

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

June 22, 2016

Presiding: Mayor John Woods, MTC Co-chair

Present:

Ron Carlee (Charlotte City Manager)

Mayor Jim Taylor (Matthews)

Michael Warner (TSAC Chair)

Mayor Jack Edwards (Pineville)

Tracy Dodson (NCDOT Representative)

Bill Thunberg (Mooresville Representative)

Bill Coxe (Huntersville Town Planner)

Chief Executive Officer: John Lewis, Jr

I. Call to Order

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

II. Review of Meeting Summary

The meeting summary of May 25, 2016 was approved with one change. Mr. Coxe noted that the last paragraph of the North Corridor item discussion, where the minutes indicate that he said that a similar service could be started on I-85, he intended to say I-77 instead. The minutes will be updated to reflect the change.

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

Michael Warner

Mr. Warner reported that TSAC met on June 9, 2016. Staff reviewed the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, which TSAC voted to recommend to MTC. Three information items included an update on the Charlotte Rail Trail, the same presentation that MTC received in April; the state of the Gateway Station Plan and a report on the recent trip to Denver. John Muth also presented an update on the North Corridor study.

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

No report

V. Public Comments

Meg Fencil, Education Outreach Director at Sustain Charlotte, spoke on the upcoming Transportation Investment Symposium in Portland, OR on September 21-22, 2016. The theme is New Thinking for a New Era. The goal is to help those interested in transportation understand how transportation investments can combine multiple approaches to achieve cost effectiveness as well as environmental protection, social justice and economic development. She reviewed topics that will be covered and distributed symposium flyers for interested MTC members.

VI. Action Items

a. **10-ride ADA Pass 15% Discount**

Olaf Kinard

Mr. Kinard, CATS Director of Marketing, Communications & Technology, said that the action item is to maintain the 15 percent discount for the 10-ride ADA pass, but continue the previously-approved discontinuance of the discount for other passes. The cost would be approximately \$22,000 in annual revenue, but staff believes that the loss can be absorbed.

Discussion: Mayor Woods said that he appreciated the staff's flexibility in its willingness to listen to the public. Mayor Taylor asked whether we were reacting to one person or were there multiple questions. Mr. Kinard said that staff received comments from one person. He thought MTC members had spoken with that person as well as other individuals. Mr. Coxe said that CTAG had made the recommendation to keep the 15 percent discount for the 10-ride ADA pass early on. Mr. Kinard concurred and said that one member had intended to exclude the ADA discount; when the motion was made at the April meeting, this exemption was omitted, probably inadvertently. Mayor Taylor said that sounded as though the original intent was to structure the approval this way, and the one comment reminded the member of that intent. Mr. Kinard agreed with that assessment.

Resolution: Mr. Carlee motioned to approve reinstating the 15 percent discount for the 10-ride ADA pass; Mayor Taylor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

b. **Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan**

Brian Horton

Mr. Horton, CATS Transportation Planner, said that TSAC recently endorsed the Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan. Since the last update five years ago, the Charlotte Urbanized Area has expanded and FTA requirements have changed. The project strategies are key aspects of the Plan. One of FTA's requirements is that when Charlotte receives funding, the approved projects must be supported by the strategies in the Plan. Key strategies include mobility management and ways to leverage technology to increase route efficiency. Plan development launched in October. Two important surveys were tailored, one for providers and one for seniors and disabled individuals. Recent action encompassed the review and action process, during which TSAC endorsed the Plan.

Discussion: None

Resolution: Mayor Taylor motioned to approve the Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan; Ms. Dodson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VII. Information Items

a. **LYNX Silver Line Transit Study**

Jason Lawrence

Mr. Lawrence, CATS Transportation Planner, said that he has gathered a good deal of information in workshops and public meetings since his last presentation to MTC in March. There have been many studies on the Independence Boulevard area, but the long-term decision is that it functions best as an automobile expressway. The purpose of this study was to define a rail fixed guideway alignment, provide an interim bus transit strategy to utilize future express lanes and develop strategies to identify and preserve the rail alignment.

Over 250 people attended public meetings held in April in various locations along the corridor. The meetings' purpose was to identify important alignment characteristics and which alignments would best meet the communities' needs and overall vision. Mr. Lawrence reviewed several alignment options. The options included various configurations of alignments running along the side of Independence Boulevard, along a widened Monroe Road, or a combination of the side of Independence Boulevard and cutting over to a widened Monroe Road. Mr. Lawrence discussed the advantages and impacts of each option. The public input preferred Option A, running along the side of Independence Boulevard. Options C and D received little support, so staff recommends dropping those options from further consideration. The Station Planning Workshop revealed a desire to preserve Bojangles Coliseum and Ovens Auditorium, as well as a desire to seek opportunities for additional green space, develop a new network of streets between Independence Boulevard and Monroe Road with dense development. The Matthews workshop goal was to explore three potential light rail alignments through the Town of Matthews.

