

Regional Transportation District

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MINUTES

Government Relations Committee

Tuesday, March 7, 2017

Rooms R, T, & D

5:30 PM

Conference Dial-in # 303-299-2663

Conference ID: 15120

Government Relations Committee

Chaired by Jeff Walker

A. Call to Order

Committee Chair Walker called the meeting to order at 7:52 p.m.

| Attendee Name | Title | Status | Arrived |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------|---------|
| Lorraine Anderson | Director, District L | Present | 7:55 PM |
| Ernest Archuleta | Director, District C | Present | 7:52 PM |
| Bob Broom | Director, District F | Present | 7:49 PM |
| Barbara Deadwyler | Director, District B | Absent | |
| Claudia Folska | Director, District E | Present | 7:54 PM |
| Tina Francone | Director, District N | Present | 7:52 PM |
| Larry Hoy | Director, District J | Present | 7:52 PM |
| Judy Lubow | Director, District I | Present | 7:53 PM |
| Ken Mihalik | Director, District G | Present | 7:50 PM |
| Natalie Menten | Director, District M | Present | 7:52 PM |
| Doug Tisdale | Committee Vice-Chair | Present | 7:50 PM |
| Chuck Sisk | Director, District O | Present | 7:52 PM |
| Paul Solano | Director, District K | Present | 7:52 PM |
| Jeff Walker | Committee Chair | Present | 7:50 PM |
| Kate Williams | Director, District A | Present | 7:52 PM |

Director Deadwyler was absent.

Staff Present: Rolf Asphaug, Shirley Bennett, Lee Cryer, Nate Currey, Martell Dyles, Sherry Ellebracht, Terry Emmons, David Genova, Adrina Gibson, Bob Grado, Doug Grag, John Hersey, Ali Imansepahi, Russ Larson, Adrian Mabry, Michelle Madrid, Doug MacLeod, Robin McIntosh, Jr., John McKay, Barbara McManus, Mike Meader, Ed Neuberg, Scott Reed, Jenifer Ross-Amato, Roger Sherman, Zamy Silva, Brittany Smith, Lindsey Smith, Errol Stevens, Henry Stopplecamp, Bill Van Meter, Jyotsna Vishwakarma, Ashland Vaughn, Brian Welch

Others Present: Jenifer Brandeberry, William Gross, John Thompson, Joe Triplett, Gary Van Dorn, Megan Wagner, Tim Walker

B. Recommended Actions

There were no recommended actions.

C. Updates

- **Local Update - CRL Associates, Inc.**

Roger Sherman, CRL Associates, said that it was unclear whether the legislature would be submitting a referred measure to the voters. He said he had heard that the prospects for transportation legislation had gone from poor to better within a span of a few days during the previous week. He said that Fix Colorado Roads, a coalition that includes Move Colorado and the Metro Mayors Caucus, is moving in parallel to the legislature on their own ballot issues and that the group plans to submit a number of ballot questions prior to the upcoming title board deadline. He suggested that the group would be submitting ballot questions regardless of what happens with the legislature. He said that the group is looking at two or three different tax increase proposals and that there are a number of scenarios where RTD could potentially benefit from a ballot question and the money that would flow to local jurisdictions. He said that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) would be receiving a significant amount of funds for infrastructure improvements, which would then allow local jurisdictions to have the flexibility to band together on regional projects. Mr. Sherman said that he would keep the Board informed of any new developments.

Mr. Sherman added that members of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) had met with Directors earlier that day and that they would be meeting with two additional Directors on Friday. Mr. Sherman said he would be presenting summary of the meetings at the April meeting.

Director Folska said that she had declined to meet with CAC members the previous year because she failed to see a tangible contribution on their part to RTD, though she did not attribute that as a failing by the CAC or Mr.

Sherman. She said she does not see RTD making an effort to integrate the CAC's input into decision-making and would be happy to meet with the CAC again in the future. She stated that CAC members could be integrated into the pass program working group, because the numerical limit on current participants was an arbitrary number.

Director Francone asked Roger Sherman about speculation that Denver may split off and form its own transit organization.

Mr. Sherman said that the primary advocate for changing the transit agency structure is Denver Councilwoman Mary Beth Susman. He said there is a plan to go to the voters with a bonding issue. Mr. Sherman said he doubts whether the city administration has the desire to get into transit business. He said the City and County of Denver is under pressure to provide more sidewalks, bike lanes, first/last-mile solutions, and circulators, and he speculated that any bonding issue would fund those projects rather than forming a new transit agency. He said he does not believe that a majority of those on the city council would agree to a proposal that would form a new transit agency and knows the mayor would not support it.

