on the phone and for the bus to arrive seem to be shorter than they were in the recent past. Doug stated that he has received this same feedback from other customers.

Open discussion:

Bruce mentioned that Dial-a-Ride medical returns are experiencing long wait times. He stated that he has waited over an hour a couple of times, and has heard from others that they have waited as long as 2 hours. Doug stated that this has been brought to the attention of the Operations team, and they are looking for a solution. He also stated that there are only so many buses and drivers, and that is one of the challenges.

Bruce asked when a decision will be made regarding the Connex service pilot. Doug stated that no specific date has been determined, but that there are meetings scheduled to discuss this issue. He will bring all of the statistical information he has gathered on the service to these meetings so that an informed decision can be made. It is possible that the pilot program will be extended before becoming permanent in order to allow time for all the behind-the-scenes logistics to happen.

Bruce also mentioned that a dispatcher suggested to him Metro Bus consider holding a job fair to fill open operator positions. Doug stated that the last he had heard, there was just one part-time Dial-a-Ride operator position remaining.

Bruce mentioned that recently, a Dial-a-Ride customer had a body fluid spill on the bus. He asked if there was a policy on this kind of incident. Doug stated that there is a protocol that the operator is to follow when this occurs. Bruce also asked if anything could be done when a rider has this issue multiple times. ADA regulations prevent Metro Bus from denying rides based on this issue.

Jenny showed a picture from inside bus 738 at night. There was a lot of glare on the windshield, which made it difficult for the operator and passengers to see out the window. Bruce mentioned that the windshields tend to leak on the newer Dial-a-Ride buses. Doug mentioned that this has been brought to maintenance's attention. They are working with the manufacturers to find a solution to this problem—and it turns out that one of the attempted fixes has caused the windshields to be more susceptible to cracking.

Jenny mentioned two issues with the Fixed Route annunciation system. On #22, the Good Shepherd stop is announced four times and on #31, the message that this route partially replaces the #32 is repeated almost constantly. Doug stated that when the next bid goes into effect in May, Steve (IT) can make software changes to address these issues. Doug encouraged committee members to email any other annunciation issues to him, so that they can be passed on to Steve.

Jenny also stated that bus 726 has seats that are falling apart, and the yellow stop signal cord doesn't always work. Doug will pass this on to the maintenance department.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:31 am.