

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE  
PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

The **Planning & Administration Committee** of the Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation Authority met in public session on **Thursday, October 20, 2016**, at 8:35 a.m., in Suite 1650, 175 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Illinois, pursuant to notice.

Committee Chairman Fuentes presided.

**ROLL CALL**

**Committee members present (7):** Durante, Frega, Fuentes, Higgins, Hobson (phone), Pang (@ Item 3a), and Ross

**Other Board members present:** Anderson, Buchanan, Coulson, DeWitte, Lewis, Magalis, Melvin, Troiani, and Chairman Dillard

**Approval of minutes from the meeting held on March 17, 2016**

Director Durante moved, and Director Frega seconded that the minutes from the meeting held on March 17, 2016 be approved as submitted. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

6 Yeas: Directors Durante, Frega, Fuentes, Higgins, Hobson, and Ross

1 Absent: Pang

**Presentation of the 2016 Strategic Plan Progress report**

Ms. Jessica Hector-Hsu presented results from the 2016 Strategic Plan Progress Report to the Planning and Administration Committee. The report summarizes progress over the last year toward meeting the goals of the 2013-2018 Regional Transit Strategic Plan. It highlights important strategic trends in regional transit and high-level needs for the future. It also brings together many of the actions taken by the RTA and Service Boards to implement the shared Strategic Plan goals.

Director Melvin asked if there is a working theory about why bus ridership across the region is going down. Ms. Hector-Hsu answered that it is primarily due to gas prices, but beyond that, the Service Boards are not sure and are looking into it.

Director Durante asked if it is possible to get some figures on where the ridership is coming from - where are our best and worst ridership areas. Ms. Hector-Hsu responded that staff will provide this information. Mr. Durante followed by stating it would be good to know because it is surprising given the investment we are making in service levels and equipment. Ms. Leanne Redden added that the trend is a national one and reiterated that we don't have a scientific answer given all the factors at play but staff will look into it. She added that staff will

provide the latest Ridership Report, which has some of the information, and that such information is also available at RTAMS anytime.

Finally, Director Lewis asked if we actually ask/survey riders for information about their preferences and such. Ms. Jill Leary responded that this component will be covered as part of the next agenda item.

**Presentation of the 2015 Regional Performance report**

Ms. Karin Allen presented the 2015 Regional Report Card and Sub-Regional Report, which provide performance results for the region's transit providers, both on an aggregated basis, as well as by agency and mode. Each report covers the five-year time period 2011-2015, with performance measures to describe five areas of service: coverage, efficiency and effectiveness, delivery, maintenance and capital investment, and solvency.

2015 was a challenging year for the Service Boards. The year started with severe weather events and gas prices that remained low throughout the year, impacting rider decisions to use transit. Ridership declined for the third consecutive year. The region's capital needs continued to be unmet. Despite these challenges, fare revenues improved for each Service Board, although only Metra implemented a fare increase in 2015.

Ms. Allen presented a snapshot slide for each of the five areas of service, showing performance highlights from individual Service Boards to illustrate areas of particular interest. Coverage measures were favorable for service provided and largely negative for service consumed, although the rate of decline was less than one percent for each of the four measures for 2015. A highlight of CTA passenger miles traveled showed a significant shift from bus to rail over the past ten years. Service efficiency and effectiveness measures were all either flat or unfavorable as operating costs increased at a faster pace than additional service and ridership decreased. A highlight on Pace ADA Paratransit operating costs showed efficiencies that resulted in a net 6% decrease over the past five years for cost per revenue mile. On-time performance was unfavorable, mostly due to CTA buses experiencing congestion and construction delays. Reportable incidents for the region stood around one per million. Metra's on-time performance was highlighted and has hovered around its target of 95%, except when more strict rules were adopted in 2011 and in the polar vortex year (2014). Maintenance and capital investment is a particular challenge for the region, as the anticipated State Jump Start bond program was not realized. The percent of vehicles beyond useful life increased, and miles between major mechanical failures increased and peaked in 2015. Highlights of the region's capital investment show that there is a significant gap between anticipated capital funding, what is actually spent, and what is needed to achieve a state of good repair within 20 years. Of the 2,100 vehicles beyond their useful life, the region replaced 581 in 2015. Solvency measures were also mixed; fare revenues were up due to the Metra fare increase, the move to the Ventra system, the discontinuance of free cash transfers at the CTA and Pace, and customer preferences to use a pay-as-you-go system versus purchasing discounted passes. The fare revenue shortfall increased as operating cost increases exceeded increases in fare revenue.

Capital expenditures of \$779 million were less than 30% of what was needed to achieve a State of Good Repair. Solvency highlights included a look at operations funding sources and fare revenue at Pace, which has increased although ridership has decreased.

