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**RTA Transit Access Citizens Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 25, 2022
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Virtual**

- **Call to order:**
 - Jackie Forbes, Committee Chairman, called to order the meeting of the RTA Citizens Advisory Board at 10:04 a.m. on 7/25/2022.
- **Introductions:**
 - Voting Committee Members Present:
 - Jon Paul Diipla, McHenry County
 - David Ogunbode, City of Chicago
 - Jackie Forbes, Chairperson
 - Jodi Hefler, DuPage County
 - Wendie Garlich, Will County
 - Joe Surdam, Lake County
 - Trisha Glee, Kane County
 - Non-Voting Members Present:
 - Jemal Powell, Pace Suburban ADA Advisory Committee
 - Michael VanDekreke, Director, Mobility Services, RTA
 - Other RTA/Service Board Staff Present:
 - Doug Anderson, RTA
 - Sarah Blair, RTA
 - Linnea Cummings, RTA
 - Jeremy LaMarche, RTA



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- Mark Koljack, RTA
- Tina F. Smith, RTA
- Peter Kersten, RTA
- Alex Waltz, RTA
- Anthony Cefali, RTA
- Julio Leal, RTA
- Katie Garrity, RTA
- Melissa Meyer, RTA
- Irma Gomez-Fierro, CTA
- Rosemary Gerty, Pace
- Public Present:
 - Garland Armstrong
 - Heather Armstrong
- **Approval of the April 2022 Meeting Minutes**
 - Jackie Forbes stated they would hold on approving the minutes until there is a quorum present.
- **Public Comment Requests**
 - Garland and Heather Armstrong requested a public comment.
- **Standing Reports**
 - **Chairman – Jackie Forbes reported:**
 - Strategic Plan’s working groups have concluded.
 - The next RTA CAB meeting is October 24th at 10 am. This meeting will be in-person. Members should let Michael



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VanDekreke know if they will be in-person. Members must be in-person to have a quorum.

▪ **Government Affairs - Jeremy LaMarche**

- The Illinois General Assembly adjourned their spring legislative session early on April 9th in anticipation of the June primary elections.
- Since that time, the Governor has been signing legislation passed earlier this year including the FY 2023 state budget which included no reductions to the formula state transit funding for the second year in a row.
- Recently, Governor Pritzker signed into law Senate Bill 3848. The legislation, sponsored by Senate Transportation Chairman Ram Villyvalam and Representative Eva-Dina Delgado, requires that CMAP and the MPO Policy Committee, in coordination with the RTA, develop a report of legislative recommendations around transit funding that will help ensure the long-term viability of the system.
 - The legislation calls for CMAP and the RTA to consider the vision, principles, and recommendations that result from the RTA's current strategic planning process in a report that will be due to the Governor and General Assembly on January 1, 2024.
 - This report, while separate, would be in addition to and a continuance of, the regional transit strategic plan that we are currently developing.
 - The purpose of the legislation is to provide funding and policy recommendations that will allow the transit agencies to continue to provide essential service after the region's federal COVID relief funding runs out. Additionally, the bill requires that the report include recommendations on how the RTA, CTA, Metra, and



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Pace can better address racial equity, climate change, and economic development.

- In Washington DC, focus remains on passing FY23 appropriation legislation. Last week, the House passed a package of spending legislation that included transportation spending that fully funds the Bi-Partisan infrastructure law passed late last year.
- Several months ago, in collaboration with Representative Chuy Garcia’s office, the RTA sent a letter to the THUD Appropriations Committee requesting funding in the FY23 Appropriations bill to help public transit agencies test innovative pilot programs and do the long-term planning necessary to fully adapt to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Although the pilot program was not fully included in the final legislation, they were pleased to see that some of the suggested legislative language was included in a \$50 million dollar Integrated Smart Mobility grant program within the bill.
- Specifically, the program calls for funding to be eligible for post-pandemic uses like improving safety, equity in access to economic opportunities and community services, use in optimizing transit route planning through first and last mile solutions and deployment of transit ambassadors.
- The Senate has yet to release any FY23 spending bills, but it is anticipated that they will begin releasing appropriation legislation soon. The federal fiscal year ends September 30, 2022.
- **Mobility Services Programs Statistical Report Questions**
 - Jackie Forbes asked if anyone had any questions on this report. There were no questions.
- **Regional Strategic Plan Update**



