

# METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

## MEETING SUMMARY

October 26, 2011

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Presiding: Mayor John Woods (Davidson)

Present: Curt Walton (Charlotte City Manager)  
Tom Cox (CTAG Chair)  
Rick Sanderson (TSAC Chair)  
Bobbie Shields (Mecklenburg Assistant County Manager)  
Jennifer Roberts (Chairman, Mecklenburg County Commission)  
Mayor Jeff Tarte (Cornelius)  
Anthony Roberts (Cornelius Town Manager)  
Leamon Brice (Davidson Town Manager)  
Mayor Jill Swain (Huntersville)  
Greg Ferguson (Huntersville Town Manager)  
Mayor Jim Taylor (Matthews)  
Brian Welch (Mint Hill Town Manager)  
Bill Thunberg (Mooresville Representative)  
Mike Rose (Pineville Town Administrator)

Chief Executive Officer: John Muth for Carolyn Flowers

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**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Transit Commission was called to order at 5:35pm by MTC's Co-chair, Mayor John Woods.

**II. Review of Meeting Summary**

The meeting summary of September 28, 2011 was approved as written.

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

**Rick Sanderson**

TSAC met on October 13 and received an informational presentation on the Countywide Transit Services Plan for FY2013-2017. TSAC members provided input on some proposed bus route changes. Staff will look at TSAC's suggestions for possible route modifications. This will be brought to MTC as an information item in a future meeting. TSAC's next meeting is on November 10.

Anthony Roberts commented that he has spoken with someone who has expressed interest in serving on TSAC. However, the meeting's 5:30pm end time conflicts with her bus schedule to Cornelius. Mr. Sanderson said that there are members who ride 77X to Huntersville. Mr. Muth volunteered to have Larry Kopf, CATS Chief Operations Planning Officer and Manager of Bus Operations, speak with the person to see if there is anything that can be done. Mr. Muth asked Mr. Roberts to give him her name for staff follow up.

**IV. Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CTAG) Chair's Report** **Tom Cox**  
Mr. Cox remarked that CTAG had an interesting meeting this month building a knowledge foundation of the group's mission and history for the new members.

**V. Red Line Task Force Update** **John Woods**  
Mayor Woods said that the Red Line Task Force discussed the Joint Powers Authority organizational concept. That discussion will lead to recommendations for future organizing efforts. Mayor Woods said he would defer the rest of the report to the action item. The economic development subcommittee has met with NCDOT officials. The ongoing plan and schedule for 2012 will be discussed in the action item.

**VI. Public Comments**  
Susan Lindsey, Chair of Joint Transportation/Transit Committee for E.A.S.T and C.E.CP, stated she wanted to comment on the ULI study action item, to recommend changing the Southeast Corridor plan. She urged MTC members' consideration in favor of the change. Ms. Lindsey said she has a long history with transit planning and is extremely pleased with the compromise reached. The ULI's recommendations are definitely well supported and needed.

**VII. Action Items**  
**a. 2012 Federal Legislative Agenda** **Dana Fenton**  
Mr. Fenton, Intergovernmental Relations Manager with the City of Charlotte, was available to discuss the 2012 Federal Legislative Agenda that was presented as an Information Item in September.

**Discussion:** None.

**Resolution:** Commissioner Roberts moved to adopt the legislative agenda as presented in the September MTC meeting. Mr. Walton seconded the motion. The resolution passed unanimously.

**b. Red Line Task Force Policy Recommendations** **John Woods**  
Mayor Woods reviewed the four policy items endorsed by the Red Line Rail Task Force:

- Pursue the Red Line Rail project as a regional economic development initiative to maximize land and infrastructure assets
- Pursue a dual-benefit project strategy to maximize the movement of both goods and people
- Establish a unified district administered through a Joint Powers Authority, and
- The State to take the leadership role in the Red Line Rail project to maximize chances for success of the project.

The action item is to direct the Red Line Task Force to complete the following steps prior to future action by MTC

- Based on policies endorsed by the Red Line Task Force, develop and present the Red Line Financial and Business plan to a joint meeting of the Red Line Task Force and MTC in November.
- To enable all parties to attend the joint meeting requires moving the November MTC meeting from November 16 to November 30.
- Following the November MTC meeting, the Red Line Task Force will proceed with communicating and referring the Financial and Business plan and schedule to the

State and the affected member jurisdictions starting with a special summit meeting to be held on December 13.

