

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

FRIDAY

10:00 A.M.

December 15, 2023

PRESENT:

**Ed Lawson, Mayor of Sparks
Alexis Hill, Vice Chair, Washoe County Commissioner
Devon Reese, Reno City Council**

**Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director
Adam Spear, Legal Counsel
Tracy Larkin Thomason, Director of NDOT**

ABSENT:

**Hillary Schieve, Mayor of Reno
Mariluz Garcia, Washoe County Commissioner**

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.

Donna Clontz, AARP and Washoe County Senior Advisory Board. I am here today to talk about FlexRIDE. Many of the seniors that fit the category for not being able to drive and needing the service, are not connected to the internet. They tend to be the ones that don't have smart phones or internet and need to access the tickets in person somewhere. I spoke with Susi Trinidad about other outlets that senior can get to, to buy tickets ahead of time, so they can ride FlexRIDE. Beyond our two main bus stations, Savemart, Bonanza Casino, Sparks City Hall, Smiths and Winco are outlets where people can buy passes. I'm here to ask if we can come up with a way that Washoe County could be a distributor for these FlexRIDE tickets, maybe at the Senior Center and maybe the City of Reno. Could they be at any of the three recreations centers; Neil Road, Paradise or Evelyn Mount? Maybe other grocery outlets? Susi Trinidad is doing a little bit of outreach, but these places need to submit requests to have FlexRIDE tickets sold.

Michael Gawthrop via email, December 14, 2023 at 2:17pm. With the most recent Annual Comprehensive Financial Report being included in the agenda packet, now should be a good time for the RTC Board to begin discussing increasing services in our community. Passenger fares are up over \$1 million over the previous year, total passenger count is up approximately 1.25 million over the previous year (which is admittedly still below the pre-COVID highs, but so are service levels). Looking at the data in the statistics section of the report, and doing some analysis on it, there appears

to be some very clear relationships between increasing service and increasing ridership. A linear regression comparing total passengers to the number of revenue hours had an R squared value of 0.3782 (which could be interpreted to mean that 37.8% of ridership levels are driven by the number of revenue hours) and a linear regression comparing passengers per revenue hour to revenue hours had an R squared of 0.0598, which while low is still something of a trend indicating that more service won't just increase total ridership, but increase the productivity of our service beyond just an increased number of buses.

Honestly, at this point, it is embarrassing that places like Park City Utah are able to operate a system with 19 routes, most with 20 minute or better service, fare free, and Logan Utah with 12 routes, many half hour or better, again fare free, in a state that is notorious for not wanting to fund public services, while Reno/Sparks, a much larger metro area, struggles with 20 routes, all except for 2 being half an hour or worse service, with the benefit of collecting fares. RTC needs to do better.

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

Item 3 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Vice Chair Hill to approve agenda, seconded by Commissioner Reese, 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 11/17/2023 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 monthly Planning Activity Report. (For Possible Action)

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

4.2.4 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Public Transportation and Operations Activity Report. (For Possible Action)

4.2.5 Acknowledge receipt of the monthly Outreach Report from the Communications staff. (For Possible Action)

4.3 Engineering Department

4.3.1 Approve a contract with J-U-B Engineers, Inc., to provide design services and optional engineering during construction for the Meadowood Mall Rehabilitation Project, in an amount not-to-exceed \$288,511. (For Possible Action)

4.3.2 Approve a contract with HDR Engineering, Inc., for design and engineering during construction services for the 2025 Bridge Maintenance Project, which includes resurfacing the Kuenzli Avenue Bridge over the Truckee River and the Evans Avenue, Ralston Street, and Valley Road Bridges over I-80, in an amount not-to-exceed \$349,942.30. (For Possible Action)

4.3.3 Approve a Settlement Agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group Inc., to resolve any potential dispute or claim related to certain services performed on the Arlington Avenue Bridges Project. (For Possible Action)

4.4 Public Transportation/Operations Department

- 4.4.1 Approve a contract with Trane Technologies for HVAC preventative maintenance at RTC facilities for a period of three and half years, in an amount not-to-exceed \$317,598. (For Possible Action)

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

Item 5 DISCUSSION ITEMS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 5.1. Receive an update on the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update for discussion and possible direction. (For Possible Action)

Xuan Wang, RTC Acting Planning Manager gave a presentation on the RTP update.

