# RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board (RTACAB)

# Meeting Minutes

10/25/2021

**Call to order:**

* Jackie Forbes, Committee Chairwoman, called to order the meeting of the RTA Citizens Advisory Board (RTACAB) at 10:05 AM on 10/25/2021

**Attendees:**

Voting Committee Members Present:

* Jackie Forbes, Chair
* David Ogunbode, Vice Chair
* Jodi Hefler, DuPage County
* Laura Saltzman, City of Chicago
* Sherrine Peyton, Suburban Cook
* Joe Surdam, Lake County
* Adam Kerman, Pace Citizen Advisory Committee
* Ryan Peterson, McHenry County

Non-Voting Members Present:

* Joe Albritton, CTA ADA Advisory Committee
* Rachel Arfa, Chicago Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities
* Sally Williams, Pace
* Michael VanDekreke, Director, Mobility Services, RTA

Other RTA/Service Board Staff Present:

* Doug Anderson, RTA
* William Lachman, RTA
* Melissa Meyer, RTA
* Peter Kersten, RTA
* Bea Reyna-Hickey, RTA
* Linda Chamberlain, RTA
* Jessica Hector-Hsu, RTA
* Felisha Barbee, RTA
* Peter Fahrenwald, RTA
* Tina Fassett-Smith, RTA
* Jeremy LaMarche, RTA
* Amy Serpe, CTA

Public Present

* Judy Shanley, Easter Seals, NCMM

1. **Introductions**
   * Jackie Forbes made an introduction and took roll call.
     + Laura Saltzman, Access Living, new committee member representing City Chicago
       - It was shared that Ryan McGraw had resigned, as Chicago representative, and Laura will move forward in the role.
2. **Approval of the May and July 2021 Minutes**

* Quorum was met and meeting minutes were approved for both May and July 2021.

1. **Public Comment Requests** 
   * No public comment request was made.
2. **Standing Reports**

* **Jackie Forbes – Chairwoman - provided report:**
  + Attends all RTA board meetings.
  + The RTA Strategic plan update
    - Will have opportunity as board to provide feedback on plan. Information that RTACAB members will get is financial picture, Covid update related to ridership and transit across the region.
  + **Government Affairs - Jeremy LaMarche – provided report:**
* Ongoing negotiations in DC on possible new infrastructure bill.
* In August, the senate passed a $1.2 trillion dollar infrastructure bill although still stalled in house.
* $106 billion for transit funding over next 5 years, which is an increase of 63% of current spending levels.
* New $1.75 billion discretionary program for station accessibility called “All Stations Accessibility Program.” This is a stand-alone initiative.
  + Will help legacy systems like CTA bring its infrastructure ADA compliant
* There is Federal Covid relief funding, through the FTA as a discretionary $2.2 billion program, which was passed in March, to provide assistance that goes above and beyond other relief packages. To be eligible for the program, 90% of the Cares Act funding must have been spent from 2020. Based on that requirement we anticipate that CTA will be applying for this funding.

