

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 September 16th, 2025, at 10:00 AM. The meeting was held to discuss ridership, learn about what a Transit Commission is, review transit options outside the service area, as well as various other questions.

The following individuals attended: Michael Kedrowski, David Williamsen, Paul Thomas, Vicki Johnson, Bruce Benner, Chinyen Oleson & Jan Scott.

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

Old Business:

- 1) RAC Emails – None
- 2) Review of May Minutes - The meeting was held to discuss ridership, hear how interactions at the Benton County Fair went, cover recent updates regarding Metro Bus Forward, hear about the FTA Administrator's visit to St. Cloud, as well as other various questions.

New Business:

1. Ridership Update – Ridership was up in the month of August. It was a full month with a full 31 days and colleges and schools began in the area.
 - a. Fixed Route – 54,337
 - i. Overall, most routes had increases, with the largest being Route 22 with 22% (one more Saturday) and next was route 32 with an increase of 10% or 60 rides. Route 3 also had nearly 600 additional rides provided in August over July.
 - ii. Routes 6 saw the largest decrease of 10% or nearly 500 rides.
 - b. Northstar Link – 1,300
 - i. Service will end at the end of December.
 - c. DAR - 13,132
 - i. Weekends saw an increase of 20%, however there was an additional day over last month.
 - ii. Weekday ridership declined slightly by 4% or nearly 500 rides.
2. Metro Bus Updates
 - a. Routes have been assessed and are being finalized.
 - i. There has been fine tuning over the last few months to increase coverage and efficiency. Also to verify timing will work.
 - ii. A new stop inventory will be made of current stops, and additional stop locations will be added as needed. New signs will be put in the ground next spring and summer in preparation for implementation.
 - b. On Monday, September 22, from 4:30-7:30 PM, Metro Bus will hold a public input meeting regarding construction of the Western Transit Center at the corner of Sundial Dr. and 2nd Ave. S. in Waite Park.
 - i. Following an extensive proposal process, Metro Bus selected Oertel Architects, LTD. to design and build the Western Transit Center.
 - ii. The public input meeting will be held at the St. Cloud Area School District Administration Office located at 1201 2nd St. S. (Door 5) in Waite Park. Community members and stakeholders are encouraged to attend to learn more about the process, give input and ask questions.
 - iii. A mailing will be sent to all addresses in the area letting residents know of the opportunity.

3. What is a Transit Commission?
 - a. Prior to 1969 transit service in St. Cloud was provided by private operators. The first service was provided by two horse-drawn carts and a short stretch of single track from the Grand Central Hotel on 5th Ave. to the intersection of 9th Ave. N. and 3rd St. N. via St. Germain Street and 9th Ave. N. It changed to an electrical operation in 1891. Street cars were replaced with bus service in 1936.
 - b. The St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission (Metro Bus) was created by the Minnesota Legislature to operate as a Transit Authority.
 - c. A transit Commission is a governmental or quasi-governmental body responsible for overseeing, planning, and providing public transportation services within a specific geographic region, such as a city, metropolitan area, or county.
 - d. Member cities are taxed through a levy system implemented to assist with the local match for providing service.
 - e. Metro Bus runs primarily on Federal and State Tax dollars, each member of the commission (Waite Park, St. Cloud, Sartell, and Sauk Rapids) pay a share based on population.
 - f. St Cloud also has a municipal planning authority the APO which Vicki is the Planner for. She helps make sure that we have the funding programmed by the state for operating expenses and vehicle purchases.
4. Transit Options/Connections:
 - a. **Tri-County Action Program, Inc. (Tri-CAP)** is the federally designated community program for Benton, Sherburne, and Stearns counties in central Minnesota. Programs administered by the agency may serve one or more counties and, in several cases, go beyond the boundaries of the three counties.
 - i. Tri-CAP is not just about transit.
 1. They help provide ranging from basic needs such as energy assistance,
 2. Food resources
 3. Housing
 4. Public transportation, and volunteer drivers
 5. Assist with self-sufficiency and building stability – like assisting with home ownership.
 - ii. If you live in an Area Not Serviced by Metro Bus, Tri-CAP offers on-demand, curb-to-curb public transportation in five counties for all ages and income levels for a minimal cost. Plus, all buses are handicap accessible.
 1. Bus reservations can be made up to two weeks in advance. Bus schedules and service hours vary by service area.
 - b. **Jefferson Lines** provides daily bus service to fourteen states across America's Heartland with affordable prices and convenient schedules.
 - i. Through partnerships with other bus companies, we connect you to thousands of destinations across the United States, Canada, and Mexico.
 - ii. Tickets can be booked and purchased online, as well as at the transit center downtown. There is also a mobile app.
 - iii. Daily trips are available, most common around 4 PM.
 - c. **Amtrack** - St. Cloud station is an Amtrak intercity train station located just off E St Germain St.
 - i. It is served by the daily Empire Builder on its route connecting Chicago, Illinois to Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon.
 - d. The next stop westbound is Staples.
 - e. The next stop eastbound is Saint Paul Union Depot.

The next meeting will be on October 21st, 2025, at 10 AM. The meeting adjourned at 10:40