

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

October 22, 2014

Presiding: Trevor Fuller (Chairman, Mecklenburg County Commission)

Present:

Debra Campbell (Charlotte Assistant City Manager)

Mayor Chuck Travis (Cornelius)

Leamon Brice (Davidson Town Manager)

Bobby Williams (Assistant to Town Manager, Huntersville)

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. Members introduced themselves.

II. Review of Meeting Summary

The meeting summary of September 24, 2014 was approved as written.

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

No report.

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

No report.

V. Red Line Task Force Update

No report.

VI. Transit Funding Working Group Update

No report.

VII. Public Comments

None.

VIII. Action Items

None.

IX. Information Items

a. Connect our Future

Jim Prosser (CCOG)

Mr. Prosser, Executive Director at Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG), reported on a three-year regional planning effort on how to grow the region's economy and jobs. The Charlotte region is projected to be the fastest growing area in the country. Currently, the 14-

county region around Charlotte has 2.4 million people. By 2050, another 1.8 million people will live in the region with 860,000 additional jobs. The planning effort solicited public input and support. Top priorities were consistent, although the region's counties had some differences in ranking. Even rural areas ranked transit corridors highly as they plan for future transit. The CCOG seeks to partner with MTC in its regional transit planning process to develop and preserve corridors, align land uses and create a clear roadmap of strategies, options and tools to define what the region's transit corridors and land uses will look like. There is currently much less financial support than in years past. However, an efficient and effective regional transit system to help move people is really about economic development. CCOG plans two seminars in the near future on transit planning: a Bus Rapid Transit seminar on November 5 in the Cornelius City Hall and CCOG's first annual conference for local government elected officials, staff and others, titled Creative Solutions for Thriving Communities, on Thursday, December 11 in Concord. Mr. Prosser encouraged MTC members to attend both events.

Discussion: Mr. Thunberg said that this remarkable collaboration with different stakeholder groups throughout the region has brought young people into the process. As Chairman of the Centralina Economic Development Commission, Mr. Thunberg said that everything that was said about having a transportation infrastructure in place to get people to jobs will be necessary to guide revenue production in the future. The focus on making government more efficient in service delivery and planning in a way that reduces friction, which can increase cost, contains some powerful information. Mayor Travis said that the corridors discussed were bus lines and light rail transit and asked what opportunities would happen along bus routes as opposed to light rail development. Mr. Prosser said that planned bus routes, particularly bus rapid transit that could convert later to a light rail system, help align land uses to the types of densities and uses that support that type of transit. Denver is a great example of a place that has rapidly accelerated their rail system because they planned ahead for transit corridors so the systems all work together. There are a lot of places that struggle with maintaining agriculture. North Carolina is projected to become more important agriculturally, so the question of how to preserve farmland while developing houses and businesses becomes important. Creating transit corridors helps preserve more open space and farmland. Mr. Thunberg said that according to IBM and Site Selection Magazine, Charlotte ranks 33rd of the Top 100 World's Most Competitive Cities, so we are attracting international attention because of our quality of life, and that quality revolves around access. Only eleven other US cities made that list.

b. Charlotte Gateway Station Status

John Muth

John Muth, CATS Deputy Director, reviewed the proposed location of Charlotte Gateway Station (CGS) at Trade and Graham Streets on the west side of Uptown. He reminded MTC members that CGS is planned to serve as terminus for the LYNX Red Line as well as the Charlotte station for the intercity bus provider Greyhound, already on the site. CityLYNX Gold Line would have a station at CGS and connect the station's passengers with the LYNX Blue Line/ Blue Line Extension. The current Amtrak station is a mile and half from the Square, posing challenges for Amtrak commuters to access our transit system easily. Amtrak service relocated to CGS would make this a true multimodal station. The State took the lead for planning the project under the municipal agreement signed in 2009, including working with real estate developer Hines to determine if a Public Private Partnership (P3) with Hines was feasible. Hines' analysis determined that 11 of the 21 acres already purchased would be

