

Minutes

RTA External & Stakeholder Relations & Advocacy Committee Meeting

9:11 a.m., October 6, 2020

Committee Members: McCall (Chair) Lucas (Vice Chair), Bibb, Byrne, Pellot

Other members: Clough, Joyce, Moss, Serrano, Weiss

Not present: None

Also Present: Anderson, Benford, Birdsong, Bitto, Booker, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Davidson, Fields, Garofoli, Gautam, Johnson, Kirkland, Orlando, Peganoff, Schipper, Sikich, Sudy, Sutula, Tarka

Ms. McCall called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that five (5) committee members were present. This meeting was conducted by teleconference for members of the Board in accordance with House Bill 197 of the 133rd General Assembly, signed by the Governor of the State of Ohio on March 27, 2020, the March 9, 2020 order of the Governor of the State of Ohio declaring a public health emergency and the April 30, 2020 order of the Director of the Ohio Department of Public Health prohibiting any gathering of ten (10) or more people. The meeting was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rideRTA) for staff and members of the public.

GCRTA Strategic Plan

Joshua Sikich, Project Manager for HDR and Jason Sudy, Engagement Lead for HDR gave the presentation. Maribeth Feke said the first Strategic Plan (SP) was adopted by the Board in 1993. RTA has been adopting them about every 10 years. There is a requirement to have a SP. This plan was awarded to HDR in February 2019. A presentation was made to the Board June 8, 2019. From January through March, COVID-19 hit. Stakeholder meetings were held in July 2020. Now they are ready for the Board to see the final plan. They will ask the Board to adopt the plan at the next Board meeting.

The goal of the SP process was to pull in multiple Pillar Studies that had their own engagement process as well as technical analysis and robust engagements with bus operators, mechanics, rail operators, general public and stakeholders to bring this into a cohesive framework for the future to the year 2030. It began as a blank slate identifying what the vision and goals would be, getting feedback bringing in the technical analysis, identifying potential strategies and culminating in key initiatives. They were planning to wrap this up in spring of 2020, but the virus disrupted that deadline. The last public meeting was completed in mid-March. It allowed them to take a step back and understand what is happening, not only with the virus and the impact, but also the subsequent economic downturn and new calls to action for social justice that have been heard in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and around the world to incorporate these new 2020 impacts into the plan.

RTA is a leader in adopting best practices nationwide related to cleaning, disinfecting, having barriers on vehicles and coordinating with health departments, etc. Due to transit provider's heavy emphasis on safety, recent research identified that there is no correlation between urban transit and transmission of COVID-19. Ridership shows no correlation with the rise or fall of local cases. The vision for the next 10 years can be summarized as Customer Focused Community Engaged. It means looking at several goals identified through engagement. Focus on user experience. Having equitable access to opportunity. Identifying a State of Good Repair is essential and financial stability is essential to delivering that customer experience that provides that leg up to those who need to ride RTA. Being community engaged, identifying the continued collaboration and partnership is essential. Leaning into tech innovation, economic prosperity, collaborating and not only with local partners, but also in the greater industry and with greater

society. Doing our part for environmental sustainability transparency. These goals had a lot of back and forth with the public and stakeholders.

The preliminary findings process identified how necessary RTA is to the region. The pillar studies quantifies this in the millions and billions. It also identified strengths and weaknesses. Jobs are decreasing in the region and expanding in areas that are more difficult to serve. However, RTA has a robust infrastructure to be vital for the future. Some of the key job hubs are downtown and University Circle where there is robust transit service. They looked at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats before COVID-19. Over the past few months, they have taken steps back to look at what the impacts are going forward. There is uncertain travel demand for all modes, health concerns, people working remotely, which was already underway, but accelerated with the virus. Economic decline and getting people to jobs is an essential service that RTA provides. Social issues can be a catalyst for change. With renewed focus on equity, essential service and essential workers can drive us forward. Look at temporary versus long-term impacts. The experts say the virus will eventually be behind us but economic recession tends to last after a downturn. From the impacts of 2020, transit remains the backbone of economic opportunity for those who need it most.