**Discussion:** Mr. Muth clarified that the second bullet of the recommendation authorizes CATS staff to work with the state's consultant and the public information staff from other towns to compile information materials on the plans. Commissioner Roberts commented that expanding the project to include both people and goods makes it more efficient and gives the project a greater likelihood of happening sooner. Mayor Swain said that the project is at an exciting stage now with the details emerging. Mayor Woods reiterated that the item includes changing the November MTC meeting date from November 16 to November 30 for a planned joint Red Line Task Force and MTC meeting that would last about two hours. Mr. Muth said CATS staff is prepared to have the item as an agenda item on November 30 at 5:30pm. Mayor Woods noted that the business and financial plans will be rolled out to elected officials at the December 13 summit meeting. Mayor Woods commented that the Red Line Task Force wants to keep everyone informed as the pace picks up.

**Resolution:** Commissioner Roberts motioned to adopt the resolution to approve the action items staff summary as described in tonight's agenda with the clarification that the joint meeting will be on November 30 at 5:30pm; the November 16 MTC meeting is cancelled. Mayor Swain seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**c. North Carolina DOT Prioritization Process**

**David McDonald**

Mr. McDonald, CATS Transit Planning Manager, noted that the list was presented as an information item last month. There is one change. After presentation to MTC, NCDOT requested that up to 550 local points be assigned to the projects for the prioritization process. Staff has selected the highest-priority projects and assigned points to those projects to maximize competitiveness for state funding. Only projects with a funding need in FY2013-2015 that were eligible for a state match and not funded with another source were recommended. If approved by MTC, the list will be taken to MPO for incorporation into their list to be submitted to NCDOT.

**Discussion:** None.

**Resolution:** Commissioner Roberts motioned to approve the staff's recommended list and points assignment. Mr. Walton seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

**d. Urban Land Institute (ULI) – Daniel Rose Fellowship Program**

Mr. Muth reminded MTC members of last month's presentation reporting on the work of the task force studying the Independence Corridor. The ULI task force recommends:

- Rescinding the special provision that preserves space in the median of Independence Boulevard for exclusive use by transit
- Using the center of the highway for High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) and High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes and expanded express bus service
- Developing a new alignment for rail transit in the Southeast Corridor and
- Funding implementation of the Area plan recommendations.

Staff recommends:

- Removing the special provisions “a” and “b” from the Southeast Corridor portion of the 2030 Transit Corridor Systems Plan
- Directing CATS staff to work closely with NCDOT and CDOT to incorporate bus services into the design of the HOV/HOT lanes for Independence Boulevard and
- Directing CATS staff to bring back a process and plan/schedule for an alignment study to evaluate a rail transit alignment on the Southeast Corridor that is not in the median of Independence Boulevard.

The alignment study will review the technologies of light rail, streetcar and commuter rail, and recommend a rail transit alignment, which will involve examining all potential rail alternatives in the corridor, including those previously studied.

**Discussion:** Mayor Taylor asked to talk about item c, the item discussing the alignment study and new rapid transit alignment. The study implies that whether the rail alignment is on Monroe Road or Central Avenue, there will be connections between that and the Independence rapid transit. He asked that the text be modified to include:

- Studying the connection between the Central Avenue Streetcar and the Southeast Corridor rail alternatives
- Studying at least to the Union County line, if not beyond. He stated that Union County is important to the discussions
- Clarifying that candidate alignment alternatives are not limited to Monroe Road and should probably say instead “Monroe Road and/or Central Avenue.”

**Resolution:** Commissioner Roberts motioned to adopt the staff’s recommendations with Mayor Taylor’s three additions. Mayor Taylor seconded. MTC members unanimously approved the motion.

**VIII. Information Items**

None.

**IX. Chief Executive Officer’s Report**

**John Muth**

Under the CEO’s report, CATS Deputy Director Mr. Muth discussed the following:

**a. Ridership Report:**

Overall ridership is up 5 percent for the quarter. The LYNX Blue Line continues to carry over 15,000 riders per weekday. Local bus ridership is up 8.5 percent, but regional and express buses continue to see decreased ridership due to the economy. Community circulators are up about 9 percent. STS ridership levels are even with last year. The service is operating at capacity now with a decreased ability to respond to non-ADA trips while demand for trips that qualify for ADA has increased. Increased STS demand during a time of limited resources will be a topic during budget discussions.

**Discussion:** Mayor Taylor asked if staff have been able to resolve any of the Blessed Assurance issues. Mr. Muth said staff will report back to Mayor Taylor later on that issue, but there have been discussions. During the time of the owner’s concern, CATS was providing 30-40 trips per day for those customers, but a few of those trips were not served.

**b. Financial Update:**

Sales tax in August was up about 0.5 percent over August of last year. July was up 30 percent over the previous year, but staff has concerns about reporting anomalies. Staff will continue to monitor sales tax revenue closely. Staff anticipates reduced operating revenue from the state. There are continuing pressures on the budget.

**X. Other Business**

None.

**XI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm by Mayor Woods.

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NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2011, 5:30PM