AGENDA

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
REGIONAL METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY OF OMAHA
2222 Cuming Street
Omaha, Nebraska, 68102
July 24, 2025
8:30 a.m.

MINUTES

The Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha Board met on Thursday, July 24, 2025, at 8:30 a.m., in person at the Authority's Administration Building, 2222 Cuming Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, and virtually. Notice was published in the Omaha Daily Record on July 18, 2025, in advance of the meeting. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meetings Law is posted in the meeting room, and the Agenda is published on the display in the facility lobby. The following were in attendance at the meeting:

Authority Board:
Mr. Curt Simon, Board Chair
Mr. Daniel Padilla, Vice Chair
Mr. Josh Corrigan
Ms. Clarice Dombeck
Ms. Yanira Garcia (Absent)
Mr. Tim Lonergan
Mr. Cornelius Williams

Authority Staff:
L. Cencic, CEO/Executive Director
K. Pendland, Deputy Executive Officer
D. Grant, Human Capital and Talent Development Director (Absent)
E. Simpson, Legal Director (Virtual)
E. Schweitz, Senior Manager of Planning and Scheduling (Virtual)
W. Clingman, Finance Director (Virtual)
J. Willoughby, Senior Project Manager (Virtual)
A. Johnson, Civil Rights & Inclusion Director
J. Beverage, Maintenance Director (Virtual)
N. Ebat, Sr. Manager of Communications & Community Relations
S. Perry, Executive Administrator & Board Secretary

Others Present:
Other Metro staff
Members of the public

Agenda Item #1 Call to Order at 8:30 am.
Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Omaha Daily Record on July 18, 2025. For the benefit of the public in attendance, a copy of the Open Meeting Law is posted in the meeting room, and the Agenda is published on the display located in the facility lobby and online at ometro.com.

Agenda Item #2 Approval of Minutes of the Previous Meeting
The first order of business is the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

a. Regular Meeting: June 26, 2025

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Padilla
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Garcia Absent), 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.

Melanie Davis, 801 Pacific Street
Ms. Davis is a Moby user who regularly attends a variety of public meetings and events held at Metro. She recently expressed concerns regarding the lack of ADA accessibility within the building, particularly in the restroom areas including her ability to navigate to the podium in the Board room instead of addressing the Board from the back of the room. She respectfully requests that accessibility be considered to ensure she and others can continue to participate fully as supporters of public transit.

Cindy Wheeler, Metro employee
Ms. Wheeler respectfully requests that the Board consider holding meetings later in the day. She noted that early morning meetings can be difficult to attend due to work obligations, transportation challenges, and caregiver responsibilities. She believes that shifting the meeting time could help increase public and staff participation.

Cornelius Williams, Board Member
Dr. Williams asked if Metro had any plans regarding the traffic that would be affected by Native Omaha Days on 24th Street.

Agenda Item #4 Administrative Report (L. Cencic)
Ms. Cencic began her report to the Board with ridership. In June, Metro carried a total of 285,685, which comes to a total of 1.7 million rides in 2025. In June 2024, Metro was at 1.5 million rides.

In June, the K-12 Rides Free Program provided over 40,500 student rides. Since January, the program has provided more than 300,000 rides, bringing the total to over 1.8 million student rides since its inception.

Ms. Cencic was pleased to share that Metro Flex, Metro's new microtransit pilot program, will launch in August, with additional details to follow. The Metro Flex vehicles were wrapped this week in preparation for the rollout. Later in today's agenda, the fare structure will be formalized; however, the service will launch with a 60-day fare-free pilot period.

Metro is preparing for the arrival of the new buses and anticipates the first vehicle arriving next month in August, with the rest coming in by the end of the year. She informed the Board of the work it takes to receive new buses, which includes maintenance inspections, technology installations, and wrapping the buses in the Metro brand.

