

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

FRIDAY

10:00 A.M.

August 18, 2023

PRESENT:

**Ed Lawson, Mayor of Sparks
Alexis Hill, Vice Chair, Washoe County Commissioner
Hillary Schieve, Mayor of Reno (Arrived @ 10:06 a.m.)
Devon Reese, Reno City Vice Mayor
Mariluz Garcia, Washoe County Commissioner**

**Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director
Adam Spear, Legal Counsel
Darin Tedford, Deputy Director of NDOT**

The regular monthly meeting, held in the 1st Floor Great Room at Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County, Reno, Nevada, was called to order by Chair Lawson. The Board conducted the following business:

Item 1 CALL TO ORDER

- 1.1 Roll Call
- 1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Item 2 PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Lawson opened the meeting to public input and called on anyone wishing to speak on topics relevant to the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) that are not included in the current agenda.

Amanda Nelson, Transit Operator with Keolis, came to discuss the bus fares. I see other agencies across the country converting to a no fare system. With the cost of living people are struggling and digging for change for bus fare. If we moved to a no fare policy, the buses could be more on time, there would be more ridership and it would help emissions.

Ms. Donna Clontz, local resident with the Senior Coalition, and Lead Volunteer with Age Friendly Communities Reno. I've been working with a large group of people that have been working on an Age Friendly Program in our area for the past five years, which includes three major areas that we work on. One is affordable transportation, two is affordable housing and three is getting information out to our senior community on what is available for them for services for resources and things they can do to make their lives much better. I wanted to give you a copy today of our latest Elder Services Guides and Resources. We've made it simple with a phone number and website. We've printed 20,000 of these brochures and we're trying to get them out across the County. Please put them in your offices and bus stations, so people have access to them.

Matthew McCarthy submitted a letter from the Washoe County Health District, Air Quality Management Division, on RTC's proposed 2023-2027 RTIP, on August 9, 2023 at 4:14 p.m., as follows: The Washoe County Health District, Air Quality Management Division (AQMD) respectfully submits comments in support of the Draft 2023-2027 RTIP. All areas of Washoe County are currently designated "attainment" for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). However, monitoring data through 2022 indicate Washoe County is violating the 8-hour ozone NAAQS. The transportation

sector is the largest category of ozone precursor emissions in the County. Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and improving per-mile tailpipe emissions are the most effective strategies for managing ozone. As stated on Page 2 of the draft plan, the RTC Board adopted a resolution of support to join AQMD's Ozone Advance Program Partnership in 2016. RTC agreed to support Health District and regional plans that reduce ozone levels, encourage sustainable plans, policies, and codes through local, state, and federal jurisdictions, and implement sustainable practices in RTC operations. After review of the Draft 2023-2027 RTIP, AQMD has determined the plan to be aligned with the Ozone Advance Program initiatives. The numerous active transportation projects, public transit projects, and intersection optimization projects will help to offset the negative air quality effects of the increased roadway capacity needed to serve our growing county. RTC must continue to implement proactive measures to decrease or offset motor vehicle tailpipe emissions to maintain Washoe County's ozone attainment designation.

In addition to the support of the draft plan, AQMD has some recommendations and preferences on the implementation of the projects. First, studies show that protected bicycle lanes are the most effective at getting people on bikes.¹ The 2023-2027 RTIP has many projects that will include the addition of new bike lanes. To be the most effective at decreasing VMTs, RTC should consider constructing bike lanes that have a physical object separating bicyclists and traffic, the best option would be trees or shrubs separating the two. Second, RTC and its stakeholders must include the planting of trees in each of its projects. Washoe County suffers from high Urban Heat Island (UHI) impacts. Reno is the fastest warming metropolitan area in the United States.² The concentration of heat in the urban areas within Washoe County enhances the formation of ground-level ozone. The best way to counteract this is by increasing the urban tree canopy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft 2023-2027 RTIP. The AQMD is available for further discussion and can provide additional input on specific elements. Feel free to contact me at 775-784-7200 if I can be of further assistance. Sincerely, Francisco Vega, PE, MBA, Director, Air Quality Management Division.

Panah Stauffer submitted written comment via email August 10, 2023, at 10:43 a.m., regarding RTIP as follows: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2023-2027 Draft RTIP. I'm providing my thoughts for RTC's consideration in the RTIP and/or other planning processes.

