



MAPLE GROVE TRANSIT COMMISSION

6:30 P.M

October 26, 2020

Virtual Meeting

<https://logis.webex.com/logis/j.php?MTID=m76aeb63f9172ce355bf15a399d936272>

- A. Call to Order by Chair
- B. Approval of Minutes: January 28, 2020
- C. Ridership and Service Update
- D. Budget Update
- E. Potential Changes to Bus Service and Facilities
- F. Blue Line LRT Extension Update
- G. Governor's Blue-Ribbon Panel on Regional Transit Service Delivery
- H. MNDOT I-94 BRT Project
- I. Next Meeting / Adjourn

A. Call to Order

- Teri Anderson will call the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

B. Approval of Minutes: January 28, 2020

- See Exhibit A for the minutes of the January 28, 2020 meeting for consideration of approval.

C. Ridership and Service Update

- **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.
- **MY RIDE Service** - The MY RIDE (dial-a-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.
- 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.

D. Budget Update

- 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.

E. Potential Changes to Bus Service and Facilities

- 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. The following bullets summarize these potential changes that all work in conjunction with one another to set the future direction of Maple Grove Transit.
- 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.

The Starlite location is popular for MY RIDE trips, so this new fixed route would free up MY RIDE buses to support some planned changes to the MY RIDE program.

- 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, micro-transit, 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 per the depiction shown below:



- For the above-mentioned project, Walker Consultants have submitted to the City a proposal to design, bid, and manage the construction for amount not to exceed \$63,000. Depending on the final design, the project is estimated to cost between \$336,00, and \$450,000. There are funds in the transit capital account for this project. The City Council approved the Walker Consultants proposal, so that item will kick-off this month.
- 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/Lfyf operates. Riders would simply just request their ride right at the time when they need it.
 - ✓ Since its inception, this service allowed riders to schedule rides 14 days in advance. In January 2020, we started to accept same-day requests. If we adopt the new process, the advance ride reservation portion would be eliminated. Riders would request rides no different how you request a taxi, just right when you need it, no advance ride reservation will be needed.
 - ✓ This change is now possible with the overall ride demand lower due to the pandemic. The Ecolane dispatching software and app purchased in 2019 provides the technology to

make this change. Southwest Transit has been using this same approach for their Prime service for the past couple years, and it works quite well.

- ✓ 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. The service would be operated in this new manner on a six to nine-month trial basis and then evaluated to determine if it should be a permanent change. This proposed change and the following service area change would be brought to a future City Council meeting for authorization to proceed.
- We are also looking at expanding the MY RIDE service area to includes designated areas in the cities of Brooklyn Park, Rogers, and Plymouth. These new defined areas would be primarily designed to support popular destination for work, shopping, and medical. The expanded service area is still being studied, so the proposed new service maps are forthcoming.
- 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. The space would be leased to the MY RIDE contracted provider and the employees would remain with that firm. This change would require the installation of some cubicle style office furniture and equipment, but there is ample space to accomplish the modification. This initiative would provide the added benefit of the staff persons providing general transit information and having a physical presence at the facility. This item requires some more research before making a final recommendation.

F. Blue Line Extension

- 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.