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- Peter Kersten reported:
 - COVID has changed the region and its transportation system. Currently, the region's public transit is carrying 900,000 riders per day.
 - Currently, they are developing the content of the plan. In the fall, they will bring all components together to develop the draft plan.
 - Plan's vision: Safe, reliable, accessible public transportation that connects people to opportunity, advances equity, and combats climate changes.
 - The principles to guide the work are equity, stewardship, and committed to change.
 - There are six future outcomes –
 - Safe, accessible, reliable, and useful for riders
 - In a state of good repair
 - Financially stable
 - Connected
 - Winning the fight against climate change
 - Thriving
 - There are three stakeholder work groups, each were tasked with goals and strategies tied to outcomes for the transit system and the region. The groups are transit service, infrastructure investment, and financial responsibility. They are wrapping up now and completing memos.
 - There are two technical groups: 10 -year financial plan and priority projects. These groups will be completed in September 2022.



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- The groups represent diverse voices from 70+ organizations throughout the region. The groups developed 29 goals and 131 strategies across the 6 outcomes.
- There are two technical groups comprised of RTA, Service Board, and CMAP staff. First is the Priority Project Technical Group. This group will be advancing the Priority Project list that was established with the current strategic plan, *Invest in Transit*. The group will also produce capital investment guidelines to be included in the Strategic Plan as well as creating new project evaluation measures and metrics to be applied to projects that make into the five-year Capital Improvement Program. The second group is the 10-year Financial Plan Technical Group. This work of this group will contribute to the 10-Year Financial Plan.
- Peter is looking for input on areas on advocacy. He provided a list of areas:
 - Increase and diversify operating funding sources
 - Develop equity-based operating funding structure that lowers reliance on fares to balance the operating budget
 - Communicate the value the transit system brings to region
 - Reduce first/last mile barriers to using transit and support communities pursuing equitable transit-oriented development (eTOD)
 - Increase transparency and communication with communities regarding transit spending, funding
 - Increase and diversify capital funding sources, pursue more “roadway” funding for transit
 - Advance efforts to improve the reliability and speed of transit trips, bus rapid transit (BRT)



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- You can submit any thoughts at a later date to Peter via email at Peter.Kersten@rtachicago.org
- Jodi Hefler believes the priority is advance efforts to improve the reliability and speed of transit trips. Jackie Forbes said she would second that.
- What do you feel needs the most urgent actions? Peter provided a list of actions:
 - Increase safety and security for everyone using the system
 - Ensure full accessibility
 - Increase the quantity and accuracy of real time travel information
 - Simplify and integrate payment system across CTA, Metra, and Pace, offer new free/reduced fare program
 - Plan to achieve near-zero emissions for the region's transit system and prioritize equity in the process
 - Invest in state of good repair and distribute capital funding in a manner
 - Adapt transit service to meet riders' changing needs and increase access to opportunities via transit.
 - Comments: Wendie Garlich is glad to see the last bulletin point – adapt transit service to meet riders' changing needs and increase access to opportunities via transit. Wendie is referring to job access.
 - Jodi Hefler would go towards simplify and integrate payment system. Ventra cards are great, but Ride DuPage cannot use them at this time.



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- Jackie Forbes believes ensure full accessibility is important. Jackie commented on the real-time travel information to make sure the paratransit side is included.
- Upcoming Engagement:
 - Movers Panel and Workshop on August 9
 - Registration Links:
 - In person: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/regional-transit-strategic-plan-movers-workshop-in-person-tickets-383517219327>
 - Virtual: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/regional-transit-strategic-plan-movers-workshop-virtual-tickets-383511943547>
 - Public Input Survey – Late Summer
 - Transit Rider Interviews – July to October
 - Draft strategic plan opens for public comment – Early December
- Partnership Opportunities:
 - Workshop on August 9th
 - Volunteer to partner on advocacy and action items
 - Contact Peter to schedule a follow-up conversation or learn more about the plan and implementation.
- Wendie Garlich thanked Peter for a great presentation.
- **Financial Projections and Funding Gap Presentation**
 - Doug Anderson reported:



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- 10-Year Financial Plan Technical Working Group consists of 17 members
 - Goals and Products:
 - Predict longevity of federal relief funding
 - Establish “official” post relief funding budget shortfall
 - Produce menu of options for re-achieving balance
 - Recommendation for permanent recovery ratio reform
 - They will be focusing on budget gaps. The Service Boards have been relying on federal recovery funding.
 - The transit system is supported by:
 - Public funding – sales tax has been strong.
 - Operating revenue – low fare and ridership revenue. They have been using federal relief funding.
 - Ridership has had a set back in early 2022 due to an increase in COVID cases and winter weather. In the early part of the pandemic, ridership fell by more than 70%. Currently, ridership is about 50% pre-covid.
- 10-year regional operating expenses: average annual growth is 3.9% per year – this is higher than the previous decade due to inflation.
- Baseline scenario assumptions – ridership recovery will continue slowly and not regain pre-covid levels within the 10-year plan.