1. Thank you for including so many bicycle, pedestrian, and other multimodal projects. I support all of them and encourage you to consider the following:

- Gaps in bike lane connectivity need to be addressed urgently. RTC is has mapped numerous gaps in the system; these create high-stress conditions that discourage biking.
- Secure bike storage for commuters, such as bike lockers or permanent bike valet cages, would greatly enhance the transit system and reduce the need to build more park-and-rides. The relocation of the Meadowood Mall Transfer Station is a prime opportunity to create secure bike storage infrastructure and support bicycle commuting.
- Many existing bike racks are situated too close to buildings, making it difficult to park more than one bicycle at a time. Adequate and appropriately positioned bike parking should be part of all multimodal projects.
- The Reno portion of the Tahoe-Pyramid Trail is very rough and needs resurfacing.
- Lines of sight underneath overpasses on the Reno portion of the Tahoe-Pyramid Trail need improvement to reduce the potential for collisions.

2. Thank you for including new FlexRIDE services in South Meadows in the draft RTIP. Please ensure this project enables seamless transfers to the Virginia Line BRT. Miles of residential neighborhoods in South Reno are currently excluded from the 56 bus line. If the new FlexRIDE requires riders to make two connections to get to other parts of town (FlexRIDE to 56 line, followed by additional transfers at Meadowood Mall), it will only reinforce that driving is a better option than transit.

3. I would like to see transformational improvements to the public transit system in the 2023-2027 RTIP. Extending the Virginia Line BRT, adding BRT on other arteries such as Veterans Parkway, increasing Reno-to-Carson Regional Connector service so that morning commuters are able to ride later than 7 AM, increasing overall frequency and coverage of bus routes, and increasing microtransit such as Bird scooters should all be near-term priorities for RTC. Based on an informal conversation,

my understanding is that RTC has funds for additional transit, but that the agency has trouble finding and retaining drivers. Please do whatever it takes to become a top-tier workplace that attracts outstanding talent. The 2020s are the make-or-break years for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and Washoe County has the potential to rise to the occasion.

Antonio Taylor submitted written comment via email August 11, 2023, at 10:58 a.m. regarding Reno Mayors Comments/US-395 South Virginia Street as follows: I was very disappointed when Mayor Hillary Schieve was lambasting the RTC at the Reno City Council meeting last night (8/9/2023). She called RTC cowards for not attending the meeting over US-395 BUS (S. Virginia Street) road changes. I find her comments towards RTC Washoe unfortunate and disrespectful as a head of government and state. When the city council meeting was occurring, she didn't know but you all and others knew about the bankruptcy of bus manufacturer Proterra Incorporated. RTC had its own crisis in the making which is more pertinent than discussing the changes of South Virginia Street. Last night during the meeting, I sent an email to members of the board (Sparks Mayor and Reno Councilman Reese) and NDOT officials regarding the bankruptcy and how that will affect the RTC bus fleet. Hopefully that will be addressed at the upcoming RTC board meeting and that concern will be sent to the Mayor Schieve.

Michael Gawthrop submitted written comment via email August 14, 2023, at 10:43 a.m. regarding FlexRIDE and Reno Mayors comments on Virginia Street through Midtown as follows: There are a few things that I would like to provide commentary on. First, the transit operations report in the agenda packet indicates that the median wait time for FlexRIDE is only 18.2 minutes. I would appreciate it if RTC was willing to release detailed data on how this was determined, because I have never had a quoted wait time of less than half an hour. I'm fortunate that I do not depend on FlexRIDE, I'm close enough to other fixed route service and am able to cycle (and when absolutely necessary can get access to a car), so that checking FlexRIDE is more of a novelty, but how are people who actually depending on that service supposed to depend on such unreliable wait times? RTC either needs to meet their promise of wait times of no more than 8-15 minutes or they need to bring back the fixed route services that FlexRIDE replaced. Second, during the discussion of the RTIP, which includes in it the goal of improving traffic safety in the region, it would be good for Mayor Schieve to explain how her vote to remove the median on Virginia St through Midtown, which the city's data indicated had reduced crashes to nearly as close to zero as we've ever seen, contributes to the stated goal of "zero fatalities".

There being no one else wishing to speak, Chair Lawson closed public input.

Item 3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Commissioner Reese to move to approve agenda, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered that the agenda for this meeting be approved.

