



MINUTES
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Board of Directors was held in the meeting room at Music City Central, 400 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN on Wednesday, September 21, 2016. A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chair Kim McMillan, Clarksville Mayor.
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair McMillan entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2016 meeting. Proper motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were adopted unanimously.
- III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Chair McMillan opened the floor for public comments and recognized the following member of the public:

Margo Chambers of Nashville had these comments:

- She would like to see the formal FTA likely daily ridership studies that were done for any plan that is going to be approved today.
- She is interested to know who of the people that live here say that they are going to be on transit and not in a car
- The 2009 enabling legislation for the RTA was made without a state fiscal note that included the Nashville RTA. At the time, Nashville RTA was decommissioned due to financial concerns.
- Before there is a vote on transit funding, or any transit plan that obligates transit funding, please provide the state fiscal note for reactivating the RTA in 2011.

There were no other public comments at this time.

- IV. MONTHLY OPERATING STATISTICS (I-16-009):** In the interest of time, Chief Operating Officer India Birdsong kept her report brief. She referred to the report presented in this month's board book. Ms. Birdsong noted that we have two additional Saturdays and Sundays in July 2016 compared to July 2015. Additionally, we also have two less week days for July 2016 compared to July 2015. That will contribute to some of the reduced ridership, particularly on the train. Staff is anticipating the Clarksville service coming up shortly and is excited about that. Concluding, Ms. Birdsong asked for any questions and there were none.
- V. FINANCE AND AUDIT REPORT:** Committee Chair Sumner County Executive Anthony Holt reported on the following items:

- a. **FY 2016 Year End Financial Update (I-16-010)**: Chair Holt called upon Controller Shelly McElhaney to give this report. In the interest of time, Ms. McElhaney briefly reviewed the year-to-date data of the Statement of Operations Compared to Budget for the RTA. There were no questions and she then reviewed the Comparative Balance Sheets. There were no questions and this ended her report. (Both reports can be found in the RTA September board book.)
- b. **Resolution for FY 2017 Annual Grant Applications (A-16-017)**: The RTA has the authority to receive federal, state and local financial assistance for transportation projects. In order for RTA to apply and receive federal funds, RTA must comply with Federal Certifications and Assurances. The funding sources are 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funds; State Operating Assistance; 5337 State of Good Repair Formula Funds; Surface Transportation Program (STP) Funds; and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Funds.

This resolution comprises the annual submittal of Certifications and Assurances for Federal Transit Administration funds and authorization to submit applications for grants with the Federal Transit Administration, the Tennessee Department of Transportation, and other grant funding entities.

Staff recommends that the Board:

- Adopt the attached resolution;
- Authorize the application for 5307, 5337, CMAQ and STP, funding and State/local match;
- Authorize the submittal of applications for State Operating Assistance funding; and,
- Authorize the submittal of applications and execution of contracts for any other federal, state, or local grant funding that may become available during the fiscal year 2017 for the benefit of RTA.

Proper motion was made and seconded, and the vote of approval was unanimous.

- VI. **TITLE VI PLAN & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN UPDATE (A-16-018)**: Chair McMillan called upon Title VI Coordinator Shontrill Lowe to present this item. Ms. Lowe reported that the update to the Title VI Plan and the Public Participation Plan is a requirement of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that "No Person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The FTA requires all recipients of federal funding to adopt and submit an agency Title VI policy every three years. The RTA Board approved the current RTA Title VI Plan in October 2013, with FTA approving the plan in November 2013. The updated Title VI plan is required to be submitted to FTA in October 2016. The Title VI Plan must be approved by the recipient's board of directors or appropriate governing entity or official(s) responsible for policy decisions prior to submission to FTA.

The plan was released for public review and comment on May 23, 2016. The only substantive change from RTA's 2013 Title VI Policy eliminates the following service changes from being designated as a "Major Service Change."

"Service frequency (headway adjustments) of over five (5) minutes during peak hour service or over fifteen (15) minutes during non-peak hour service"

Staff has updated RTA's Title VI Plan and the Public Involvement Plan. The plans are due to FTA in October 2016. Therefore, the Planning Department recommends moving forward with the adoption of both RTA's Title VI Plan and the Public Involvement Plan.

Proper motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and this action item was adopted.

VII. CEO'S REPORT: CEO Steve Bland presented the following action item:

- a. **nMotion Transit Strategic Plan Recommendation (A-16-019):** On August 17, 2016 the plan recommendations were presented to the MTA and RTA Boards during a joint meeting and both Boards endorsed the nMotion recommendations to be released for a 30-day public review and comment period. During that comment period just under a thousand comments were received relative to that plan.