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- ADA Paratransit will be fully funded each year.
- Funding distribution by current statute/agreement
- Relief funding projected to exhaust in 2025 for all
- Use 2026 to isolate annual shortfall – “the gap”
 - This will be the first year without federal relief funding and half-way through the 10-year plan. There will be enough time for legislative action.
 - By 2026, there will be a \$730M shortfall. Ridership would be at 70% pre-COVID levels. Currently, they are experiencing a shortfall of \$640M but have federal relief dollars to cover it. The region is not alone with experiencing shortfalls – many are experiencing a 20% shortfall of their budget.
 - Next steps: define additional scenarios and compile a list of funding ideas (Currently, they have more than 20 ideas). In addition to funding, initiatives to stimulate ridership return are also a very important avenue for exploration.
 - Jamel Powell asked if they considered looking into adding tolling or seeking an extra tax on marijuana. Doug stated tolling is on the menu but instead of adding tolls they would increase the toll price. RTA receives a sales tax on marijuana, but this is not on their menu because it would not make a significant dent.
- Transportation Tuesdays Series Briefing
 - Alex Waltz reported –



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- The Transportation Tuesday series started in 2020 and are free and virtual sessions. They took a break in 2021. There were 400 registrations.
- These series took place on Tuesdays in June.
 - 1st session – Transit Orient Development (TOD)
 - They talked about the impact on transit-oriented development. They had panelists from Auburn Gresham, Skokie, Harvey, and Highwood.
 - June 14 – Signage
 - This focused on how the RTA’s Interagency Signage Program helps solve a complex regional problem. There have been more than 1,000 signs installed so far. This consisted of panelists from Aurora.
- Melissa Meyer reported on the other topics within the series:
 - June 21 – Curbs
 - This topic focused on RTA embarking on the first curb management plan. Curb needs are beyond parking. This can include delivery, ride haul, etc. This consisted of panelists from Seattle, Chicago DPD, and Walker Consultants.
 - June 28 – Data
 - This webinar offered a demonstration of two regional transportation data resources: the RTA’s RTAMS website and CMAP’s Data Hub Panelist from RTA and CMAP. They discussed the importance of transparency.
- Webinar recordings can be found at youtube.com/user/rtachicagoland



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- Recaps are available on the RTA Connections blog:
blog.rtachicago.org
- **Service Board ADA and CAB Committee Reports**
 - **Pace Suburban ADA Advisory Committee**
 - Jemal Powell reported:
 - There meeting is tomorrow and being held virtually. They will discuss the bylaws. He is not sure when they will meet in-person.
 - **CTA ADA Advisory Committee**
 - Irma Gomez-Fierro reported:
 - They met on July 11th. They discussed CMAPs points, accessible fare gates, and the red-purple modernization project. Currently, they have openings for committee members. Applications are due 9/19/2022.
 - Jemal asked when they would meet in-person. Irma said they do not have plans yet but are thinking of having a hybrid meeting.
 - Jemal asked about the doors on the 700 train cars. Irma stated that there will be a new voice for announcements, flashing lights to alerts the doors are opening, and the sitting arrangement will change to accommodate a bike and people with disabilities. Irma sent a link for more information: <https://www.transitchicago.com/7000s/#features>
- **Public Comments**
 - Garland Armstrong stated they are living in Iowa. He welcomed Irma to the CTA. He asked where the cooling bus from CTA was since Pace had a cooling bus at the Disability Pride Parade. He is concerned about Tinley Park (159th and Oak Park Ave – RT 354) and their lack of



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sidewalks. August 11th to 21st is the Iowa State Fair. They will have shuttle buses and paratransit. Garland and Heather will be back in September.

▪ **Adjournment**

- Next Meeting: Monday, October 24th at 10 a.m. in-person.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

Meeting minutes submitted by: Sarah Blair, Supervisor, Mobility Outreach