Director Francone said she would like to know what benefit RTD would receive from any of the ballot proposals currently under consideration. She said that the MPACT64 proposals and bills coming out of the legislature do not direct funding toward RTD. She questioned why RTD is participating in the discussions and questioned whether RTD should be using its resources in these efforts.

Mr. Sherman said that new revenues being directed toward RTD would be unlikely because RTD has its own funding source. He said that RTD's participation in the conversation is important, particularly because of the proposed flexible funds for local jurisdictions, with which the jurisdictions could pool their resources. He mentioned that, in the past, certain local governments contributed a high degree of matching funding for the projects such as the Southeast Rail Extension (SERE). Mr. Sherman said that such funding is a direct benefit to RTD and that he believes that the agency and the Board should participate in the process regardless of the jurisdiction and regardless of whether the given locality is interested in more bus routes, bus miles, or infrastructure improvements.

Committee Chair Walker said he agreed with Mr. Sherman that RTD should participate in the ballot question conversations. He said that he was recently asked to sit on the transportation and mobility committee of a general obligation bond issue group and sat on a similar one in 2007. He stated that one of the projects that came out of the prior effort was the bike bridge over I-25 that leads to Colorado station. He said that, if Denver wants to build sidewalks and improve bus stops within the city, RTD would also benefit. He asked whether other local cities were pursuing similar initiatives.

Mr. Sherman said that a similar ballot question failed in Arvada and that he is not sure whether any other local government is preparing to do something similar. He said Aurora is always looking at options.

Director Lubow said that she would be interested in securing funding for FasTracks and that she hopes local jurisdictions would band together to leverage their flexible funds.

Director Broom stated that local jurisdictions are reluctant to go forward with their own bond issues because the legislature is working on measures of its own.

Mr. Sherman said that the situation is unique in that revenues would be coming from sales tax. He said that the additional incremental sales tax from an initiative could push some cities toward a 9% or 10% sales tax rate.

Director Anderson asked whether there is strong support for transit being part of a ballot initiative.

Mr. Sherman responded that the answer to Director Anderson's question changes depending on who is answering. He said here is not a lot of support for levying a statewide sales tax and taking a portion of it to flow directly into RTD, which is why the initiative proponents have come up the idea of flexible funding. He said that, in jurisdictions where transit is important, the discretionary money is available for that purpose.

- **State Update -State Update - Brandeberry McKenna**

Jenifer Brandeberry, Brandeberry-McKenna Public Affairs, said that there is enormous potential for a transportation bill, sponsored by the President of the Colorado Senate and the Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, that would direct flexible funds to local jurisdictions. She said she is encouraged that the President and the Speaker have been involved in ongoing talks on the issue and is optimistic the bill would be introduced in April 2017. She said it is important for RTD to be part of the conversation around the crafting of transportation legislation because RTD acts as a statewide partner and has reputation for creating results. Regarding the state budget, Ms. Brandeberry said that both parties realize they need to apply some outside-the-box thinking. She said that, as opposed to years past, legislative leadership, not just the Joint Budget Committee (JBC), would have input on the rollout of the budget and that budget talks have been delayed pending House and Senate agreements on transportation funding and the hospital provider fee.

Director Broom asked whether local jurisdictions have been encouraged to develop lists of projects for any flexible funds identified in the forthcoming referred measure, lest the voters say that the measures are merely a blank check.

Ms. Brandeberry said that no bill has been introduced yet, though she stated that discussions have indicated the referred measure would take the form of

a sales tax increase. She said that discussions will need to take place on how to bond off of the sales tax, how to repeal certain taxes such as the gas tax, and how state general fund money would be used to pay off bonds.

Mr. Sherman said that the campaign entity that will be formed to advocate for the passage of the referred measure would push for local jurisdictions to outline the projects for which the flexible funds would be used.

Ms. Brandeberry concluded with an update on a bill regarding construction defects, SB17-156, which passed the Senate on third reading by a vote of 23 to 12, indicating bipartisan support for the measure. She said that the bill now moves to the House.

- **Federal Update – Squire Patton Boggs**

Sherry Ellebracht, Government Relations Officer, said that Mike Dino of Squire Patton Boggs was in Washington, D.C., at the time of the meeting and that she was happy to answer questions.

Director Folska asked Ms. Ellebracht to give the new Directors background information on the Highway Transportation Trust Fund and the 80/20 federal-to-state matching ratio.

Ms. Ellebracht responded that she could deliver that information offline and that Mr. Dino could better address the issue. She also said that the Directors had each been given information on the talking points the Directors would be using during the APTA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., the following weekend. She said that she would follow up with any information that came out of the conference.

D. Other Matters

There were no other matters.

E. Next Meeting Date - April 4, 2017

F. Adjourn

Committee Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

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THE CHAIR REQUESTS THAT ALL PAGERS AND CELL PHONES BE SILENCED DURING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING FOR THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT.