

The St. Cloud Metro Bus Rider Advisory Committee (RAC) held a meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 10:00 am at the Mobility Training Center, 700 W St Germain, Cloud, MN.

The following individuals were present: Ryan Daniel, Doug Diedrichsen, Jill Justin, Bruce Benner, Jan Scott, Kelly Carlson and David Williamsen. Absent: Aisha Bah, Alexis Lutgen, Jenny Svihel and Paul Thomas. Visitors: Vickie Williams, St Cloud APO and Jerry Schmitz, Fixed Route Operator.

Welcome. Ryan welcomed everyone and read the purpose of the RAC.

Public Open Forum. Open Discussion.

Jerry mentioned that on the outbound Route 5 at 22nd Street S and Red Fox Road, there is no bus stop sign. Our printed materials indicate that there is a stop at this location. Doug will check into this. Jerry mentioned that customers would like to have a bus stop on the east side of Best Buy on Route 3. This would be safer for customers who currently get off the bus at Crossroads and cross Division Street to reach Best Buy and neighboring businesses. Jerry also stated that customers would like a bus stop on Route 3 that is closer to Executive Express. Doug stated that this has been brought forward. When a new bus stop is installed, it would necessitate reprinting the schedules, so when the Route 3 needs reprinting, the stop will likely be added at that time. Jerry also indicated that customers are still asking to extend Saturday service to match the Monday thru Friday service hours, and extend Sunday service until 7 pm.

Vickie mentioned that the St Cloud APO (Area Planning Organization) has put their long range plan out for public input. The plan comes out every 5 years and goes out to 2045. The plan is available to view on their website, stcloudapo.org. There are also several pop-up events scheduled in the community—the next is scheduled for Thursday, 8/22/20, 11 am to 1 pm here at the Mobility Training Center.

Jerry mentioned that customers would like Route 31 to run every 30 minutes versus once an hour. He mentioned that it is very difficult to make transfers at the Transit Center, especially during afternoon peak time. Doug thanked him for this feedback, as it will be good to know as decisions on the future of the ConneX and Route 31 will need to be made in the near future.

Bruce has heard that customers want the Route 32 back in service, while Jerry has heard that people are liking ConneX and are settling into this new service.

Jan asked for clarification on the Dial-a-Ride door thru door policy. She stated the difficulty of getting into the second entry door at her apartment building. Doug will check with Berta for clarification. Berta and Shawn will be invited to a future meeting to give the committee an update on their respective areas.

Old Business.

Welcome New Members:

Ryan officially welcomed Kelly Carlson as our newest RAC member, representing Fixed Route.

New Business.

- 1) RAC email. There was none.
- 2) Ridership—Doug Diedrichson. Routes 1 and 2 were the top performing routes in July, both averaging approximately 20 riders per hour. Route 6 was next, with 17.5 riders per hour. The lowest performing route was again the ConneX service—but there was a significant jump of over 300 additional rides provided in July versus June. Total rides for the month were 1,899. Doug suspects that this jump was due to the U Go Free program and the change in service hours. Dial-a-Ride ridership was up across the board, with the exception of a slight decline in Sunday rides. Over 1,000 additional rides were provided in July 2019 versus July 2018.

Doug also mentioned that an outside company is conducting a feasibility study for Metro Bus. They are formulating a plan to meet our needs over the next 50 years. This includes all facilities, including office space, bus storage, maintenance areas and the Transit Center. One preliminary idea is to add a second Transit Center on the west end of St Cloud. The goal is to maximize our current space before adding additional buildings. The plan is still in the conceptual phase, with no internal engagement as of yet. A formal plan would need to be presented to and approved by the Board of Commissioners before going out for public comment.

Open discussion:

Jerry mentioned that suitcases and strollers are often blocking the aisles on Fixed Route buses. When the bus is full, and it is peak time, it is difficult for the operator to fully address the issue with the customer due to time constraints. Operators can ask, but not require passengers to fold down strollers.

Ryan mentioned that our 50th Anniversary Celebration committee continues to plan events. There will be an open house for the public, and free rides on all services on a weekend. When these events are finalized, they will be communicated to the public. Ryan distributed invitations to the employee event on 10/26/19 to the RAC members. Jan and David expressed concern regarding transportation, since Dial-a-Ride service will have ended before the event begins. Ryan will check into a solution.

Nate, Marketing Manager, reminded the members that Tri-County Broadcasting would be recording statements for the 'what I love about Metro Bus' radio ads immediately following the meeting. All members are invited to participate, and will take just a few minutes per person. Nate will let members know when they would be able to hear the radio ads.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10:46 am.