They held a robust public engagement process. They were able to finish the outreach before cancellations due to COVID. They had three stakeholder input periods: an external stakeholder group of community leaders throughout the region, general public meetings and internal stakeholders within RTA. They tied in the Pillar Study engagement process to understand the larger picture. There were over 6,000 responses to surveys and over 40 total meetings. They met with operators, vehicle maintenance, dispatchers, etc. The survey went along with the meetings to allow people to replicate the different activities if they could not make it in person. The nine meetings took place from February to March. They advertised with physical elements and online. That yielded thousands of participants online and many hundreds that attended the meetings in person. They had in-person live activities that were replicated online, including a number of geographical things. They had 49 strategies identified from the top goals. They got the same three top strategies from online and public meetings, which were linking people to jobs, more funding and increased frequency/maintain coverage. The engagement occurred throughout the process and drove their recommendations.

There are geographic focus recommendations. Priority Corridors came from a previous strategic plan. Bringing focus to locations where TOD could be emphasized in partnership with local stakeholders. They identified corridors were due for an update and looked to identify what the geographic focus should be going forward. They found that there was times to increase the cohesion between infrastructure development and service frequency. If there is a great branded bus stop on a corridor, they want to make sure frequent service continues on that corridor. There needs to be a network of urban corridors with frequent service. In collaboration with the system redesign there is a network of priority corridors that are connected with frequent service across the region. The connections are as important as the corridors themselves. Many people transfer among routes on RTA service and people with lower incomes transfer at a higher rate. They identified true data analysis. These priority corridors focus specifically on the need populations with lower incomes, lower education attainment and higher unemployment. They can look at the socioeconomic data points and identify how to get a leg up to the people who need it most while focusing transit and those areas where transit works best; where there is high population of people and jobs along the linear corridors. It identifies a focus for a partnership for TOD in collaboration going forward. This is a data driven process to deliver equitable service.

The priority corridors are in large cases urban corridors, which transit works best. The biggest job hubs are downtown and University Circle. There are also regional outline job hubs that are inherently difficult to serve with transit. RTA currently has services to these locations, but there can be improvements made over time. It is important to note that this is a key opportunity for partnership and cost sharing along multiple entities understanding that these locations are costly to serve, yet the data shows they have jobs available across the region. The job locations often do not require a college degree. The recommendations have seven key initiatives. These are prioritized based on 10 goals, visions, existing

condition, pillar studies and input to provide a guide for enhancing the customer experience and pursuing capital improvements for the future. The key initiatives include:

- Improve Where and When Buses Travel
- Improve How Streets Function
- Improve How Customers Pay
- Improve Passenger Safety and Comfort
- Engage with Emerging Technology, Data, and New Mobility
- Address Funding Challenges
- Partner to Support Vibrant Communities and Access to Job Centers

With each of these initiatives, they address a series of goals, have a timeframe for interim improvements, and have shared responsibilities. Improving where and when buses travel coordinates with the system redesign pillar study, identifying that over time there is a way to focus improvements on key corridors and build that frequent network. Each initiative has an understanding of the impact of the Pandemic. A focus on urban corridors such as the priority corridors, with frequent service improves safe and equity access to opportunity and allows for social distancing on buses. It gives priority service to essential workers. Making sure buses travel across streets in a timely manner and ensuring walkable areas to the transit stations. The Pandemic has identified innovative opportunities to reallocate roadway space, rethink pedestrian pauses, more café seating and rethinking how streets are prioritized for transit. There are new best practices and federal guidelines about the use of innovative tools on this front.

Improving how customers pay connects with the fare equity study, which identified that there is policies and technologies that can improve the equitable delivery of customer payment. RTA is already moving forward on new policies to address these issues. There are also tech changes like fare capping, that over the next decade identify ways that people are not penalized for not buying in bulk. Improving passenger safety and comfort entails procuring new rail cars and maintaining the infrastructure, procuring new vehicles and leaning into new technologies like zero emissions vehicles. Engaging with emerging technology, data, and new mobility by refocusing on using technology to improve the customer experience and equity. RTA has new technology they can start piloting, like vehicle technology, identifying that shared data and data privacy among mobility partners is a big topic in the industry. RTA can be a thought leader at the table regarding these new changes in the way mobility is delivered. Also with collaboration to identify, the best ways that private mobility partners can be shared providers' first and last mile. Making sure there is no negative impact like duplicate service.