needed for track, leaving only ten for development and withdrew from the project. Subsequent discussions with the State reworked the planning effort. The State will continue to work with Norfolk Southern (NS) and Amtrak to determine track requirements into Uptown while CATS will take the lead in developing the site's facility, determining how much space each mode will require and the feasibility of a P3 partnership. CATS is working closely with NCDOT Rail to update the municipal agreement and anticipates bringing the updated municipal agreement to MTC and the Charlotte City Council in November. CATS received a total of \$20 million in FTA grants over the past several years, some of which is earmarked for preliminary engineering and design and construction. Those funds may be in danger of being returned to FTA if planning is not advanced. The State has also received a TIGER grant of approximately \$265,000 for the project. Additional funding would be needed, as the project was estimated to cost around \$250 million several years ago. Completing property acquisition would be an eligible project cost. Some of the planning necessary for the project is not eligible under FTA rules, so that funding will have to be worked through. A draft project schedule, pending funding, would involve developing agreements and real estate acquisition, with planning completion in 2016 and construction projected for 2018-2020.

Discussion: Mr. Travis asked if Hines was still a development partner. Mr. Muth replied that the State recently discharged them, so they are no longer a potential partner. Mr. Muth said that the acreage needed for track alignment is being reviewed. Mr. Thunberg said that the State's interest had been driven by high speed rail; since that impetus has slowed, it makes sense to take a more thoughtful approach. Mr. Muth said that the State may also not see as clear a funding path as they saw before. Mr. Messera commented that the State purchased property for a maintenance facility. Mr. Muth said that it is not close to the CGS, and they have funding for a portion of that piece. Mr. Brice asked whether the tracks at the Amtrak station would provide some of the needs. Mr. Muth said that passenger trains would need exclusive track at CGS to be separated from the main line. Mr. Messera commented that currently, trains stopping at the station are on the NS main line.

c. County Smoking Regulation

John Joye

Mr. Joye, Senior Assistant City Attorney, said that he wanted to cover four key points on the new County Smoking Regulation, which was enacted last night at the Mecklenburg County Commissioner meeting. The County was acting in their capacity as Mecklenburg Board of Health. The new smoking rule covers every jurisdiction in the county for grounds, buildings or enclosures. There are three transit areas where smoking was allowed in some form but will no longer be allowed. Smoking was allowed on light rail platforms, sidewalks and SCIP trails; it will no longer be allowed there effective March 18, 2015. While smoking will continue to be allowed at open bus stops, smoking will no longer be allowed at enclosed bus stops. A shelter is enclosed if it has a top and three sides. Smoking areas in buildings like the Charlotte Transit Center are currently allowed, but smoking areas within buildings will no longer be permissible, so the transit center will be a smoke-free area. People will have the ability to step onto sidewalks, where smoking is allowed. CATS will train security officers to inform passengers of areas where they can and cannot smoke. The City's current smoking ordinance invokes a \$50 criminal infraction for smoking; when the County rule goes into effect, the citation will be a \$25 infraction. The two different enforcements and infractions will have to be worked out.

Enforcement will be through police officers, although CATS uniformed officers will be required to ask people not to smoke if they observe it. Court costs do not apply; the only penalty is the \$25 fine for failure to cease smoking. It will cost about \$5,000 to install new signs in English and Spanish. Fines collected by the criminal court system will go to the school system, per the North Carolina constitution. Staff will put up appropriate signage to make it clear to everyone where they can and cannot smoke.

