

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W. St. Germain St, St. Cloud, MN

The following individuals were in attendance: Kim Hoff, Ryan Daniel, Tom Cruikshank, Steve Williams, Brenda Severson, Jenny Svihel, Bruce Benner, David Williamsen (arrived @ 9:10 am), and Karen Maruska (arrived @ 9:08 am).

Welcome. Kim welcomed everyone and read the purpose statement which was printed on the agenda. "The purpose of the RAC is to provide feedback and recommendations for improving operational or service issues affecting Metro Bus riders. Members also will have input on the organization's ongoing long-range transit plan. Members of this committee will also act as ambassadors for Metro Bus."

Public Open Forum.

- 1) Open Discussion. Kim reminded everyone there was discussion at the last meeting about the RAC meetings being open to anyone in the community that wanted to come to a meeting and share information or ask questions. There was no one in attendance.

Old Business.

- 1) RAC email. Kim mentioned she had gone over the agenda with Debbie on the previous Friday and as of that time, there weren't any emails.
- 2) Continue with Monthly RAC meetings. There was discussion at the last meeting in regard to how often to hold the RAC meetings and it was decided to continue meeting on a monthly basis.
- 3) October meeting canceled. Ryan apologized for being late but he had double booked himself that morning. He explained the meeting will be canceled due to the Minnesota Public Transit Association's annual state conference which St. Cloud is hosting. On the day when the RAC meeting would be, there will be an Expo at the River's Edge Convention Center, which will showcase all the latest in things like fareboxes, buses, destination signs, technology, etc. Ryan invited the committee members to attend the Expo which will be on Tuesday, October 17th and runs from 12 Noon to approximately 3:00 p.m. He mentioned if anyone is interested in going, they should let Kim or Debbie know so they can be signed up.
- 4) RAC Terms. Kim explained when the RAC committee was formed, there were terms set at different lengths so that not everyone's term would expire at the same time. She stated there are three one-year terms and five two-year terms. At this time, the individuals who are serving a one-year term will be expiring in November 2017. Suzanne has indicated to Debbie that she would be willing to continue serving, unless there was someone that was really anxious to join. The other two individuals that will expire at Janice and Karen, both of whom were not present, so Debbie will be in contact with them. When Karen arrived, Kim asked if she was wanting to remain on the committee and Karen explained that she would be leaving, due to a new job, which will take her out of town more. She did indicate that in the future, she would consider coming back.
- 5) Route 5 Update. Tom explained when Route 5 started last year, it was part of Phase 1 of route changes that were being proposed. He mentioned he knew going into the

new route, it would be a challenge because it's a tight route. Staff has been watching the route to see what could be done to improve on-time performance. One of the first things that was done was to not directly serve the Miller Learning Center at SCSU and to just stay on 5th Avenue (both inbound and outbound). The second thing that was changed was to service Cash Wise on Waite Avenue. The original route was going to stay on 2nd Avenue in Waite Park both directions, but a lot of customers asked for service at the bus shelter by Cash Wise.

Tom also mentioned because of the Transit Center being closed this summer, it has been troublesome for a lot of the routes, and there really wasn't anything we could do about it. Regular service will be resuming next week. Route 5 had a higher incidence of being late this summer especially due to the Transit Center, so he stated there is one area that is being looked at for a time saver. When the bus travels down 7th Street, to 10th Avenue and then Sundial Drive (which travels by Wacosa). This loop is done twice every run mainly so Wacosa can be served on their side of the road. Bruce mentioned there are a lot of people that cross the street to go back and forth to their jobs. Tom agreed there is a pedestrian crossing there but when a bus is parked there and people cross the street, and if a car approaches behind the bus and doesn't stop, there's a high risk of an accident with a pedestrian. One of the ideas is to eliminate one of the "loops" which will save about 3-4 minutes, depending on time of day and amount of traffic. He felt the best time to skip the loop would be on the return. There will need to be communication/education with the riders so they know that the bus will only go through the area once. Tom thought that a 30 day test run should be done to see what people think about the change. This would happen after we're back at the Transit Center, so probably sometime in October.

New Business.