Ms. Cencic further reported on grant funding and future funding at Metro. Recently awarded grant funding from MAPA for two new projects. One project is carbon reduction for electrical upgrades and

additional charging stations, and the second is a planning feasibility study to consider adding bus service to Fort Calhoun and Blair, which is currently outside Metro's service area. Representatives from those areas approached Metro earlier this year with an interest in studying transit services to those areas. Both grants are going through the process of being transferred from the Federal Highway Administration to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and will need to be obligated, so Metro anticipates money will be available early next year to begin those projects.

The Board asked if there would be a bus traveling from Omaha to Fort Calhoun or one that services the Fort Calhoun area only.

Ms. Cencic answered that the feasibility study would give an indication of how that area could be serviced. Under state statute, Metro is a Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority; therefore, service has to start in the Omaha urbanized area. However, if potential future service were provided via an interlocal agreement, there would be a little more flexibility.

Ms. Cencic further responded to the question Dr. Williams had earlier regarding traffic and the Native Omaha Days activities along 24th Street. Metro is working with organizers, attempting not to disrupt service too much and adjusting for detours. It's still a plan in progress. As for an additional question regarding whether a bus will be in the parade, she deferred to Ms. Ebat.

Ms. Cencic concluded her report and opened the floor to the Board for questions.

The Board asked how much money MAPA is providing for the grants that Metro has been awarded and how much. They also asked if Washington County has been involved in the study at all. The Board further asked if there were any updates with the K-12 Rides Free Program. Lastly, when will the parking lot be completed, and with the equipment purchased with federal funding, will we have any issues looking forward in the next few years?

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that the grant for electrical upgrades was 1.8 million in federal money, and the study is $150,000. She expounded that Washington County has not been involved. Metro is working more with the economic group there, the chamber, and the two cities. It would be a part of the feasibility study to work with additional stakeholders.

Regarding the K-12 Rides Free Program, there are currently no updates at this time. Metro is hoping to extend the contract, but no firm commitment from Omaha Public Schools. If there is no word soon, Ms. Cencic will look at sending a letter with additional information under a separate cover to the Board of Directors.

The parking lot is close to being completed this year. The concrete is done contractor is fixing minor repairs. The other big piece with that project is waiting for OPPD to finalize the inspection of solar panels, and close to finishing the conditioned air in the maintenance area.

Ms. Cencic said in regard to equipment purchases that she doesn't anticipate immediate changes, but it will be monitored. Metro will prioritize certain projects, but nothing official has been sent at this time.

An additional question from the Board consisted of how much Omaha Public Schools (OPS) contributes to the K-12 Rides Free Program?

Ms. Cencic informed the Board that it's a smaller amount of the program because Metro believes in the overall support of the program. OPS is currently $258,000; initially, it was $154,000.

Agenda Item #5 Administrative Reports:

Administration/Human Resources (J. Hall)

Ms. Juanite Hall presented to the Board on behalf of Mr. Grant. Ms. Hall has been the HR Generalist for a little over 1 ½ years. The primary focus of her position is serving as a business partner with Metro's Maintenance department and also coordinating employee engagement activities throughout Metro.

In June, Metro hired seven new team members: three bus operators, two paratransit operators, a mechanic, and a mechanic supervisor. Metro has identified nine new hires that will start in July.

Additionally, Metro held a graduation this month with seven new team members completing their training successfully. The congratulations were extended to five bus operators and two mechanics.

Ms. Hall concluded her report and opened the floor to the Board for questions.

The Board asked if the Mechanic Supervisor position just filled was an internal promotion or a new hire.

Ms. Hall informed the Board that the position recently filled was a new team member at Metro.

Programs/Operation (K. Pendland)

Mr. Pendland reported on the operations of Metro, beginning with customer service. The customer service numbers remained steady in June, with 11,171 calls answered, and the service level increased to an overall average of 88%.

Fixed route revenue hours in June were 23,225, which reflects an increase in service delivery of 1,204 hours compared to June 2024. Passenger trips were at 285,685, which continues the trend of the highest passenger trip numbers. This led to a route productivity level of 12.3 passengers per revenue hour across all fixed routes in June. Passenger trips and route productivity level numbers are the highest productivity numbers we have seen for June over the last 6 years.

On-time performance in June averaged 4% early departures, 15% late departures, with an on-time departure rate of 81%.

