



Metro Transit Advisory Committee

April 9, 2025

6:30 p.m.

**This meeting was open to the public online and in-person at Metro offices. Notice of the meeting was published in The Daily Record on April 7th and was also available on Metro's website and from the Metro administrative offices prior to the meeting.*

Digital:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81362662191>

Meeting ID: 813 6266 2191

Committee Members: Rose Krekelberg, Joey Yamada, Clyde Anderson, Leah Keator, Alex Mendoza (online), Gab Rima (online), Neena Nizar (online)

Members of the public: Monique Summers-Currington, Ray Williams, Steve Thomas

Board of Directors: Clarice Dombeck (online), Cornelius Williams

Staff Facilitators: Bridget Battafarano, Nicole Ebat

Opening: Public comment period (Limit to ten minutes total, please)

Steve Thomas: Attended January public meeting about microtransit and personal home is just outside of a zone. Looking for updates. Have a friend who has functional limitations that require her to use a walker/wheelchair combination device. She gets vertigo and MOBY stairs are difficult for her to manage. If she is using her non-traditional mobility aid, can she still use the MOBY lift?

Clyde Anderson: Maps have been updated since the public meetings and are available online. Many microtransit details are yet to be decided.

Bridget Battafarano: We will consult with our ADA Coordinator, but your friend should be able to use the lift with or without the mobility device.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

February minutes approved by all. No objections to March minutes (no quorum at March meeting).

New Business:

1. Paratransit appeals: None
2. Metro updates and upcoming events (Public Transit Weeks, etc.)
 - a. *Hosting field trips: April 1 – Masterpiece Academy; May 5th – Sunny Slope preschoolers*
 - i. *Neena Nizar: Is Metro reaching out to schools and training transition-age youth with disabilities? This is an important skill and trainings should be intentionally inclusive of these students.*
 - ii. *Bridget Battafarano: We have not done so but we are able to do this outreach and are open to recommendations and requests.*
 - b. *Alicia Johnson, PhD and Lucy del Rio Lopez offered a presentation on Disadvantaged Business Enterprise contract work at the Nebraska Opportunity Exchange. They also recorded a presentation providing tools to businesses interested in government contract work through Metro. The recording will be posted on our website and our Facebook page.*
 - c. *Train the Trainer sessions: April 8 and April 11; teach agency staff to teach clients to ride.*
 - d. *Books and Buses: Story time on the bus for kids at the Washington branch library April 9*
 - e. *Wheel Appeal reveal April 14th 10am-12pm; middle schooler bus design TAC invited to attend*
 - f. *“Carcentric” showing at Ruth Sokolof theater; April 14 at 6pm; 13th and Mike Fahey; Clarice Dombeck (board) and Lauren Cencic (CEO) to speak on panel.*
 - g. *Open House of the Nebraska Afghan Community Center: April 17th 4-8pm*
 - h. *Omaha Refugee Task Force Transportation Conference: April 21 9am-4pm; Milo Bail Student Center at UNO*
 - i. *Put on by the Omaha Refugee Taskforce*
 - ii. *Transit Agencies from across the state to bring elected officials, members of the public, and transit agency staff together to work on solutions to transportation issues, particularly for refugees.*
 - i. *TAC invited to join us at Earth Day Omaha with table and electric bus on April 26th 11am-4pm*
 - j. *MOBY public participation: Dates to come when we finalize venues.*
3. Discussion: Bylaw changes

- a. TAC was largely operating according to the Act, so changes are minor. Changes are largely references to the Open Meetings Act for process, procedure, and precedent. Several changes are secretarial
- b. TAC is newly considered subject to the Open Meetings Act. The Committee is required to keep meetings open to the public because it discusses matters of public business: briefings from Metro departments and the board of directors; and making formal recommendations to the board about service and policy changes.
- c. Question: It says that TAC must appoint a subcommittee to review MOBY appeals. Have we done that? How does that work? Answer: We have not done this yet. TAC can decide when to appoint a subcommittee. It can be arranged in a number of ways, including a standing committee with alternates or different subcommittees on standby. When a rider applies to receive MOBY service and is denied or only approved conditionally, the rider can appeal the decision. A secondary review is done internally and, if the rider still believes they qualify for the service, they may file an appeal that goes to a TAC subcommittee for consideration. The subcommittee will review the application materials in private, with the opportunity to ask questions or request additional information from the appellant. The appellant is encouraged to attend the meeting of the subcommittee for this purpose. When the subcommittee has reached a conclusion (within 30 days), they will send the decision to the Metro ADA coordinator to notify the appellant. The decision will be presented at the next regularly scheduled TAC meeting. The Open Meetings Act allows the subcommittee (even a quorum) to meet privately to discuss the appeal to protect the privacy of the appellant.
- d. Question: Does HIPAA apply to an appeal subcommittee? Answer: The subcommittee reviewing MOBY appeals is required to keep the appellant's information private but is not covered under HIPAA. Our legal team has reviewed the bylaws. Will confirm with Metro ADA coordinator.
- e. Question: What qualifies a TAC subcommittee to make the decision about MOBY eligibility? Answer: When a MOBY applicant receives an initial determination of ineligibility, it may be reviewed a second time internally. If the applicant wishes to make a formal appeal, TAC offers the appellant a more neutral review because TAC members are not paid by Metro. TAC also has a diverse range of insights into the rider experience (such as the effect of sidewalk conditions on someone's functional limitations) that the applicant's clinician may not have.

4. Committee report on public feedback

- a. Clyde: Was on an ORBT on Saturday and there is a temporary stop at 13th St. due to 10th St stop closure. Did not see this news in the MyRide app. Nicole Ebat: Sometimes construction changes multiple times within a day and too

many news alerts can crash our software system. We post what we can and try our best to post news alerts in the morning when possible.

- b. Alex: Will Metro walk in the Cinco de Mayo Parade? Nicole: The parade may shut down our MCC South transit center and we are waiting for a decision about whether we can commit to the parade.
 - c. Clyde: It's helpful to check the news alerts on MyRide for route and system updates.
 - d. Nicole: You can also opt in to push notifications for alerts through text, email, or the app on routes of your choice.
5. Discuss communication with board, microtransit pilot
- a. Clyde: The microtransit pilot contract is awarded for 2 years, with 3 one-year extensions possible, for a total of 5 potential contract years. Asked for updates on microtransit statistics as the pilot progresses. Also asked that each transit center have a designated pick up and drop-off spot for microtransit vehicles.
 - b. Board approved the 2026 Transportation Improvement Program for 20 more bus shelters, 4 MOBY vans, and 2 new fixed-route buses.
 - c. Microtransit service agreement was approved. Does not include transfer details, fare, etc, but does make way for those decisions to be made.

Next meeting:

- May 14, 6:30 p.m. at Metro administrative offices and on Zoom

For questions, please contact Bridget Battafarano at 402-341-7560 ext. 2560