Items 4 CONSENT ITEMS

4.1 Minutes

4.1.1 Approve minutes from 7/21/2023 Board meeting. (For Possible Action)

4.2. Reports

4.2.1 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Procurement Activity Report. (For Possible Action)

4.2.2 Acknowledge receipt of the Summary Report for the Technical, Citizens Multimodal, and Regional Road Impact Fee Advisory Committees. (For Possible Action)

4.2.3 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Planning Activity Report. (For Possible Action)

- 4.2.4 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Engineering Activity Report. (For Possible Action)
- 4.2.5 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Public Transportation and Operations Activity Report. (For Possible Action)
- 4.2.6 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Outreach Report from the Communications staff. (For Possible Action)

4.3 Planning Department

- 4.3.1 Approve a contract with Parametrix, Inc., for consulting services on the Regional Freight Plan, in an amount not-to-exceed \$149,296.14. (For Possible Action)

4.4 Engineering Department

- 4.4.1 Approve a contract with HDR Engineering, Inc., for design and optional construction management services for the Veterans Parkway ITS Project, in an amount not-to-exceed \$375,460. (For Possible Action)
- 4.4.2 Approve a recommendation to commence with the sale of four parcels (APN# 020-111-66; 020-11-67; 020-111-36; and 020-111-37) acquired in connection with the Peppermill Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station Project, by sale to adjoining property owners, sealed bids, auction, direct sale, or as otherwise authorized by law. (For Possible Action)

4.5 Public Transportation/Operations Department

- 4.5.1 Approve a contract with Spika Design & Manufacturing for the purchase of a bus inspection platform, in an amount not-to-exceed \$200,790. (For Possible Action)
- 4.5.2 Approve an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement (ICA) with the Nevada Department of Transportation to provide funding to the RTC for the ED Pass Program in the amount of \$350,000. (For Possible Action)

4.6 Executive, Administrative and Finance Department

- 4.6.1 Acknowledge receipt of a report regarding quarterly progress on RTC Agency Goals and Strategic Roadmap - FY 2023 (Q4). (For Possible Action)

On motion of Commissioner Schieve to approve all Consent Items, seconded by Commissioner Reese, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered Consent items be approved.

Item 5 PUBLIC HEARING

- 5.1 Approve a resolution adopting the Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2023-2027 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). (For Possible Action)
 - a. Staff presentation
 - b. Public Hearing
 - c. Action

Dan Doenges, RTC Planning Director, presented slides and stated this motion is before you to approve our update to our RTIP.

The RTIP is a required Federal document. It is a 5-year look at all of our Program of Projects, which include anything showing Federal funding, as well as projects of regional significance within Washoe County. All of the MPOs in the State have a copy of this and they are adopted by rights into the Statewide Project Improvement Program. This includes projects for RTC and NDOT and the local jurisdictions.

Our current RTIP covers the FFY 2021-2025 and we will be updating this to FFY 2023-2027. We are required to do this every four years, however, we choose to update every two years, as it really helps us streamline the process and keeps it more relevant to the public.

The RTIP is looking at air quality impacts. There are no changes to projects that involve capacity, as all of the capacity projects have already been vetted through the Air Quality Analysis process, so there are no new air quality projects. We held a public comment period starting July 21, 2023 through August 10, 2023, which was advertised throughout our media outlets, social media, RGJ, Sparks Tribune, Nevada de Sol and through our Public Participation Plan.

We received two comments, one from the Washoe County Health District Air Quality Management Division, as well as one from a resident. They were largely in support of the projects and programs that are being proposed in the updated RTIP. Those will also be included as part of the record in the meeting minutes.

A few notable projects are the Sparks Boulevard Phase 2, the Plumas Street Sidewalk Improvements which is being implemented by the City of Reno, and US-395 in both Phase 1 and Phase 2, also the Micromobility Network. Those are pending public input, as well as input from the Reno City Council and we anticipate coming back in a few months after we have additional information to amend it, but for now, those projects are in the RTIP and identified.

We have a few bridge projects that include, Keystone Avenue, Sierra Street and Arlington Avenue Bridges.

Commissioner Reese, thank you for the excellent presentation. I want to understand more about the Military Roadway Improvements and North Valleys. Both the State and RTC have sought to improve the traffic patterns in the North Valleys, so I'm always going to be pushing at this dais to understand specifically what is going on in the North Valleys. We have a lot of safety concerns in that area. What specifically you anticipate happening in the North Valleys?

Jeff Wilbrecht, RTC Engineering Manager, that project is looking at safety and capacity of Military Road from Lemmon Drive up to Echo Avenue. Lear Boulevard is an intermediary component of that corridor where we will be performing intersection control evaluations. We are in the beginning stages of this project where we are doing our due diligence and gathering as much data and input that we can to understand all the needs for the area. Then we would advance to a rough 10%-30% design in which we would start the outreach process to outwardly communicate of the findings and receive input from the community. Then the process would advance forward towards construction.

