



Metro Transit Advisory Committee

This meeting was held on April 8, 2026 from 6:36 p.m. to 8:07 p.m. and was open to the public online and in-person at the Metro Office (2222 Cuming Street).

Attendance

- Metro Staff: Bridget Battafarano (Community Mobility Coordinator), Nicole Ebat, Senior Manager of Communications and Community Relations
- Committee Members Present: Joichiro Yamada (Chair), Clyde Anderson (Vice Chair), Ray Williams, Marshall Maurer, Gab Rima, Lindsey Button, Rondae Hill, Rose Krekelberg, Alex Mendoza, Brian Neely (virtual)
- Committee Members Absent: None
- Members of the Public: Edie M., Rob Sembrat, Alexander Liu

Call to Order

- Motion: Marshall; Second: Clyde
- Approved unanimously

Public comment period

- Rob S.:
 - The March meeting minutes stated that Rob's comment was about 40th and Broadway. It was about 4th and Broadway. Rob shared a follow up to his comment from March about how there aren't bus stop signs in Council Bluffs and that he got some good explanations on the background. Decisions for Council Bluffs service are up to the City of Council Bluffs.
 - Rob shared excitement about the Route 30 change to serve Saddle Creek and asked if it is the first time in history that a bus has gone down Saddle Creek. Metro Transit staff said yes, as far as they knew.

- Question was posed about the common flooding of Saddle Creek. Metro Transit staff shared that there will be a flood detour planned and published.
- Rondae:
 - Rondae was at Outlook Nebraska this week with a lot of MOBY riders who shared that the Customer Service transition was not going too smoothly. Rondae acknowledged the rider alert sent by email that addressed concerns. One concern shared is that callers were told rides couldn't be booked past 3:30 p.m. on Sundays instead of 4:30 p.m. Another MOBY rider shared that they were trying to get to their location around 1:00 on a certain day but Customer Service had them getting picked up at 1:00 on that certain day. Concern was shared about translations and English fluency of the agents. Metro Transit staff shared that the feedback would be passed along to be addressed.
 - Rondae shared that a couple MOBY riders are supposed to receive assistance to or from the door and the drivers have not been assisting them. Metro Transit staff shared that assistance requirements are added to the MOBY rider's profile and that if there are specific incidences of assistance not being provided to please share so Metro Transit staff can properly research the occurrence. Specific occurrences can be shared with Metro Transit staff or through the online comment form: ometro.com/customer-service/customer-comment-form.
- Edie M.: The route 3 detour around UNMC is confusing and could be routed a different way. Riders need clarity about where to stand to catch it with the detours. Riders also get confused when there are new changes.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

- Unanimous approval, as amended to correct Rob Sembrat's statement from 40th and Broadway to 4th and Broadway.
- Motion: Clyde; Second: Gab

New Business:

1. Paratransit appeals: None.
2. Committee report on public feedback
 - a. Lindsey: The MAPA Coordinated Transit Committee heard similar concerns to what Rondae shared during the public comment period. Lindsey noted that Metro Transit staff were already in direct communication with the concerned individual.
 - b. Rondae: Reiterated concerns about the Customer Service transition shared during the public comment period. Also shared about her experience missing her MOBY van. The 30-minute pickup window can be a long time, and riders aren't sure if the van will arrive at the beginning or end of the window. The text message is sent as a reminder five minutes before the start of the pickup window. Rondae also shared that it's challenging to identify when the van has arrived at Outlook based on the entrance and acknowledged that the rider needs to share the correct entrance for pickup when booking the trip. With the challenges, Rondae asked if it would be possible to get real-time arrival on MOBY vehicles like there is for buses. Rondae shared that she had a conversation with other MOBY riders about the real-time arrival and tracking and they were very interested in the option. There was also a question asked about if there is a new Customer Service phone number.
 - i. Metro Transit: Staff share that they are looking into software that would allow tracking of MOBY vans in the future. Staff also noted that MOBY riders can request a reasonable modification so that the driver honks upon arrival or other forms of driver assistance. All riders are asked to use the 402-341-0800 Customer Service number.
 - ii. Gratitude was shared for Rondae being a spokesperson for the people that are communicating with her on MOBY.
3. Committee report on Metro Board – Clyde

