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Regular Meeting of the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha (dba Metro Transit) Transit Advisory Committee

This regular meeting of Metro Transit's Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) was held on July 8, 2026 from 6:35 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and was open to the public online and in-person at the Metro Transit Administrative Building (2222 Cuming Street). Notice of the meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on July 1, 2026, in advance of the meeting. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meetings Law was posted in the meeting room, and the agenda was on display in the facility lobby.

Attendance

The following were in attendance at the meeting:

Transit Advisory Committee Members

- Joichiro Yamada, TAC Chair
- Clyde Anderson, TAC Vice Chair
- Raymond Williams
- Gab Rima
- Rondae Hill
- Lindsey Button
- Alex Mendoza
- Rose Krekelberg (online)
- Brian Neeley (online)

Metro Transit Staff

- Nicole Ebat, Senior Manager of Communications and Community Relations
- Bridget Battafarano, Community Mobility Coordinator
- Alicia Johnson, Director of Civil Rights and Inclusion

Others Present

- Rob Sembrat
- Sarish Kasat, Via
- Clarice Dombeck (online), RMTA Board Director for District 2

Agenda Item #1 - Call to Order

Chair Yamada called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Agenda Item #2 – Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the June 2026 meeting were sent to all committee members in advance and are available at ometro.com/tac. No corrections were made to the minutes and the minutes were approved.

Motioned by Button; Seconded by Anderson
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #3 – General Public Comment Period

This is an opportunity for members of the audience to be heard regarding topics related to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, not on the agenda for a maximum of 2 minutes.

Rob Sembrat, Midtown Resident

Mr. Sembrat shared that he was speaking with a traveling nurse who was based in Omaha for several months. The nurse shared frustration with him about the limited service in west Omaha, especially that the system stops at 144th Center. Mr. Sembrat shared that the needs of workers who come to Omaha and may not have a car, such as travel nurses, should be considered in decision-making. Mr. Sembrat asked about the funding structure for Metro Transit and if the taxpayers in west Omaha pay for the service.

Agenda Item #4 – Committee Report on Public Feedback

This is an opportunity for members of the Transit Advisory Committee to share feedback they have received from members of the public regarding topics related to the Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha, or to share feedback about their own ridership experiences.

Clyde Anderson

Vice Chair Anderson shared that in reflecting on the public comment made, once you get below three households per acre, it's not feasible to provide conventional fixed-route bus service. Vice Chair Anderson has always encouraged people to move to areas that have density and are within the route network if they want to use transit. Vice Chair Anderson shared that he hopes Metro Transit can expand Micro Flex // driven by Metro service further west in the future and acknowledged that the service is currently a grant-funded pilot project.

The TAC invited public comments. There were none.

Agenda Item #5 – Committee Report on RMTA Board of Directors (C. Anderson)

Vice Chair Anderson shared that he attended the June 25 RMTA Board of Directors meeting and noted that there was a lot on the agenda. He shared that ridership on the fixed route system continues to break records and that Metro saw the highest ridership in May (2026) since 2015, meaning ridership has not only recovered from COVID, but exceeded pre-COVID numbers by quite a bit. Vice Chair Anderson shared that in the Board packet there are now graphs on volume of ridership by route and that the packet is available in the Board of Directors section of the Metro Transit website. The packet is lengthy and the referenced reports are on pages 101 to 103 for June. He noted that the availability of this data has been requested for quite a while. Route 18 is the highest ridership route, ORBT is second, and Routes 24 and 4 are generally third and fourth. Vice Chair Anderson noted that the high frequency of service likely contributes to higher ridership and that routes with hourly or half hour frequency have a harder time achieving higher ridership.

Vice Chair Anderson shared that the Board of Directors approved revisions to the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). The PTASP is included and available for review in the June 2026 Board Packet. He also shared that the Board approved the contract for the South Omaha Transit Center repavement. The MCC South Transit Center will be closed during the project. Additionally, other contracts were approved without much discussion, such as the fuel contracts.

Additionally, Vice Chair Anderson noted that Directors Simon and Corrigan stated that Metro Transit needs to work closely with the City of Omaha for pedestrian safety issues and the Vision Zero effort. Vice Chair Anderson shared that his church successfully lobbied the City of Omaha to refresh the crosswalk and stop line paint near the church and that he spoke during the Board meeting to encourage Metro Transit to do the same advocacy.

Lastly, Vice Chair Anderson noted that there is a problem with increased service interruptions, primarily due to a driver shortage. He commented that the Board packet only showed that Metro is short six fixed-route operators short of the goal, but that that must be enough to impact service. Vice Chair Anderson hopes that Metro Transit is continuing to work on the service interruption issue and acknowledges that there is turnover due to resignations and retirements.

The TAC invited TAC member discussion and public comments on Vice Chair Anderson's report.

