



**MAPLE GROVE TRANSIT COMMISSION**

**6:30 P.M**

**January 25, 2022**

**Mayors Conference Room**

**Maple Grove Government Center**

- A. Call to Order
- B. Oath of Office for Reappointed Member
- C. Approval of Minutes: October 26, 2020
- D. Ridership Report
- E. 2021 Review
- F. 2022 Outlook and Pending Projects
- G. Commissioner Reports
- H. Other Business
- I. Adjournment

# MAPLE GROVE TRANSIT COMMISSION

6:30 P.M

January 25, 2022

## A. Call to Order

The Transit Commission Chair will call the meeting to order.

## B. Oath of Office

Member Teri Anderson will take the Oath of Office for a reappointed term to expire December 31, 2023.

## C. Approval of Minutes

The Commission will review and consideration adoption of the meeting minutes from October 26, 2020 per Exhibit A.

## D. Ridership Report

The 2021 ridership report will be presented at the meeting.

## E. 2021 Review

The Transit Administrator will review the major projects, events and issues from the past year, including:

- COVID Impacts on ridership, service, and budget. Driver vaccinations.
- COVID special services on the MY RIDE / AirBubble filters.
- Metro Transit driver hiring outreach.
- MY Ride reservation and service expansion .
- Mobility Hub project and award at Transit Station.
- Electrical Vehicle Charging Stations at the Transit Station.
- Blue Line Extension light rain discussion with Metropolitan Council.
- Age Friendly Transportation Study.
- I-94 road construction impacts and detours.
- MNDOT Hwy 252 freeway conversion impacts to I-94.
- Route 730 local bus service between Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove
- Preparation for Chauvin trial / station board up plans.

## **F. 2022 Outlook and Pending Projects**

The Transit Administrator will review the major projects, events and issues for the coming year:

- Express bus service plans for 2022.
- *New downtown* Minneapolis bus layover location.
- Planning for Route 781E branch serving Minneapolis east area.
- Storage room, LED light fixture, and camera projects at the Transit Station.
- MY RIDE service area expansion.

## **G. Commissioner Reports**

The commission members will present their individual reports, questions, or comments.

## **H. Other Business**

Other transit business items not on the agenda will be considered for discussion.

## **I. Adjournment**

A motion for adjournment will be considered.

# Exhibit A

## Meeting Minutes

**MAPLE GROVE TRANSIT COMMISSION**  
**City of Maple Grove**  
**Virtual Meeting of October 26, 2020**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Teri Anderson, Yolanda Brantley, Claudia Hames Newman, Matt Nelson, Dave Moline and Mary St. Marie.

**Members Absent:** none

**Also Present:** Mike Opatz - City of Maple Grove

**Call to Order**

Chair Teri Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the January 28, 2020 meeting were approved

**Ridership and Service Update**

Opatz stated the EXPRESS bus service when COVID hit this past spring, Express bus ridership went from 3300 daily rides down to 120. As a result, service was drastically reduced from 57 round trips per day to 12. Routes 780, 782, 783, and 785 have all be suspended. The remaining service is all on the Route 781 to and from the Maple Grove Transit Station. Ridership is now slowly increasing with 175 daily riders. As of September 14, we increased service to 24 round trips. Riders must wear a facemask and COVID driver barriers have been installed on the express bus fleet.

Opatz said the MY RIDE service is operating at about 75 percent of contracted service levels. Demand continues to increase with some days attaining 70 to 80 total rides. Grocery and food shelf trips remain an option and are occasional being utilized by residents.

Opatz said Exhibit B is the adopted express bus service plan for the December 5, 2020 round of service changes. It only includes select Route 781 trips, which is a slight reduction from the current service plan. While not yet finalized yet, the other routes will likely remain suspended until June 2021.

The transit commissioners provided comments about when their employer projected that employees would return to work sites in Minneapolis.

**Budget Update**

Opatz said that MGT receives its funding from the statewide motor vehicle sales tax (MVST) account. MVST is performing better than expected as it is only down four percent for the year compared to 2019. Due to MGT receiving a CARES Act grant and that we significantly reduced service, budget wise, MGT should end the year on a favorable note.