Commissioner Schieve, what is the process in which you prioritize projects?

Dan Doenges, RTC Planning Director, when we do the long-range plan update, we are really taking a 20 year look to find needs throughout the whole region. A lot that goes into the RTP is formed by specific corridor studies that we do, so when we hear about safety needs, such as in the North Valleys, those kind of elevate and rise to the top. We funnel projects through a prioritization process and try to be very data driven about that, but understand that there might be other desires or needs outside of the data driven process, so we really use that as the information gathering and working with our stakeholders, such as the staff at the local jurisdictions, getting their input and the public input adding an additional layer of that prioritization.

Commissioner Schieve, can you tell me where pedestrian fatalities fit into that?

Dan Doenges, this current RTIP looked at a variety of factors, safety was actually our highest weighted factor, so we applied a composite score to that based upon crash frequency rate and severity, with severity being the heaviest weighted. We apply that to all of our projects and that was a big driver in how they were ranked and prioritized. As we're getting ready to do an update to the RTP in the coming months, one of the things we want to do is reevaluate that process to see if there is room for improvement. If there are things we can refine for the next round of projects as they are prioritized going forward, then we want to do that.

Commissioner Schieve, do you use the same recipe at NDOT?

Deputy Director Darin Tedford said yes, we do.

Vice Chair Hill, I see we have the Truckee River Shared Path on the list, as well as Broadhead Park, can you describe what those are going to be?

Dan Doenges, the Truckee River Shared Use Path is in relation to the segment that is next to the Reno Sparks Indian Colony. We've been working closely with the Indian Colony to advance that project. It addresses the one segment next to their Health Center. Then the Broadhead Park was one of the recently awarded transportation alternative grants. The is focused on specific trailhead access.

Vice Chair Hill, asked for highlights on the Safe Routes to Schools project and RTC Park and Ride.

Dan Doenges, we programmed the funding to support the Safe Route to Schools Coordinator positions. We do work with them, but they take the lead on doing the assessments and identifying solutions.

We are looking to expand our Park and Rides primarily for the Vanpool program to grow. We're trying to create those formal/informal meeting spaces where people can gather and ride the vans together. We will address that through our development review process. We're doing a Virginia Street Transit Oriented Development Study, so we're looking at potential opportunities there for Park and Ride, also we will be looking tangentially at the upcoming Freight Study, and looking at truck parking as well.

On motion of Commissioner Schieve to accept the (FFY) 2023-2027 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), seconded by Commissioner Reese, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered this item be approved.

Item 6 DISCUSSION ITEMS AND PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Discuss paving and lighting on the Truckee River Path as requested by Mayor Schieve, and provide input and direction to the Executive Director. (For Possible Action).

Commissioner Schieve, I really think it's time that we focus on the river on many aspects. I don't think it's just RTC, I think it's all of the jurisdictions coming together and making sure it's sustainable. I do think the path can provide ways for micromobility, walking/running. Being able to invest in it, whether it's lighting or paving, what does that look like? How much interest does the RTC have, so that we're all working together. The Truckee River Path is a rare asset to not to use it to its best ability.

Vice Chair Hill agrees that we have to figure out how to regionally work on the river path. The reason I brought up the Truckee River Shared Use Path and Broadhead Park in the RTIP, was because I wanted to point out that there have been efforts by RTC to invest. How can we further the

commitments to the path? Washoe County has partnered with the City of Reno on a study of the river, so how do we make sure the RTC is also at the table for whatever we can do to support this effort as well?

Commissioner Schieve, what would be helpful would be to create a Board that we all sit on, so there is constant conversation and everyone knows what is happening. I really feel strongly about having dedicated River Rangers along the river, it's not safe to sleep or camp and people need to be able to enjoy the river like we did when we were growing up. I'm happy to move that forward at the City to create some sort of Board, but I think it's time that we actually say, "how are we going to invest in this asset?"

Commissioner Reese, when I contemplate the importance of the river as a place of multimodal transportation, I think about the river and the reasons why people are engaging along it. Yes, some of it is recreational, but also some of it is moving people to and from a place. We have to conceptualize more broadly the role we have here at the RTC. It cannot just be about roads that buses and cars drive on. It includes the places where people bike and walk. People are living in our urban core more than they have historically, so if a person desires to go from their home in downtown Reno to their job in South Meadows, they may access parts of that along this multimodal transportation corridor and the connectivity to it is what really drives the conversation. I want us at the RTC to be building the community we want to see 30 years in the future.

