

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 10:00 am at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W St Germain, Cloud, MN.

The following individuals were present: Doug Diedrichsen, Kim Hoff, Bruce Benner, Jan Scott, Kelly Carlson, Aisha Bah, Jenny Svihel and David Williamsen. Absent: Paul Thomas, Alexis Lutgen. Visitors: Vicki Williams, St. Cloud APO.

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

Public Open Forum. Open Discussion.
No one was present to speak.

Old Business.

- 1) Missing stop at 22nd St S & Red Fox Road—Doug reported maintenance replaced the bus stop sign.
- 2) It was reported that the glass was replaced in the bus shelter by the St. Cloud Surgical Center.

New Business.

- 1) RAC email. The information was unavailable. Doug will update at the next meeting.
- 2) Ridership—Doug Diedrichsen. Route 8 is the top performing route in September with 26.49 passengers per hour, followed by Route 1 with 21.02 passengers per hour and Route 2 with 19.08 passengers per hour. He explained all of the routes are down a little bit compared to last year except Route 33. The lowest performing route was again the ConneX service, with 3.45 passengers per hour which was a drop from last month. He explained it may be due to the U Go Free program ending and fewer activities for seniors. Routes 10 and 33 continue to be at the bottom as well. Dial-a-Ride ridership was up 184 rides for the month.

Jan brought up a concern about Dial-a-Ride. She stated she had a procedure at the hospital recently and wasn't feeling the best when it was over. She called for a medical return and waited for the bus. A man came over to her in a wheelchair and asked her how long she had been waiting. She stated it had been over an hour. He explained to her that he never takes Dial-a-Ride after a medical appointment anymore, he only uses it once a week for groceries. He is diabetic and can't wait a long time, so he uses Care Cab. Jan ended up waiting for 2 hours and 10 minutes. She said that she called and asked what was going on because she really wanted to get home and they said "we're still looking for a bus for you". Meanwhile there were three buses that pulled up but none of them were for her. She commented that it is frustrating for both the passengers and the bus operators when people have to wait over an hour for a medical return. She mentioned that she had to use the bathroom but couldn't leave because she was afraid that she would then miss her bus. There needs to be another route put on so people don't have to continue sitting and waiting for a ride.

Doug explained that Berta, the new Dial-a-Ride Operations Manager spoke to the committee the previous month and she is looking at the data, to see how they can better schedule the operators during the peak times and giving breaks at off-peak times, etc. However, it all comes down to having the budget to provide more service.

Kim asked Jan if she had called in a complaint to Customer Service. She said she had not done that. Kim handed out Customer Service business cards and explained that people need to call in when they have a problem or concern, otherwise it won't be documented and nothing can be done to correct the problem.

- 3) St. Cloud Metro Active Transportation Plan. Doug explained the St. Cloud APO is working on an Active Transportation Plan and they will be including transit. They are recognizing that passengers who are walking to/from bus stops are considered active transportation users. Vicki mentioned they are in the early stages of the plan. They are looking at what's out there currently, such as sidewalks, trails, bike trails, and are including bus stops as destinations within the active transportation network. They are looking at the cities as well as the counties that are affected in the metro area in regard to future plans of development; roadways, sidewalks, trails, etc. They know in regard to transit, there are areas where there aren't sidewalks by the bus stop, or it's across the street. When they look at roadway improvements, they also want to consider the implications it will have for transit users.

Vicki mentioned they are looking for community members from all walks of life to participate in a small group of volunteers to discuss what should be included in the Plan. Bruce, Aisha and Jenny volunteered to be a part of the committee.

Open discussion: a) Jenny mentioned that some of the newer operators are still doing the detour route on Routes 21/22. Doug stated he will discuss it with Shawn, Operations Manager. b) Bus #734 was leaking water inside the bus after a recent big rainstorm. Jenny mentioned it to the operator, but it's still leaking. She will send a picture of it to Doug, so he can let the maintenance department know about it. c) Jenny mentioned when she was at Good Shepherd, she noticed a Dial-a-Ride operator picking up a person that was using a scooter and as they were half way up the ramp, the operator was pushing the scooter and then the battery died. She said the operator didn't know what to do. Doug mentioned he would relay the information to Berta and ask what the policy is when a battery dies on a motorized mobility device. d) Bruce asked if a police officer could stop and ticket someone if they were smoking in a bus shelter? Doug said it would depend on each municipality. He jokingly suggested Bruce go to the different city council meetings and pitch the idea that transit stops are supposed to be non-smoking, so why don't you start handing out tickets? Metro Bus isn't a jurisdiction that can pass ordinances and issue fines. Vicki stated that she will follow up with the police department. e) Bruce also mentioned that all of the No Smoking signs have been ripped down at the Crossroads shelters, and f) the Grace McDowall bus shelter is leaking on the benches inside when it rains. f) Kelly offered a suggestion for communicating to passengers when the weather gets bad. She mentioned that not everyone is on Facebook or has access to information when buses aren't running, so wondered if people could sign up to receive a text, and then when there's a detour or bad weather and buses aren't running, a mass text could be sent out to everyone that signed up. Doug mentioned he would check with Nate in the Marketing department to see if there we have the technology to be able to do that. g) Jenny mentioned the fabric is coming off and ripping apart on some of the bus seats and she wondered if anyone is checking on them. Doug stated the cleaners are supposed to be looking for things like that. He asked Jenny to email him the bus number if she sees a really bad one and he will let the maintenance department know.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:42 am.