- a. Metro’s CEO Lauren Cencic reported that there was a new information kiosk installed at the airport for Route 106. Clyde noted that a wish list item is to get more airport service.
- b. The Board approved a resolution for the 2027 Transportation Improvement Plan. This is done annually to plan for improvements for the upcoming year and is then submitted to the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) for review and approval.
- c. Clyde noted that there was a presentation at least a year ago about the entire Title VI process and suggested TAC consider having the presentation again at a future meeting if people are interested.
- d. The Board approved the resolution for the Title VI analysis and service changes that go into effect on April 19, 2026. This information was presented to TAC during the March 2026 meeting.
 - i. There was extended discussion during the Board meeting about Route 4 not going to Regency as late anymore. A member of the public spoke in opposition to the service changes since the 8:55 p.m., 9:55 p.m., and 10:55 p.m. departure for the Regency loop would no longer run. The member of the public is a waiter and relies on the bus to get home once he is done with work. Clyde noted that there may have been a misunderstanding of the information presented to TAC as the note about Route 4 and Regency Circle was interpreted as increased service, not reduced service. During the Board meeting, CEO Lauren Cencic explained that it takes the bus 15 minutes to go around the Regency loop and get back to Westroads. By ending service to Regency earlier, it allows Route 4 to have 30-minute service for the entire evening. Evan Schweitz, Senior Manager of Planning and Scheduling, shared during the Board meeting that there are only 10 riders on an average day who board or alight at a stop along Regency Circle. Clyde noted that the path from Regency Circle to Westroads requires the pedestrian to go underneath Dodge Street, that it’s a very dangerous pedestrian walkway,

and is concerned about this. Clyde noted that it was unclear when the service changes were presented that service would be removed from Regency Circle.

- ii. There was another public comment during the Board meeting about the emergency hatch in buses. The public commenter felt that when there are a lot of standees in hot weather and if the air conditioning is not working, it's good to have the emergency hatch open for air flow. The commenter shared that a lot of drivers refuse to open the hatch. Metro Transit staff shared that right now the discretion to open the hatch is left with the driver. Clyde shared that he often asks permission on the number 18 to open the hatch and the drivers always agree. He noted that it's easy to open and it really does help with air circulation.
- e. Clarification was requested for the improvement at the airport for Rout 106. Clyde shared that Metro Transit is improving the bus stop at the airport with a nice platform area and a shelter of some sort. Clyde shared that the bus stop has moved several times due to the construction and that can be confusing, but it will be nice when the construction is all done.
- f. Clarification was requested about the changes to Route 4. Confirmed that the last three pickups would be canceled with the changes and that, on average, there are 10 riders for the Regency loop throughout the entire day. Clyde shared that he often rides the Regency loop when he attends the Board meetings and acknowledged that that is once a month.
- g. Gab: Spoke with Board Director Clarice Dombeck about the possibility of a joint meeting between TAC and the Board of Directors. Director Dombeck has spoken with other Board Directors about the idea. One possibility would be to host a quarterly or annual joint meeting since most TAC members are not able to attend the Board meetings. There was discussion about how a joint meeting might work, possibly as a pre-meeting to the regular TAC meeting or

after the regular Board meeting. There was acknowledgement about work schedules conflicting with the Board meeting time and the time following the Board meeting.

- i. Metro Transit staff encouraged TAC members to think about the proposal and consider adding the joint meeting as an agenda item for the next meeting. Staff also shared a reminder about Open Meetings Act requirements related to quorum.
- ii. An idea was posed for TAC to produce a report or letter to the Board either quarterly or annually.
- iii. A suggestion was made to invite Director Dombeck to the next TAC meeting to discuss the idea further.