1. **2nd Quarter 2021 Mobility Services Department Statistics**
   * + - There were no questions regarding Mobility Services stats.
2. **Regional Transit Strategic Plan Development - Jessica Hector-Hsu – provided this portion of the report:** 
   * Update on strategic plan
     + - Five topics of focus for next year: Opportunities for Impact, Transit System Adaptation, Funding Stability, Equity and Engagement
       - Required to do a strategic plan every five years as part of RTA act. Last one adopted in 2018 and due to develop a new one in 2023
       - Regional Transit Strategic Plan Timeline
         * Strategic planning – identify issues, develop vision and supporting elements
         * Financial planning track – guide budget process – 10-year financial plan – prepare for future actions to fund transit when federal dollars run out
         * Communications track – board and stakeholders are engaged and understand plans
     + We are “Making a Plan” which means we are engaging stakeholders, engaging the RTA board, as well as the service boards and at times the general public. This is something that began in August through the RTA board workshop.
     + Some of the engagement has been with:
       - Connections – bloggers series
       - RTA Board speakers – ongoing
       - Emerging from crisis wiser – on 11/11 – a public forum hosted by Transportation Center at UIC which will allow us to hear from people outside the agency; please join us
       - Public survey – will ask people for input for those that could not attend any of the sessions
       - Stakeholder workshops – beginning in Dec.
       - Info on social media
   * State of Transit today
     + Overall service
       - Service boards continue to operate
       - Mask are required on all forms of public transportation
       - CTA, Metra, and Pace continue cleaning and sanitation of vehicles and air filtration systems
       - Not currently seeing train cars and buses at capacity seen prior to the pandemic
       - All three agencies have experimented with discounted pass products.
       - CTA will be making changes to make it as easy as possible to get people riding again.
       - Public Funding is strong, and two main sources of that funding comes from public funds; primarily RTA sales tax and system funds
       - The sales tax that funds transit has exceeded expectations and 2021 performance has rebounded significantly and outperforming expectations
       - Ridership is ½ pre-pandemic – ticked up a bit over the summer
       - Using federal relief funds to make up difference.
       - We don’t expect things to go back to what they were pre-pandemic
   * Peter Fahrenwald – Topics for discussion
     + - Five topics key planners
     + Opportunities for Impact – bigger picture of areas that transit can contribute to region
     + Transit System Adaptation – ways to adjust what we do now to what needs to be done in the future
     + Funding Stability – how should we be thinking of funding for the future?
     + Equity – how do we equitably serve those that need it most?
     + Engagement – getting feedback from stakeholders, etc. on what we can do as part of our planning
   * Bill Lachman – Funding Sustainability

* Funded by Transit system revenue and federal funds
* Likely to be used for next several years
* Input on key financial issues – where should we focus---possibilities
* Prepare for a future scenario when covid relief funding runs out.
* Taking a regional approach to investing in transit infrastructure.
* With fare revenue low, how can we balance funds between public funds and fare revenue?
  + Peter Kersten - Equity
* Geographic equity – distributing investment across region fairly. Using equity analysis, using civic groups.
  + Examples – fostering discussions about equity
  + Regional equity statement
  + Establish performance goals
  + Rethinking transit funding and service distribution at regional level.
  + Engagement
  + Leadership and staff from service boards
  + Leaders from other units of government
  + Civic groups and advocates
  + Leaders within the disability community

1. **2022 Regional Budget Development**
   * Doug Anderson
     + Ridership recovery slow but steady.
   * Metra is most challenged in pre-pandemic ridership.
   * Sales tax recovering quickly and doing well right now.
   * March 2021 had highest record of sales tax.
   * Have proposed operating expenses.
   * Each service budget is at or above what we expected for 2022.
   * Additional expenses due to covid precautions
   * Metra is approaching pre-COVID service level.
     + Pace above budget – trying different things to get service level up.
     + ADA budget –RTA fund will cover ADA budget.
       - Federal relief funding
       - Three relief packages through federal funding for which 76% of that budget has been used from Cares Act.
       - CRRSAA will last for some time, but we need to plan in place as this money will not last long-term.
2. **Regional Mobility Manager Project Update**

Due to timing, we will have an update on this project in January.

1. **2022 Meeting Dates:** 
   * 4th Mondays of each quarter: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

January 24, April 25, July 25 and October 24, 2022

* + - Motion was called and meeting dates for 2022 were approved.

1. **Service Boards** 
   * **Steve - Metra**
     + Initial design of new Metra passenger cars.
     + Creative scheduling because we don’t have ridership currently – looking to encourage people to ride off-peak.
   * **Joe – CTA**
     + Pedway signage initiative – block 37 people can connect.
     + Funding set aside for a best stop improvement – enhancement at underserved sites.
     + Mask still required.
     + Meeting early Jan – two council members leaving. Reaching out to committee looking for new members.

* **Adam - Pace**
* Pace has major increase in bus budget – Dempster corridor moving forward.
* Public comments on 2022 budget by Friday 10/29.

1. **Public Comments**
   * No public comments
2. **Adjournment** 
   * The meeting adjourned at 11:57 PM.
     + Next meeting is January 24 at 10 AM.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Daphine Phillips, Mobility Services Program Coordinator