



MINUTES
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
FEBRUARY 17, 2016

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** The regular meeting of the Regional Transportation Authority Board of Directors was held in the meeting room at Music City Central, 400 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN on Wednesday, February 17, 2016. A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chair Kim McMillan, Clarksville Mayor.
- II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair McMillan entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2015 meeting. Proper motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
- III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Chair McMillan opened the floor for public comments and recognized the following member of the public:

Jo Ann Graves with Transit Alliance of Middle Tennessee (TAMT)

Ms. Graves reported that TAMT is in their first Transit Leadership Academy session of the year with their third class being held tonight (February 17) at Music City Central. Another session is being planned to begin in late May and another in the fall. Ms. Graves encouraged those who might be interested to please go to their website for further details. She also noted that TAMT is in their second round of meetings for the RTA community outreach that will begin in March and continue through the end of April. Additionally, an abbreviated three-hour session that is geared to planning commissions and city councils is going to be offered for those who cannot come to a seven week session. The first will be held in Sumner County.

- IV. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (A-16-001):** In December, the Executive Committee presented this slate of officers for the Board's consideration:

- Chair – Clarksville Mayor Kim McMillan
- Vice Chair – Wilson County Mayor Randal Hutto
- Secretary – Governor's Appointee Paula Mansfield

Motion was made to elect the officers as presented and the vote of approval was unanimous.

As a matter of housekeeping, per RTA By-laws, the election of officers is to be officially held this month and nominations from the floor will be accepted. Proper motion was made to elect the slate of officers as presented. There were no nominations from the floor. The vote to elect this slate of officers was unanimous.

- V. **MARKETING REPORT:** Chair City of White House Alternate Gerald Herman reported that the Marketing Committee met last week, and he expressed his thanks to all the members for participating in their first meeting of the new year. The Committee had an extended session with a presentation on the results of the Intercept Survey conducted with potential riders in the RTA service area.

As mentioned late last year, the Committee worked with our marketing firm Phase 3 and researchers from “What They Think Research” on this project. The following is a synopsis of information about that survey:

The Online Survey was for those in the RTA service areas outside of Davidson County. There were 25 questions, and it was conducted in December 2015. Nearly 600 surveys were completed with a margin of error +/- 4 percent.

There were two main objectives of the survey:

- We wanted to understand why residents *are* or *are not* using RTA services. That was important to us.
- We wanted to test potential nMotion concepts for increasing ridership.

Overview of Key Findings:

- Current RTA riders choose to use RTA services when traveling to Davidson County for primarily two reasons: to avoid traffic and to get to work.
- Potential riders or non-riders are not using RTA services when traveling to Davidson County primarily because of *inconvenience*. Service is not convenient to where they live or need to go. Many others said that they need the use of their car during the day.

All 11 concepts developed by nMotion tested for improving RTA transportation services were considered very or somewhat beneficial by the majority. Some examples include:

- Develop some form of rapid transportation services (light rail, express buses or other forms of rapid transportation): 83 percent
- Provide stops closer to their destination: 80 percent
- Provide more frequent service during the week: 78 percent
- Operate longer hours on weekdays: 77 percent
- Add more Park and Ride lots closer to my location: 77 percent

The Committee appreciates that many of the members linked/or posted the survey tool to their website and social media platforms. If anyone would like to review the full report, please contact Patricia Harris-Morehead, and she will email the full report to them.

Concluding, Chair Herman reported that Ms. Morehead provided an update for the committee on RTA’s partnership with Miller Coors for Game-Day Express. The committee is pleased to report that, for the first time in several years, we made a profit: \$2,300. This concluded the report.

- VI. **FINANCE AND AUDIT REPORT:** Board Chair McMillan called on Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant to present the report. Mr. Oliphant reported that the Finance & Audit Committee did not meet this month, but the financials are included in the Board book. The action item that follows the Financial Report concerns the Annual

Audit Report which was presented when the Finance & Audit Committee met in January. Inclement weather (snow and ice) caused the January Board meeting to be cancelled and that is why this action item is coming before the Board today out of the January Committee meeting.

