

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 18th, 2025, at 10:00 AM. The meeting was held to discuss ridership, go over operator pre and post trip checks, and various other discussions.

The following individuals attended: Michael Kedrowski, Vicki Johnson, David Williamsen.

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

Old Business:

- 1) RAC Emails – None
- 2) Review of January Minutes - The meeting was held to discuss ridership, learn about operator pre and post trip procedures for Fixed Routes and Dial-a-Ride, and various other discussions.
- 3)

New Business:

- 1) Ridership Update
  - a. Michael went through ridership documents for Fixed Route, Dial-a-Ride, and the Northstar Link.
  - b. In February, there were two less weekdays which account for a bulk daily ridership.
    - i. Route 3 saw the largest decrease of just over 1,000 rides, and route 21 saw the largest percent decrease at 17%.
    - ii. Routes 11 and 4 saw slight increases over January.
  - c. Dial-a-Ride recorded just over 12,000 rides.
  - d. Northstar link recorded 1,026 rides.
    - i. Michael informed the group about up-to-date news regarding Northstar Commuter Rail, which works in conjunction with the Northstar Link.
      1. There have been discussions at the State level about discontinuing the rail service due to poor ridership over the years and replacing it with a bus service.
      2. This is only preliminary discussions being reported on, “The Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council said in a joint announcement last month that the rail line, which has long failed to meet ridership expectations, could be shuttered and replaced with bus service.” – Sarah Ritter - Star Tribune writer.
      3. The Northstar Commuter Rail is often confused with the Northstar Link which Metro Bus operates in conjunction with the rail.
        - a. The Northstar Link is supplemental to the train and there is an agreement with the Met Council to operate it and connect St Cloud to the rest of the Metro and Northstar Corridor as it is often referenced.
        - b. This Northstar Link is mostly funded through grant funds, and additionally through shared percentages via the three counties along the line.
        - c. The current contract for operation is through the end of 2026.

- 2) Providing feedback and recommendations – The long-range plan has been ongoing for quite some time and that was a period in which it was quite easy to provide service recommendations and whatnot. How can you do so or field questions moving forward?
- a. Customer service, all comments, questions, and everything else are fielded and sent to the correct department or person to be addressed within 48 hours. It may seem tedious, but it is the most efficient way to get things done.
    - i. If you observe something that they feel is important to the agency that could be corrected or improved upon, to write down the bus number, time of day and date.
    - ii. When concerns are brought forward, they assist with future assessments and may not be taken into consideration immediately but are heard and documented internally.
  - b. If you notice issues with stops like damaged signs, annunciator not working at all or is too late/too soon let us know so we can fix that. It is important to us to have accessibility to all.
  - c. Michael asked members to bring concerns forward and have open discussions about them to initiate future action.
- 3) Open Discussion
- a. Michael provided a brief update on the Western Transit Center
    - i. Requests for Proposal (RFP) have been sent out to various engineering and architectural firms to assist with the design and construction.
    - ii. No set date is made, but internally the project team is working through the project timeline.
  - b. Michael provided updates on the Metro Bus Forward Project.
    - i. The team has been working through a timeline and implementation tasks for the project.
    - ii. Things are moving along but no information is to be shared publicly at this point in time.
    - iii. Michael addressed the group to consider getting more involved. The consultant team is looking to create a rider panel to provide feedback and recommendations on stop locations and amenities along the routes.
      1. We are a few months out from doing so but are thinking of some people that can help be involved in that ride and can contribute well to the cause.
  - c. The next meeting will be on April 15th, 2025, at 10 AM.

The meeting adjourned at 10:41