There have been pillar studies to address funding challenges. One of the Pandemic impacts is that federal funding needs to be reassessed with RTA advocating with partners for that appropriate federal funding with transit being an essential service. This is a key initiative because people from a variety of occupations understood that RTA's funding challenges are their personal challenges. RTA not having adequate resources affects them. Continued partnerships is needed to support vibrant communities and access to job centers. RTA is a national leader in TOD and to continue that partnership along the priority corridors is essential. Staff recommends the External & Stakeholders Relations & Advocacy Committee move the Framework for the Future, GCRTA Strategic Plan 2020-2030 for action to the GCRTA Board of Trustees at their next meeting.

Maribeth added that the current plan sunsets in 2020. The plan rest on the foundation of the five Pillar Studies. It will work with another plan from TransPro that will help figure out how and what metrics to establish for the staff to make the plan a reality. Technology, customer focus and community focus are intrinsic over the next 10 years. Chief McCall added that this plan is important. Even in the midst of a Pandemic, it gives us a good opportunity to get things finalized from planning to implementation. Mr. Bibb believes the plan does not go far enough in being transformative and it does not tell him how RTA is doing against peer agencies and what levers will be pulled to be a leading agency in the State, region and country. Usually cost consideration and cost benefit analysis are tied to each recommendations. He is concerned that this plan does not tie to the long-term operational enterprise strategy of the organization. Chief McCall asked him to expand on what he means by not being transformative. He said there were

high lever recommendations on fare collection so does that mean RTA will execute contactless payments and if so what does that look like operationally. What are the bold recommendations for alternative funding. Chief McCall said the report could be tied closer to some of the recommendations that came out of the Pillar Studies. Maribeth said that HDR did perform analysis comparing RTA to other transit agencies and that this plan will match up with yearly metrics developed by TransPro. Some of the specifics are difficult in a long-range plan. Looking closely at the goals in each objective, you will see RTA transforming into the agency it wants to be at the end of the decade.

Joshua said there are cost associated with the plan. Utilizing technology to be transformative is something that RTA is approaching. Looking at 2030, RTA's vehicles will be cleaner with zero emissions vehicles, connected to the environment through technology, the payment process will be seamless and equitable, service will be frequent across the region. RTA is driving the economic success for individuals in the region. This plan lays the groundwork for a transformative change in RTA's service going forward. As many of the pillar studies and conversations have identified, RTA is far from where it needs to be currently. There is a long way for RTA to go. Past SP have identified expensive rail extensions across regions. That is not in this plan. The plan identifies maintaining current infrastructure, identifying how frequent bus service drives ridership across the region. Some recommendations may not appear catalytic on their face, but he believes the data shows that when the plan is implemented, it will transform RTA and the region.

Mr. Bibb added that the cost considerations for each recommendation are not clear and the operational wide decisions needed to execute the recommendations. Chief McCall asked if some more slides could be added to connect it to the other studies. She is not tied to what other agencies are doing, but she asked if there could be some points looking to the future to take advantage of the Pandemic. She likes the seven key points. The plan can be looked at annually against the metrics. Ms. Birdsong said the feedback is warranted. She agrees the presentation can be bulked up prior to the Board meeting. The peer agency comparison should be in the presentation. The cost consideration piece will shake out as the operational piece is looked at on the success metrics and goals. TransPro will come to the Board in the next month regarding the action items and turning the plan into yearly metrics. The details will be reflected in the TransPro presentation. There needs to be more detail in the HDR recommendations to answer questions related to fare equity and new funding.

Public Comments

1. Joshua Jones - I am a member of RTA's Citizen Advisory Committee, and we received an early presentation of the strategic plan from the consultants. Equity is a main goal of the plan, and the consultants also included this year's social movement for racial justice as an influence. Therefore, I ask that RTA incorporate into the strategic plan a commitment to equitable fare enforcement. I ask that RTA begin a civilian (unarmed) transit ambassador program to assist riders and check fares, thus enabling proof-of-payment for our rapid transit services and remaining in compliance with constitutional fare enforcement rules. I ask that RTA reallocate 50% of its transit police budget to the civilian transit ambassador program and service improvements. This is necessary to end the criminalization of our riders and the disproportionate harm that people of color experience from RTA. Thank you.
2. Steve Charron – Cleveland, OH - Hello, my name is Steve and I live in Cleveland, in the Tremont neighborhood. I believe a major change in faring and fare enforcements are critical to restoring the faith of Cleveland residents in the transit system, and crucial to revitalize what could be a model for transit services in mid-sized cities across the country.

