

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

January 22, 2014

Presiding: Trevor Fuller (Chairman, Mecklenburg County Commission)

Present:

Ron Carlee (Charlotte City Manager)

Rob Watson (CTAG Co-Chair)

Rick Sanderson (TSAC Chair)

Mayor Chuck Travis (Cornelius)

Anthony Roberts (Cornelius Town Manager)

Mayor John Woods (Davidson) (via phone)

Bill Coxe (Huntersville Town Planner)

Mayor Jim Taylor (Matthews)

Ralph Messera (Matthews)

Brian Welch (Mint Hill Town Manager)

Bill Thunberg (Mooresville Representative)

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 November 20, 2013 was approved as written.

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

Rick Sanderson

Mr. Sanderson reported that TSAC met on December 12 and January 9. At the December meeting, TSAC discussed the City's transit needs and how they tie in with the City's overall infrastructure needs with City Manager Ron Carlee. CATS staff also presented a potential program for buses called Onboard Audio Ads. TSAC also unanimously approved the use of the Independence Busway by MTS and reelected Rick Sanderson as Chair and elected Scott Jernigan as Co-Chair. At the January meeting, TSAC unanimously recommended approval of the March service changes and heard about the Performance Monitoring System and a BLE update.

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

Rob Watson

Mr. Watson said that CTAG met on January 21. CATS staff presented an update on CATS' capital development program in preparation for upcoming work on budget matters. The next meeting will be February 18.

V. Red Line Task Force Update

No report.

VI. Transit Funding Working Group (TFWG) Update

Bill Thunberg

Mr. Thunberg reported that Mayor Swain asked him to remind everyone about the East Coast Public Private Partnership (P3) infrastructure conference on March 5-6 in Charlotte. The conference will present P3 experts offering power-packed information which will be helpful as the TFWG examines ways to provide funding and financing to build out the entire system of the 2030 System Plan. The TFWG met on January 13 and meets again on February 3. TFWG working

groups are communications, funding and finance and legislative advocacy. The funding and finance group is working on funding ideas to report back to MTC soon. The legislative committee is working on legislative advocacy particularly in next year's legislative Long Session. Ms. Flowers added that the strategy on the legislative side is working on the long term. The legislative group has been working on the toolkit and the recommendations that came out of the White Paper.

VII. Public Comments

None.

VIII. Action Items

a. Select Vice Chair for MTC

Mayor Taylor nominated Mayor Woods to continue the position of Vice Chair.

Discussion: None.

Resolution: Mayor Taylor motioned to approve the nomination of Mayor Woods to the position of Vice Chair; Mayor Travis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

IX. Information Items

a. FY2015 Operating Program and Five-year CIP

Dee Pereira

Ms. Flowers presented an overview of the budget and financial challenges facing CATS. Ms. Pereira, CATS Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Director of Public Transit, said that she would talk about some of the key MTC Financial policies, as well as an overview of the recommended programs and a review of the budget schedule. As a City department, CATS follows City policies of a two-year Operating budget and a five-year capital program.

The CEO's recommended budget continued the focus on:

- Advancing the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan within constrained financial resources
- Providing mass transportation services which enhance mobility options and service equity for the community
- A structurally balanced financial plan

Significant budget drivers include:

- A 20 cent base fare increase effective July 1, 2014. This recommendation is in compliance with the MTC approved CATS Financial and Fare Policies
- Construction of the LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE) project
- Implementation of Phase I of the CityLYNX Gold Line streetcar service
- Complete management of the Charlotte Transportation Center
- Compliance with CATS long term financial plan (i.e., 3.6 percent increase in cost of operations)

The MTC will review details of the Transit Fund and Transit Capital Fund programs in February and March, prior to adoption of the budgets in April 2014.

A public hearing on the proposed fare increase is scheduled for March 26, 2014 in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center.

Discussion: None.

b. Title VI Policy Update

Arlanda Rouse

Mr. Rouse, CATS Civil Rights Officer, said that Title VI is part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects people from discrimination based on race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. FTA Circular 4702.1B ensures Title VI compliance for transit agencies. A recent Circular Update has changed transit agency requirements. Previously, no Board notification or approval was required of transit agencies on Title VI program, policy or equity analyses. That will now be required and agencies will submit meeting minutes demonstrating Board consideration, awareness and approval. CATS' Title VI program update is due in July 2014. CATS staff ensure Title VI consideration whenever a major service or fare change could impact low income or minority communities. A major service change is a change to an existing bus or light rail route affecting more than 25% of revenue miles, elimination of an existing route without replacement, or when a new service route is started. Staff considers alternatives, choosing the least adverse option to accomplish the purpose of the service or fare change, provides justification on why the change must occur and implements a mitigation plan. At the last fare increase, staff increased efforts to educate low income individuals about passes, which provide a discount over the single-route fare. Staff solicits public input through public meetings and website comments. Workable comments received during the public input process are incorporated into the final analysis as alternatives or mitigation efforts. CATS Transit Title VI Policy will be distributed to MTC members for their review and action at the February meeting.