Mr. Bland introduced Director of Planning Felix Castrodad to briefly review the recommendations and to speak to what was heard during the comment period. Mr. Castrodad reported that since last month's meeting where the board received a full presentation of the plan, the plan was opened for a 30 day public review and comment period. He continued with the following commentary:

At the beginning of the planning process in April 2015, MTA/RTA set a goal of 10,000 engagements. An engagement is a submitted survey or a comment received via nMotion2016.org, comment cards, Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, or on various media websites. Some individuals have engaged with nMotion more than once during the process. We have also had people show up at meetings and events that may not have submitted comments, but they asked questions and were interested in the process.

In the last 30 days we have received almost a thousand comments. During this period we had three open houses, some community events, a panel discussion that was co-hosted by the Tennessean at the downtown library and was live-streamed over the internet. There has been extensive coverage of the local television and radio networks. The RTA/MTA joint board meeting held in August was covered by Metro 3. There were extensive comments on the nMotin website as well as Facebook and Twitter during that time.

In general, we have seen a broad range of opinions on this plan, but one thing we have heard constantly is the recognition that it is needed, and the desire to see something done, and to know how this fits within the regional goals for improving mobility and congestion in this region.

Overall, people are in approval of the plan. They think it is a good idea and that it is needed; but they also want to see something happen a lot faster than 25 years in which this plan extends. There is a sense that we are already behind, especially when compared to other regions of the country. We need to fast-forward through many of these improvements and hopefully before 25 years.

Especially with the current riders, we heard that while building something new is good, they want to see improvements to the existing services. Improving service for our current riders also makes it better for those who do not currently ride and makes the service more attractive as well.

We heard a lot about having more rail options. There are a couple of rail options in the plan, but we also have a lot of improvements to bus service throughout Davidson County and the region.

There are concerns about the cost. Some people think it is a waste of money to invest so much in transit. Some people think it is needed. Some fear it will increase their property taxes because rail or transit is coming.

There is also a call for good coordination with other ride-sharing modes like Uber and Lyft, especially in low density areas where it would be more problematic to have bus service. There was also a call to take into consideration the upcoming autonomous vehicles and how the changes in technology can have an impact on these and the plan is very flexible in that sense. We revisit these plans every few years with the idea that we make sure we are keeping track of how context and circumstances are changing and adapt to include these technological advances.

Mr. Castrodad reviewed the underlying goals of the plan which are included here:

- **Improve Access to Opportunity**
 - At the core of our mission is to improve access to opportunities to those who can't afford a car or can't drive for whatever reason
 - Help the access better option that can help them advance economically
- **Expand Range of Competitive Travel Options**
 - At the same time, expand the reach of those to everyone in the region, whether current riders, captive riders, commuters, casual riders or non-riders
 - Provide options for different purposes by developing meaningful alternatives that are reliable and competitive with the single occupant vehicles for everyone in the region
- **Simplify and Integrate Different Means of Transportation**
 - Make it a true transportation network
 - A recognition that no single solution will address the mobility and congestion problems whether is more roads, transit, bicycles, Uber/Lyft, autonomous vehicles, etc.
 - We have to make it simpler to integrate and connect trips with pedestrian facilities, bike alternatives, ridesharing solutions, etc.

- **Prioritize major transit**
 - Several things will need to happen. We face major challenges when it comes to mobility and accessibility
 - As we prioritize higher level investments, there's a need to concentrate on areas that develop in a way that includes policies that will allow for the right conditions to support transit like the proper densities and complementary infrastructure and are most like to provide the highest return on investment.
- **Increase ridership on Target Markets**
 - Focus on key corridors where we see most of the activity and where we experience most congestion.

Mr. Castrodad reviewed the Assumptions of the plan which are included here:

- **Growth with Intention**
 - Work with other agencies and build on previous work NashvilleNext, MPO's 2040 RTP
 - Greater densities that support Mass Transit (Dev patterns, pop/job densities)
 - Bike/Ped improvements
 - Coordinate land use/complementary policies (workforce housing)
- **Downtown**
 - Core of the system
 - Major travel generator
 - Make it a convenient connection
- **Short Term Improvements**
 - Things that can be done faster, comments that people want to see things now
 - Have a meaningful impact
 - Improve system for current users and attract new users
- **Bigger Capital Dollars broader corridor improvements**
 - Expand beyond just transit improvements – Accessibility to transit
 - Connected system to other modes
 - Increase on overall cost – Airport connection and complementary infrastructure on major corridors, sidewalks, lighting, streetscaping, signals
- **Partnerships**
 - Several things outside of the control of the transit operator
 - Extremely important tool
 - Local, Regional, State, Federal, Private operators and entities
- **Flexibility**
 - A plan that is robust but flexible to adapt to changing conditions.
 - No certainty of what will happen in the future. Technology changes, people's travel behaviors changes, political will changes and so on.