Discussion: Mr. Messera asked if there were plans to work with Town Police Departments. Mr. Joye said that he would meet with Levern McElveen, CATS General Manager, Safety & Security, to determine how to work with local police departments to make sure that everyone understands the new rules and to solicit local governments' suggestions on where to post signage. Mr. Thunberg asked about park and ride lots. Mr. Joye said those are owned by local governments and are all designated as no smoking areas. Mr. Joye said that the rule was written so that people can smoke on sidewalks of public streets, but sidewalks that are part of the grounds of local government or part of light rail are non-smoking. Mr. Edwards remarked that he felt it was unlikely that local police departments would be interested in enforcing smoking laws. Mr. Joye said that as officers are out on their normal duties, CATS supports their discretion if they choose to take action, but there is no intent to take officers away from other duties. Ms. Flowers asked whether the smoking ban would extend to businesses in commercial facilities owned by CATS such as the CTC; Mr. Joye replied that it would. Ms. Campbell asked about leased space in park and ride lots, such as church lots and retail centers. Olaf Kinard, CATS Director of Marketing & Communications, said that CATS does not own most of its park and ride lots, but either leases them or has a free right to use them. David McDonald, CATS Transit Planning Manager, said that CATS does not have control over the leased lots. Mr. Joye said that if CATS leases a lot, we have a use and the lot is no smoking. If we hold a license, then this ordinance would not apply. An individual would not know the difference, so CATS will need many additional signs to help the public understand what they can do and where they can do it.

d. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Regional Strategy **Olaf Kinard**

Mr. Kinard reminded MTC members that MTC members approve a TDM grant yearly in May of about \$120,000 that enables CATS to reach out to riders in businesses to encourage transit options. Because of the way sales tax is generated CATS does not have the opportunity to expand into surrounding counties and we have not been successful in soliciting more funds from the State. Staff has spoken with Mr. Prosser on ways to expand funding to enhance inter-county transit options. Triangle Transit Authority receives almost \$500,000 yearly for their efforts, a greater amount of funding than CATS.

Mr. Prosser said that TDM is one of the tools to address and reduce congestion and improve air quality. Many concepts already in place at CATS need to be expanded to a regional level. Communities can grow into TDM and incorporate strategies such as bike trails and vanpools or staggering work release schedules to reduce traffic congestion. CATS wants to emphasize to the Federal and State governments that the region is planning for growth outside the region's core and on reducing traffic congestion. The Memorandum of Understanding between CCOG and CATS clarifies the roles of CCOG, MTC and CATS, with CCOG expanding the marketplace and CATS providing services. Next steps include Regional TDM Memorandum of Understanding endorsement, a regional TDM Steering Committee and

soliciting grant funding through the NCDOT TDM grant funding program and local MPO CMAQ funding.

Discussion: None.

X. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Carolyn Flowers

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

a. Budget Update:

Sales tax receipts reflect two strong months of receipts. August receipts were also strong, but lower than July's all-time high of \$8.2 million. Staff will continue to monitor to see if this is the beginning of a trend and report back to MTC after mid-year budget analysis.

b. Legislative Agenda:

The Town of Matthews and Lake Norman Transportation Commission have adopted the transit resolutions. Dana Fenton is sending information tonight for other jurisdictions. Ms. Flowers said that she and Mr. Thunberg would make a presentation at the Charlotte City Council's dinner meeting on October 27; it is on Council agenda for vote on November 10. Ms. Flowers said that she and Mr. Fenton will make a presentation at the County Intergovernmental Committee on October 28 to solicit a resolution from them. Ms. Flowers asked MTC members to let her or Mr. Fenton know if they need resolutions for their towns. The legislative agenda will be brought to MTC for adoption on November 19.

c. MTC Representative for CRTPO:

The election of MTC's representative for the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) will be added to the November agenda. Ms. Flowers asked members to nominate candidates for the November vote.

d. SmartRail Conference:

The SmartRail Conference is next week in Charlotte. MTC members are invited to attend an Infrastructure Financing Forum next Tuesday night at McGuire Woods' offices. Staff and Transit Funding Working Group members will attend, as well as several state legislators and members of the Charlotte City Council. Secretary Foxx will attend the SmartRail conference and will speak in the morning on October 29.

e. BLE Update:

Siemens has shipped the first rail car of the BLE order. It is currently in Tennessee. There will be a celebration when it gets here.

XI. Other Business

None.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m. by Commissioner Fuller.

NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014, 5:00 P.M.