In June, service interruptions accounted for 2.7% of our revenue hours. This is a 63% reduction in total service interruptions compared to June of 2024.

For Paratransit operations, Metro completed a total of 7,167 trips in June, which is an increase of 597 trips from last June. The average paratransit passengers per revenue hour in June was again 2.0, which continues the trend of the highest productivity levels over the past 5 years for the current month.

Lastly, Mr. Pendland reported that last week, Operations, Planning, and Communications met to discuss with Ms. Cencic and him to debrief regarding the additional service offerings for the College World Series (CWS) and the Memorial Park Concert events. For CWS, the Ballpark Bus experienced a ridership total of 1,092 rides, with an additional 164 rides for Fastball ORBT, an overall increase in ridership from normal ORBT service by 25%. For the Memorial Park Concert, ORBT had a single-day ridership of 2,940 rides, an increase of 1,164 rides compared to the previous Friday's numbers.

Mr. Pendland concluded his report and opened the floor to the Board for questions.

The Board asked if the 1200-hour increase in service hours was mostly a result of the calendar.

Mr. Pendland explained the increase would be due to the number of service interruptions experienced the previous year as well as Metro's increase in service.

There were no other questions or discussions.

Communications (N. Ebat)

Ms. Ebat reported that the primary focus has been on branding, mobile applications, and other design elements for Metro Flex. The first vehicle has been wrapped with the Metro Flex brand, and she noted that it looks amazing.

The Communications team is also working on the design and overall aesthetic of the new buses as they begin to arrive.

In June, Metro was featured in nine earned media pieces across four different outlets, with coverage primarily centered on the Memorial Park Concert and other summer engagement events.

Ms. Ebat also reported that Metro has hosted five public engagement events, with a sixth scheduled for the weekend following the Board meeting. These events focused on Moby, UMO, and microtransit and were held at Metro Headquarters, the Aksarben Farmers Market, and virtually. A full list of events is always available at ometro.com.

Additionally, training sessions for students and parents will be held at Central High School during the last week of July. On August 2nd, Metro will participate in a student resource fair.

On August 9th, Metro will also take part in Open Omaha, with an ORBT stationed at Heartland of America Park on 8th Street.

Ms. Ebat concluded her report and opened the floor to the Board for questions.

The Board inquired whether Metro Flex vehicles would be housed on-site and whether Communications was involved in any activities related to Native Omaha Days.

Ms. Ebat deferred to Ms. Cencic, who informed the Board that the Metro Flex vehicles will not be housed on-site. Instead, location sites within the three service zones are currently being identified.

Regarding Native Omaha Days, Ms. Ebat stated that while Metro is in communication with event organizers for this biannual event, the agency will not be participating directly this year due to capacity limitations. Communications is in the process of hiring an additional team member to help increase departmental capacity. Detours are still being finalized due to the event's location along 24th Street, which will affect Route 30. Once detours are confirmed, riders will be informed promptly.

Agenda Item #6 Resolution 2025-18 Request Approval of Board Committee Assignments

(L. Cencic)

Annually, the Board of Directors identifies committee assignments. The Board committees are Finance/Procurement, Planning & Policy, and Operations. No committee membership shall constitute a quorum.

Finance/Procurement Committee:	Daniel Padilla
	Tim Lonergan
	Josh Corrigan - Alternate
Planning & Policy Committee:	Clarice Dombeck
	Cornelius Williams
	Yanira Garcia - Alternate
Operations Committee:	Josh Corrigan
	Yanira Garcia
	Tim Lonergan – Alternate
Board Pension Representative:	Clarice Dombeck
	Daniel Padilla – Alternate

The resolution was recommended to the Board for approval and reaffirmation of the assignments previously set.

The Board invited public comments on this resolution. There were none.

