

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting off-site on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 10:00 am to speak about a Ridership update, a Farebox update, a Benton County Fair update, the Mask Mandate, and various other questions.

The following individuals attended: Ryan Daniel, Michael Kedrowski, Kellen Rasmussen, Ben Paulson, Bruce Benner, Vicki Johnson, Kelly Carlson, Jan Scott. Absent: Keshia Anderson-King, Jenny Svihel, Paul Thomas, David Williamsen.

Welcome. Mike thanked everyone for coming and reviewed the purpose of the RAC.

#### Public Open Forum.

- 1) Open Discussion. There were no members of the public present.

#### Old Business.

#### New Business.

- 1) Ridership Update
  - a. Ridership dropped slightly across all modes, down only 2% over last month.
  - b. Dial-A-Ride evened out, with an increase of only 1%.
  - c. Northstar continues to increase with over 800 riders last month and an increase of 4%.
  - d. Looking at best performing routes:
    - i. Route 22 up 11 % and Route 33 and 11 were down 9%.
  - e. Connex was down 11.5%, with about 200 less rides (could be attributed to one Sunday less of service).
- 2) Farebox Update
  - a. On Friday, October 1, 2021, Metro Bus will resume charging fares for all transportation services including Fixed Route, Dial-a-Ride, ConneX in Sartell and Northstar Link.
  - b. When fares resume, Metro Bus will be implementing new fareboxes and fare payment options including a new Smart Ride Card and Smart Ride mobile app. Fares will not change for any Metro Bus services.
  - c. Beginning Sunday, September 19, customers will be able to exchange unused passes, tokens and change cards at the Metro Bus Transit Center in downtown St. Cloud. Smart Ride Cards will also be free during this time. The option to redeem passes, tokens and change cards will last until Saturday, October 16, after which Smart Ride Cards will cost \$3 in addition to the cost of any passes or stored monetary value purchased to the card.
    - i. All previous unused passes, tokens and change cards will be obsolete after October 16.
    - ii. The new Fareboxes will no longer offer change and transfers will only be available on the Smart Ride Cards.
  - d. In early September, Metro Bus will announce the date customers can begin to purchase the new Smart Ride Cards online, at the Transit Center and at other community locations.
    - i. The date the free Smart Ride App will be available to be downloaded will be announced at the same time.

- e. Metro Bus customers can visit the Metro Bus Mobility Training Center at 700 West St. Germain Suite 100 in St. Cloud to try the new Farebox or call the Mobility Training Center to schedule free Travel Training at 320.529.4487.
  - i. Any questions heard at Transit Center or the Mobility Training Center are important to have answered accurately.
- 3) Benton County Fair Update
  - a. Thank you to those of you who were able to either help assist at the booth, and to those who stopped by to visit.
  - b. Building on from the Farebox discussion, there is a list of FAQ from the website regarding the Farebox which will greatly benefit all.
    - i. Resources are available for consumption at the Transit Center or the Mobility Training Center. They cover terms and costs associated, as well as a list of questions and answers about the fareboxes.
- 4) Mask Mandate
  - a. Effective April 30, federal mandates and accompanying directives from the Transportation Security Administration - TSA require passengers on public transportation to continue to wear masks until September 13, 2021.
  - b. The Federal order overrides changes to Minnesota guidelines. It is confusing, but it is required by federal law.
    - i. All Metro Bus facilities are required to have a mask.
    - ii. However, you may see another Metro Bus employee talking to another employee without a mask, they are only required when facing anyone of the general public and NOT another Metro Bus employee.

Open discussion.

- 1) FAQ regarding fareboxes online on website
  - a. <https://ridemetrobus.com/home/frequently-asked-questions/#/FAQfareboxes>

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:29 am.