G. Governor’s Blue-Ribbon Committee on Metropolitan Council

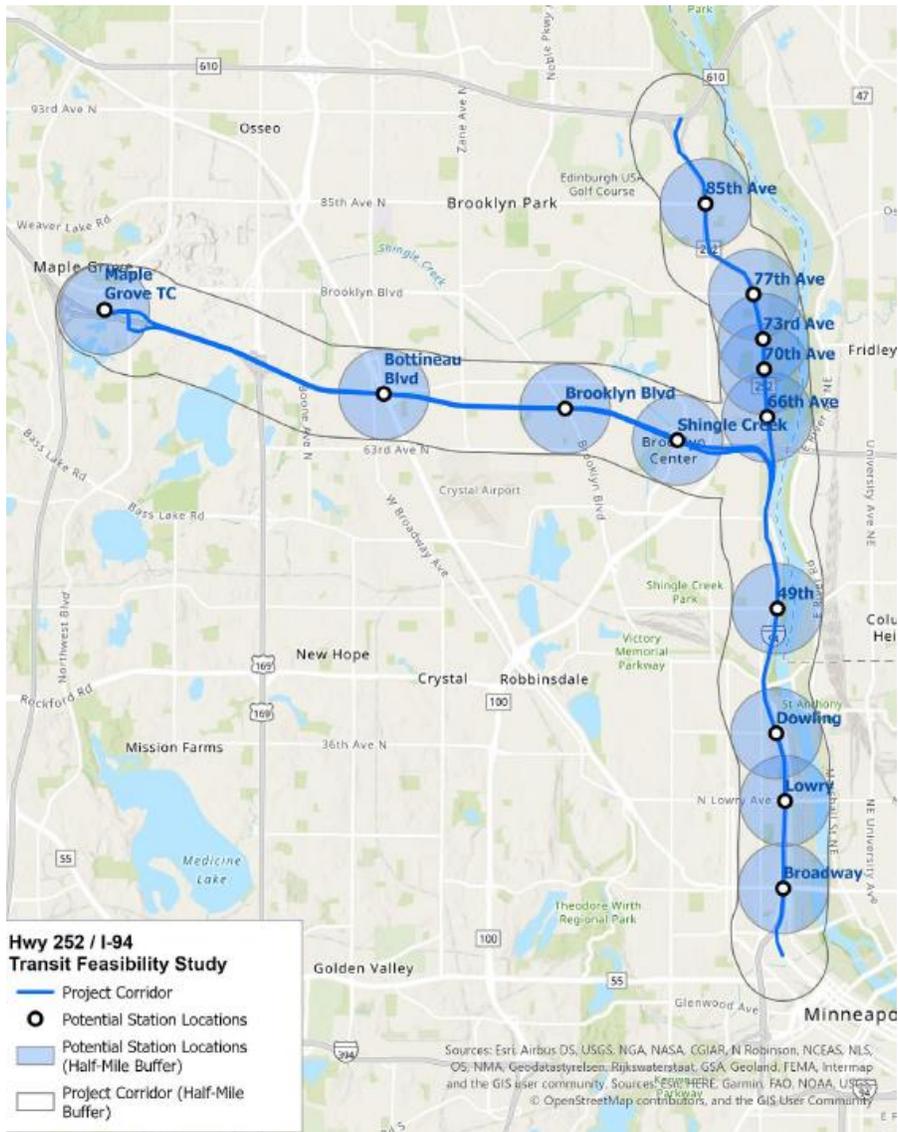
- Governor Walz on August 31 released an Executive Order that established a Blue-Ribbon Committee to study the Metropolitan Council. The purpose of the Committee is to review:
 - ✓ The role of elected versus appointed Metropolitan Council members.

- ✓ 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.
 - ✓ The effectiveness of the delivery of regional transit service.
- 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 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 issuance of the Executive Order will require the City to actively engage our local legislators, Hennepin County Board member, Metropolitan Council member, bus riders, and other stakeholders on the proven track record and benefits of the suburban transit systems.
 - Also, it will be important to stress the numerous difficulties and challenges associated with any potential transfer of transit services, fleet, and facilities to the region. This includes both logistical and budgetary factors that will lead to major disruptions in the delivery of transit service to the public.
 - 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

H. MNDOT I-94 BRT Project

I am on 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.

While I 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. I would assume a BRT line would need to access the Maple Grove Transit Station thus impacting our local road network. I would also assume 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 I stated that the City would at a minimum like to publicly comment on this report. See project map below:



I. Next Meeting Adjourn

- The Commission can discuss dates for the next meeting in early 2021 mostly likely targeting January 26, 2021.

Exhibit A

MAPLE GROVE TRANSIT COMMISSION City of Maple Grove Meeting of January 28, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

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

Members Absent: Dave Moline

Also Present: Mike Opatz - City of Maple Grove, Bobby Andress-Metro Transit, Brian Hanson-Metro Transit, Robert Brevig-Metro Transit and Bill Patten-Midwest Paratransit Services.

Call to Order

Transit Commission Chair Teri Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

Approve Minutes

The minutes of the November 26, 2019 meeting were approved.

Boards and Commission Ethics Training.

City Attorney Justin Templin provided ethics training for the Transit Commissions members. A hard copy of the presentation was distributed to all attendees.

Oath of Office

Teri Anderson took the oath of office being she was reappointed to the Transit Commission for another two-year term.

Discussion of Routes and Statistics

Opatz reviewed the most recent daily ridership and monthly ridership summaries. Also, Opatz reviewed the 2019 yearend ridership report.

The Commissioners had the following reports:

- Teri Anderson – Reviewed the morning a wheelchair rider experienced a broken seat on an articulated bus in the disabled seating area. The rider was accommodated in the other disabled seating location. Opatz noted the matter was reported and the seat fixed.
- Matt Nelson – Route 785 ridership is increasing, but riders have been acting quite civil at the station and on the buses.

- Mary St. Marie – The Route 781 also is experiencing crowded buses on a more frequent basis.
- Claudia Hames Newman – The NexTrip sign on 2nd and 4th is still not working.
- Dave Moline – Absent.
- Yolanda Brantley – The temporary bus stop location on 3rd Street at 1st Avenue North is creepy and it is very hard to see the buses without leaning into traffic. Buses seem to barely stop here. .

Nominations of Distinguished Service Awards

Commission reviewed and approved the award nominations as presented by Opatz. The awards will be presented at the March 31, 2020 meeting.

