

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

**FRIDAY**

**10:00 A.M.**

**April 19, 2024**

**PRESENT:**

**Ed Lawson, Mayor of Sparks  
Alexis Hill, Vice Chair, Washoe County Commissioner  
Devon Reese, Reno City Council (Left @ 10:25 a.m.)  
Mariluz Garcia, Washoe County Commissioner**

**Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director  
Adam Spear, Legal Counsel  
Sajid Sulahria, Deputy Director of NDOT**

**ABSENT:**

**Hillary Schieve, Mayor of Reno**

The regular monthly meeting, held in the 1<sup>st</sup> 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. There being no one wishing to speak, Chair Lawson closed public input.

***Item 3           APPROVAL OF AGENDA***

On motion of Commissioner Reese to approve agenda, seconded by Vice Chair Hill, 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 02/16/2024 Board meeting. (For Possible Action)
- 4.1.2 Approve the meeting minutes for the 03/22/2024 RTC Board Retreat 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 summary report for the Technical, Citizens Multimodal, and Regional Road Impact Fee Advisory Committees. (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 an Interlocal Cooperative Agreement with the University of Nevada, Reno for the Intersection Safety Priority project, in the amount of \$30,000. (For Possible Action)

#### **4.4 Engineering Department**

- 4.4.1 Approve a contract with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc., for design services and engineering during construction for the Traffic Signal Fiber 25-01 Project, in an amount not-to-exceed \$496,134. (For Possible Action)

#### **4.5 Public Transportation/Operations Department**

- 4.5.1 Acknowledge receipt of this quarterly Construction/Maintenance update on Transit Stops as presented to the Citizens Multimodal Advisory Committee on April 3. (For Possible Action)
- 4.5.2 Approve the RTC Safety Management System Plan (Safety Management Plan) as required by 49 C.F.R. Part 673. (For Possible Action)

#### **4.6 Executive, Administrative and Finance Department**

- 4.6.1 Approve a contract with Nichols Consulting Engineers to conduct a study to identify and summarize current roadway maintenance practices and available funding in the Washoe County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary, in an amount not-to-exceed \$163,000. (For Possible Action)
- 4.6.2 Approve Amendment No. 3 to the contract with Loomis Armored US, LLC for Armored Car Services for cash pick-up and delivery, in the amount of \$833,005, for a new total not to-exceed amount of \$2,587,511. (For Possible Action)
- 4.6.3 Approve modifications to RTC Personnel Rule 5.7 regarding employee pay-for-performance, to allow the Board to later consider and approve an employee cost-of-living adjustment and performance-based salary increases for this fiscal year during its final review of the FY 2025 budget. (For Possible Action)
- 4.6.4 Approve revised bylaws for the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County. (For Possible Action)
- 4.6.5 Approve revised bylaws for the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County. (For Possible Action)

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

#### ***Item 5 DISCUSSION ITEMS AND PRESENTATIONS***

Commissioner Reese asked to start the discussion and presentations with 5.3 and 5.4, due to needing to leave the meeting early for a funeral.

- 5.3 Review a report from the RTC's Director of Finance regarding the Fiscal Year 2024 increase in the indexed fuel taxes in Washoe County that will become effective on July 1, 2024, as required by NRS 373.067 and WCC § 20.43416. (Informational Only)
- 5.4 Acknowledge receipt of the Fiscal Year 2025 RTC Tentative Budget. (For Possible Action)

Christian Schonlau, RTC Director of Finance/CFO gave presentations and spoke on how fuel taxing works. The fuel tax increase for this year is 3.98%.

Moving right into the tentative budget now, I must thank everyone in the RTC for assisting with the budget. It is not just a finance effort but takes the work of all of the Board members, our Director's and everyone in this office to get to this point.

At the board retreat in March, you emphasized the goals and objectives that you would like us to attain over the next year. I and my team have incorporated that into our tentative budget, which we submitted to the Department of Taxation last Friday due to statutory deadlines. Today I'm providing an input, and I'd like you to give direction and any input you have on the budget again so that I can come back to you next month, May 23rd, and approve our final budget with your comments upon that, we'll submit it to the Department of Taxation and then we begin operating on July 1st.

You have a complete package which describes every line item of the budget and I really just want to touch some high level details today. The main thing to focus on here is that our fuel tax and our sales tax are our primary funding sources for RTC. We do get federal funding for about 30% of our projects, but we do match those with local sources as well.

Unlike your local organizations, we are capital heavy, and we've made some large increases to our capital expenditures this year. About \$30 million over the previous year, just due to some project timing. We've got some large projects coming up, which I'll talk a little bit more about in a minute. Outside of that, other large portions of our budget are mainly related to our RIDE operating contract with Keolis and our paratransit operator, MTM. I just want to remind everyone that we do debt service to the tune of about \$24 million every year, so we have to keep that in the bank as well.

