

MAPLE GROVE TRANSIT COMMISSION
City of Maple Grove
Meeting of November 24, 2015

MINUTES

Members Present: Terry Coss, Mandy Knudsen, Teri Anderson, Matt Nelson and Mark Davison.

Members Absent: none

Also Present: Mike Opatz-City of Maple Grove, Bill Patten - Midwest Paratransit, Jason Bordenave and Jay Kluge-Metro Transit.

Call to Order

Transit Commission Chair Terry Coss called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approve Minutes

Terry Coss called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 29, 2015. The motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved.

Discussion of Routes and Statistics

Opatz reviewed the monthly ridership summaries for September through October 2015 plus the daily ridership sheets for November 2015.

The Commissioners had the following reports:

- Teri Anderson – All is good and most 781 trips are quite full.
- Mark Davison – The Route 789 is also going well with full buses.
- Mandy Knudsen – No issues to report on the 780, but concerned with some of the low ridership on some Route 780 trips. What sort of marketing like a free ride campaign to Maple Grove and Plymouth residents could take place?
- Terry Coss – Again there are occurrences where the 783 drivers do not know how to activate the stop request system on the coach buses. They need to be trained about the location of the master switch. The overhead destination sign on bus # 60023 was not working and the bus route was only marked with a small placard. We should get an update on the policy for automated announcements for cross streets and bus stops.
- Matt Nelson – All is good on the Route 785.

Public Hearing - Suburb to Suburb Bus Service Project

Opatz said that legislation was approved in 2015 (**HF1526/SF1487**) to award the Suburb Transit Association (STA) a funding grant to demonstrate suburb to suburb bus service in the I-494 Corridor primarily targeting work trips. A total of \$2 Million was awarded over the next two years. The STA has been meeting over the past few months to craft a service, operations, and market plan. The service is projected to start in mid-January 2016.

Opatz said that a collaborative effort serving Eden Prairie, Hopkins, Maple Grove, Plymouth and Shakopee will provide suburb-to-suburb service on Route 494, with a one-seat ride between Shakopee's Marshall Road Transit Station and Station 73 in Plymouth (via SouthWest Station or the Golden Triangle in Eden Prairie) with connecting service to/from Maple Grove Transit Station.

Route 494 is aimed at increasing access to major employment and commercial centers throughout the Twin Cities western suburbs. The service plan includes 20 trips operating about every 30 minutes, in both northbound and southbound directions during the morning and afternoon peak periods.

Opatz presented the latest service plan in terms of trips times and routing. The corresponding routing was also reviewed. A draft fact sheet representing the efforts to date in terms of developing a marketing plan was presented. Five trips in the morning and five trips in the afternoon are projected to serve the Maple Transit Station

The operations plan in terms of which STA agency will operate which trips is still being finalized. However, it appears initially that Maple Grove Transit will not provide or operate vehicles for the main line portion between Maple Grove and Plymouth. It appears SW Transit and Plymouth Metrolink will operate that portion of the service. If appropriate buses can be secured, Maple Grove could in the future contract with Midwest Paratransit for a portion of the service to Plymouth as a means to alleviate some of the operation pressure placed upon Plymouth Metrolink.

Opatz stated that the grant will cover all operation and marketing expenses for the main line service. However, each local transit agency is expected to fund their local service connections to help work commuters get to and from the various transit hubs being served. Maple Grove Transit is planning to accomplish this by utilizing the capacity that was created by the dial-a-ride expansion included in the 2016 budget. Maple Grove will further examine options to expand dial-a-ride service to support this initiative if the ridership demand dictates.

To be consistent with Maple Grove Transit' adopted Title VI plan, this service plan is be presented to general public for comment on November 24, 2015 at the Maple Grove Transit Commission meeting.

Chair Coss opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 PM to see if anyone in attendance from the general public would like to comment on the proposed plan. No members from the general public were in attendance, so Chair Coss closed the public hearing at 7:01 PM.

2016 Rider Survey

Opatz said that Federal Title VI regulations related to civil rights and equal access requires transit agencies to survey their customers on a periodic basis. The survey must discern how groups of different races, ethnicities and income level respond to the survey compared the survey responses as a whole.

Maple Grove Transit's Title VI Plan states it will survey its riders every five years. The last survey was conducted in December 2011. For that survey, Maple Grove Transit partnered with National Research Center, Inc. to conduct a web-based survey of riders. In early December 2011, Maple Grove Transit emailed the survey link to all "rider alert" subscribers and distributed bus flyers on two different days. A total of 574 riders completed the survey, for an estimated response rate of 35%. The survey captured current rider behaviors, attitudes and service evaluations, as well as any suggestions for improvement. Attached is a summary of that survey along with the questions asked.

In early 2016, City staff will research options with National Research Center to repeat this online rider survey. The City used this same firm to conduct its community wide resident surveys. While we want to closely mirror the 2011 survey, a close examination of the instrument is needed to make sure we delete any out of date elements or to capture new areas of useful information.

Opatz reviewed the key survey tasks that we need to develop a timeline for with the goal of conducting the actual survey around October 2016 and to receive a final report in December 2016. Opatz said he would provide the Transit Commission with the cost for 2011 survey.

December 2016 Bus Service Changes

Opatz reviewed the following December 14, 2015 Maple Grove Transit service changes:

Route 789

- Starting the a.m. trips a couple minutes earlier at 6:58 AM and 7:59 AM
- Adding both an arrive and depart time at the Transit Station for the morning trips
- Clarifying the time point versus the bus stops at Oak/Wash and Oak/Univ.
- The revised rider flyer is attached.

Route 780

- Includes the September 17, 2015 change to the Route 780 P.M. trips that reversed the direction of travel on the West Eagle Lake Drive route segment. This change allowed the afternoon buses to utilize the traffic signals when making the left turn from West Eagle Lake Drive back to southbound Hemlock. The traffic levels and speeds on Hemlock Lane have increased to a point where it was no longer safe for the buses to make the left turn from the uncontrolled intersection of the south loop of West Eagle Lake Drive.

Route 781

- Adds a new morning trip arriving at the Transit Station at 8:14 and leaving 8:17. The new trip would be trip # 20 and the two remaining 781 trips are now renumbered to 21 and 22 respectively. The current trip arriving at 8:22 AM has been experiencing significant loads over the past few months.

Bus Service for the Holiday

Opatz reviewed the rider flyer for the bus service levels planned around the 2015 Christmas and New Year's Holidays.

Adjourn / Next Meeting

- Next Scheduled Regular Meeting: *January 26, 2016*
- Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by Mike Opatz, Transit Administrator.