TAC Member Button asked if the ridership data is controlled for the total time that the bus is on the road to account for the frequency differential. Ms. Ebat shared that staff can check but that she believes the numbers reflect raw numbers and that there is productivity data available by revenue hour. TAC Member Button said she would be curious to see if there are more riders on the higher frequency routes independent of the route frequency itself to assess if the route running on a higher frequency in and of itself makes more people ride it. She shared that if frequency is accounted for in the data, it can be pulled out to see if you get higher ridership by increasing frequency, not just because of existing high frequency.

Vice Chair Anderson said that he commonly hears complaints about ORBT that even though the trip is faster, the stations are spaced farther apart, especially west of 30th Street, which means the total transit time when accounting for the extra walking, especially for seniors, discourages people from using ORBT. If Metro Transit decides to go the ORBT route for 24th Street, Vice Chair Anderson hopes a slower route with more stops is considered so the stops aren't so far apart.

Chair Yamada shared that ideally if Metro had more buses, they could have the same routes but additionally have buses with fewer stops, like the express buses. Vice Chair Anderson said the original plan for ORBT was to continue running Route 2 with the stops closer together alongside it, but that was removed from the plan several months before ORBT was launched.

There were no further questions or discussion.

Agenda Item #6 – Approval of TAC Representative and Three Topics for the July 2026 TAC Report to the RMTA Board of Directors (J. Yamada)

Chair Yamada provided a review of topics that had been discussed to this point in the meeting and asked the TAC if any of the topics should be communicated to the Board.

Member Hill recommended the comment about service in west Omaha due to the number of businesses in that area. Member Krekelberg recommended the crosswalk and stop line painting topic and stated that she feels the painted lines are important communication tools used by vehicle drivers to foster pedestrian safety. Chair Yamada, Vice Chair Anderson, and Member Button discussed that the scope of the City of Omaha's Vision Zero initiative includes traffic circles, lane reconfigurations, crosswalks, signal timing and upgrade, and all roadway safety efforts to reach zero traffic fatalities. Member Mendoza asked if there is a plan for implementing safety features at any of the bus stops as a result of Metro Transit's bus stop audit and if that connects to Vision Zero. Ms. Ebat shared that the bus stop audit is nearing completion but cannot speak to

implementation plans. Member Mendoza said there are some bus stops that have no sidewalks by them or that lead to an intersection. Several TAC members discussed the Ames Avenue Safe Mobility Recovery Plan as an example and Ms. Ebat shared that Metro Transit is represented on the advisory committee for the project. Member Hill asked if the traffic circle at 33rd and Hamilton would impact the bus route that uses that intersection. Ms. Ebat shared that Metro's Planning Department worked with the project team to reduce impacts to bus service. Vice Chair Anderson expressed concern about pedestrian safety and traffic circles and Member Button shared some of the ways that traffic circles do provide greater safety for pedestrians than a four-way intersection.

TAC members discussed the necessity of selecting individual topics versus sharing highlights of the discussion at the TAC meeting to the RMTA Board of Directors.

Member Button acknowledged that the purpose of the TAC providing a report to the RMTA Board of Directors is to open communication between the TAC and the Board of Directors and expressed hesitation about the substantiveness of topics TAC presents the Board of Directors. The concern is that the Board of Directors may not take the TAC as seriously as if the TAC reserves their comments when there are more substantial updates. However, Member Button reiterated that it is important for the RMTA Board to see TAC at the Board meetings and to know that the Board will see and hear from the TAC.

Chair Yamada and Member Rima agreed with Member Button.

Member Hill sought clarification about the evolution of past discussions. Initial discussions proposed that the RMTA Board and TAC have joint meetings so the two entities meet one another but that was later determined not to be regularly feasible. Then the recommendation was for the TAC to recommend a TAC member to provide highlights at the Board meeting. And in the current discussion, the proposal is to only provide highlights when topics are deemed important. Member Hill shared concern about who determines what is important and said that pedestrian safety is important to her, especially as a person who is low vision and legally blind.

Member Rima stated that there are still conversations about having joint meetings between the TAC and RMTA Board, but the meetings would happen on a less frequent basis. But since Vice Chair Anderson brings back information from the Board meetings to the TAC, the goal of the highlights at the RMTA Board meeting is to bring TAC discussions to the Board to open two-way communication. Member Rima said the TAC presentation at the Board meeting is not in place of the joint meetings, but in addition to. Ms. Ebat reiterated that the TAC decides what is important.

Member Rima said that it is ok to share topics TAC discussed with the RMTA Board even if they are not immediately actionable.