Discussion: Mr. Coxe asked if MTC members would receive a policy with the current wording. Mr. Rouse replied that MTC members would receive the draft policy prior to next month's meeting, which will contain current policy wording as well as the proposed wording. Mayor Travis asked what proposing new fare types might entail. Mr. Rouse replied that low-income customers often purchase single-ride passes, which are the most expensive fare type. After the last fare increase, CATS educated individuals on purchasing ten-ride, daily and weekly passes. Mayor Travis said that it may be difficult for low income individuals to come up with the money for a ten-ride or weekly pass, so we should investigate what other cities are doing. Mr. Rouse said that some cities raise their passes at different levels, which can disproportionately increase the single-ride ticket cost. CATS' fare increases are across the board. Mayor Taylor asked what MTC's options would be with regard to the policy. Mr. Rouse said that staff will make recommendations and provide reasons for the recommendations, but MTC is the policy making board and will make the policy. Ms. Flowers added that all of CATS grants require a civil rights sign-off, so there are regulations that guide the recommendations and analysis of where routes will go to keep CATS in compliance. Counter-recommendations or additional recommendations would still require analysis before they could be implemented. Commissioner Fuller asked if staff would provide alternatives within the recommendation. Mr. Rouse said that staff will choose the alternative that has the least impact on the impacted populations. Ms. Flowers reminded MTC members that through the public process, the community has had a chance to review, have input and come up with workable solutions prior to recommendations being brought to MTC.

c. 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan Update

David McDonald & Danny Rogers

John Muth, CATS Deputy Director, reminded MTC members that MTC adopted the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan in 2006 as a 30-year guide for growth of the area's mobility options. Since the plan's adoption, there have been changes in the economy and in funding

award by key financial and technical partners Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). NCDOT funds are matched by local funds through the half-cent sales tax. Other changes include Norfolk Southern's (NS) recent release of requirements for potential passenger rail on NS lines, which may impact the Red Line. The Silver Line on Independence Boulevard may be revisited as a busway with a rail line elsewhere in the corridor. Charlotte Gateway Station, a multimodal facility, may be developed as a P3 project.

Danny Rogers, LYNX Blue Line Projects Director, said that the LYNX Blue Line opened in 2007 to heavy ridership. Over \$1.45 billion in actual and proposed corridor development has occurred along the Blue Line through 2015. Development along the line slowed in the economic downturn, but has recovered along with the economy. Work to expand the Blue Line to accommodate three-car trains will begin soon, as the line is pushing capacity limits with the present two-car configuration. The BLE is designed for three-car operation, so the upgrade will allow a seamless transition from the present line to the Extension.

Rogers said the BLE will transform North Tryon Street with new bike lanes and planting strips where the BLE runs in the center of the street. BLE design is 95-100% complete and most of the real estate has been purchased. Utility relocations are underway and the three largest construction contracts will be awarded in the next several months. Civil construction will begin in March with work on roadways, bridges, retaining walls and traffic signals, with an opening date in the spring of 2017. Construction will impact traffic, parking, access and visibility, so CATS has developed a Communications Plan to notify people of what to expect and how to adjust. CATS opened a field office in the area and has business liaisons dedicated to keeping area businesses informed. CATS has installed temporary business signs as business signs are removed due to project work.

A multidisciplinary team from several City departments keeps the BLE moving forward. Project contracts include incentive payments for early completion of significant milestone activities, providing an incentive for contractors to complete their contracts early. The contracts also include liquidated damages for cases where poor contractor performance leads to project delays. The project budget includes contingency amounts for unforeseen expenses.

BLE risk factors include continued private utility relocation coordination and coordination with NCDOT projects in the area. Additionally, railroad coordination with NS freight and flagging are factors, as is the bid environment for contracts. To manage the project's risk, CATS has built a strong project controls plan with a project controls system and two oversight boards to review and implement project decisions. There is also a healthy unallocated contingency balance, a robust construction management team and continuous coordination with partners. Public meetings for the BLE will be held in February and March.

David McDonald, CATS Transit Planning Manager, reviewed plans for the CityLYNX Gold Line. Phase I of the CityLYNX Gold Line is currently under construction and is scheduled to open in 2015. Phase 1 has six stops. Phase 2 will extend the line by 2.5 miles and add eleven stops. Recent changes in federal funding have made Streetcar more competitive in the Small Starts program than in the past, but more up-front local investment will be required. Streetcar design needs to be advanced at least to the 65% level to obtain a federal funding

commitment. Vehicle assessments also need to be made, comparing on-wire versus off-wire capability. Streetcar's Land Use and Economic Development Report, required by FTA with the project's Small Starts submission, needs to be updated. The Phase 2 Streetcar schedule is aggressive; the Small Starts rating needs to be submitted to FTA by September 2014. Mr. McDonald said that he will speak with the Charlotte City Council next week.

Discussion: Commissioner Fuller asked whether obtaining initial approval increases the chances of receiving final approval. Mr. McDonald said that agencies must obtain first approval to begin the process. FTA will not advance a project that they believe has no chance of being completed. There is no guarantee of funds in the federal process, but once a project receives initial approval, there is a good chance of completing the process to final funding award.

X. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Carolyn Flowers

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

a. February MTC Meeting Start Time:

The Charlotte City Council is holding a budget workshop in MTC's usual meeting room on the next MTC meeting date. The start time will need to be moved later, or the location moved. If MTC members agree, the next meeting will begin at 6 p.m.

Resolution: Mayor Travis motioned to begin the February MTC meeting at 6 p.m.; Mayor Taylor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. Funding Update:

Congress has appropriated FY2014 funding. Funding was allocated to CATS' program in the FY2014 program. Staff feels confident that CATS will receive the \$100 million appropriation.

c. P3 Conference:

Ms. Flowers encouraged MTC members to consider attending the East Coast P3 conference. More details will be given at the February MTC meeting.

XI. Other Business

None.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m. by Commissioner Fuller.

NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2014, **6:00 P.M.**