

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

May 28, 2014

Presiding: Trevor Fuller (Chairman, Mecklenburg County Commission)

Present:

Mayor Dan Clodfelter (Charlotte)	Mayor John Woods (Davidson)
Ron Kimble (Charlotte Assistant City Manager)	Mayor Jill Swain (Huntersville)
Scott Jernigan (TSAC Vice Chair)	Mayor Jim Taylor (Matthews)
Dena Diorio (Mecklenburg County Manager)	Bill Thunberg (Mooresville Representative)
Anthony Roberts (Cornelius Town Manager)	Mayor Jack Edwards (Pineville)

Chief Executive Officer: Carolyn Flowers

I. Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Transit Commission was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by MTC's Chairman, Commissioner Fuller.

II. Review of Meeting Summary

The meeting summary of April 23, 2014 was approved as written.

III. Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) Chair's Report

Scott Jernigan

Mr. Jernigan reported that TSAC met on May 8 and received an update on the LYNX Blue Line Capacity Expansion (BLCE) project to expand some light rail platforms from two-car to three-car platforms. TSAC also received an update on the market survey and advertising videos. TSAC felt that the video production was well done and members were happy to see the videos.

IV. Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CTAG) Chair's Report

There was no report from CTAG as the group did not meet this month.

V. Red Line Task Force Update

No report.

VI. Transit Funding Working Group (TFWG) Update

Bill Thunberg

Mayor Swain said that the next TFWG meeting will be held in the summer at a date to be determined. Mr. Thunberg reported that TFWG's Advocacy Subcommittee has developed an Action Plan of legislative advocacy with short, medium and long term goals to meet the challenge of building the entire transit system. The community needs infrastructure; the challenge is finding the revenue to pay for it. Many of the subcommittee's recommendations for legislative action will benefit other infrastructure such as water, sewer and schools in addition to transit and transportation. Legislative Recommendations from the Action Plan are to seek authority to enter into all Public Private Partnership (P3) methods available, allow tax increment financing and Special Assessment District (SAD) revenue to be eligible for both capital and operating costs of transit, enter transit loan agreements for Transportation Infrastructure and

Finance Innovation Act (TIFIA) and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) with the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and to extend or abolish the sunset date for special assessment districts. The Action Plan recommends building a statewide coalition with the transit community as well as identifying coalition partnership opportunities with other types of infrastructure that would benefit from legislative changes and working with the private sector.

In the short term, the Action Plan urges building a statewide coalition in the transit community, identifying coalition partnership opportunities with other types of infrastructure and working with the private sector. In the medium term, the Advocacy Subcommittee urges seeking from the General Assembly the authority to enter into Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain arrangements with the private sector as well as continuing to work on legislation for SADs and the authority to enter into TIFIA and RRIF arrangements. Considerations in the medium term will involve assessing the political climate, financial condition of the 2030 Transit System Plan, community support and support from MTC member jurisdictions and working with the executive and legislative branches. In the long term, General Assembly approval should be sought to enact an additional sales tax for transit as well as the legislative actions sought for the short and medium terms. The Advocacy Committee has realized that the need is about infrastructure and producing the revenue to pay for it regardless of whether the infrastructure is for transit, schools, water or sewer. Mr. Thunberg asked MTC members to provide the Advocacy Committee with a list of organizations which may have similar interests in expanding the use of P3s, SADs or improving infrastructure, and to help the Committee identify private sector entities that support transportation choice and/or improving infrastructure and to add these items to the legislative agenda in the broader context of improving infrastructure. The agenda needs to be developed soon so it is ready for the next legislative Long Session.

Discussion: Mayor Swain said that she attended the ASC Board Meeting last week. They gave a report on where their donors are. The list extended outside Mecklenburg County. She suggested that we speak with ASC to get their information to determine if there are overlays. Mr. Thunberg said that he attended Mr. Carlee's presentation to ULI for a discussion on being locally competitive. Mr. Carlee said that we have reached the limit on our ability to be locally competitive with other regions in the nation due to limited transportation infrastructure. He said that 26 percent of the revenue in the State's coffers comes from the nine counties in this area; the growth could be unleashed with improved transit infrastructure. Mayor Taylor said that he felt that we needed additional people to speak with legislators as some legislators have entrenched views on local attitudes and screen out much of what is said by area elected officials. Mayor Swain commented that we are losing international companies because we do not have the transportation and transit infrastructure that they expect. Mayor Woods said that we can speak with Lowe's and Rubbermaid and other large employers to solicit their assistance.

VII. Public Comments

None.

VIII. Action Items

a. MTC Representative to CRTPO

Chairman Fuller

Mayor Taylor said that it is hard to commit to attend both the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) and MTC meetings since they are both monthly. He said that it may be worth investigating requesting that CRTPO change its by-law that requires the MTC representative to CRTPO to be an elected official.

Discussion: Ms. Flowers said that MAP-21 simply says that there should be representation from the transit commission; it is CRTPO that has set a requirement for an elected official. In many places, a staff member fills the role, or the role could rotate among members. She suggested that John Joye, Assistant District Attorney, could draft a letter requesting a change in the by-laws. A CRTPO member who was a staff member could review agenda items with MTC and then make a directed vote. Mayor Woods noted that MTC's vote is only one vote out of 50. Ms. Flowers said that we are trying to adhere to the Federal regulations so we do not put Federal grants at risk.

Resolution: Mayor Woods motioned to have Mr. Joye draft a letter requesting a change in CRTPO's bylaws to allow the MTC to appoint someone other than an elected official to serve as its representative; Mayor Swain seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. Summer Meeting Schedule

Chairman Fuller

Ms. Flowers said that staff would like to propose that MTC not meet in July as there are no agenda items. Staff will assess whether there is an action item for an August meeting. There may be one item which may be able to be handled by an online vote. The DBE goal must be submitted to FTA in a timeframe that may require action in August. MTC received a presentation on that recently, so the goal previously discussed would need to be ratified.