4. Metro updates and upcoming events

a. Nebraska Public Transit Week was March 15-21

- i. Wheel Appeal bus wrap contest for middle and high school students is open. Submissions will be accepted through August 31. More information is available at ometro.com/wheelappeal.
- ii. 12 individuals from multiple organizations attended the Transit Trainings
- iii. 15 riders talked with Mayor Ewing and Metro's CEO, Lauren Cencic during their ride-along
- iv. 6 people joined the Bus and Books story time on the bus at the Washington Branch Library
- v. 327 people joined Metro's Bus and Crafts event at the Gene Leahy Mall

b. Metro transitioned to the new customer service contract provider on April 1st. Staff are confident that any initial issues are part of the learning curve and will be resolved soon.

- i. Metro Transit staff have live access to the performance tab for Customer Service and the ability to listen to calls. TAC members were invited to make test calls and report back to Metro Transit staff about their experience. All calls are recorded and Metro Transit staff can go back and listen to calls.

- ii. Metro Transit staff pointed out that the live access is something new to staff with the new contract. Prior to this, if Metro Transit staff wanted to listen to a call, staff had to request the call from the contractor and then wait for them to send it. Often this led to issues being addressed well after the fact rather than more in the moment. Metro Transit staff are in a Microsoft Teams group with Customer Service and provide guidance and feedback in real time.
- iii. Metro Transit staff shared a follow-up reminder that the new contract had been in place for a week as of the day of the meeting. Not every agent has worked that entire week, so some of them are on day 3 of learning a new job. Metro Transit staff understand the frustration and that everyone just wants to be able to make a call and get where they need to go as quickly as possible. Metro Transit staff ask that everyone bears with staff, bears with the agents, and remembers that there's a human on the other end of that phone call, too.
- iv. A question was asked if Metro Transit keeps track of how satisfied the caller was or if the issue was resolved similar to how some call centers have a survey at the end of a call.
 - 1. Metro Transit staff shared that formal surveys are not done at this time, but they can ask the project manager for the contract to see if that is possible.
- c. New service changes go into effect in April. All the information for that is on the website: www.ometro.comApril2026Changes.
- d. There will be a Board resolution for a door and window access project that is being planned for Metro Transit's administrative building. The aim is to enhance security, accessibility, and energy efficiency.
- e. Metro Transit will be attending two Earth Day events. One will be on April 25th at Elmwood Park and the other will be on April 26th at the RiverFront.

- f. Metro Transit is partnering with Conservation Nebraska on May 2 to host a read-along on ORBT during the ride. The book that will be read has not been finalized, but the group will then meet at the new Central Library. Nicole will then give a presentation that's going to be about land use and accessibility and how it all relates to transit. The group may also get a tour of the new library. Everyone is invited to join the event. The Eventbrite link should be up soon.
- g. Metro Transit staff will be doing outreach at the transit centers to make sure people know about and understand the service changes going into effect on April 19. Posters about the service changes will also be hung up around the community, on buses, and at transit centers. Staff will also be engaging with employers along Route 30.
- h. Metro Transit staff are working on documenting compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Metro Transit's deadline for compliance is April 24, 2027 since we are a special district government. Metro Transit's contractors and vendors are also required to be compliant. WCAG includes websites, apps, and social media.
 - i. Discussion was had around the accessibility features of apps, such as Umo that has auditory alerts for when the rider's stop they need to get off the bus at is approaching.
 - 1. Question about whether there is a similar feature available for MOBY. Metro Transit staff shared that there is not an app available for MOBY at this time, but it's something that staff are exploring.
 - 2. Comment was made about the onboard announcements project previously discussed. Metro Transit staff shared that the project is ongoing.
- i. Bridget shared that she has done a couple of trainings/tours for organizations that serve people with disabilities. The tours start with a check in about what people know about the bus, if anybody's taken it, what to do once you get to the bus to stop, how you pay, and maybe some trivia for people to know. Then Metro Transit staff take

the group on a mini tour of the bus barn downstairs. The group on Monday got to ride in the bus around the garage and through the bus wash. Everyone was very excited! Bridget is working on identifying ways to connect with transition programs to provide one-on-one or group training to introduce them to the idea of independent travel.