- a. **Monthly Financial Report Compared to Budget (I-16-001):** Mr. Oliphant reviewed for the Board the statement of operations for the month of December 2015 compared to budget and the balance sheet as of December 31, 2015. All things were in order, and there were no questions.
- b. **Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Audit Report (A-16-002):** The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015 has been completed and was distributed at the Finance and Audit Committee meeting in January 2016. The Committee is pleased to report that the RTA of Middle Tennessee once again received a “clean” opinion on the report from our auditors.

After a thorough review of the Annual Report by the RTA’s outside accountants, Crosslin & Associates, the Finance and Audit Committee recommends the Board adopt the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2015 as presented to the Committee in January.

Governor Appointee Ed Cole asked that the record show this Board’s appreciation to the staff at MTA/RTA for this clean audit with no findings and their management of RTA’s resources.

Proper motion was made and seconded and the vote to adopt this audit was unanimous.

- VII. OPERATIONS REPORT:** Chair Mayor Wilber asked RTA Chief Operations Officer India Birdsong to review the operating statistics for the Board. Ms. Birdsong noted that these December statistics are impacted by holidays, reroutes, and construction and that a couple of the express routes continue to suffer from the loss of the park & rides. Ms. Birdsong continued with a detailed review of the operating statistics for the Board.

Chair Wilber then presented the following action item:

- a. **Update of System Safety Program Plan (A-16-003):** At the inception of the Music City Star rail service, RTA developed a living document entitled the System Safety Program Plan (SSPS), to ensure the well-being of our customers, employees and contractors. This plan is utilized to develop system safety goals and objectives, while measuring the effectiveness of enforced safety programs.

As such, the SSPS is to be reviewed and updated annually, thereby providing a comprehensive description of current safety related policies and procedures to aid in the prevention of and response to accidents. The SPSS has been updated and was submitted at our committee meeting for review. The Committee recommends the updated System Safety Program Plan to the Board for adoption. Proper motion was made and seconded. There was no discussion and the vote to adopt was unanimous.

- VIII. NMOTION STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE & BOARD DISCUSSION (I-16-002):** Chair McMillan called upon CEO Steve Bland to lead this discussion. Mr. Bland noted

that their original goal was to have done this at the January Board meeting, but because of the weather they had to defer until this month.

Mr. Bland gave an overview of what has been done to date, April 2015 through December 2015. Overall there were about 8,700 recorded engagements with the public through that period of time. Essentially the ‘asks’ were pretty simple: convenience, speed, directness of travel, frequency, and dependability. Safety and the issue of park-and-ride locations also came up, asking for a reliable park & ride in a good location accessible both to home location and immediately accessible to the travel routes.

The purpose of this next phase is to engage further public discussion on mobility options for Middle Tennessee – not to select a final plan from among the three scenarios. It is highly unlikely that one of the three scenarios would be recommended as presented for a final system plan. They are intended to show a wide range of approaches (at varying levels of investment, time to completion and impact) and where various strategies could be most effective. We expect to process the feedback we receive from the region on various strategies, levels of investment and impact to work toward final plan recommendations later this year. These are not detailed, accurate cost estimates; they are intended to be comparative. For this order of investment, this is what you can expect to see.

With a primary focus on expanded public engagement, the nMotion process has built on work advanced in prior studies and manifested through products such as NashvilleNext (Nashville’s Comprehensive Plan) and the Nashville Area MPO’s “Bold New Vision for Mass Transit.” Most of the locational decisions for transit investments are based on these prior processes.

The respective strategic plans of the MTA and RTA were originally intended as two separate documents. As we advanced through nMotion, you will see the MTA and RTA scenarios are presented in a combined fashion. While the planning process recognizes the independence of the two entities organizationally, conversations with residents emphasized the need for a seamless system from the perspective of the end user. The same is true of local transit systems in Clarksville, Franklin and Murfreesboro. The scenarios all speak to a need to better coordinate services throughout the region, and move toward a seamless and connected experience for the end user. These recommendations are not intended to speak toward issues of governance structure.

The scenarios show widely different levels of investment and impact. Scenario 1 (labeled “A Comprehensive Regional Transit System”) presents a large scale capital intensive investment in transit that will take many years to complete and have tremendous impact on transit mode share and regional development patterns consistent with that in many peer cities (such as Denver, Salt Lake City, etc.) that have developed robust transit networks. Scenario 3 (labeled “Improve Experience for Current Customers and Continue Moderate Expansion”) assumes growth in investment in mass transit proportionate with population growth, as has been the case for the past 10 years or so. It contemplates many improvements in current services, but would not be expected to significantly alter mode share, or

fundamentally change the current mobility trajectory for Middle Tennessee. Scenario 2 (“Major Improvements to Several Key Corridors”) represents a middle ground.