Several recommendations came out of the Climate Study for RTC, and we've tried to incorporate a few of those into this year's budget. Director Thomas, the other directors and I have started executive coaching as of this week. We've continued that contract into the next year to address some of the communication items that were brought up in the culture study. We also heard loud and clear that there was a need for additional staff and we've added five new positions. A Senior Planner/Neighborhood Planner for the Active Transportation Plan, which came directly from the board retreat. We've also added an HR Specialist to help with some of our onboarding and recruitment efforts, an IT Technician, an Accounting Specialist and a Traffic Engineer for a new traffic management center.

Additionally, there were comments about compensation and classification. We've engaged in a study to view every desk in the office, to see how they're paid and how they compare to their peers, and what their job descriptions are. The pay for performance was indicated as being clunky and hard to understand. So, we've included a pay for performance adjustment.

Some of the large projects that are ongoing this year that are causing the increase to the capital side include Arlington Avenue Bridges, West Fourth Street Safety Project in partnership with NDOT, Sparks Boulevard design and construction and we're continuing to develop and enhance our hydrogen fueling station construction. We're looking at enhancing our Meadowood transfer station and we're doing a study to design and possibly relocate our facilities on Sutro Street.

Overall, we're in good shape. We have a balanced budget, the Department of Taxation does predict a modest sales tax increase of around 1% next year, which will be beneficial to our transit operations. Overall, Reno is very stable with an increasing population and low unemployment. The operations of RTC take up less than 10% of our budget with 75 full-time employees. Last year we created over 2,600 jobs in our capital projects and invested over \$186 million into our community.

Vice Chair Hill would like to build in for next year, \$250,000 to support micro transit in Lake Tahoe.

Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director, I'm comfortable as your executive director that we could, for a one-year period put in the 250,000, but I do think it should be tied to completion of the study. In other words, it should not be presumed by the other partners that this is going to be an ongoing commitment from RTC. This gets us through next year so that the service doesn't go away, but it also then gives us an opportunity to do a coordinated study with all the partners to come back to you as a board and say, here's what we found and to present to you the options. We should look at what the role of RTC is in transit at Lake Tahoe going forward, but do it in a more cumulative way, so everyone understands the tradeoffs and the consequence. So, I think that based on what your suggestion is, I can support that as executive director, as a path forward.

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

#### 5.1 Presentation from UNR regarding the RTC Regional Signal Timing Program. (Informational Only)

Alex Wolfson, RTC Engineering Project Manager, I have a couple of interlocal agreements with UNR related to managing traffic signal timing and transportation research in general. Traffic signal timing is an important project that we've been working with UNR on for a while now, which has a lot of benefits to the community, both in terms of efficiency and reducing delays. In order to learn more about that, I'm going to turn this over to Dr. Zong Tian, who is a professor with UNR Civil Engineering department, and I would say, a national authority when it comes to signal operations.

Dr. Zong Tian discussed a presentation on "RTC Regional Signal Timing Program – A Data-driven and Evidence-based approach, which included slides on:

- Unique Agency-University Collaboration
- ITE Student Paper Awards
- Advanced Signal Timing Tool – WaySync
- Signal Performance Measures Using Automated Trajectory Data – Sparks Boulevard
- Benefits Number
- Regional Performance Map
- Regional Signal Performance – How Do We Compare?
- West McCarran Blvd & I-80 Interchange Retiming
- North Virginia Street Traffic Flush Plan
- Challenges

The presentation is available upon request.

- 5.2 Approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC), the City of Reno, the City of Sparks, and Washoe County to collaborate on the deployment recommendations contained within RTC's Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Strategic Master Plan. (For Possible Action)

Dale Keller, RTC Deputy Executive Director, this item and proposed action is a follow up from last month's board retreat and an accumulation of a two-year effort led by RTC, local agencies, and traffic engineering professionals. Our Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is technology aimed with innovations to improve transportation safety, mobility and environmental sustainability. RTC initiated this ITS strategic master plan roughly two years ago to establish the region's near-term and long-term visions and goals. This MOU is for the RTC, the City of Reno, City of Sparks and Washoe County to really collaborate on those deployment recommendations contained within that strategic master plan. So today I want to introduce you again to Alex Wolfson. He's our RTC project manager and traffic engineer who will talk through and briefly describe those components inside this MOU.

Alex Wolfson, RTC Engineering Project Manager, currently the signal timing is on separate networks between City of Reno and City of Sparks and we want to work towards consolidating that into one network. RTC will strive to establish an oversight committee that will be made up of at least one representative from each agency, including Washoe County and NDOT. In order to do that, we are proposing to establish, operate and support a Regional Traffic Management Center. Plans are tentative, but the initial plan is to set up the center here at the RTC building.

With approval at this Board meeting today, we will then take it to the City of Sparks on Monday, Washoe County on Tuesday and City of Reno on Wednesday. If the MOU is approved, our plan is to finalize the SMP document by the end of June.

On motion of Vice Chair Hill to approve Item 5.2 as listed in the staff report, seconded by Commissioner Garcia, which motion unanimously carried, Chair Lawson ordered the item be approved.

## ***Item 6           REPORTS (Informational Only)***

### **6.1     RTC Executive Director Report**

- I am happy to announce that we were successful in our request for 2.5 million dollars in Congressionally Directed Spending. The money will support construction on Sun Valley Boulevard. The project will make improvements on that corridor between Scottsdale Road and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Those upgrades include sidewalk, bicycle facilities, transit improvements, drainage, pavement, and the potential for landscaping and lighting. This wouldn't be possible without the leadership of Senators Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen, and Congressman Mark Amodei, so we thank them for their work.
- We will also receive a 33 percent increase in formula funding from the Federal Transit Authority this year. That is the largest increase in the country, which amounts to 3.3 million dollars. This funding is designated for capital projects, so we are looking at different options to determine the best use of this funding.
- Congratulations to Amanda Callegari, the Pavement Preservation Group, and Granite Construction on a national award. The National Asphalt Pavement Association has awarded the team with the 2023 Quality in Asphalt Paving for the Holcomb Avenue Rehabilitation Project. Granite Construction incorporated reclaimed asphalt pavement in the project mixes to conserve virgin materials and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The result was a smooth, quality asphalt road. The

project also realigned the intersection of Sinclair Street and made several pedestrian, ADA, bicycle and drainage improvements. This was an important project and a job well-done.

- We held our first public meeting for the Sierra Street Bridge Replacement in March at the McKinley Arts and Culture Center. This gave residents and other stakeholders an opportunity to see our plans and to provide input. We value the public's opinions, especially with a generational project like this one. We hope to break ground on the new bridge in 2026, after we replace the Arlington Bridges. Thank you to our staff who set up the meeting and provided valuable information.
- The RTC is beginning coordination with the Bureau of Land Management and Washoe County in identifying a potential corridor for the Lemmon Valley – Spanish Springs Connector. The coordination includes preparing the initial paperwork and BLM application to reserve right-of-way for the roadway and utilities. This will be an important east-west corridor that will provide needed access between the two valleys and reduce traffic congestion – and it will provide an additional evacuation route during a potential wildfire or other natural disasters.
- We held a media event, just a few weeks ago to let the public know about the start of construction on the Steamboat Parkway Improvements Project. Thank you to Councilman Reese, Councilwoman Duerr, Dale Keller, and staff from the RTC and City of Reno for doing your part for this important public outreach.
- I am very happy with the growth in ridership in our transit system. March is the 20<sup>th</sup> straight month of growth in ridership. Last month, we had more than 442-thousand riders for an 8.6 percent increase compared to last March. We are still trying to catch up to pre-pandemic levels though. The RAPID Virginia Line had more than 80-thousand rides which is up 8.6 percent for the year – and 16 percent compared to last March.
- Earlier this month, we joined 150 transit stakeholders from 43 states to support a “Buy America” waiver for cutaway buses that we use for ACCESS and FlexRIDE. We signed a letter to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg to let him know our concerns with the program. These include supply chain issues and the inability to replace aging buses in a timely manner. The cutaway marketplace is facing significant challenges including long delivery times and cost increases. The waiver has been pending for eight months and we think it's time to act. Without it, transit agencies could face service disruptions and increased safety issues.
- Congratulations to Yeni Russo on her 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with RTC. Yeni celebrated this milestone achievement last month. Thank you for all of your hard work in Agency Services. I also want to thank Michelle Kraus for all she does at the RTC. Michelle is celebrating 10 years with the RTC this month. Also, Laura Freed and Alex Wolfson both passed the one-year mark at RTC last month. Thank you to all of you for doing a great job for us.
- Please join us in congratulating Wayne Ming as the MTM Employee of the Month for February – and Jasper Ferguson for March. Wayne has driven for Citilift and Access for 21 years. His favorite part of the job is the passengers. He says they make this job worthwhile because they're the reason the drivers are here. Jasper just started four months ago and is already having an impact on the customers who give positive feedback regularly. He enjoys his job as not only a happy driver – but a safe one, too. Thank you to Wayne and Jasper for your great work.
- Bruce Jones is the Keolis Driver of the Month for February and Francisco Velez for March. Bruce has worked as a bus operator for RIDE since July of 2007. He loves his job and has developed a reputation for reliability. His accomplishments in February consist of 95% on-time performance, zero preventable accidents, and no customer complaints. Francisco has worked as a bus operator for Ride since July of 2022. He takes pride in his job and has compassion for his customers. Francisco's accomplishments in March consisted of 93% on-time performance, zero preventable accidents, and no customer complaints. Thank you, Bruce and Francisco for being such good employees.