- j. Question: Is Metro going to be in the Cinco de Mayo parade?
 - i. Metro Transit staff shared that the sign-up hasn't been completed, but the intention is to register for the parade.

General Discussion

- Edie: Discussion was had about service animals on board Metro buses. Edie M. shared concerns about the size and breed of service dogs. Alexander shared that there are no breed restrictions for service dogs and that service animals don't have to wear any indicator that they are a service animal. Alexander also shared that individuals can be asked to leave if the service dog is not under control. Metro Transit policy requires all pets (non-service animals) to be in an enclosed carrier. Metro Transit drivers are allowed to ask if the animal is a service animal and what tasks the service animal has been trained to perform. Metro Transit drivers are trained to take the appropriate steps in any case where an animal is out of control.
- Edie: Question was asked about safety reporting options if someone is unable to make it up to the bus operator for assistance, such as a silent text. Metro Transit staff shared that there is nothing available for real-time assistance at this time. Metro Transit staff noted that during the TAC meeting in March, Evan Schweitz, Senior Manager of Planning and Scheduling, reminded attendees that even if a rider doesn't hear a driver saying something to address a situation, it doesn't mean they aren't addressing it. They may be reporting it to dispatch, who then can either send a field supervisor to the bus or watch the live cameras.
- Edie: A concern was shared about the volume of belongings individuals bring on the bus and riders who do not pay their fare. A clarifying question was asked if the belongings block the aisle or take up seats. It was shared that sometimes the belongings are stored on the wheel well.

- Edie: An additional comment was made about having alerts sent out for MOBY when the van is in route and that one of the biggest complaints has been about locating the van. Metro Transit staff shared that the paratransit software contract will be revisited and staff hope to be able to add features such as van tracking or real-time arrival information.
- Rob: Question about what the back up plans are for when drivers call off sick for the day so that routes don't get canceled? Metro Transit staff shared that there is an extra board, which is essentially a batch of operators who are designed to be there for any time an operator calls off or needs to go home for an emergency, or needs to go home sick, or anything like that. The extra board operators are then asked to step in on any routes where coverage is needed. Dispatchers are responsible for assigning operators to routes and work hard to ensure there is coverage for full service to the greatest extent possible. Metro Transit does have service interruptions from time to time, but they are drastically lower than they were a year ago.
- Brian: Question about the April 2026 service change proposal and if they went into effect. Metro Transit staff shared that the updated timetables and maps are available on the website through the news alert banner at the top of the page. They will be incorporated into the system map and MyRide on the 19th.
- A question was asked about whether the call center is local to Omaha and how the staff provide support to callers. Metro Transit staff shared that the call center is not operated locally and that they use the available tools to provide support. Metro Transit staff have provided the contractor with training materials and there is a constant flow of information between what Metro Transit is doing internally, what is being sent out to the public, and what is being sent to Customer Service.
 - Comment was made about North End Teleservices providing Customer Service. Metro Transit staff shared that there was a request for proposals published and different contractors bid as part of the process. Contractors have to meet very specific parameters that are set as part of the procurement process.

- A question was asked about whether the new Customer Service contractor is in the country. Metro Transit staff shared that they are not.
- A comment was made about the questions Customer Service representatives are asking for trip bookings. Metro Transit staff shared that the new contractor is contractually required to follow a specific script and that staff have received complaints from some MOBY riders who are not accustomed to needing to go through that entire list of questions, and so calls are taking a little bit longer right now. It was shared that a new question is asking about trip purpose. Metro Transit staff shared that the software requires that question to be asked and will explore if it is necessary.
- Rondae asked if there are any new processes for the call center that she should advise other riders about. Metro Transit staff shared that the biggest thing is to ensure MOBY riders are calling 402-341-0800 instead of the older secondary number they previously used. The older number now goes to voicemail.

Adjournment:

- Motion: Lindsey; Second:

Next meeting:

- May 13th, 6:30 p.m. at Metro administrative offices and on Zoom

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