Commissioner Garcia, I echo the sentiments of my colleagues here about the importance of having continuity between the local jurisdictions. I represent District 3 at the County, which goes from Keystone to East McCarran in Sparks and Sun Valley down to Wooster. I think my District in particular is impacted by the decisions our body makes and the discussions we choose to have or not have. Having a uniform vision is key in any well planned project or design, but for me, more importantly is having equitable access. I would like to avoid having a piecemeal approach to the Truckee River Corridor where you can feel when you're in Reno, and you can feel when you're in Sparks, etc. It's not only about connectivity, but also about the aesthetics of it. We want our constituents to feel valued.

Chair Lawson, there needs to be a plan number one. What does it look like, how wide is the path, how many street lights do you add, how much is it going to cost, what is the budget? So, you can then come up with a plan. I'm 100% in favor of what you're talking about and it doesn't all fall here. It falls on many different regional boards. I've been talking about a Lands bill so we can get tilt up concrete off of the river, so Sparks can enjoy the river. Our Truckee River is a huge asset for us that we're not taking advantage of. Again, I'm 100% behind this, but I think we have to start with what does it look like, where does it start and stop, how do we connect Reno, Sparks and Washoe County, and maybe even Storey County for that matter? This is a huge community effort, but I think it all starts with a drawing that lays out what it's going to look like and what it's going to cost.

Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director, I want to make sure we don't exit this item with unclear expectations. We certainly don't want to fail our Board and what you're expecting of us. I do know there is a consultant either being selected or being looked for on behalf of City of Reno and Washoe County to delve into this issue right now. Our perspective at the RTC is that we would be a participant. We're not a lead, but we will be participating. If there is a greater expectation of us, we would want to know. At least for now, that is how we're looking at it. I think part of the reason we've been so successful is that we stay focused on a couple of things, but certainly, if this is a direction for the Transportation element that you want us to be more engaged, then we are happy to do that.

Commissioner Schieve, you're right, we are investing about \$3 million to kick this off and start to put it together, so I think you're right. All I would ask is that you participate, and whenever that study is done, and we have a better idea of what that looks like, I think the Board would like to particularly focus on that aspect. We do have a role in it, but I do not think you are the lead.

Vice Chair Hill, to the Mayor's point, what we're doing with the Keystone Bridge for example, there is potential for RTC to collaborate with the Flood project. Ensuring we're working together and take partnerships in the studies, so when there is a role for us to play, we step up and play it. Find a way to support these projects in the same way we have the Shared Use Path and Broadhead Park and thinking how we play a role with those essential transportation elements that are outside of just streets.

6.2. Discuss the history and future direction of public transit in relation to Lake Tahoe as requested by Mayor Schieve, and provide input and direction to the Executive Director. (For Possible Action)

Commissioner Schieve, as the region has gotten much more popular, people have asked why we don't have dedicated transit up to Lake Tahoe? Have we ever played a role with our partners up there? Is there some way collaborate? Most cities that are tourist centered typically have transit to those destinations.

Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director, I will point the Board to one of the goals that we put in for 2024 in our RTC Goals. We have a goal to explore transportation solutions to reduce vehicle miles traveled in the Washoe County and the Tahoe area. That's very broad, but at least putting it in our goals means it's something we're going to be spending time on this year to try to refine and find out what it means. We also want to give the Board and the public a little history on what we have done, as we don't want to keep trying the same things, if they're not working. I'm going to ask Jim Gee to come up and give a little history on our efforts.

James Gee, RTC Service Planning/Innovation Manager, in terms of history of our service to Tahoe, the first attempt was several years ago and we had a traditional fixed route bus service that connected from The Summit Reno up to Incline Village and Sand Harbor. That service lasted about two months before it was cancelled and it was cancelled for three reasons. One was poor ridership; two was poor efficiency, in that it is a long stretch of road with really limited pick up and drop off points; and third and much more significantly, safety issues. The 40-foot transit bus that you see going up and down city streets were simply not made to go up and down Mt. Rose Highway. We had a lot of concerns about the braking systems and making sure our vehicles were safe going up there.

As a follow up to that in 2021, we created a FlexRIDE type of service to serve the Tahoe Region. That service used a smaller vehicle, and used a more on-demand type of scheduling system where folks had to schedule a ride. That service lasted most of the summer of 2021, but again, similar to the previous attempt, had very poor ridership, about 300 trips for the entire summer. We found that it was not families who were riding, but a lot of single person trips and two passenger trips, so it was very inefficient in that way. Surprisingly, we also found that the ridership was not centered on the weekends, it was actually a lot of week day ridership, which was taking our drivers away from ACCESS and FlexRIDE at a time when we had a significant driver shortage, and that created a lot of operational issues for us.