Mr. Castrodad gave an overview of transit improvement strategies. This was put together throughout the process in coordination with the public comments and they serve as building blocks for different things that will happen and how the recommendations are put together. The highpoints have been included here:

- **Make Service Easier to Use**
 - Simplify Routes/Service – better information
 - Unified system branding – A seamless system
 - Simplify Fare Payment and provide more options with technology
- **Improve Existing Services**
 - Establish a Frequent Transit Network
 - Overall increase in frequencies and hours of ops for the system
 - Improve AccessRide (real time info, payment options)
 - Faster Service through downtown
 - Crosstown, through routing
- **Access to Transit**
 - Bike/Ped connections
 - Partnerships with Ridesharing – lower density areas
 - More conveniently located Park and Ride lots
- **Make Service More Comfortable**
 - More and Better Stations including amenities at stops
 - New and Better Buses
 - Improve the Passenger Experience
- **Regional and Neighborhood Transit Centers**
 - Facilitate non-downtown travel
 - Improve Connections
 - Strong pedestrian connections, Parking, Bikes sharing and bicycle parking, space for ridesharing, Real-time info, Comfortable waiting areas
- **Expand Service to New Areas**
 - Fill in gaps in Davidson County
 - Expand to newly developed areas
 - Stronger connections between local and regional services
- **Build HC/Rapid Service**
 - Develop Premium Services that are faster and competitive with the automobile
 - LRT – 4 Corridors
 - BRT – 3 Corridors
 - Commuter Rail
 - Improve MCS
 - NW Corridor
 - Bus on Shoulder
 - Rapid Bus

This concluded Mr. Castrodad’s part of the presentation. CEO Steve Bland continued the presentation beginning with the cost slide that depicts an overview of what is projected in the plan and gave the following commentary:

The general public wants more of what we are proposing, but they want it faster and they want it cheaper than what we are proposing. People articulated concerns about the increase cost of operations with increased service on top of the capital cost. It will not get any cheaper the longer we wait, so this will continue to be an issue of importance. When you break down the plan over that 25 year period, and accounting for population increases projected for the region,

in comes down to about \$244 per capita as a blended average through this 10 county region. That includes what we currently spend which is coming in at about \$70 per capita. So, the increase is about \$175 per year per person in cost.

We are not solely responsible and solely involved in transportation infrastructure in the region. Clearly the MPO is the leader in putting together plans and financing structures. All of this underlies a network that TDOT owns, operates, manages, and controls, not to mention all the counties and cities within our area.

In terms of next steps and sequencing, there are a number of activities that the RTA and the MTA can undertake independently. Some of those, and the ones we can move fastest on, are very low cost or no cost, things like service simplification, service presentation, how we better integrate our systems, simplified fare payment structures.

Some of them can be done independently by the RTA and the MTA with additional funding and we will be talking to the board and partners about those shorter term opportunities; but many are going to be dependent on our increasing, improving, and expanding our relationships with other partners. The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) will be a key partner. We greatly appreciate those at TDOT that have been very engaged in this conversation and extremely supportive of the process and clearly understand the connection. The way to make this plan more affordable is for us to be able to integrate transit improvements where other capacity improvements are being implemented throughout the network. That has been a very engaged conversation with TDOT and we are going to need to step that up even more in the coming months and years.

The cities and the counties, certainly Mayor Barry and Mayor Moore in Franklin, have made this a forefront of their considerations. There is no expectation that this will move at the same pace and the same rate throughout the region. The issue is much more acute and the demands are much more easy to articulate in some areas versus others; but every county and every city in our 10 county service area has a stake in the outcomes of what we do, whether that is in terms of preservation of quality of life or improving travel options for residents.

While a lot of the conversation and the bulk of the dollars associated with this plan are in large scale projects like rail, there are many improvements that can be seen within a one year, three year, and five year period. Our intent as a staff is to continue to produce for you periodically a report card on how we are progressing on all of these goals and objectives.

This concludes the staff presentation and the staff recommendation is for the board to adopt the nMotion plan as presented. This concluded Mr. Bland's commentary.

Move for approval with comment was made and seconded and the floor was opened for discussion. Chair McMillan thanked Mr. Bland for his presentation and noted that this is a very historic day for the RTA to be able to join with all

of the other entities, nMotion, Nashville MTA, the other board members of the RTA to have comprised this effort to involve the public because they are the users of the transit, they are our major concern and we want to make sure that their services, their needs, and their desires are met. This plan, through its public engagement process has done just that.

