



Regional Metropolitan Transit Authority of Omaha

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**ometro.com**

## **Metro Transit Advisory Committee**

March 11, 2026

6:30 p.m.

*\*This meeting was open to the public online and in-person at Metro offices*

### **Digital:**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85886025172>

Meeting ID: 858 8602 5172

*Staff facilitators: Bridget Battafarano, Community Mobility Coordinator; Evan Schweitz, Senior Manager of Planning and Scheduling*

*Committee members: Clyde Anderson (Vice Chair), Gab Rima, Brian Neely, Alex Mendoza, Raymond Williams, Rose Krekelberg, Rondae Hill (online)*

*Member of the public: Rob Sembrat*

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

Rob Sembrat: Noticed that there is no bus sign at 4<sup>th</sup> and Broadway in Council Bluffs, but it does stop there.

Evan: We provide the signs to Council Bluffs for the routes we run, but it is up to them to install and maintain them in their jurisdiction. They decided to run on a “flag stop” system, so you can wave down a bus anywhere along the route, not just where there are signs.

### **Approval of previous meeting minutes**

January – Passed unanimously. Motion: Brian; Second: Gab

February – Passed unanimously. Motion: Brian; Second: Gab

### **New Business:**

1. Paratransit appeals: None.
2. Committee report on public feedback
  - a. Gab: Friend reported that there was an intoxicated rider on the bus who was arguing with another rider. The driver did not ask the rider to get off the bus or say anything. On a different day, the friend reported that the back door didn't open, so she had to get off at the next stop. *Details provided to staff.*
  - b. Brian: Between Turner Blvd and 24<sup>th</sup> and between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, it is not clear where stops are for the 15 and 30. Staff: Yes, we can make changes on MyRide to better show these. There are bus stop signs along that stretch and they are serving the #30 and the #15.
  - c. *On MyRide news, there were an unusually large number of service interruptions. Do we know why?* Staff: *Not sure. We have a new class of drivers getting on the road soon and it is possible that our numbers are dipping lower than we want them.*
  - d.
3. Committee report on Metro Board – Clyde Anderson
  - a. January 2026 fixed-route ridership was the highest in 10 years. However, K-12 riders were down from Jan. 2025, continuing the monthly decline in K-12 ridership since Sept. 2025. There were a few canceled school days due to cold in January.
  - b. The majority of Metro Flex trips continue to be in the North Zone, with Open Door Mission and the airport among the most popular destinations. January 2026 MOBY ridership was the highest January number in the past five years.
  - c. On Jan. 27, bus 1308 caught fire in the Metro garage. Although the fire was extinguished quickly, there was extensive damage from the smoke and soot. The Board approved two resolutions related to the fire: the first for \$400,000 for fire remediation work that was started soon after the fire, and the second for \$908,500 for additional cleaning and remediation. Metro is still processing insurance claims.
    - i. The first contract that went to the board was based on initial emergency response to remediate immediate issues and test the air quality around the building. Based on the results of the test, further remediation was recommended in the garage and parts of the maintenance area.
    - ii. Metro requested quotes and awarded a second, larger contract which addresses extensive cleaning of the areas needing remediation.
  - d. The Board approved about \$250K to fund the final design of the westbound ORBT station at Dodge & Park Ave, which has a very small area adjacent to the Burger King for the platform and shelter. This small station will be like the other three small ORBT stations and will have solar panels.

4. Proposed April service changes discussion
  - a. TAC should have received a copy of the public meeting slides, which are also online. It was determined that the proposed changes will not create a disproportionate burden or disparate impact on low-income and minority populations.
  - b. Staffing is currently at a level where we feel comfortable adding the proposed services on April 19<sup>th</sup>, if approved. We have been able to improve recruiting, offer in-house, paid CDL training, and increase support for employees to retain them. We are hoping we are on target to add service in the fall as well, but will have to watch staffing numbers.
  - c. If the changes are approved, staff will do outreach to the community ahead of the changes. This will include providing hand-outs to riders on the buses, spreading the information at transit centers, providing a press release and news coverage, posting to our website, social media, and MyRide news.
  - d. Motion to recommend approval of the proposed changes: Rondae; Second: Gab. Passed unanimously.
5. Metro updates and upcoming events
  - a. Nebraska Public Transit Week is March 15-March 21. More information is online at [www.ometro.com/nptw26](http://www.ometro.com/nptw26)
    - i. Sunday: The Wheel Appeal art contest opens for youth to design a bus wrap. Metro's scavenger hunt for places the bus can take you opens.
    - ii. Monday: Fare Free day
    - iii. Tuesday: Staff provide Transit Training. Metro CEO Lauren Cencic and Omaha Mayor John Ewing ride along.
    - iv. Wednesday: Transit Employee Appreciation Day
    - v. Thursday: Books and Buses with the Washington Branch Library story time
    - vi. Friday: Transit Training
    - vii. Saturday: Bus and Crafts at the Gene Leahy 11<sup>th</sup> St. Promenade (between the stage and the slides).
  - b. The MOBY wait-time change – from 10 minutes to 5 minutes – is in full effect. The grace period ended on March 1<sup>st</sup> and on time performance numbers are forthcoming.
  - c. Lauren (CEO) was a panelist at the We Make Omaha presentation on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was called Health x Place: Designing for Well-being and explored how land use affects social determinants of health.
  - d. Staff presented at the Nebraska Association of Transportation conference
    - i. Kevin Pendland (DEO) presented on data-driven decision-making

- ii. Nicole Ebat (Communications and Community Relations) and Alicia Johnson (Civil Rights and Inclusion) presented on accessible communication
- e. Lauren Cencic, CEO is part of Omaha's new Age Friendly City coalition and will attend a press conference on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- f. Metro will be transitioning to the new customer service provider on 4/1/26.
- g. Alex: Does Metro coordinate with the Public Works department when there are construction projects?
  - i. Yes, but it is not a perfect system. We try to see plans ahead of time to advocate for things like sidewalk access or slightly shorter construction zones so bus stops are not blocked. There are times when projects come up quickly or there isn't a completion date, so communication with riders is more difficult.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Brian; Second: Gab

**Next meeting:**

- April 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. at Metro administrative offices and on Zoom

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