

ARC COMMITTEE MEETING FOLLOW-UP

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE May 14, 2015 Meeting Notes

Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Tim Lee, Chair
Mr. Kerry Armstrong
Commissioner Charlotte Nash
Commissioner Tom Worthan
Mr. Sonny Deriso

Non-Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Donald Hawbaker
Ms. Carol Comer
Commissioner Charles Oddo
Mr. Chris Tomlinson
Commissioner Jeff Turner
Commissioner Richard Oden

Voting Members Absent:

Commissioner Buzz Ahrens
Mr. Fred Daniels
Mr. Clark Boddie
Commissioner John Eaves
Interim CEO Lee May
Mayor Kasim Reed
Commissioner David Austin

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Commissioner Pete Amos
Mr. Rudy Bowen
Commissioner Keith Ellis
Commissioner Pat Graham
Mr. Douglas Hooker
Commissioner Tim Lassetter
Commissioner Kevin Little
Mr. Keith Parker
Commissioner Tommy Smith

Actions Taken:

A quorum was not present, and the meeting was held for information purposes only. There were no comments given from the public.

1. Welcome, Chair's comments:

Chairman Lee welcomed everyone to the Regional Transit Committee meeting. ARC Chairman Kerry Armstrong wishes Chairman Lee a Happy Birthday.

2. MARTA's Transit Oriented Development

Jason Ward from MARTA presented on MARTA's current transit oriented development projects. MARTA has three main goals with the TOD work: increasing ridership, generating additional revenue to help operate the transit system, and promoting a more vibrant, sustainable Atlanta. Currently MARTA has launched five RFPs for developments on and around their stations, with an additional RFP to be released soon for Arts Center Station.

The very first RFP was at King Memorial Station, and the site included five acres for redevelopment. Walton Communities was selected as the development partner. The second RFP was the Edgewood/Candler Park station, with Columbia Ventures and Invest Atlanta selected as the development partner. The Edgewood/Candler Park development will include affordable housing, and possibly a non-profit that focuses on the arts and dance. The third project is Avondale Station in Decatur, again with Columbia Ventures as the development partner. This TOD will include apartments, condos and senior housing. Ground breaking is expected by early 2016. The fourth TOD RFP was released in March and proposals are due in two weeks. Pretty extensive engagement will be required for this project. The fifth TOD project is at Chamblee Station. The sixth RFP is Arts Center Station in Midtown. This project will be complex due to the parcel of land up for development. Proposals are due in September for Arts Center.

Upcoming TOD initiatives include an RFP for Oakland City Station later this summer. Additionally MARTA is looking at interim uses for the parking lots surrounding Hamilton Holmes Station until a mixed use development occurs there.

Commissioner Lee: Great work in connecting transit and job centers.

3. Transit Expansion and the Region's Plan

Patrick Bradshaw updated the RTC on the policy development of the Region's Plan. Mr. Bradshaw gave an overview of how the Region's Transportation Plan is being developed. The final plan is expected to be completed by March 2016.

Transit consists of about 1/3 of the policy document of the Region's Transportation Plan, and these policies will be reflected by the actions in the region's plan.

The Region's Transportation Plan consists of three main focus/vision areas, including World Class Infrastructure, Livable Communities, and Competitive Economy. Competitive Economy was renamed from Innovative Economy based on feedback from initial stakeholders.

Mr. Bradshaw gave examples of policies that are being proposed for each focus area of the plan. World Class Economy will have a policy to focus on projects that can trip reliability for travel on all transportation modes. Livable Communities will include policies that encourage increased housing, services and employment opportunities for residents of all incomes and abilities around transit stations.

Competitive Economy will include policies that promote alternative transportation modes to improve access to, and within, employment centers and regional places.

Mr. Bradshaw closed with an overview of the order of priority for projects under consideration to be included in the RTP. Transportation projects are categorized as one of three types of project. The Fiscally Constrained Element of the project list includes transportation projects that have a identified funding source and are constructible within the life time of the RTP. Streetcar expansion plans are an example of a project included under the constrained list. The Unconstrained Element of the project list includes projects that have moved forward with planning and feasibility studies, but have not yet identified a potential funding source. The MARTA rail expansion on the GA-400 corridor is an example of this type of project. Finally, the third element of the project list includes other projects that the region views as potentially important in the future as included in Concept 3, but aren't currently possible during the current planning cycle. Commuter rail from Atlanta to Athens is a good example of this type of project.

Chairman Lee: There are no questions from the committee.

4. Regional Human Services Transportation Planning

Ms. Janae Futrell provided the RTC an update on the upcoming Human Services Transportation Plan.

The purpose of Federal Guidelines on Human Services Transportation include identifying the needs of transportation disadvantaged, provide strategies for meetings needs, and prioritizing funding and implementation.

ARC's efforts in this arena include the 2007 Interim Atlanta Regional Coordinated HST Plan, the 2010 Atlanta Regional Coordinated HST Plan and the 2013 Atlanta Regional Coordinated HST Plan Limited Update. Additionally ARC is currently looking to undertake a holistic update to the HST Plan.