Member Krekelberg asked about when public comments are acknowledged and addressed and noted that it felt unproductive for the public comment at the beginning of the meeting to be shared with no further discussion or opportunity for resolution. Member Krekelberg said that if the public comment isn't going to be selected as a topic to report to the RMTA Board, then she would want to make sure the public commenter at least feels heard. Chair Yamada shared that the TAC is following the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and there is no opportunity for back-and-forth discussion with public commenters. Ms. Ebat acknowledged that the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is a state statute, and the statute ensures that members of the public have access to the discussion topics in advance and can determine if they would like to participate. This is the reason for limited discussion after a public comment.

Motion for Vice Chair Anderson to represent the TAC at the July 2026 RMTA Board meeting and share that the TAC heard a public comment about the limited service in west Omaha beyond 144th Street and pedestrian safety.

There were no further questions or discussion.

Motioned by Button; Seconded by Rima
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #7 – Metro Transit Staff Report (N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat shared the following updates:

- Metro Transit is participating in the Joslyn Caste's Omatopia: Versions of Omaha event. Staff will be tabling at the Urbanism Summit on July 16 and will facilitate a Transit Planning Workshop on July 29 in the Carriage House from 6-9 PM. This event is free and open to the public. People can RSVP in advance.
- Metro Transit will participate in the upcoming Heartland Pride Parade on Saturday, July 18 as well as the rescheduled Juneteenth Parade on Saturday, August 15.
- Cincinnati's transit agency will be on site July 13 to learn about ORBT as Cincinnati plans their first BRT line. They will tour and ride on ORBT on Sunday and spend the day with Metro staff on Monday.
- Open Omaha is on August 8. The ORBT bus will be parked in front of the Metro Administrative Building. The focus will be on the history of Metro Transit.

- The MCC South Transit Center will be closed starting on Friday, July 17 for pavement replacement. All work must be completed within 60 days.
- The City of Omaha will be repaving Mercy Road so the Aksarben Transit Center will be closed this Friday, July 10 through Tuesday, July 14.
- Metro Transit staff met with NCBVI staff for feedback about the placement of Umo readers on MOBY vans. Will also be doing a similar session at Outlook Nebraska on July 21.
- The next driver route bid and opportunity to make route changes is July. No proposed changes are considered major. They include tweaks to operational efficiency that will help with reliability. Metro is looking to make a big operator hiring push to prepare for a major service change in December. The specific changes have not yet been determined.

The TAC invited TAC member discussion and public comments on Ms. Ebat's report.

TAC Discussion

Member Krekelberg asked for clarification about the number of operators Metro Transit wants to hire. Ms. Ebat responded with 60. Member Krekelberg said she would share it with her network and asked for a flyer to share.

Member Button asked if applicants need to have their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) at the time of application. Ms. Ebat responded with no and shared that Metro provides CDL training and helps hires get their CDL through the 8-week training. Metro Transit is looking for customer service-oriented individuals to hire as drivers. Ms. Battafarano stated that applicants must have their CDL permit by their start date if hired. Member Button commended Metro Transit for providing the training for individuals to earn their CDL.

Member Rima asked when the hiring push was starting. Ms. Ebat said immediately.

Public Comment

Ms. Dombeck, RMTA Board of Director, shared excitement about the hiring push and asked if hiring is background friendly. Ms. Battafarano stated that it is case by case and depends on the specific violations. Ms. Dombeck recommended that Metro Transit connect with Racquel Henderson in the City of Omaha Mayor's office.

There were no further questions or discussion.

Agenda Item #8 – Brief overview of Micro Flex // driven by Metro

The presentation slides follow. The slide images have been marked as decorative for those who may be using a screen reader. The slide text and additional information shared during the presentation is below the image.

