To: RTA Transit Access Advisory Committee

From: Claire Serdiuk-Anderson Manager, External Affairs

Date: January 19, 2021

**Re: Minutes from the October 5th, 2020 RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board Meeting**

The RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board (RTACAB) met on Monday October 5th, 2021. Below is a summary of the items discussed.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Greg Polman called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. and asked all members of the board to introduce themselves.

1. **Reading and Approval of the February 2020 Minutes**

The board voted to pass the February 2020 meeting minutes for adoption.

1. **Public Comment Requests**

Chairman Polman then asked if there were attendees present, who wanted to address the committee during the public comment section and 2 individuals requested time.

1. **Standing Reports**
2. **Chairman’s Report**

Chairman Polman discussed the ongoing COVID 19 crisis and how the Service Boards have been handling the challenges the pandemic has presented. He announced this will be his last meeting as Chairman of the RTACAB and thanked all of the committee members and RTA staff for their hard work and dedication. In addition, former Committee Member Susan Borucki passed away this year and the Chairman recognized her contributions to the RTACAB as well as the region.

1. **Government Affairs**

Claire Serdiuk-Anderson, Manager of External Affairs, updated the Committee on recent events in Washington D.C. and Springfield.

In DC, the latest relief package offered by the House Democrats includes $37B for public transit. This is in line with what the RTA and other large legacy systems (New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco) have been lobbying.

The Illinois Comptroller’s Office stated that it anticipates that the state’s bill backlog (currently at $5.7 billion) will likely increase over the course of the upcoming fiscal year. The rating house, Fitch, recently stated that if the federal government does not provide financial relief to States, it is likely that states will revisit spending plans- which of course could result in cuts to spending.

Fitch also pointed out that the outcome of the graduated income tax constitutional amendment provision on the ballot in November will have a significant immediate impact on the state’s FY 2021 finances, providing an estimated $1.3 billion in additional revenue during the second half of FY 2021 if passed.

The General Assembly will go into veto session in November, after election day, so state agencies will have reassess at that time.

1. **Mobility Services Department Statistics**

Chairman Polman asked if there were any questions pertaining to the Mobility Services Department Statistics, which were distributed prior to the meeting. There were none.

1. **RTACAB Membership Terms**

Several RTACAB members’ terms expired in 2020, so Michael VanDekreke, Director of Mobility Services informed the RTACAB that staff will be identifying new members to join the board representing Lake, Will, Kane, Suburban Cook, and McHenry counties, as well as one member representing the City of Chicago. As per the RTACAB by-laws, each of the Directors of the RTA Board representing the aforementioned areas will be asked to signify agreement with the candidates recommended by RTA staff for appointment to this board.

1. **2020-2021 Budget Presentation**

Doug Anderson, RTA’s Manager of Budget and Business Analysis informed the RTACAB that the RTA Board of Directors adopted a revised 2020 ADA paratransit operating budget during its August 2020 meeting. This revised budget added $18.4 million in funds from an ADA paratransit reserve to cover unexpected expenses incurred due to the impacts of COVID-19 on paratransit operations.

Mr. Anderson then briefed the Board on the proposed operating and capital funding amounts for the 2021 budget and five-year capital program. Mr. Anderson noted the uncertainty of the funding need as the region recovers from the impacts of COVID-19 on the regional system, as well as the uncertainty of further federal stimulus money that may be available beyond the CARES Act funding already received. To help navigate this uncertainty, RTA has continued to contract with a third party, Moody’s Analytics, to provide objective custom sales tax forecasts. The most recent of those forecasts, received in late August, is the basis for the funding projections. There is some good news in the form of the initiation of a direct RTA sales tax on online (internet) purchases within the RTA region to begin in January 2021. This long-awaited change is projected to bring more than $50 million per year in new funding for transit at a critical time.

Finally, Anderson laid out the timeline and procedure for approving the 2021 budget.

1. **ADA Innovations Study Presentation**

Peter Kersten, RTA’s Strategic Planner with the Planning and Market Development Division gave an update on the ADA Paratransit Innovation study. He reiterated that the goal of this project is to preserve the integrity of Pace ADA Paratransit service while determining innovative solutions to make ADA paratransit service financially sustainable for the long-term.

Currently the Project team is working to finalize the technical memoranda for the modeling and analysis work that was accomplished thus far in the study. Next, the team will develop an action plan for a viable pilot or pilots to determine if the identified innovations will in fact make ADA paratransit service more financially sustainable. RTA and Pace will then begin outreach efforts to gain more formal input on the pilots.

1. **RTA COVID-19 Recovery Scenario Presentation**

Jessica Hector-Hsu, Director, Planning and Market Development, provided an overview of the RTA’s scenario planning work that is being used to frame a discussion on how to prepare the region’s transit systems to successfully navigate the next 1-2 years of uncertainty brought about by impacts from COVID-19. RTA staff has identified several different scenarios and evaluated their impacts on the regional economy, commuting levels, and transit mode share. Hector-Hsu detailed three of the scenarios – the “Stalled Economy” scenario, the “Congested Recovery” scenario, and the “Regional Remix” scenario, describing how regional transit funding levels could be impacted by each.

Hector-Hsu then summarized stakeholder feedback received through a survey and two workshops focusing on several common themes that emerged in each strategic goal area. The work will be used to inform the budget process and additional discussion to come.

1. **2021 RTACAB Meeting Dates**

The RTACAB set its meeting dates for 2021. Meetings will be held from 10am until 12pm on January 25, April 26, July 26, and October 25.

1. **Service Board ADA and CAB Committee Reports**

Jamel Powell, Chairman of Pace Suburban ADA Committee, reported on the recent developments Pace was taking to combat the virus and keep passengers and staff safe.

Michelle Lee, Vice-Chairman of the CTA ADA Committee, reported on the recent developments CTA was taking to combat the virus and keep passengers and staff safe.

1. **Public Comment**

Heather and Garland Armstrong announced their impending move to Des Moines, Iowa. They explained their decision to move is based on Des Moines’ expansive Paratransit network. They encouraged the RTACAB to keep advocating for more paratransit services.

Chairman Polman asked for a motion to adjourn at 12:03 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on Monday January 25th, 2020.

**Attendees**

Voting Committee Members Present

Greg Polman - Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind- Chairman

David Ogunbode - Community Service Options – Vice Chairman

Ryan Peterson - McHenry County DOT

Roxanne Callibro – Suburban Cook

Jackie Forbes – Kane County

Jodi Hefler – DuPage County

Adam Kerman - Pace CAB Chair

Adam Ballard – Chicago

Emily Karry – Lake County

Jodi Hefler – DuPage County

Joe Surdam – Lake County

Non-Voting Committee Members Present

Michael VanDekreke, RTA Staff Representative

Michelle Lee – Vice Chair CTA ADA Advisory Committee

Jemal Powell – Chair Pace Suburban Advisory Committee

Kerry Moore - Chair Pace Chicago Advisory Committee

Other RTA/Service Board Staff Present

Claire Serdiuk-Anderson, RTA Staff

Linda Chamberlain, RTA Staff

Peter Kerstin, RTA Staff

Mark Koljack, RTA Staff

Doug Anderson, RTA Staff

Peter Kersten, RTA Staff

Amy Serpe, CTA Staff

Jessica Hector-Hsu, RTA Staff

Public Present:

Garland Armstrong

Heather Armstrong

Judy Shanley, Easter Seals

Mike Klemens, Lake County DOT