The purpose of the RTP is to identify transportation guiding principles and goals and to develop transportation investments through 2050 through community-based process. Our current RTP was approved in March of 2021 and it is required that the plan is updated at least every four years. We plan to have draft for the Board to review in late 2024 and have the plan completed in March of 2025.

The RTP is the first step of the improvement process and looks at more of the overall transportation trend and the community needs to develop a plan to address long term and higher-level policy and strategies.

The RTP will be developed through extensive public agency outreach approaches. We will provide a bi-monthly update to the RTC Board and the TAC and CMAC. We will also have an agency working group, which includes all Federal, State and Local partners, and we will work together through bi-monthly meetings to develop the RTP.

It's also required that the RTP include an Air Quality Conformity determination. We will work with our Air Quality Inter Agency consultation group to address any concerns about air quality and we will have public facing community planning workshops and public meetings through social media and traditional media.

Vice Chair Hill, thank you for the presentation, it is exciting to be at the beginning of this process and I'm really looking forward to working on it with the team. On the Inter County Transportation working group, does that include Regional Planning? Do we include Planners from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County as well?

Xuan Wang, yes. The Inter County Transportation working group will have entities from Washoe County and also Planning Agencies from other counties, such as Storey and Lyon, so we will address any transportation issues across the borders of the counties and Tahoe TRPA.

On motion of Vice Chair Hill to accept the report, seconded by Commissioner Reese, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered that the item be accepted.

5.2 Receive a report on the FY 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County and authorize staff to submit the document to the Nevada Department of Taxation. (For Possible Action)

Christian Schonlau, RTC Director of Finance/CFO, and on the phone, we have our audit partner with Crowe LLP, Scott Nickerson who will be happy to any questions at the end.

There are two NRS Statutes that guide our audit requirements. One is because we are a government agency and the other is because we require auditing of our federal funds. The combined audit of those two things is called the single audit, which we have performed under the guidance and partnership of our audit partner. There is also federal guidance that requires us to complete both parts of that as well.

The audit is part of our financial statement preparation, but the financial statement itself really ties directly to our goal for strategic road map, which is our financial planning function. We are focusing on the fuel tax right now as we're starting to see gallons sold kind of plateau and planning for the future of that.

The result of our audit was an unmodified opinion, which is the highest rating and there were no findings. There were no management comments and no finance comments on our single audit, which is the federal side.

I'm very pleased and I want to take the time to thank my Financial staff. It is really an organization-wide effort to make sure that this all goes well and that we follow our processes and procedures, but at the end of the day I have a group of hard-working folks in finance that put it all together.

On motion of Commissioner Reese to accept the report, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered that the item be accepted.

5.3 Approve the RTC federal priorities and provide direction accordingly. (For Possible Action)

Paul Nelson, RTC Government Affairs Officer, we've identified 23 federal priorities for this year, but four of them have received funding, so we created a new category for those. I'll talk about some of the projects that we have in the queue, along with the presentation.

The ones that we've added to the 2024 priorities include:

- 6th Street Bicycle facilities and safety improvements. This one is all about multimodal safety improvements. This is also one of our Top 5 priorities, so I'll discuss this one in a later slide.
- Geiger Grade Road Realignment. Realign Geiger Road over near Toll Road over to US395 south of where the intersection of S. Virginia Street is by the Summit Mall.
- Alternative Fuel Expansion. We are early adopters of electric buses, we also have hybrids and now we have hydrogen fuel cell buses on the way, so we're looking at ways that we can expand our sustainable transportation.

The Top 5 priorities, which are not in any particular order.

- Bus Maintenance Facility replacement with the Spaghetti Bowl Phase 4 coming up. We will need to replace Villanova and then over to Sutro. It will be a pretty expensive capital

project, so we're looking at different funding sources for this. This is also going to be where we have our hydrogen fueling facility.

- Keystone Avenue Bridge Replacement. This is a \$75 Million project. Construction is planned for 2027.
- Highland Ranch Parkway & Pyramid Highway Intersection where Sparks Boulevard connects.
- Sun Valley Boulevard Improvements.
- 6th Street Bicycle Facility and Safety Improvements. This is an important project for safety. It is one of the most dangerous roads in our high injury network and it is also part of the Vision Zero Truckee Meadows improvements, which is already one of our federal priorities. We did get good news on this project earlier this week and Bill Thomas will discuss that more in his Executive Director Report.