## Potential Changes to Bus Service and Facilities

Opatz stated that it appears the pandemic and other factors may have a long-term impact to express bus ridership. As a result, the transit market is likely to shift to more of a local focus. It likely frees up resources that can be invested into new initiatives. The primary focus of these changes will be to support local employers with workforce transportation, especially first mile and last mile connections, including:

- MGT is exploring a new local fixed route between the Starlite Transit Center in Brooklyn Park and the Maple Grove Transit Station with some trips being extended to the Boston Scientific campus.
- Maple Grove Transit is exploring a concept called *"Shared Mobility and Mobility Hubs"*. With the potential of permanent changes in commuting and mobility habits/patterns, a Mobility Hub would help coordinate and embrace express buses, local fixed route, demand response, microtransit, carpooling, Uber/Lyft, biking, and pedestrians all at once at the Maple Grove Transit Station. This would require the reconfiguration of a portion of the busway and small surface parking lot.
- For the above-mentioned project, Walker Consultants have submitted to the City a proposal to design, bid, and manage the construction.
- MGT is also looking at changes to the MY RIDE program. The first is to change the service to an on-demand ride reservations system versus the current advance reservation process. Our Ecolane app has proved to be popular and successful to schedule rides and can easily adopt a process that is similar to how Uber/Lyft operates. Riders would simply just request their ride right at the time when they need it.
- MY RIDE would still accept advanced scheduled rides for current standing order rides. These are rides that repeat on a frequent basis at the same times and locations. These are typically set up for daily work trips and reoccurring medical trips. We would like to make this change in early January 2021.
- We are also looking at expanding the MY RIDE service area to includes designated areas in the cities of Brooklyn Park and Plymouth. These new defined areas would be primarily designed to support popular destination for work, shopping, and medical.
- MGT is exploring the option to base the MY RIDE customer service center at the Maple Grove Transit Station. This type of change is tied to the above mentioned *"Mobility Hub"*. This would entail one to two persons staffed here to perform the scheduling, dispatching, and customer service duties. This item requires some more research before making a final recommendation.

## Blue Line Extension

Opatz said that the Metropolitan Council recently announced that the METRO Blue Line Extension using the current freight rail line along County Road is no longer a feasible alignment option. They have stated that BNSF Railroad is unwilling to advance the project on their freight line. As a result, they are starting over as to exactly where the rail line would operate. They have stated that they want the mode to remain light rail versus switching to bus rapid transit (BRT).

This means that any start to service is many years away. Mayor Steffenson wrote the Met Council a letter stated the City of Maple Grove would like to get involved with their Corridor Management Committee on this project being it is looking at new routing options for the Bottineau Corridor light rail project.

## **Governor's Blue-Ribbon Committee on Metropolitan Council**

Opatz said that Governor Walz on August 31 released an Executive Order that established a Blue-Ribbon Committee to study the Metropolitan Council. The purpose of the Committee is to review, 1) The role of elected versus appointed Metropolitan Council members, 2) The Metropolitan Council's role as a Metropolitan Planning Organization ("MPO") and identify and evaluate the ways this federal designation may complement and conflict with the Council's responsibilities under Minnesota law, and 3) The effectiveness of the delivery of regional transit service.

Opatz said that while the entire study is of great interest to the City, the item above related to the delivery of regional transit service is of particular importance and concern. There is a concern that the committee's work could ultimately affect the suburban transit systems in some form or fashion. The STA is in the process of developing talking points to address the matter. The Blue-Ribbon Committee met for first time on September 14 and received a general overview of the Met Council. The group is expected to meet twice a month and deliver a report to the Governor by the end of the year. The STA is schedule to present to this committee on October 26

## **MNDOT I-94 BRT Project**

Opatz stated that he is on a MNDOT subcommittee to study the proposed Hwy 252 freeway conversion project as it likely would include a dedicated bus/HOV lane that MGT buses would use. Recently, the project has changed to include a study of highway bus rapid transit (BRT) along I-94 from Maple Grove to Minneapolis. This was never discussed in the early meetings of the Highway 252 project. Per the project consultant, the Highway 252 community meetings resulted in significant opposition and concerns from residents, local legislators, and the Sierra Club. From there, MNDOT staff expanded the study scope to include the BRT component.

Opatz said that he could see some benefit to this type of highway BRT to Maple Grove, it seems in times where transit funding is hard to come by that this project directly competes with versus complementing the Blue Line Extension efforts. However, it is unclear how this has a connection to the 252 project.

Opatz said that he would assume a BRT line would need to access the Maple Grove Transit Station thus impacting our local road network and that the current MGT express riders would prefer the faster MGT express service over a BRT service. A draft report is projected to be ready by December, so the City would at a minimum like to publicly comment on this report.

## **Adjourn/Next Meeting**

- Next Scheduled Regular Meeting: TBD
- Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by Mike Opatz, Transit Administrator.