We need to take a hard look at how we're allocating money. How have we allowed our annual budget for fare enforcement officers to balloon to \$14 million dollars, just to issue under 500 evasion citations in the last 3 years? Rather than paying 125 officers to track down a miniscule number of fare evasions, you could drop fares on the estimated 45 million rides a year by 10% and still have nearly \$3 million left over!

Reinstitution of cut services would also make riders feel respected. I'm sure some riders resent paying increasing fares just to wait longer, or to never see a bus come, and use that as rationalization to skip a fare in the first place. Rather than browbeating riders into paying, make it a service they're willing to pay for.

As doctors say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Rather than have officers try to guess who may or may not have paid their fares, why not institute an ambassador program, aimed at helping members of the community to assist with fare relief as needed, direct the homeless who use the bus or train a shelter into facilities that can help them, and draw attention to dirty or damaged facilities before it impacts rider comfort or fleet functionality.

As I said, I believe the Cleveland RTA is uniquely positioned to show that a strong public transportation system doesn't have to be something you only find in the major metropolises of New York, San Francisco, or Chicago. Often it feels like the east and west sides of the city are very disconnected, with few easy methods to get back and forth, and the lake causes some major choke points for drivers. I know many young professionals who would love to skip the drive, but the unreliability of service and inconvenient locations of stops often makes it a hard sell. Revolutionizing our transit service into something that people want to use (not just feel obligated to) would have many positive impacts on our city for citizens of every race and every class. In summation: I strongly support a drastic re-allocation of fare enforcement officer funding into supporting service restoration, and focusing on supporting riders rather than criminalizing them over less than a nice cup of coffee.

3. Robert Winn - I am writing to provide comments re: the strategic plan presentation. Today's public hearing was livestreamed, but not until midway into the presentation. From my perspective as a regular rider there is a lot to like about this presentation, but since it was not provided to the public from the beginning, the public hasn't had an opportunity to see the full presentation and to digest the details.

Please provide a separate hearing, possibly facilitated by an external partner or other organization that is better equipped with the capabilities to successfully facilitate a virtual public hearing with the appropriate platform, hardware, etc. needed to provide this information in an online/virtual format. Even once the session began; the audio/WebEx issues have resulted in a largely inaccessible, difficult to understand presentation.

As far as the plan itself, I'm excited to see that there is a shift toward equity, and a goal of implementing fare capping as well as pursuing additional funding with the aim of shifting to the expanded funding network alternative. Please consider reallocating some operating funds from other departments such as Transit Police (which still has the same number of Fare Enforcement Officers despite proof-of-payment being eliminated from the HealthLine) and the shifting to civilian fare enforcement -- an alternative that would allow additional funds to be reallocated to operations and a possible earlier shift to the expanded funding alternative.

Agencies around the country are reexamining how they provide public safety and the cost effectiveness of traditional law enforcement in an equitable and cost effective way. RTA should be among the agencies leading on this issue.

4. Rev. Pam Pinkney – Cleveland, OH - This is Rev. Pamela M. Pinkney Butts 2020 United States Presidential Candidate. In the strategic planning please, remember that I have been asking for elevators on the east side not just ramps especially for people who manually push their wheelchairs. Please also check on the dialysis patients. Thank you very much.
5. Bob Ross - I implore RTA to take a hard look at several issues. The need to move to a more equitable position and remember the idea of Fair Fares. Expansion of routes and 7-day access to transit needs to happen. Defunding and diverting funds from transit police and looking at Transit

ambassadors and other groups for help in this area would be beneficial also. Thanks for your time and concerns.

Chief McCall said that comments could be submitted after the meeting for consideration and during the Board meeting. Ms. Pellot asked if the Community Circulators would be brought back for consideration. Maribeth said the plan does include improving where buses go and how they get there. They will go out for public meetings to look at how to implement the system redesign. This service will be addressed in the system redesign activities. Mayor Clough said this plan looks at what we want to accomplish and the next steps is how to accomplish it, which is the goal of the administration and the Board. It was moved by Rev. Lucas, seconded by Ms. Pellot to move this to the full Board. A revised version of the presentation will be submitted prior to the Board Meeting.