- 1) Monthly Cumulative Ridership Summary. Steve handed out a ridership report for the month of August. He explained the reports are prepared each month and presented to the Board of Commissioner's for their review. Ridership is tracked as well as service hours, which provides Passengers per hour. He explained the Passengers per hour are used more than total passengers because if information is compared year to year, there may be a different amount of days of service (such as this year there may have been 21 weekdays but last year there were 22 weekdays). Ridership is broken down by division (both Fixed Route and Dial-a-Ride). On the fixed route, there are usually four separate reports: weekday, Saturday, Sunday and Cumulative ridership. On the Dial-a-Ride, the types of passengers are recorded, such as regular ADA riders, PCA's or Companions. If a child that is five years old or under, rides with someone, they are free and are recorded as a General Public rider on the report.
- 2) Dial-a-Ride Garage Dedication. Ryan mentioned there will be a Dial-a-Ride garage dedication/ribbon cutting on Tuesday, September 26th. The doors will open at 10:30 a.m., with a ribbon cutting to follow and then from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. there will be an appreciation lunch/bbq in the garage. Ryan mentioned he would coordinate transportation for everyone that was interested in attending the ribbon cutting and lunch and would have Debbie contact them with specifics times and locations. Karen mentioned she would attend but would have her own transportation.
- 3) Open Discussion. Bruce mentioned that a lot of people are asking if we are going to extend the route times on Saturday evenings as well as having earlier route times on

Sunday mornings. He wondered about long the construction will be happening by the hospital because they are working on the sidewalk side where the bus stop is located. He was also told that the bus stop sign (southbound) is going to be moved back down the street (closer to the hospital). Tom stated he was not aware of that.

He mentioned there is no departure sign in the shelter for Route 33 across from the hospital. There is one for the other two routes, but not Route 33.

Tom commented that last August 2016, we did add earlier Sunday service and that we will be starting the process again to look at the entire system, to find out what the needs are and whether or not there is something that can be changed. He stated later service on Saturday evening is a request that has been talked about for a long time and it was talked about a little bit in the long range plan in 2014-15.

Bruce asked if the bushes by the hospital bus shelter could be trimmed back because it blocks the view of the shelter and by the time people see the bus approaching the shelter (northbound), it's almost too late for the bus to pull over.

Bruce mentioned that bigger No Smoking signs need to be put in the shelters. He has talked with a guy at Cash Wise Waite Park, two days in a row, and asked him nicely about not smoking, pointed out the rules and he only responded with a four letter word. He mentioned it to the bus operator and she called it in and asked that a supervisor go there to talk with him. He has also talked with people at Crossroads shelter about smoking.

Jenny mentioned that she is noticing the passengers who ride Route 21/22 from Journey Home are not taking their children out of the baby strollers and some don't fold the strollers up. The children are also banging on the windows. She wondered if someone could talk with them about this. Kim explained that she goes to Journey Home once a month to do a bus riding orientation to all of the new residents and she will definitely bring this up during her presentation. She mentioned she will also contact the staff there and see if they can post something for the residents, reminding them about the stroller policy.

Karen gave a big thank you for painting the railings at the Transit Center. She was working with a visually impaired client that noticed it right away. She also mentioned that she has been riding the bus a lot lately with clients and the stop annunciation is only working about 50% of the time. She explained the one person that always notifies her has asked who she should call to report it and Karen has given her a phone number and email address. This person usually rides Routes 1 and 2. Tom asked Ryan if there have been issues with stop announcements and Ryan wasn't aware of any. Karen mentioned that her client said the blue bus is one that never works. Kim reminded Karen to encourage her client to call us right away, if she notices it again, and tell us what route she was on, the time and place that she got off.

Karen mentioned that the low vision population of people don't usually want to carry their white cane because most people think that all they can see is black or darkness. One of the fixed route operators daughter-in-law is a client she works with and she has

said that if she doesn't carry her white cane, the operators don't want to help her but if she does carry her cane, then they think all she sees is darkness. She thinks that they think she is faking her blindness if she doesn't carry her cane. She isn't totally blind but she can't see landmarks so she uses the cane when she rides the bus, but folds it up and puts it in her purse when she gets off the bus, because then she knows where she is at.

Karen mentioned if Metro Bus ever wants a short in-service training on using a white cane, she has simulators of different eye conditions and training materials and would be happy to share it with the operators. Kim mentioned she would pass the information on to Scott Stark, Training Manager. Karen stated there are about 30-40 people who regularly ride fixed route buses that are blind or have low vision.

Brenda asked why she was unable to get a medical return for a ride that she scheduled a few months ago. She had a medical appointment at Leafline Labs and wanted a medical return but was told by the dispatcher that they couldn't give her one from that location. She ended up having to schedule a much later pick up at Taco Bell so to make sure that she was done. She didn't understand why she couldn't have the medical return because she never knows how long she will be there and will be needing to go one to two times a month for pain management.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.