Mr. Lawrence discussed the remaining corridor options, key tradeoffs for the alignment options in Matthews, and the visual impacts of the alignment options in various areas. Light rail can be an opportunity to shape future growth in Matthews, and the alignment can offer a way to shape development. Traffic impacts are another key tradeoff. Left turns along the future Independence Pointe Parkway would be limited with light rail in the road's median. There are also design challenges and needs for corridor preservation provisions. Workshop results were to improve commuter access from Matthews to Charlotte, to make Matthews a destination, facilitate development and redevelopment and a desire for light rail to provide access to downtown Matthews without being in the historic core of downtown. There was general consensus that light rail is not desirable along Monroe Road and that the Sam Newell design option would be acceptable if the visual impacts could be managed.

Next steps include looking at ridership and developing a cost estimate as well as considering a maintenance facility location and building a consensus between Charlotte and Matthews. CATS will present the staff recommendations to the MTC for information in Summer 2016 with action at a later meeting.

Discussion: Mayor Taylor commended Mr. Lawrence and CATS staff for the work on this project. The group's consensus was interesting, to see the dynamic of how things changed as the group thought out of the box, as they considered options and examined impacts. Everyone wants light rail to be close to downtown Matthews, but not in the heart of downtown Matthews. He said that he is excited for the timeline and is thrilled with the process. Mayor Woods said that he was interested that this plan goes east of I-485 and asked about expansion into Union County. Mr. Lawrence said that the Town of Stallings has begun the conversation. Mr. Thunberg asked if there was a timeline penciled to the next steps yet, assuming the plan's adoption. Mr. Lawrence said that the timelines were part of what they would come to with the staff recommendation. They are still in motion right now. The staff recommendation will be for one preferred alignment, with consensus between Charlotte and Matthews ensured.

Mr. Coxe said that he had spoken with Mr. Lawrence about the evaluation metrics. He appreciated the land use component of the analysis. Mr. Coxe said that we need to consider what best serves the goals of creating the land development pattern along the corridor that we want to create. He wanted to make sure we remember that is the preeminent factor in the evaluation, how does that help us achieve our goals for this region and community long-term, and that is a land use evaluation. Mr. Lawrence agreed that with growth anticipated for the area, land use is the critical piece.

VIII. Chief Executive Officer's Report

John Lewis, Jr.

Under the CEO's report, Mr. Lewis discussed the following:

a. Ridership:

Ridership continues to trend at about four percent lower than the previous year. Mr. Lewis said that he is hopeful that the technology upgrades which will occur in August will help reverse the numbers. New fare boxes are not expected to solve all the issues, but we will have reliable ridership information. Operators say they are seeing as many if not more riders on their routes, so we will see if that observational data is accurate. Fare box replacement will begin in August; the new fare boxes should be fully functional by late September.

b. Financial Update:

Sales tax revenue continues to track higher than budgeted. Staff is in the process of having additional conversations with about what happens with MTC policies when the CATS reserve is fully funded. The question is whether and how we adjust financial policies to allow us to take advantage of sales tax revenue over budget once the reserve is filled. Mr. Lewis anticipates future MTC discussions on financial policy options with regard to the reserve.

c. Service Development:

CATS will be looking to redesigning the bus system next year. We will work to achieving the major goals as outlined in the 2030 Plan, but need to look at how we provide bus service day-to-day. He anticipates quite a bit of restructuring the bus system over the months to come. Staff is working on procurement of those services for a future action item.

IX. Other Business

Mayor Woods said that this is Ron Carlee's last official MTC meeting. He has ably served MTC, particularly in the recruitment of John Lewis. On behalf of the region, Mayor Woods said that the Mecklenburg County towns outside Charlotte have enjoyed a great working relationship with Mr. Carlee and wish him the very best. Mr. Carlee expressed his appreciation for the comments and said he is a great believer in transit and regionalism and hopes to continue to advocate for those areas if he remains in the region. Mr. Carlee said that Charlotte's potential rests on its ability to provide transit. He said that he is proud of the City's construction of CityLYNX Gold Line and of bringing CityLYNX Gold Line back to MTC and CATS as part of the transit system. He believes strongly in providing bus rapid transit on managed lanes and said that we have to work together as a region on this transit system.

Mayor Woods said that it is normally MTC's practice not to meet in July. Staff indicates that there are no pressing items for July. He proposed that the July meeting be cancelled.

Resolution: Mayor Taylor moved to approve cancellation of the July MTC meeting; Ms. Dodson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

X. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m. by Mayor Woods.

NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016, 5:30 P.M.