One success we've had with Tahoe is in our Vanpool Program. We started Vanpooling to the Tahoe region in 2022, and we now have 8-10 vehicles going up there, about 1,500 passengers per month. That piece has been much more successful than our previous efforts.

Vice Chair Hill, thank you Mayor Schieve for bringing this up, because this is something I'm working on as Chair of the Tahoe Transportation District, to try to see how we can better connect the region with transit. I will give RTC some big credit, as before I got on this Board, this Board approved funding for a mobility hub in Incline Village and we're working through that public process, which is amazing.

When you don't know where you are going to park or where you're going to go once you get up to Tahoe, it's easier to just drive, but we need to change that thought process. Could there be a basin user fee if you use your vehicle and what does that look like? We can't do tolls per NRS right now, so there is a lot of State law that would need to be worked out to incentivize public transit, but we have to figure this out. One thought is how are we going to do the Park and Ride? That's why I was curious about our RTC Park and Ride Program through the RTIP. Maybe there is a way to study Park and Ride by purchasing or leasing a property, to see what that could look like with infrastructure in place, and start to incentivize people taking the bus. I want to make sure that when we put the service into place, that people are going to take it. That's my concern and I don't know how we get them there unless we incentivize it. I have spoken to the Governor's office about basin fees and that and it's not a very popular concept.

Jim Gee, it's difficult right now because there is a disincentive in that if we take people up to Incline, for them to spend a weekend and want to move around the community, they have to switch to a different transit system. To move your luggage, coolers, backpacks, etc., is disincentive in itself to have people just say that they would rather drive.

We have in the past talked about alternative ways up to the Tahoe area. Maybe through Truckee where we can connect with TART. Maybe from the south, which obviously adds a lot of miles and time, but in terms of safety and the road itself, it may be a better fit for us geographically. I think it does deserve some definite study and thought.

Commissioner Schieve, a lot of the comments I've received were from tourists. Do we know what the ridership looks like, tourism versus local?

Jim Gee, our ridership was really designed for Reno residents to travel to Tahoe. There are private companies that provide shuttle services from the Airport both to Stateline and along the North Side of the Lake.

Commissioner Schieve, I think figuring out that connectivity piece is really critical and we haven't done that yet. Vice Chair Hill and I both sit on the Tourism Board, so we need to connect over there too and figure out what it looks like when we talk about the ridership. I think we're catering to different demographics and different users, and that is something that could shape where we want to go with these initiatives.

Jim Gee, one thing I neglected to add, we do have a great working relationship with both TART and TTD, those are the transportation providers in the regional up there. Both of them provide service in different areas along the Lake. TART has created a microtransit type of service in Incline Village and they have three different zones, which is partially funded by the RTC. They are also struggling the same as us with the driver shortage, so that has impacted their service quite a bit. For example, there is no direct connection between Stateline and Sand Harbor, which is a big gap on that side of the lake.

Chair Lawson, out of curiosity, does TRPA have anything to say in regards to transportation?

Jim Gee, my sense is that TRPA is the planning side and TTD is more of the operations and wheels on the streets.

Vice Chair Hill, TRPA just applied for a Federal Grant to essentially charge fees for people to go through Emerald Bay and through the Highway 28 corridor that is impacted by Sand Harbor, to see if we can start the concept of a basin user fee on a small scale. That would be something that TTD would eventually implement, because TRPA is seeing the impact of the vehicle miles traveled within the basin. They want to be a partner and they are trying to plan and find funding to support this. I think the Santini Burton Purchase Program is another possibility through the Lands Bill to look at, where every time land is disposed of, a portion of that money goes to the Forest Service. We need to figure out how that Santini Burton Forest Service money can go to transit.

There are a lot of things in place, but I'm trying to figure out how to connect the Reno side, which is missing. I'm trying to fund the shuttle that goes from the Airport to Incline Village because it's a \$90 ride right now, and it's too expensive. I have been working to subsidize it, and I've asked the Airport Authority, but they said they had restricted funding. I think I asked RTC and RTC said no too. Figuring out how we can fund and incentivize those kinds of things to get tourists in the habit of not having a vehicle up there is another piece. I agree with Jim, even the connectivity around the Lake needs to be improved greatly in order for us to say, "leave your car in Reno".

Vice Chair Hill, can we ask for a study or for staff to bring back a component of what a study would look like and the cost of something like that, so the Board could consider that for future approval?