There are several significant changes that have happened regionally that will be included in the HST Plan update including: the new flex route service that CCT has launched, the www.SimplelyGetThere.org trip planning website for paratransit users that ARC launched. ARC's plan will be reflecting this type of work that is being done on the county level.

One of the questions that has recently surfaced out of the HST Advisory Committee that this HST Plan will address how to better leverage dialysis trips regionally across multiple transit agency boundaries. Additionally how can we better coordinate between transit agencies on mobility training for paratransit users, and find some improved economies of scale for our transit operators.

The public involvement for this HST Plan will include collaborative sessions, one-on-one interviews, as well as focus groups. The current expected completion for this project is Q1 2016.

Commissioner Lee: Lots of great information and the project is heading in a great direction. CCT has met with health care providers to better coordinate on medical trips. We all greatly appreciate the work being done.

5. Transportation Legislation Highlights

Mr. Scott Haggard with ARC gave the RTC an update on the State's recent legislative session.

Mr. Haggard informed the committee that existing excise and sales taxes on motor fuel is still not eligible for transit funding, but that the new \$5/night hotel fee could potentially be used to fund transit projects. This new fee is expected to generate \$165,000,000 annually. Additionally there is a new annual fee placed on alternative fueled vehicles that could generate up to \$10-15 million annually.

The State Legislature also provided a new T-SPLOST Option for Atlanta counties. Beginning July 2016, any ARC county may hold a referendum for transportation purposes. The sales tax rate can be 0.05% to 1%. Intergovernmental agreement with cities and counties are required to enact a full 1% sales tax, or 0.75% can be enacted if there is no intergovernmental agreement. The SPLOST cannot exceed 5 years in length, and 30% of the project list must be on the State's Strategic Transportation Plan.

The State budget included \$75 million for a capital bond that will benefit transit. These funds and the award process are being overseen by SRTA. Mr. Haggard asked SRTA Director Chris Tomlinson if SRTA had any comments about how these funds would be allocated across the state.

Chris Tomlinson: SRTA is working on the framework for this process. He stated that because the bond money is state general obligation bonds, it has to be used for capital costs and that State would need to maintain ownership interest in the asset. The bonds should be approved for sale June 9th, and be available at the first of the year. SRTA is proactively working with the Georgia Transit Association on how best to structure the allocation. The allocation process will be available for comment by the end of June.

Mr. Haggard informed the RTC that the Legislature permanently eliminated MARTA's 50/50 requirement, which required 50% of their funds to be spent on capital and 50% to be spent on operating. MARTA also received approval to enact penalties for the Ride with Respect violations.

New regulations were placed on on-demand taxi services like Uber and Lyft, but carpool drivers and carpool programs are not affected by this legislation.

There were two bills that passed one chamber, and will likely resurface next legislative session including: HR 830: Transit Community Improvement Districts which would enable CIDs to tax and fund transit projects. Additionally HB 386 was intended to eliminate the rural and human services transportation coordinating council, but this will continue to be a conversation on how the state is to participate in that role.

Finally there is continued interest from the State in the transit governance question about how best to coordinate and fund transit in the region. Senator Beach is very aware of this topic and interested in how to deal with these issues in the future.

Chairman Lee: Because of your work, and your team's work, we've moved forward with transit this session. Thank you for all that you do.

6. Updates and Meeting Wrap-up

Mr. Cain Williamson reviewed the ATLTransit.org website updates and commented on upcoming improvements in content and functionality to the website. ARC has taken over the responsibility and management of this trip planner.

Mr. Aaron Fowler provided an update on the Regional Bus Stop Signage project. He informed the committee that due to uncertainty in Congress of transportation funding, that the recent TIP project solicitation has been put on hold. He suggested that RTC staff would continue to look for all potential funding possibilities.

Mr. Aaron Fowler provided an update on the Breeze Clearinghouse Review project, and stated that a consultant has been selected and that a contract should be signed late this month. The expected project completion is in late October 2015.

Ms. Janae Futrell gave the committee an update on the Regional Marketing project, stating that the project will be splitting up marketing efforts between local and regional marketing efforts to better target each agency's target markets.

Commissioner Lee: These are the projects that the committee is looking to move forward. The transit operators work together in moving the needle forward on these projects. If our State begins a discussion on regional transit governance we've set the groundwork for that. Everyone should congratulate Phil Boyd from GCT on his upcoming retirement.

Handouts supplied in advance on the ARC website: (www.atlantaregional.com/rtc)

- 5/14/2015 RTC Meeting Agenda
- 3/12/2015 RTC Meeting Summary
- Presentations
 - MARTA's Transit Oriented Development
 - Transit Expansion and the Region's Plan
 - Regional Human Services Transportation Planning Process
 - Transportation Legislation Highlights
- Handouts
 - RTC Work Program Status Update Document