There was no further Board discussion necessary. The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Padilla
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Garcia Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #7 Resolution 2025-19 Request Approval to Set Fare for Metro Flex Service

(L. Cencic)

Metro Staff sought Board approval to establish a fare of $3.00 per ride for Metro Flex, a microtransit pilot project. This fare is consistent with the industry standard of twice the fixed-route fare, including transfers. Metro hosted four public meetings and an open comment period in January 2025 as part of a service and fare equity analysis for the proposed microtransit pilot project pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Based on this analysis, the $3.00 fare and associated policies comply with federal requirements, do not result in a disparate impact on minority or disproportionate burden on low-income populations, and are supported by a majority of public commentors.

The $3.00 Metro Flex fare includes transfers to or from Metro's fixed-route buses following existing transfer rules through the Umo fare system. Transfers are valid for 90 minutes on weekdays and 120 minutes on weekends and can be used on one Metro Flex vehicle and up to three Metro buses. Currently eligible MOBY riders who transfer between MOBY and Metro Flex will receive a $1.25 discount on Metro Flex fares through the Umo fare system. The total cost for one MOBY ride and a transfer to or from one Metro Flex ride would be $4.25.

Metro Flex will not accept cash for fares but will accept payment through a variety of mediums:

1. Umo app, smart card, or paper token
    - Cash can be used to add stored value to a Umo account at Metro's Office, at Ticket Vending Machines, and at select retail vendors.
2. Metro Flex app, which will accept debit or credit cards and prepaid cards.
3. Paper tokens can be used for transfers from Metro Flex to Metro buses, if applicable.

The resolution was recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board invited public comments on this resolution.

Clyde Anderson 7020 Burt Street, Omaha, NE
Will senior or handicapped discounts apply with Metro Flex?

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Chris Nanke, President of TWU
Mr. Nanke asked if cash is not accepted, will that affect the underserved?

The Board inquired about public feedback received during the microtransit public meetings around the usage of cash.

Ms. Cencic advised that there would be no discount at the initiation of the pilot. Ms. Cencic reiterated that Metro is fully within the guidance and regulations of Title VI as it pertains to the proposal. Metro Flex is a premium service that does not require Metro to accept cash. She also included that many premium services don't accept cash for any of their services. What is most important is to make additional accommodations to remove any barriers or burdens that would be disproportionate or disparate. Metro's primary focus has been working with UMO and building up a retail network so the unbanked will still have access to the service.

Ms. Cencic responded that the $3 fare was the primary focus of public communication at the time, as the service was still in the planning stages. There were no comments regarding cash acceptance; however, staff made a concerted effort to ensure unbanked individuals have access. Prepaid debit cards are eligible, and cash can be used to load funds onto a Umo account. For those without a smartphone, a phone number will be available to access the service. Additionally, platforms like Venmo and Cash App offer debit cards that can be used with Umo.

There was no further Board discussion necessary. The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Corrigan
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Garcia Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #8 Resolution 2025-20 Request Approval of the Amended By-Laws of the Transit Advisory Committee (N. Ebat)
In October 2023, the Metro Board of Directors ("Metro Board") approved a revision to Metro's Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) Bylaws. The TAC is an advisory committee formed to inform the Metro Board concerning any service area program(s) or project(s) of local community concern and to review and resolve appeals by applicants denied eligibility and to proposed service suspensions to Metro's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, complementary paratransit service ("MOBY"), and issue final determinations.

The proposed amendments to the TAC Bylaws aim to clarify language and align the Bylaws with Metro's MOBY eligibility determination and proposed service suspension appeal policy and the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The proposed amendments have been reviewed and approved by the TAC.

The resolution was recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board invited public comments on this resolution. There were none.

There was no further Board discussion necessary. The Board approved unanimously.

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Padilla
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Garcia Absent), MOTION CARRIES

Agenda Item #9 Board Chair Report (C. Simon)
To serve as his board report, Mr. Simon commended the staff for the recent improvements made to the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC).

Agenda Item #10 Date, Time, and Place of Next Board Meeting
Thursday, August 14, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.
Authority's Administrative Building

This meeting is not the regular scheduled meeting; it has been moved up.

Agenda Item #11 Adjournment at 9:13 a.m.

Motioned by Lonergan; Seconded by Padilla
ROLL CALL: UNANIMOUS (Garcia Absent), MOTION CARRIES