We also had some recent accomplishments:

- Lemmon Drive Improvements and Resiliency project. We received a RAISE grant for \$25 Million. This will realign Lemmon Drive Phase 2, from Ramsey Way to Fleetwood Drive. This is planned for construction in 2025.
- Sierra Street Bridge Replacement. We have about \$23 Million in federal funding that will help us replace this bridge. It doesn't perform very well during flood events and it also has a seismic risk. This is planned for construction in 2026.
- Sparks Boulevard project. This is also fully funded. We have close to \$58 Million in federal funding to widen from two-lanes in each direction to three-lanes. We will also make pedestrian and bicycle improvements. This is planned for construction in 2025.
- Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus and Fueling Facility. We received a Low-No Grant for almost \$9 Million, which will purchase six new hydrogen fuel cell buses and also provide a fueling facility and provide the high-tech virtual training for our mechanics.

Vice Chair Hill, on the transit priorities, I don't see anything about expansion of microtransit. Is that a priority for the Board and how that would work as part of a federal priority?

Jim Gee, RTC Director of Public Transportation, microtransit is a priority for us, but it is not funded by federal dollars. That is the distinction.

On motion of Commissioner Reese to accept the report, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered that the item be accepted.

Item 6 REPORTS (Informational Only)

6.1 RTC Executive Director Report

1. I am very happy to announce that we were successful in our application for the Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant.

- The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded the RTC nearly 9 million dollars to improve East 6th Street in downtown Reno.
- This road is one of our most dangerous roads in the High Injury Network, so adding better bike and pedestrian infrastructure – and changing the traffic design will make this street much safer for everyone.
- This street runs through downtown and affects the university, Midtown, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, and the Northern Nevada Cares Campus.
- Thank you to Graham Dollarhide for leading the application effort.

- And I would like to thank Senators Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen, and Congressman Mark Amodei for their roles to help secure this important funding.
2. I'm very happy to announce that we launched our new and improved website Monday.
 - This change is part of our TOPS plan and includes an A.D.A. audit to improve the site for our disabled customers.
 - Since most of our web traffic has to do with transit and bus schedules, we moved Public Transportation to our homepage.
 - We also have tabs for people to navigate to our Construction Projects and our Metropolitan Planning pages, and others.
 - Overall, this change is a better user experience for our customers because it's a lot easier to maneuver and search the website.
 - Thank you to Nicole Coots and John Ponzio for their hard work and communication with our contractor, Trillium, to make this happen.
 3. I would congratulate Mark Maloney on a long career – and thank him for his hard work with the RTC.
 - As many of you know, this is Mark's last day here.
 - He's retiring after more than six years here – the last four as the Director of Public Transportation and Operations.
 - We have a short video to show our appreciation.
 - Mark worked in the transportation industry for more than 30 years, including stops in L.A., Orange County, Glendale and San Diego.
 - He leaves us in good hands with Jim Gee taking over his role.
 - Thank you, Mark. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement.
 4. I would like to introduce you to three new employees – Jeremy Lattin, Sai Sun, and James Ross.
 - Jeremy started as our Senior Financial Analyst November 27th.
 - He has experience in government finance, accounting, and grants management.
 - Before coming to the RTC, he worked for the State Treasurer's Office, Health Department, and most recently – the Lyon County School District.
 - Sai is our new Transit Planner who started December 4th.
 - She is new to the Reno-Sparks area – coming from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she received her Master's Degree and worked as a Research Assistant.
 - James just started his job Monday as our new Facilities Maintenance Specialist.
 - He had been with U.S. Foods for the past six-and-a-half years as a technician, doing work in northern Nevada and California.
 - Welcome to the team, Jeremy, Sai, and James. We look forward to your success at the RTC.
 5. We held our first public meeting for the Keystone Avenue Bridge Replacement Project, last week at the McKinley Arts and Culture Center.
 - Members of the community had a chance to ask questions and make comments about the future of the bridge and surrounding areas.
 - RTC Staff and contractors were on-hand to give an update on the different options – including number of lanes and bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
 - Thank you Sara Going for giving a great presentation and for your leadership on this project.
 6. Last Thursday, we held our annual Stuff A Bus Holiday Food Drive.
 - We had a great turnout from the community who filled the bus with non-perishable food and cash donations.
 - We delivered the bus to the "KTVN Share Your Christmas Food Drive" Friday, which all went to the Food Bank of Northern Nevada.