Community Training & Development Sites (Job Hubs)

Alicia Booker, Vice Present of Manufacturing Technology Center for Excellence for Tri-C and George Fields, Deputy General Manager for Human Resources, made the presentation. Dr. Marshall, Vice President of Access and Community Connections with Tri-C is on the call. RTA's people's strategy addresses all facets of developing current and future employees in cultural and engagement, leadership development, talent management, continuous empowerment, innovation and technology and compliance. Tri-C has been a long-standing workforce development partner for RTA and plays a significant role in meeting this strategy.

Tri-C has partnered with RTA on programs such as Facilities Maintenance Training, Mechanic Training, Electronic Repair Training, Temporary Commercial Drivers License Training, Frontline Supervisor Training, Lean Six Sigma (Green Belt & Black Belt). In order to further advance the development of current and future workforce, employer/academic and public workforce development partnerships are critical to providing solutions to challenges such as workforce sustainability. Low rates of education attainment, Greater Cleveland Population Loss, 30% of workforce eligible for retirement over next four years (Retirement Attrition at RTA), the need for a skills based workforce and the evolving leadership development and succession planning needs. As such, RTA is developing a memorandum of understanding with Tri-C to develop a Community Training & Development Job Hub. This type of partnership is part of Tri-C's Access Centers Framework. This type of partnership is also something that other transit agencies are doing. Particularly, they've been inspired by the collaboration of Los Angeles Metro and L.A. County to develop a transportation school to develop future generations of workers for careers in the transportation industry.


Alicia Booker will provide you with some more background on Tri-C's Access Center Framework and Community Training & Development/Job Hubs. As a part of Tri-C's Institute for Engagement and Development, they have established Access Centers. The focus of the centers is to join the community, neighborhood and industry. This was a part of RTA's Strategic Plan long-term strategy. As an educational institution, that is a part of their strategy. It's not enough to have a facility in the community. They want to connect the community to the facility. RTA is the method to do that. Through this MOU, they want to reach into communities that most need their support, to connect the community to education, training and jobs. They believe that RTA is rightly positioned as a part of their collaboration. They have Access Centers in specific communities such as Esperanza, MetroHealth and Olivet CDC. The next phase is connecting people to jobs through the job hubs. RTA will be a partner as a part of their Jobs Hubs collaborative. Central Bus Maintenance will be the primary training facility. Their target population is around that facility. They currently work with RTA for the CDL bus operator training at the Transportation Innovation Center in Euclid. The bus mechanic training apprenticeship is their newest initiative with the State. This is upwards of two years of training where a person can earn college credit that can be transferred as well as earn a journeyman's credential so they can backfill the void of talent.

Some of the training includes Google IT, healthcare training, manufacturing training, mechanical and transit. This will allow people at entry level positions to upscale and apply for skilled for training for higher positions in the organization. They are working on a press release, integrated marketing plan and

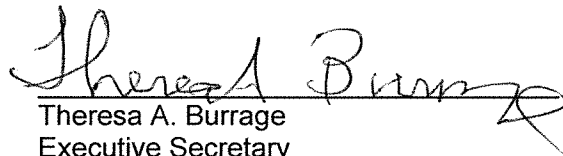
evaluation to co-brand this and leverage it out to the community and to communicate this internally. If this is approved to move forward, they will identify the matrix that will be specific to the work they are doing around the job hubs. Rev. Lucas asked why RTA is not included in the presentation. Ms. Booker said the presentation includes other partnerships. They haven't developed the material yet for RTA. Ms. Birdsong said this is the beginning of the partnership. RTA's expectation is to be included in future promotional material. These are examples of current programs. The MOU is to document the intent to ensure there is a commitment in writing as to the job centers and job hubs to move forward and visually included as well as verbally.

Chief McCall asked for some examples where RTA is included. She hopes access points are strategically aligned to have connectivity with some of the locations. She did not see anything about working with the CDCs like Burten, Bell, Carr and others. They are strategically located throughout the city. This needs to be updated before it comes to the Board. This is just an update to the Board. Ms. Birdsong said the feedback will be taken back to refine the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.



Floun'say R. Caver, Ph.D.
Interim Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage
Executive Secretary