Slide 1

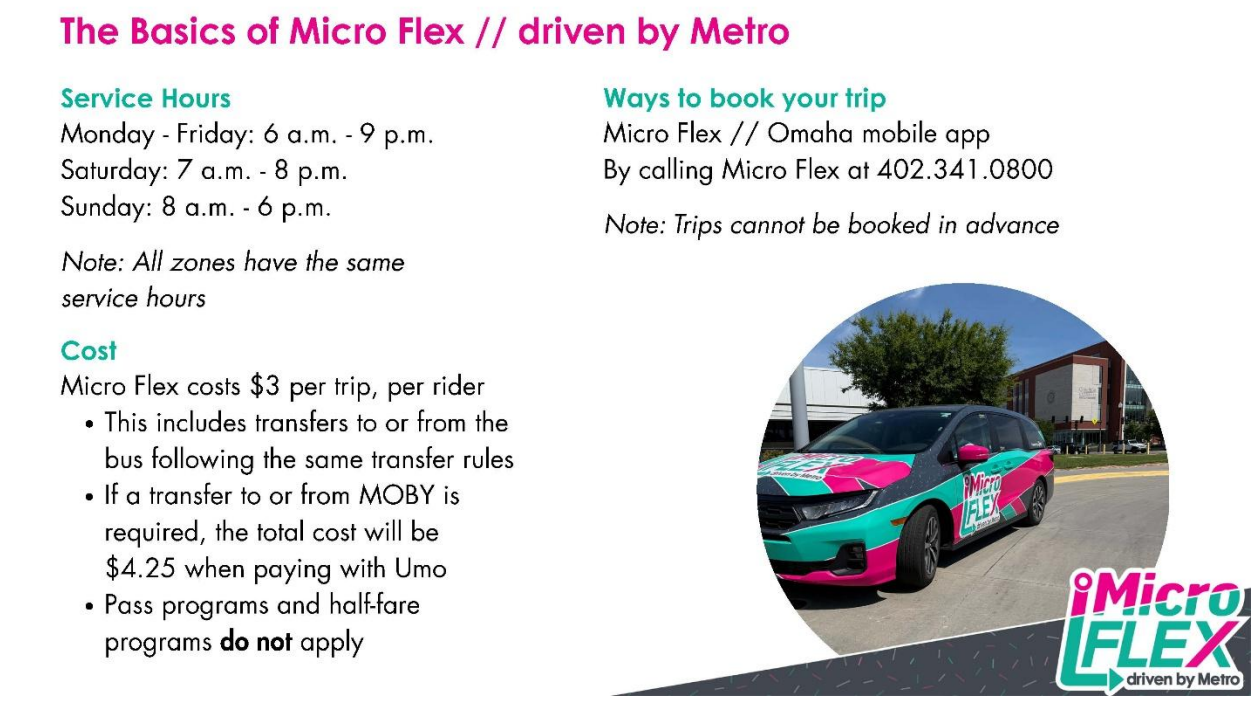


Title slide with the Micro Flex // driven by Metro logo in pink, teal, and gray with a white background. Micro Flex is Omaha's microtransit service, connects with bus and paratransit, and is a rideshare service in specific areas. On the slide there is a graphic of gray passenger van with pink and teal stripes and the Micro Flex logo.

The presentation is being provided in response to a public comment from a previous TAC meeting.

Ms. Ebat included that the service operates in zones and to think of zones like forcefields. The Micro Flex vehicle cannot leave a zone and if a person needs to travel outside a zone they can do so by bus or MOBY.

Slide 2



Title: The Basics of Micro Flex // driven by Metro

Service Hours

- Monday - Friday: 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- Saturday: 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- Sunday: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- Note: All zones have the same service hours

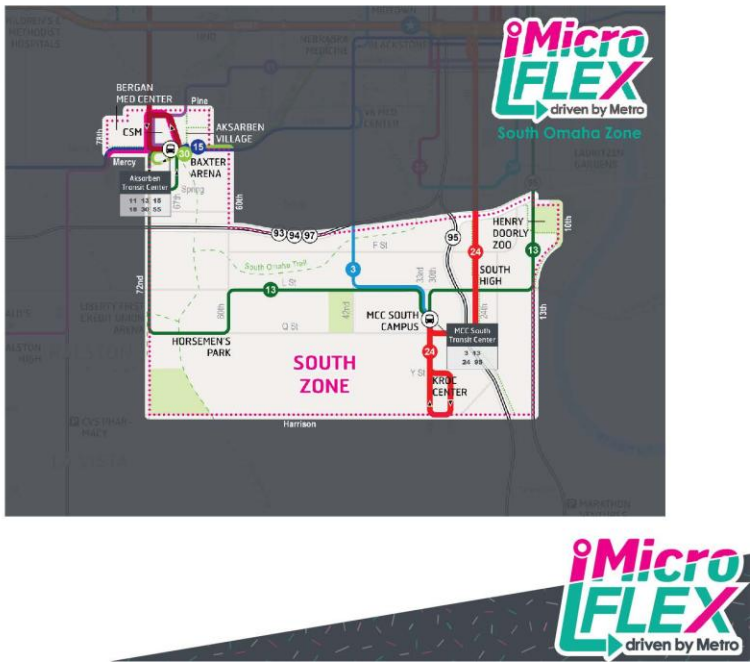
Cost

Micro Flex costs $3 per trip, per rider. This includes transfers to or from the bus following the same transfer rules. If a transfer to or from MOBY is required, the total cost will be $4.25 when paying with Umo. Pass programs and half-fare programs do not apply.

Ways to book your trip

- Micro Flex // Omaha mobile app
- By calling Micro Flex at 402.341.0800
- Note: Trips cannot be booked in advance.