Chair McMillan asked for any discussion or questions and recognized Franklin Mayor Ken Moore who had these comments:

- He applauds the fact that there has been such great public input and urges that we continue to get that input.
- He feels an extreme urgency in moving forward as he hears this consistently amongst his constituents.
- He applauds the idea of not only improving the local service in the Nashville Metropolitan area, but also working to improve our local services within the region.
- The charm of rail came out in the presentation and many things predicted that we will be doing will not be rail. So that raises the question as to how can we create that charm for other options that are out there.
- As technology evolves, he is glad to see that technology is being taken into account and also the flexibility of the plan to move forward.
- We have to look at options other than mass transit and we have to make sure that we are emphasizing as we move forward that it is not about a bullet train, but it is about a lot of different options.
- As leaders in our community, we need continue to look at how we are designing our communities to make sure that we have those connectivity options and the density that will support people not having to get in their cars but rather having other options.
- As we move toward a new legislative session, we have to make sure that as leaders in our community and leaders on this board that legislation that may be proposed does not amputate other options that we have but rather that we will continue to encourage legislation that supports multi-modal options and not just laying asphalt.

Chair McMillan recognized Nashville and Davidson County Mayor Megan Barry who had these comments:

- While Mayor Barry acknowledges that this is an incredible plan, she echoes the urgency of a 25 year window and would like to see it done much more quickly.
- The 1-5 year plan gives us incredible improvement in the system that exists, but she would like to see us move that 6-15 year plan to be working right alongside the 1-5 year plan.
- She knows that all of the board members hear from their constituents repeatedly that the traffic is not getting any better. Making sure that the transit options are accelerated is incredibly important to the continued economic development for Nashville and our region. She encourages us to put a shovel in the ground today.

Chair McMillan recognized Davidson County Governor Appointee Ed Cole who had these comments:

- He noted his thanks to the staff and to the RTA and MTA Boards and all that have been involved in this planning effort that he believes is unprecedented.
- If it raises the issue of urgency, as Mayor Barry has just pointed out, there are a number of things that this plan enables us to think about in the funding arena.
- One is to be more aggressive in value capture – whether it is transit oriented development or other benefits that flow from this plan being implemented on an expedited schedule. That those benefits, as they accrued to individuals, to investors, to developers, to a number of people, there be a mechanism that they would willingly contribute and be a part of, to help fund this.
- It is not just about federal dollars, it is not just about tax revenues, it is not just about fares, it is also about capturing the incredible improvement in the value of our communities if we implement this plan on an expedited basis.
- Again, thanks to the whole staff for allowing that conversation to go forward.

Chair McMillan recognized Robertson County Mayor Howard Bradley who had these comments:

- For Robertson County, as all the others that are contiguous to Davidson County, I think we need to, in terms of selling this program, emphasize the essence of the act that in a county like Robertson 60% of the people who live there commute outside of the county. The Metropolitan Planning Organization has projected that commute times from Springfield to Nashville will more than double in the next 15 years which makes the viability of living there and working here less and less possible – more and more tenuous. Just for our future as a community as a region, it is very important that we stress that and the option of doing nothing is not an option at all.

Chair McMillan concurred. She continued stating that she agrees with all the comments made here today and especially Mayor Barry's plea to have us do our best to try to move this forward. She thinks we are doing that and that we are all working in our individual counties to look at ways and things we can do. Speaking for herself, Chair McMillan noted that the Northwest Corridor is moving very quickly and fast. We already have meetings with the affected mayors and the affected counties to start talking about right-of-way acquisition for a future rail line. We have studies that we are moving forward to see that happen.

As with everything that we have to do, funding is the main issue; but, if we work together, we can solve this problem and move forward.

There was no further discussion and the motion that was made and properly seconded was brought to vote and the resolution was adopted unanimously.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT: Chair McMillan echoed the comments made previously today and as Mayor Barry termed it previously, she stated that his is a very bold vision, but what is necessary for Middle Tennessee. Because of the growth we are experiencing, we need bold plans and we need to take bold action. It is going to take all of us working together as a region to make that happen.

She thanked the members of the RTA Board, the members of the MTA Board, the nMotion committee and staff, and all the people who have come together for all of their hard work to make this happen. It truly is a regional effort and it takes regional solutions and that is exactly what we are doing.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business to come before the Board.

X. ADJOURNMENT: Motion was made to adjourn, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Respectfully,

Paula Mansfield

Governor's Appointee
RTA Secretary