Many people may view these as discrete choices (i.e.: large investment/long-term vs. small investment/short-term) and perceive that we are simply asking them to pick one or the other. However, growth and change in Middle Tennessee is too dynamic for this simple a choice, and our plans for future mobility should be more robust. The MTA and RTA Boards of Directors could easily conclude that we should undertake the types of projects and investments outlined in Scenario 3 as quickly as possible, while planning for strategies contained in scenarios 1 and 2 over a longer time frame and simultaneously pursuing funding alternatives and complementary public policy changes.

With respect to current transit riders, there would be significant service improvements in all three scenarios. Higher investment levels reflected in scenarios 1 and 2 would attract new riders in larger numbers.

Mr. Bland then presented a brief overview of each scenario. Included below is a summary of each:

- a. Scenario 1 – A Comprehensive Regional Transit System. This scenario illustrates a robust regional transit system structured around a network of high capacity services including Light Rail, Bus Rapid Transit, Rapid Bus, Streetcar, Commuter Rail, and Freeway Bus Rapid Transit. It also strengthens regional connections and provides local service in many new areas. In terms of outcomes, it would provide for major increases in mass transit ridership; significantly affect the market share for transit in a number of key, congested corridors; help to generate “transit oriented development” investment in a number of neighborhoods, communities and corridors – with accompanying increases in property values; and would make mass transit a much more integral component of Middle Tennessee’s transportation network. It would also require a much higher level of investment over time (with new, dedicated funding sources), much longer time frames to complete, and supporting changes in public policy such as land use, development density and pedestrian infrastructure. This could be considered a “full build out” alternative.
- b. Scenario - 2 Major Improvements in Several Key Corridors. This scenario would expand more service to new areas, but would focus the most significant improvement in major corridors. Its major improvements consist of providing service over more hours, developing a larger Frequent Transit Network comprised of Bus Rapid Transit and Rapid Bus routes, and the development of Freeway Bus Rapid Transit on I-24 south and I-65 north and south. This scenario would begin to shift more people onto transit and encourage transit-oriented development in specific locations, but would not be as comprehensive as Scenario 1. Transit would still not be considered an option for most commuters in Middle Tennessee. This could be considered a “medium-term” alternative. It would also require significantly more funding than is presently the case, either through a new (albeit, smaller than Scenario 1) funding source or a significant shift in current spending priorities away from other purposes toward mass transit.

- c. Scenario 3 – Improve Experience for Current Customers and Continue Modest Expansion. This scenario represents a continuation of recent trends where marginal improvements are made to improve the customer experience, but where service is still largely attractive to relatively small market niches. While some expansion is included, the major thrust of this scenario is to make existing services more robust, and to make transit more convenient and attractive in areas that are already served. Major improvements would consist of providing more trips for longer hours on both MTA and RTA routes and developing a Frequent Transit Network comprised largely of Rapid Bus routes (similar in nature to current MTA BRT lite service). These would greatly improve transit for existing riders and make it more attractive to others who travel in those areas. However, these improvements would still be relatively modest. Such a system could be expected to yield ridership gains relatively proportional to population increases (particularly in areas that are currently served by transit). However, market share would not be impacted, and the system would have little to no impact on future development patterns, mandating that significant roadway capacity expansions be planned to accommodate forecast regional growth. Overall spending on mass transit would increase, but generally in proportion with population/tax base increases in the region, so it would be unlikely to strain spending on other priorities.

Mr. Bland further discussed these scenarios and then introduced MTA/RTA Director of Planning and Grants Felix Castrodad and Geoff Slater from Nelson Nygaard to answer further questions.

- IX. **CEO’S REPORT:** In the interest of time, CEO Steve Bland deferred his report.
- X. **CHAIR’S REPORT:** Chair McMillan extended her thanks on behalf of the Board to Steve Bland, Geoff Slater, and Felix Castrodad for their presentation today.
- XI. **OTHER BUSINESS:** There was no other business to come before the RTA.
- XII. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

Respectfully,

Paula Mansfield
Governor’s Appointee
RTA Secretary