Slide 3



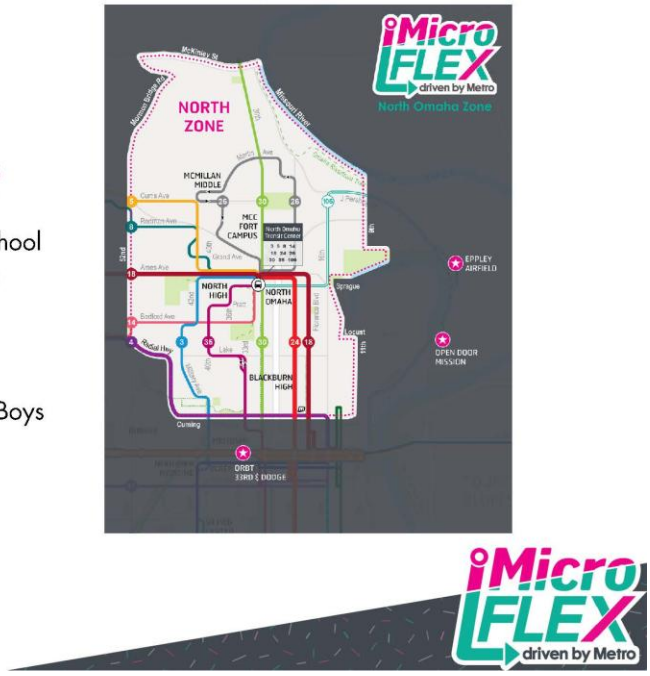
Title: South Zone

- Connects with Routes 3, 11, 13, 15, 18, 24, 30, 55, + 95
- Includes Aksarben Transit Center and MCC South Transit Center

Zone highlights:

- MCC South
- South High School
- Buena Vista High School
- College of Saint Mary
- UNO
- Bergan Med Center
- Kroc Center
- Henry Doorly Zoo

Slide 4



Title: North Zone

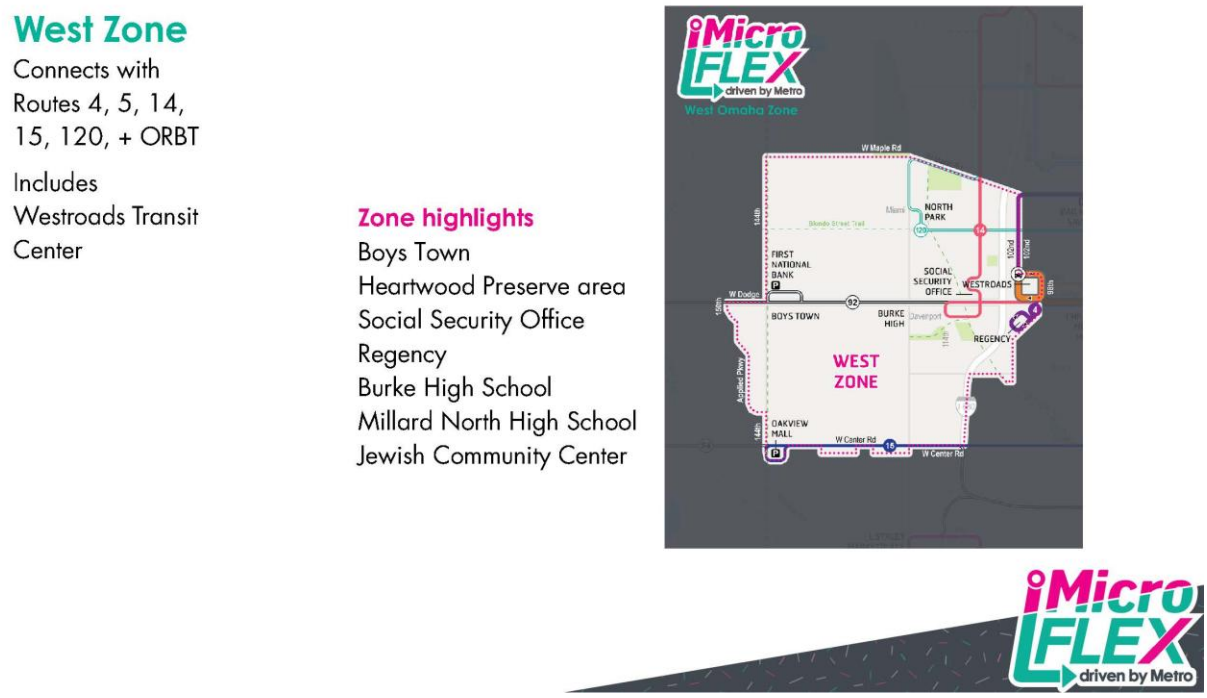
- Connects with Routes 3, 4, 5, 8, 14, 18, 24, 26, 30, 35, 106
- Includes North Omaha Transit Center
- The North Zone has three additional destinations:
    - Eppley Airfield
    - Open Door Mission
    - ORBT - 33 & Dodge

Zone highlights:

- North High School
- Blackburn High School
- MCC Fort Campus
- Miller Park
- Florence
- Fontenelle Blvd
- Omaha Home for Boys

The three additional destinations are not technically in the North Zone, but you can get to or from the locations when traveling from or to the North Zone.