Service Changes for March 2020

Opatz reviewed the service changes effective on March 16, 2020. This include new reverse commute service on the Route 781 and expanded MY RIDE service. Both changes are designed to focus on local work force transportation needs.

Adjourn / Next Meeting

- Next Scheduled Regular Meeting: March 31, 2020
- Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.
- Minutes submitted by Mike Opatz, Transit Administrator.

Exhibit B

781 Monday – Friday only

South to Downtown Minneapolis

Trip Number	Route Branch	Maple Grove (pick-up times)				Downtown Minneapolis (drop-off times*)				
		94th Ave & Dunkirk Lane 	Co Rd 30 & Elm Creek Blvd	Forestview & 89th Ave	Elm Creek Blvd & 89th Ave	Maple Grove Transit Station 	4th Street & Hennepin Ave	Marquette Ave & 8th St	Marquette Ave & 10th St	
AM 1	781					5:02	5:05	5:25	5:29	5:31
2	781					5:27	5:30	5:50	5:54	5:56
3	781					5:56	5:59	6:19	6:23	6:25
4	781					6:14	6:17	6:38	6:43	6:45
5	781					6:25	6:28	6:49	6:54	6:56
6	781					6:33	6:36	6:57	7:02	7:04
7	781					6:44	6:47	7:08	7:13	7:15
8	781					6:50	6:53	7:14	7:19	7:21
9	781					6:57	7:00	7:21	7:26	7:28
10	781					7:04	7:07	7:28	7:34	7:36
11	781					7:09	7:12	7:34	7:39	7:41
12	781					7:12	7:15	7:37	7:42	7:44
13	781					7:16	7:19	7:41	7:46	7:48
14	781					7:22	7:25	7:48	7:54	7:56
15	781					7:27	7:30	7:54	7:59	8:01
16	781	7:13	7:18	7:31	7:34	7:33	7:35	7:59	8:04	8:06
17	781					7:38	7:41	8:05	8:10	8:12
18	781	7:28	7:31	7:34	7:37	7:15	7:18	8:12	8:17	8:19
19	781					7:56	7:59	8:22	8:27	8:29
20	781					8:06	8:09	8:31	8:36	8:38
21	781					8:17	8:20	8:41	8:46	8:48
22	781	8:08	8:13	8:16	8:19	8:27	8:30	8:51	8:56	8:58
23	781					8:37	8:40	9:01	9:06	9:08
24	781					11:24	11:26	11:48	11:52	11:54
PM 1	781					2:28	2:30	2:50	2:54	2:56
2	781					3:58	4:00	4:21	4:27	4:28
3	781					4:58	5:00	5:21	5:25	5:27

Note: Inbound trips 10, 14, 16, and 18 suspended.

North to Maple Grove

Trip Number	Route Branch	Downtown Minneapolis (pick-up times)			Maple Grove (drop-off times*)				
		2nd Ave & 10th St	2nd Ave & 6th St	3rd St & Hennepin Ave	Maple Grove Transit Station 	Elm Creek Blvd & 89th Ave	Forestview & 89th Ave	Co Rd 30 & Elm Creek Blvd	94th Ave & Dunkirk Lane 
AM 1	781	5:06	5:09	5:13	5:31				
2	781	5:50	5:53	5:57	6:15				
3	781	6:33	6:37	6:41	6:59				
PM 1	781	12:16	12:19	12:23	12:41				
2	781	2:16	2:19	2:23	2:41				
3	781	2:45	2:48	2:52	3:11				
4	781	3:14	3:18	3:22	3:45				
5	781	3:37	3:41	3:45	4:08				
6	781	3:45	3:49	3:53	4:16				
7	781	3:56	4:00	4:04	4:27				
8	781	4:05	4:09	4:13	4:36				
9	781	4:10	4:14	4:18	4:41				
10	781	4:14	4:18	4:23	4:46				
11	781	4:19	4:23	4:28	4:51				
12	781	4:26	4:30	4:35	4:58				
13	781	4:29	4:33	4:38	5:01	5:08	5:11	5:14	5:21
14	781	4:35	4:39	4:44	5:07				
15	781	4:40	4:44	4:49	5:12	5:19	5:22	5:25	5:32
16	781	4:49	4:53	4:58	5:21				
17	781	5:00	5:04	5:09	5:32				
18	781	5:01	5:05	5:10	5:33	5:40	5:43	5:46	5:53
19	781	5:09	5:13	5:18	5:41	5:48	5:51	5:54	6:01
20	781	5:11	5:15	5:20	5:43				
21	781	5:23	5:27	5:32	5:55				
22	781	5:36	5:39	5:43	6:06	6:13	6:16	6:19	6:26
23	781	6:06	6:09	6:13	6:33	6:40	6:43	6:46	6:53
24	781	6:36	6:39	6:43	7:03				

Route 781A and 781P branches suspended until further notice. See Rider Alert.