On Motion of Vice Chair Hill, seconded by Commissioner Schieve, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered the motion to have RTC put a component of a study together on travel from Reno to Tahoe be accepted.

Item 7 REPORTS (Informational Only)

7.1 RTC Executive Director Report

1. John Ponzo's 25th anniversary with RTC was July 27. John is our IT Manager and he does a great job. Congratulations and thank you for your hard work here.
2. Paul Nelson, Amanda Callegari, and Kim Diegle are all celebrating one year at the RTC.
3. I would like to thank Director Larkin Thomason and NDOT for their continued work to make our highways safer. NDOT is replacing "Wrong Way Driver" systems between Keystone Avenue and the California state line. This is extremely helpful in the Mogul area. We will keep working with NDOT's team to get more of these treatments along I-80 and Highway 395.
4. The Best in the West Nugget Rib Cook-off starts later this month. RTC Washoe is partnering with the Nugget. We are providing free transportation on our RAPID Lincoln Line and Route 11 to Centennial Plaza. It runs from Wednesday, August 30th through Monday, September 4th—all day.
5. At last month's board meeting, you requested to discuss a Tahoe pilot for public transportation. Here is what we have learned: Only 342 people used it over the course of four months. Recreational lake users typically don't want to wait for a bus, pay a fare, load up, then wait for a return bus. Parking fees or car restrictions could increase demand.
6. VanPOOL has seen early success for Lake Tahoe and we think more companies will join. In June, VanPOOL saved more than 14-hundred trips to the lake and 47-thousand pounds of carbon dioxide. Since the service started in January, it has saved more than 8-thousand trips and nearly 300-thousand pounds of CO₂.

7. Planning is underway for the West Fourth Street Downtown Project from Keystone to Evans. The plan will replace existing street lighting with new lighting, using the Neon Line LED fixture. It will have ADA improvements, some intersection improvements, and design of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit structures.
8. The RTC is teaming up with the Nevada Wolf Pack for the upcoming football and basketball seasons. We will advertise the RAPID Virginia Line and the ED-Pass Program. The package includes digital ads for five minutes per game at Mackay Stadium and two minutes per game at Lawlor Events Center. We will have a booth for outreach on the concourse for two football games and basketball games. The agreement includes social media advertising, too.
9. Congratulations to the Keolis driver of the month, Angela Bergei. She has worked as an RTC RIDE operator since August, 2013. Angela is a very sweet lady and loves her job. Her on-time performance was 98 percent in July. She works extremely hard to get her passengers to their destinations safely and on time. Angela enjoys puzzles, cooking, baking, golfing, swimming, walking her dog, and family time.
10. The MTM Employee of the Month is Nancy Gray. Nancy has been an Access and FlexRIDE driver for more than 5 years. She is well-loved by her passengers and coworkers. This year, she has provided more than 27-hundred trips. 369 passengers took the time to leave positive reviews. Outside of work she enjoys spoiling her ten grandkids, taking care of her chickens, yardwork, and swimming. Nancy is the epitome of MTM's Vision that every trip is important.
11. The last thing I wanted to bring to the Boards attention, because it's a really positive thing. Our fixed route operations, particularly our Bus RAPID Transit, has done an amazing job of rebuilding from the pandemic. We're almost going to cross the five million annual passengers' line, which is significant, because we lost close to 60% of our ridership. It has to do with the drivers, mechanics, schedulers, and also with the management at Keolis that have been able to get drivers back and get the system running. I would say that is a direct indicator of success when we're at almost five million and we're up 37% year over year in ridership.

Commissioner Schieve, I wanted to go back to employee appreciation. Am I correct that we do 12 a year from Keolis and MTM? How many people do we recognize each month?

Phil Pumphreys, Keolis General Manager, we do three per month. We do one each for drivers, maintenance tech and utility workers.

Commissioner Schieve, I would like to see, and maybe this is something the Board has to agree on with the funding side of things, what exactly do we do for them besides recognizing them here? I want to make sure they are receiving something significant enough to where they know we appreciate them.

Phil Pumphreys, they each get a \$250 bonus. We have other recognition programs, we give out pens and gift cards for customer compliments and such.

Commissioner Schieve, I would love to see if RTC would add at least another \$100 to those bonuses.

Bill Thomas, Executive Director, not to negate the positive of what you're saying, but we have to be careful in terms of what RTC does, because they are not our employees. We have some ability in a very general sense, and maybe Adam Spear could share with the Board the limitations on what we can actually do, but we can do things to show appreciation.