- We are very proud to help our neighbors who are struggling to put food on the table, especially during the holidays.
7. On Monday, the RTC will announce a Call for Projects to provide transportation improvements for seniors and disabilities.
 - We will accept applications through January 17th.
 - These projects were previously funded through the FTA's Section 5310 Program.
 - Under a new two-year funding agreement, we will be able to provide services with a different pot of money to remove federal barriers and provide more flexibility for these projects.
 8. The MTM Employee of the Month for November is Donald Martinez.
 - Donald has been a part of RTC's ACCESS team since 2016.
 - He loves his job because he can make a positive difference of individuals and our community.
 - Donald enjoys his coworkers and always has a smile on his face.
 - He spends a lot of free time working on his '67 Chevy Impala but his pride and joy is his family – three daughters and nine grandkids.
 - He's also a big 49ers fan and fully expects them to go to the Super Bowl this year.
 9. The Keolis Driver of the Month is Bongi Barber (**Pronounced Bongee with a hard G**).
 - Bongi was born and raised in South Africa and moved to Reno in the late 90s.
 - She has 23 years of transportation experience – including as an RTC bus operator since 2002.
 - In November, Bongi's on-time performance was 98 percent with zero accidents.
 - She is a huge golf fan and heads to the course every chance she gets.

6.2 RTC Federal Report

Paul Nelson, RTC Government Affairs Officer. Congress has until January 19th to finish its appropriations bill as far as we're concerned, because that is when the T HUT expires. Some house members would like to do a long-term CR that would get through the end of the fiscal year, but if that happened, that would put our congressionally directed spending priorities in doubt. These decisions will get pushed into January once congress returns from its holiday recess.

FHWA issued a final rule to establish a green house gas performance measure for States and MPOs. MPOs will have to establish a four-year admissions reduction target. We are also required to establish joint targets, because our urban area has more than 50,000 people.

There are some current funding opportunities including the RAISE and ICAM grants, bike and pedestrian funding opportunities. We are looking at applying for the RAISE grant for the Sun Valley Corridor project and that has a maximum of \$25 Million.

6.3 NDOT Director Report

NDOT Director Tracy Larkin Thomason gave a presentation and spoke on the following topics:

Tracy Larkin Thomason, NDOT Director provided a discussion and presentation.

We would like to welcome a new board member, Frank Lepori of Lepori Construction. He is replacing Steve Ascuaga who rotated off of the transportation board. We are looking forward to Frank serving on the Board.

As of yesterday, the Warrior Way Tahoe traffic signal is now fully online. We also coordinated with Douglas County and other local agencies to finalize the signal phasing and timing. We have also removed highway parking near the signal to reduce safety concerns and will continue coordinating with the US 50 Corridor partners to evaluate additional parking opportunities at the Lake to move them off of the corridors.

U.S. 395 North Valley widening has begun and will be completed at the end of 2025. You'll see over the next several months overnight lane and ramp closures, but the major construction will start in January. This adds a lane to southbound US 395, North McCarran to Golden Valley Road and also construct additional merge and auxiliary lanes.

We say good-bye to Darin Tedford, Deputy Director of Administration, after 30 years with the department. We also say good-bye to Jeff Lerud, Deputy Director of Operations and Maintenance. Their last day is next week and we thank them for their time in and they've done a phenomenal job and now they will be moving onto other opportunities in their lives.

I am welcoming the two new Deputy Director's who have been appointed. Sondra Rosenberg will be the Deputy Director of Planning and Administration. She's been with the department for 15 years, the last 9 years she has been the Assistant Director of Planning. Mario Gomez will be the Deputy Director of Operations and Maintenance. He has been with the department for 23 years, with the last 4 years as District Engineer in District 1. His position is located in Las Vegas.

Item 7 COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

Commissioner Reese wanted to thank RTC and the City of Reno for working on the 6th Street project, as this is a really big deal. This is really good project and something our region can be proud of. I know it would not have happened without the work of Mr. Dollarhide and Kerri Koski and her staff at the City of Reno.

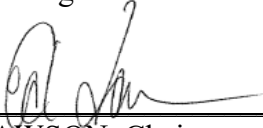
I wanted to thank Mark Maloney, as he retires, he made it so easy to transition onto this Board for me. He was always so gracious in sharing his knowledge with me.

Item 8 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 moved to Adjournment.

Item 9 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.



ED LAWSON, Chair
Regional Transportation Commission

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