Discussion: MTC members agreed that they would be amenable to handling the DBE goal action item by online vote.

Resolution: Mayor Taylor motioned to cancel the July meeting and potentially handle the August action item by online vote. Mayor Swain seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

IX. Information Items

a. Annual Route Performance Report

Larry Kopf

Mr. Kopf, CATS Chief Operations Planning Officer and Manager of Bus Operations, said that he would talk about route quality and about customer service. CATS' Route Performance Monitoring system helps CATS manage resources, evaluate bus route productivity and efficiency, track service trends over time, communicate service adjustments to the public and fulfill MTC-adopted financial and service policies. Routes are grouped by type for comparison using industry standards for passenger per hour and net cost per passenger. High scoring routes' needs are addressed by adding trips or improving frequency where possible. Low scoring routes are examined to see if improvements can be made to increase ridership. The Gold Rush is the highest scoring route in the system, followed by Route 15 Randolph Road and Route 6 Kings Drive. Staff will examine low scoring routes such as Route 97 Huntersville/CPCC and Route 51 Pineville-Matthews to see if improvements can be made to increase ridership.

Mr. Kopf said that Customer Service begins with training and monitoring. The Teams of Professionals (T.O.P.) customer service program was recently cited in an FTA review as a Best Practice. The teams used to be comprised of road supervisors in charge of a group of about 40 drivers. Responsibility is now expanded to include dispatchers, station managers and others in smaller teams of about 16-17 people so everyone is responsible for service quality. The smaller teams allow more time for positive reinforcement and coaching. Mr.

Kopf reviewed the types of complaints that are received, how complaints are tracked and the complaint investigation process. CATS' goal is to resolve each issue and respond back to the customer within five business days. Service reliability uses the On Time Performance Committee with members drawn from Bus Operations, Scheduling, Systems and Research who use operator input and investigate operational issues, data issues and schedule deficiencies to ensure on-time performance. Before March, on-time performance was just under 85 percent. Since March, CATS has trended close to 87 percent on-time performance, better than the goal of 85 percent on-time performance. Construction near the Transit Center may make continuing that trend difficult, but CATS will be close to the goal. Bus interiors are cleaned nightly; bus exteriors are cleaned three times each week. Supervisors ensure that buses meet standards, although buses do accumulate litter and dirt while in use.

Discussion: Mayor Swain commented that the Huntersville/CPCC route was new. Mr. Kopf said that it has been around, but was changed in March. CATS is hopeful that the change will improve ridership. Ms. Flowers said that staff wanted to add more foundational information so MTC members can understand how staff makes decisions on the routes. Commissioner Fuller asked if staff sees trends developing. Mr. Kopf said that routes going through the transit dependent areas tend to do better than other routes. Regional express routes are losing steam lately. Express routes within Mecklenburg County still have strong ridership, so staff is trying to determine why the longer routes outside the county are losing ridership. Commissioner Fuller asked if there are conclusions to be made. Mr. Kopf replied that this information is a snapshot, but staff still has to perform further investigation and analysis. Mayor Taylor said that Route 51 is less than a year old and has been going through Matthews for less than two months. He asked how long staff will examine the route and expressed concern that the route would go away when the two-year grant ends. Mr. Kopf said that CATS has two years of funding for that route and it is growing slowly. Staff hopes that the change will boost ridership. There is no set policy on how much time to give a route. Ms. Flowers said that the financial plan is to maintain the size of the bus fleet and the number of hours of revenue service. If ridership improves but we are not able to get another grant to fund Route 51, we may be able to use revenue hours from somewhere else in the system to maintain the route; it is a balance. That was the most-requested bus route at the public hearing. Mayor Swain asked what sorts of advertising we do for routes such as Route 51. Mayor Taylor said that perhaps we should advertise at Carolina Place Mall, which is on Route 51. Mr. Kopf said that advertising a route is specified as one of the measures for staff to use to improve ridership for low performing routes, so staff will look at that.

X. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Carolyn Flowers

Under the CEO's report, Ms. Flowers discussed the following:

a. Budget Update:

City Council approved the transit budget last night, which will now go through the overall City budget process. CATS and the Airport are collaborating on service coordination for the Airport's South and North park and ride lots to address summer peak parking congestion relief. Staff is working on a deal that should be budget neutral.

b. Speed Street Update:

Speed Street light rail ridership was over 27,000. There was special service to the Speedway during Speed Week. There were no incidents at the Transit Center during Speed Street.

c. Construction Update:

Staff is working on construction mitigation efforts near the Transit Center and on North Tryon Street and is working with the City on the CityLYNX Gold Line Phase I.

MTC members will receive an invitation for the June 26 ground breaking for the LYNX Blue Line Capacity Expansion (BLCE), a TIGER III grant project. At FTA's request, CATS will have a formal groundbreaking ceremony, scheduled near the time of the FTA Quarterly meeting.

d. Red Line Update:

The White Paper on the Red Line is nearing completion. A draft should be ready for MTC members' review by the end of this week, prior to final publication.

e. Cabarrus County Transportation Summit:

Ms. Flowers said that she will give a presentation on public transit at the Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce's Transportation Summit on June 3.

f. Procurement Policy Update:

In the past, Procurement policies have been brought to MTC for approval. However, those policies are guided by Federal regulations and thus do not need MTC approval. In addition, MTC does not approve procurements. An action item will be on MTC's agenda to remove the requirement after staff has worked with Legal to review and amend the policy.

XI. Other Business

None.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m. by Commissioner Fuller.

NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2014, 5:30 P.M.