

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held an in-person meeting at the Mobility Training Center and streamed simultaneously on Microsoft Teams on Tuesday March 19th, 2024, at 10:00 AM. The meeting was held to discuss ridership updates, hear new updates about Metro Bus's Long Range Transit Plan, as well as various other questions.

The following individuals attended: Michael Kedrowski, Jenny Svihel, and Vicki Johnson **Absent**: Kiesha Anderson-King, David Williamsen, Bruce Benner, Jan Scott, Paul Thomas and Kelly Carlson.

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

Public Open Forum.

- 1) None

Old Business:

- 1) RAC Emails - None
- 2) Review of January Minutes - The meeting was held to discuss ridership updates, hear latest updates about Metro Bus's Long Range Transit Plan, as well as various other questions.

New Business:

- 1) Ridership Update - Overall system wide ridership was up 2% over last month, or roughly 1,000 more rides.
 - a. Routes 22 and 32, each had increases of over 12%, and most other routes had increases of at least 5%.
 - b. Route 12 saw a decrease of 6%.
 - c. Dial-a-Ride provided around 13,000 rides.
 - i. Saturday ridership was up 13% over January.
 - d. The NorthStar Link provided 1206 rides and was up 6% over last month.
- 2) Long Range Plan Updates – The Long-Range Transit Plan Update (Metro Bus Forward) initiative continues to move along.
 - a. There is a dedicated space on our website, ridemetrobust.com/forward, in which you can view the project timeline and updates regarding plan are located here:
<https://ridemetrobust.com/forward>
 - b. Michael continued to cover material from the State of the System report. The following covers the portion discussed at the meeting:
 - i. Fleet and Facilities
 1. Metro Bus's fleet consists of 88 total vehicles, 38 of which are 35' buses used for local Fixed Route services. Dial-a-Ride paratransit service is provided with a fleet of 35 ADA lift-equipped cutaway vehicles. We also have 5 coach buses used for the NorthStar Link.
 2. Metro bus has 3 facilities, the Mobility Training Center, Transit Center, and Operations Center.
 3. There are 728 bus stops system wide.
 - a. 72 contain shelters.
 - b. 12 contain benches.
 - ii. Reassessing the current and future transit market
 1. To supplement the evaluation of existing transit services, the project team analyzed the underlying market and potential demand for transit service.

- a. U.S. Census Bureau. (2020).
 - b. U.S. Census Bureau. (2020) LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) Data
 - c. U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
 - d. St. Cloud Area Metropolitan Organization
 - 2. Factors related to transit demand.
 - a. Transit demand is strongly related to six factors that are the focus of the market analysis:
 - i. Population and Employment Density, Socioeconomic Characteristics, Development Patterns, Activity Centers and Travel Patterns and flows.
 - 3. Origins and Destination Analysis
 - a. To understand how people travel to, from and within the communities in the Metro Bus service area, a travel flow –or Origin-Destination (OD) -analysis was conducted.
 - 4. Peer Analysis will be done at another point in time, next I would like to discuss the community survey results.
- iii. Survey Analysis
 - 1. In the fall 2023, two surveys were conducted in support of Metro Bus Forward. An online community survey was conducted for three months between August and November 2023 and was designed primarily to solicit feedback from community members who are not using Metro Bus.
 - 2. A total of 167 completed community surveys were received.
- iv. An onboard passenger survey was also conducted on Metro Bus fixed route buses in September 2023 to understand how riders are currently using the bus and asking about their priorities for service improvements.
 - 1. A total of 495 completed surveys were collected.
- v. Community Survey Results
 - 1. Travel Patters
 - 2. Metro Bus usage
 - a. How long have people used our services, and how often do people ride?
 - b. Why do they ride?
 - c. Why DON'T they ride?
 - d. Perceptions of Transit Services
 - e. Customer Input
 - f. Demographics
- vi. Onboard Survey Results
 - 1. Customer profile
 - a. Types of customers using the system, how frequently they use the system.
 - b. Whether they have access to an automobile.
 - c. Whether they could have made their trip if Metro Bus were not available.
 - 2. Trip details
 - a. Customers' trip purpose, bus stop access
 - b. Trip starting and ending location.
 - c. Transfer activity.
 - 3. Service satisfaction.

- a. Customers' level of satisfaction is related to various aspects of Metro Bus service.
 - 4. Customer input
 - a. Which includes open-ended comments that have been categorized to highlight key themes.
 - 5. Customer demographics
 - a. Assesses additional characteristics such as age, gender, race, and household income.
 - vii. The remainder of the survey results cover open-ended comments, which is important to hearing feedback of those who chose to say something.
- 3) Open Discussion
 - a. It was brought up as a suggestion that people new to the area may not know about Metro bus and the services that are offered. Jenny asked how we can get the word out. Michael mentioned if it is seen that someone may be new to the area or may not know the system to guide them to the schedule rack or Transit Center. They can be informed there. Travel training is also an option to help them get to know the service area.
- 4) Next meeting
 - a. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 16th.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 11:29 AM