## **6.2 RTC Federal Report**

Paul Nelson, RTC Government Affairs Officer. Congress wrapped up its FY24 funding, and now they're moving on to FY25. House members are still working through their process for congressionally directed spending, however, the Senate has already decided to move forward with theirs in the appropriations process.

Bill Thomas, Jim Gee, Mayor Lawson, Councilman Reese and I were able to meet with our Federal Delegation last week in Washington DC to discuss some of our projects and some of our priorities moving forward here in the region. We think it was a pretty valuable discussion that we had with them and think it was a productive visit, and hopefully that will pay dividends down the road.

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration issued a notice of proposed updates to safety standards for electric vehicles, and it's accepting comments on this through June 14th. It's also hoping to expand some existing rules to cover heavy vehicles. The FTA released an updated version of the National Public Transportation Safety Plan, and that includes new provisions addressing requirements in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. These include seven new safety performance measures, eight new requirements for safety risk reduction programs, and an updated list of voluntary minimum safety standards and recommended practices. The US District Court for the Northern District of Texas ruled that the Biden administration exceeded its statutory authority by imposing a greenhouse gas emissions performance measure upon the states. So now Republicans and Democrats are debating whether the FHWA has the authority from Congress to impose the GHG performance measures on State Departments and NPOS.

Last week the RTC provided transportation to Assemblywoman Brown, May and Mosca. They're part of the nonprofit caucus at the legislature, and they wanted to learn more about some of Northern Nevada's nonprofit organizations. Staff from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County also joined us on the tour, as well as Commissioner Garcia. We did have the chance to stop at eight different nonprofit organizations, and we gave them an overview of what the RTC does here. Mike Hillerby and Sam Anastasiades did a great job prepping for the tour. So, a big thanks to them and we were able to provide the bus to take them between the organizations.

## **6.3 NDOT Director Report**

NDOT Deputy Director Sajid Sulahria gave a presentation and started off announcing two big appointments. Joe Harrington has been appointed to NDOT Director of Communications and Government Affairs. Joe comes to us from Florida, where he led Public Communications for the International Airport and one of the state's largest transit and paratransit providers. He is relocating back to Nevada, having lived here in the Silver State about 11 years. Many here know that Joe held the position of Public Information Officer for the RTC Washoe, where he worked with NDOT as a partner on several major projects, including the Pyramid and McCarran Interchange Improvements Project, Spaghetti Bowl improvement projects, and planning for future I-11. His experience also includes 10 years at KOLO as television journalist. We welcome Joe back to the Silver State.

Another familiar face here in our Director's office is the new Assistant Director of Planning, Rebecca Kapuler. Rebecca most recently worked as Assistant Chief of Multi-Modal Planning, where she led the Active Transportation Program that included programs such as Safe Routes to School, pedestrians and bicycle safety and education, and the Transportation Alternative Set Aside

programs. Rebecca has an extensive background working in multimodal transportation and planning in northern Nevada. She also has more than 20 years of experience with government agencies at the local, regional, and state levels, which of course includes her years of experience as a team member at the RTC.

Updates were given on the following:

- 6 E's of Traffic Safety: Equity, Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Emergency Response and Everyone.
- Work Zone Safety Awareness Week, April 15-19.
- South Virginia Street Safety Management Plan.
- I-80 East Widening Public Meeting, Wednesday, May 8th.
- Pyramid Highway Project Update

***Item 7 COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES***

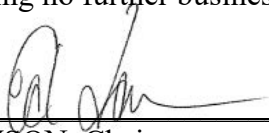
Commissioner Garcia, I would love to welcome and invite all of you to bring your children and families out to the Second Annual Ride Reno Spin Sparks experience on May 18th. I'm super happy to be sponsoring this event, and I really want to thank the RTC staff for being involved in the planning of this as well. We're meeting at Paradise Park and you can drive and park if you want, or if you live close by, feel free to ride your bike on down. We've partnered with Bernice Mathews Elementary School and we're going to have some tabling and some nonprofits out there, and it's just going to be a really beautiful way to put an exclamation point in what has been a truly beautiful and transformative project. It's only two hours long and you can come down anytime between 10:00 am and 12:00 pm.

***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 11:17 a.m.



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ED LAWSON, Chair  
Regional Transportation Commission

**\*\*Copies of all presentations are available by contacting Michelle Kraus at [mkraus@rtcwashoe.com](mailto:mkraus@rtcwashoe.com).**