Slide 5



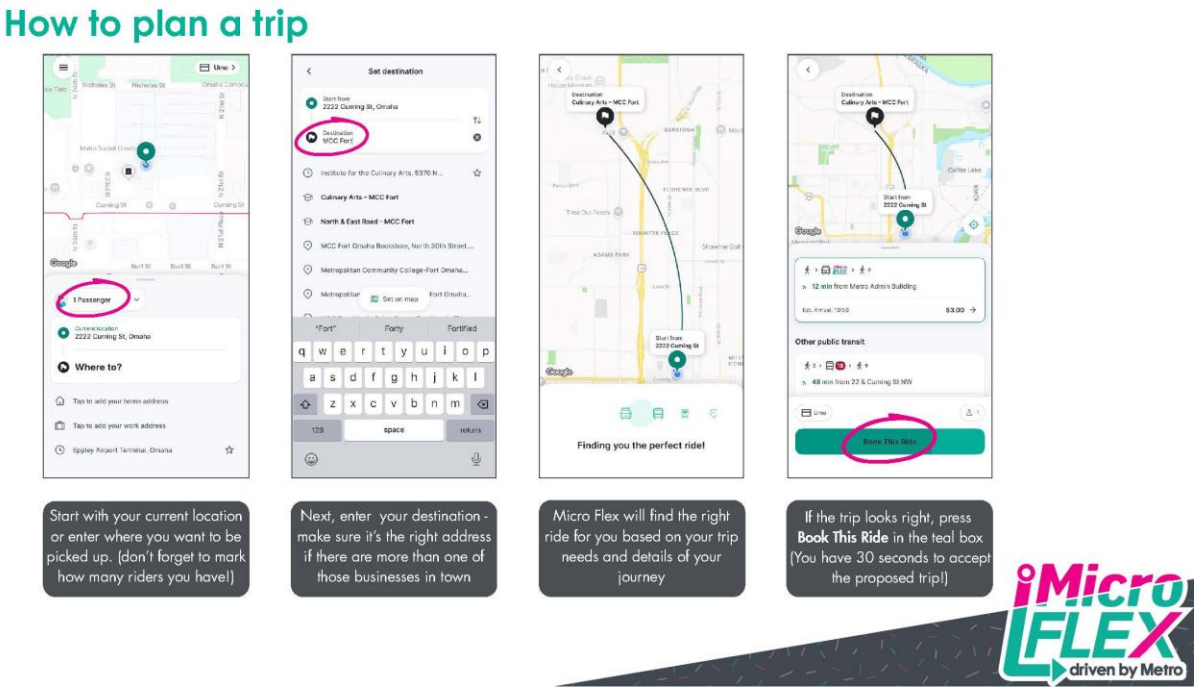
Title: West Zone

- Connects with Routes 4, 5, 14, 15, 120, + ORBT
- Includes Westroads Transit Center

Zone highlights:

- Boys Town
- Heartwood Preserve area
- Social Security Office
- Regency
- Burke High School
- Millard North High School
- Jewish Community Center

Slide 6



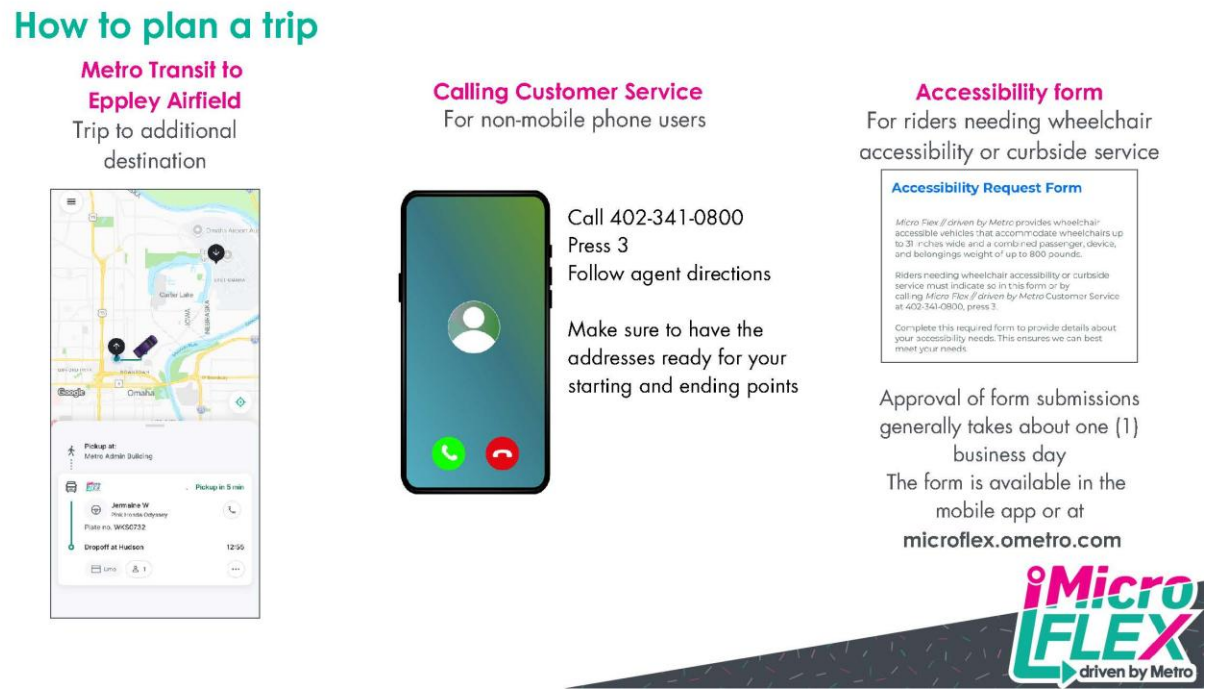
Title: How to plan a trip – Slide 1 of 2