Commissioner Schieve, if we can somehow figure out, on our side, to show how much we appreciate employees, I think would be a nice addition.

7.2 RTC Federal Report

Paul Nelson, RTC Government Affairs Officer, things are kind of quiet right now in Washington DC, because the House and Senate are on their August recess. They wrapped up their legislative business at the end of July, and they'll return back to DC right around Labor Day. When they do return, they are going to have to try to pass the budget for the Federal Government by September 30th. There is skepticism that will actually happen and the thought is that they'll have to pass a continuing resolution. Both Houses did pass their 12 Appropriations bills out of their committees. The senate's spending levels follow what the spending caps passed earlier this year, and the house is looking to cut some spending. We're not exactly sure of the cuts they want to do, but we're hoping that won't have much of an impact on the Transportation system.

USDOT is accepting Smart Grant applications and we're taking a look at some of our projects around town and seeing if there is a good fit to apply for one of those grants. These are geared towards innovation and technology when it comes to our transportation system.

7.3 NDOT Director Report

NDOT Deputy Director Darin Tedford, the Director sends her regards as she was pulled away to meet with our Federal Representatives about the Bright Line project, but I will be sure to convey your thanks to her and the rest of our team. We appreciate that.

I want to talk about what we've done on I-580 through the center of Reno. NDOT, and our contractor Q&D Construction, completed the fourth of four marathon weekends just in time for the Northern Nevada Events season to begin. While the project still has single lane closures to complete the work, four lanes of new smooth pavement and fresh striping are in place and in use. We thank the public and our stakeholders for being patient and helping us save months of nightly lane closures and risk to our team members on the roadway. We hope everyone enjoys the new riding surface.

The Safe Routes to School program has geared up to help safely move our youngest transportation users to and from. Since early 2023, the School District Police Department Safe Routes to School Coordinator has conducted regular school based events to teach K-8th grade students how to become more visible to motorists and how to follow safety precautions. NDOT's Safe Routes to School partnership mission is advancing safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in every day life, and improving the health and well being of all Nevadans to provide a safe and connected system. In addition to grant coordination to fund Safe Routes to School, NDOT uses our dynamic message boards to remind vehicle travelers that bike and pedestrian traffic is increasing.

Responding to a question about the potential for wildlife crossings in the Verdi area. We know that wildlife crossings are one way we can help keep our roadways safe for drivers and Nevada's wildlife. New funding from Assembly Bill 112 created an account to support wildlife crossings statewide. Funding will include such things as bridges, tunnels and culverts to help reduce animal/vehicle crossing interactions and to reconnect fragmented natural habitat. An initial appropriation of \$5 million in general fund money will help the State provide State matching funds for Federal Grant Programs.

What we're doing right now is installing 8-foot tall wildlife fencing alongside I-80 from Mogul to Verdi to direct animals to the natural under-crossings and along the Truckee River. This will allow a reduction of animals crossing randomly across the interstate.

On Monday, August 14, 2023, the NDOT Transportation Board approved an award of Contract 3988. This is a preservation project for US395 between Cold Springs and Bordertown. Approximately four miles of northbound and southbound US395 will be milled and overlaid with the new asphalt surface

and other related activities for a preservation project. This project is estimated to take about 80 working days, which will start soon and complete in the spring.

For the North Valleys areas extending down to Clear Acre, this project has been advertised and bids have been received. We anticipate taking it to the Transportation Board for approval in September or October 2023, but most likely September.

As requested by the Governor's office of Economic Development and Tesla, the Department is beginning a Feasibility Study for a southern route to the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center. The scope of the study will include development of alternative concepts, and starting the planning and environmental linkage process, which is something we do on occasion prior to the NEPA process. Also, a benefit cost analysis and risk analysis will be performed. We anticipate the study to begin at the end of 2023, with an approximately 18-month duration.

Item 8 COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

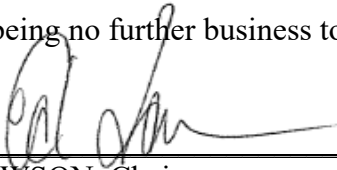
Vice Chair Hill, I wanted to applaud the City of Reno for RPD being out in force in the school zone areas this week. Amazing work!

Item 9 PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Lawson opened the meeting to public input and called on anyone wishing to speak on topics relevant to the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) that are not included in the current agenda. There being no one wishing to speak, Chair Lawson closed public input.

Item 10 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.



ED LAWSON, Chair
Regional Transportation Commission

****Copies of all presentations are available by contacting Michelle Kraus at mkraus@rtcwashoe.com.**