Upcoming activities include the quarterly performance results, which will be presented at the November Board meeting. Staff is ready to release a Customer Satisfaction Survey in the next ten days, to be followed with on-board surveying at the CTA and Pace in November. Those results will be presented in Spring 2017. Also in the Spring, staff will present results for the peer performance reports.

Director Hobson asked how the total passenger miles traveled for CTA remained flat over time? Ms. Allen answered that the CTA's passenger miles traveled has increased 1.2% over the past five years.

Director Hobson had questions about on-time performance. Ms. Allen stated that for Metra, OTP is defined as arriving at the terminal station within 6 minutes of the scheduled time; each station in between does not get reflected in official OTP statistics. This is in keeping with commuter rail industry standards. Director Hobson asked about the disconnect between the criteria and passenger perception; Chairman Dillard asked whether we could ask about this in the Customer Satisfaction Survey – what is acceptable to passengers? In his opinion, 20 minutes is late and mechanical delays and breakdowns are the most onerous. The BNSF is making changes in its schedule to more accurately reflect recent performance. Director Hobson stated that his constituents do not believe Metra is on-time 96% of the time and wants to get to the bottom of the perception problem. Director Anderson added that we should look more in-depth at OTP for the entire system. Chairman Dillard would like this added into future surveys and wondered what peer delays look like, stating that New York City has bad delays.

Director Lewis commented on the customer survey as well, and would like to add a question about why riders aren't taking the bus as much. The current survey does ask why people take transit and whether their use has increased or decreased over the past year.

Director Ross asked what happens to information on perception once we get it? Ms. Allen responded that the Service Boards have to decide on what policies or services to implement with information gathered.

Director Higgins asked if the survey has a question asking riders if they are not riding the CTA, what would they ride? Ms. Allen responded that this is in the survey.

Director Buchanan brought up a survey ranking cleanliness of buses that ranked ours at the bottom. Is there a solution to getting them cleaner. Ms. Leary responded that the CTA launched a courtesy campaign last year to help address this point.

Director Melvin inquired about miles between major mechanical failures, be improving given the percent of vehicles beyond useful life? Ms. Allen responded that the CTA just completed mid-life overhauls of about 1,000 of its buses, that has a significant impact on this reliability measure. Also, 2014 was atypical with the polar vortex, so there was rebound from that in 2015.

**Ordinance approving Section 5310 – Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program of Projects**

Ms. Kim Porter presented the program of projects for the federally funded Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program or Section 5310 program for short. Its main goal is to expand mobility options. The RTA has administered similar federal program since 2006, becoming the designated recipient for the Section 5310 program with IDOT in 2013. Ms. Porter stated that as a co-designated recipient of the Section 5310 program, the RTA awards and administers Section 5310 eligible operating, short-term planning, and capital improvement projects. IDOT retains responsibility for awarding and administering grants for paratransit vehicles. With approval of the proposed ordinance, this Section 5310 Program of Projects will be incorporated into the federally-required Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan (HSTP).

The projects that were approved continue to meet the goals of the HSTP and Section 5310 Program. The submitted applications, solicited from the pool of previously funded projects, were reviewed for program eligibility by the RTA in conjunction with a project selection team composed of staff from IDOT, CMAP & the RTA. As a result of the review, all ten submitted continuation projects were recommended for approval and inclusion in the Section 5310 Program of Projects. No RTA funds are required to support any of these projects. Awards of \$4.2 million in federal funds were proposed with sponsors committed to providing \$3 million of local match for a \$7.2 million program budget. The RTA will solicit new applications for a competitive selection of new projects in the Spring of 2017.

Director Lewis asked why are the listed projects skewed from Cook County and the City of Chicago? Ms. Porter responded based on applications received and project selection committee, which evaluate grant criteria. Director Lewis also asked if we advertise the application process? Ms. Porter responded yes, at the RTA Board meeting, on our website and via the Communications Department.

Director Troiani asked how many total applicants? Ms. Porter responded 10 with no denials.

Director Coulson asked what is the basis for Kendall County receiving funding as they are not within the RTA's region. Ms. Redden responded that Kendall County is eligible for funding based on the federal government's geographic boundaries.

Director Ross moved, and Director Pang seconded that the proposed ordinance be approved as submitted. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

7 Yeas: Directors Durante, Frega, Fuentes, Higgins, Hobson Pang, and Ross

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the meeting of the Planning & Administration Committee, Director Frega moved, and Director Durante seconded that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried on the following voice vote:

7 Yeas: Directors Durante, Frega, Fuentes, Higgins, Hobson, Pang, and Ross

The meeting ended at 9:35 a.m.

*Audrey MacLennan*

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AUDREY MACLENNAN  
Secretary of the Authority