The trip planner works a lot like MyRide OMA, Umo, and Google.

1. Start with your current location or enter where you want to be picked up. (don't forget to mark how many riders you have!)
    a. Trips cannot be booked in advance, but you can still use the app to plan your trip and make your plan in advance. Most of the time your trip will be your current location and the GPS should pick that up. It is important to mark how many people are traveling with you due to Micro Flex being a shared ride and it impacts which van can be sent to you.
2. Next, enter your destination - make sure it's the right address if there are more than one of those businesses in town
    a. Most of the time the exact address is not necessary.
3. Micro Flex will find the right ride for you based on your trip needs and details of your journey
    a. There will be several trip options generated. Generally, the app will generate the fastest ride.
4. If the trip looks right, press Book This Ride in the teal box (You have 30 seconds to accept the proposed trip!)

Ms. Ebat recognized Mr. Kasat from Via, the current contractor that operates Micro Flex.

Slide 7



Title: How to plan a trip – Slide 2 of 2

Metro Transit to Eppley Airfield
Trip to additional Destination

Calling Customer Service

- For non-mobile phone users Call 402-341-0800 Press 3
- Follow agent directions
- Make sure to have the addresses ready for your starting and ending points

Accessibility form

- For riders needing wheelchair accessibility or curbside service
- Approval of form submissions generally takes about one (1) business day
- The form is available in the mobile app or at microflex.ometro.com

Slide 8

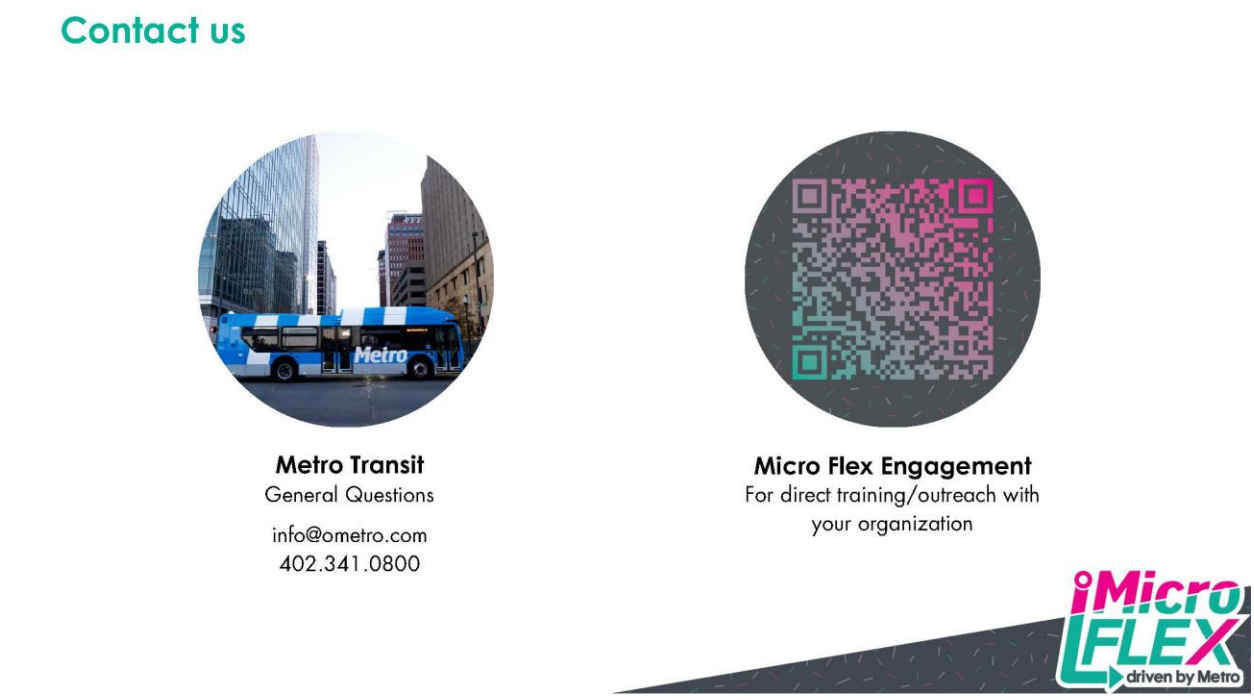


Title: How to pay

- Umo smart card
- Umo mobile app
- Umo token
    - These are available for purchase at Metro Transit's Office or at Ticket Vending Machines.
- Credit/debit card

Ms. Ebat encourages individuals to use Umo as it works for all Metro Transit services. The Micro Flex drivers have a Umo reader that allows riders to scan the QR code in their Umo mobile app or tap their Umo smart card to pay. The Umo token works similar to the app; there is a QR code on the paper token that is held up to the Umo reader. A credit or debit card can be loaded into the Micro Flex app.

Slide 9



Title: Contact us

Contact Metro Transit for General Questions at info@ometro.com or 402-341-0800.

For direct training or outreach with your organization, submit the Micro Flex Engagement form.

This concludes the presentation. The TAC invited TAC member discussion and public comments on Ms. Ebat's presentation.

TAC Discussion

Vice Chair Anderson requested a copy of the presentation be sent out to TAC members. Ms. Ebat confirmed that the presentation would be sent out.

Vice Chair Anderson asked if the vehicles are equipped with bicycle racks. Ms. Ebat said that all non-wheelchair accessible vehicles have bicycle racks, but they cannot carry the weight of a Heartland Bikeshare bike. Member Button asked if all e-bikes cannot be accommodated and Ms. Ebat shared that bikes up to 35 pounds can be accommodated.

Member Mendoza asked if the bike racks are left on the vehicles year-round. Ms. Ebat and Mr. Kasat confirmed that they are left on the vehicles.

Chair Yamada asked if the Micro Flex service has been available for a year and Ms. Ebat confirmed that the one-year anniversary is coming up in August.

Public Comment

Mr. Sembrat was surprised to know that the Micro Flex service has its own app and commented that a lot of people might not know how cool the app is and that there is a lot of potential with the service. Mr. Sembrat asked if people can go from a star (additional location) to another star in the North Zone. Ms. Ebat said yes. Mr. Sembrat asked if he wanted to go from Aksarben Transit Center to Horseman's Park for horse racing on a Sunday when the Route 13 runs hourly on that portion of the route, whether the app would offer him a Micro Flex ride or if it would tell him to wait for the bus. Ms. Ebat shared that the app will generally prioritize whatever is the fastest trip and in that case, it would probably recommend a Micro Flex ride. Lastly, Mr. Sembrat commented that the West Zone for Micro Flex still stops at 144th Street, same as the bus, and doesn't extend to 180th or 204th but that it could be a stop gap for that area. Mr. Sembrat shared that people coming into Omaha, like the travel nurse he mentioned during the public comment section, might not know the service exists and that he uses public transit when he travels and hasn't seen microtransit service elsewhere. Ms. Ebat shared that microtransit is gaining in popularity and there are quite a few cities and agencies using microtransit service. She also shared that the information about Micro Flex is available on the Metro Transit website and in places where people would go to find information about available public transit options. Member Krekelberg suggested that the information be provided with the traveling nurse who could share it with her supervisors along with the code to request training so other traveling nurses know about the service. Mr. Sembrat said he is not in contact with the traveling nurse but that would be a good idea and he would share the information with others.

Vice Chair Anderson commented that there were concerns brought up at the RMTA Board meeting a few months ago when service changes to Regency were proposed and that the Regency area is now included in the West Zone for Micro Flex in response to the concerns. Ms. Ebat said that individuals can request a ride to locations that are not currently served by Micro Flex and that staff uses that data to evaluate possible zone modifications or additions, as was done when considering adding Regency.

Ms. Dombeck asked if the presentation used during the TAC meeting is like the how to ride trainings offered. Ms. Ebat responded that the presentations are similar, but the how to ride trainings have a more hands-on focus. Most how to ride trainings for bus include a ride, but for Micro Flex the focus is more on booking a trip. Ms. Battafarno shared about a recent training experience that included both a bus and microtransit ride.

Chair Yamada asked to see Micro Flex ridership numbers and Ms. Ebat shared that they are reported in the Board meetings.

Vice Chair Anderson asked if the West Zone continues to see more ridership than the North Zone and Ms. Ebat said yes.

There were no further questions or discussion.

Agenda Item #9 – Date, Time, and Place of Next TAC Meeting

Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Metro Transit Administrative Building and Online

Agenda Item #10 – Adjournment at 8:00 p.m.

Motioned by Button; Seconded by Williams
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS, MOTION CARRIES