

**MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING OF THE
PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

The **Planning & Administration Committee** of the Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation Authority met in public session on **Thursday, March 17, 2016**, at 8:45 a.m., in Suite 1650, 175 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Illinois, pursuant to notice.

Committee Chairman Fuentes presided.

ROLL CALL

Committee members present (7): Durante, Frega, Fuentes, Hobson, Pang, Ross, and Totten
Other Board members present: Coulson, DeWitte, Lewis, Magalis, Melvin Troiani, and Chairman Dillard

Approval of minutes from the meeting held on January 21, 2016

Director Hobson moved, and Director Frega seconded that the minutes from the meeting held on January 21, 2016 be approved as submitted. The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

7 Yeas: Directors Durante, Frega, Fuentes, Hobson, Pang, Ross, and Totten

Report on 2014 Regional Peer Review and Sub-Regional Peer Review

Ms. Allen presented the 2014 Regional Peer Review and Sub-Regional Peer Review, which provide performance results for the region's peer transit providers, both on an aggregated (regional) basis, as well as by mode (sub-regional). Both reports cover the 2014 report year. The data come from the FTA's National Transit Database.

Overall, regional performance was strong, with the Chicago region ranking in the top half for 15 of 16 measures and in the top 3 for 7 of them. Chicago did not rank in the bottom for any of the measures contained within the report. A series of slides were shown to demonstrate the 1-10 ranking for each measure of service performance. In the coverage area, the Chicago regional performance was strong, ranking in the top half for each of the five measures, with no rank changes since 2011. Although Chicago reported a ridership decline in 2014 (along with 6 peer regions), annual passenger miles traveled exceeded 4 billion for the fourth consecutive year. For service efficiency and effectiveness, the Chicago region ranked first for operating cost per passenger mile for the fourth consecutive year, 23% lower than the peer average.

In the service maintenance and capital investment area, the Chicago region improved to fourth place for the percent of vehicles beyond their minimum useful life, up from 9th place in 2011.

However, the Chicago region moved down one rank position for miles between major mechanical failures, owing to extraordinary polar vortex events, which were particularly challenging for Chicago. In the solvency area, the Chicago region saw downward movement for two measures, although it ranked in the top half for each of the five measures. Capital program expenditures per resident moved down one rank position as Los Angeles surged up four positions with a major rail project underway. Overall, regional performance was favorable to peers.

The sub-regional peer review is conducted to look at each mode separately and allows agencies to benchmark performance and see unique characteristics or circumstances that may constrain performance. Overall, the Chicago operators perform well in service efficiency and effectiveness, a trait that has been noted in prior reports as well. CTA bus is a strong performer, ranking first or second for 9 of 11 measures. CTA rail outperforms its peers for 6 of 11 measures, and had a notable improvement in its average fleet age, going from last place in 2012 to first place in 2014.

Metra continues to outperform its peer average for 5 of 11 measures and a rank improvement for its average fleet age, having replaced the entire Metra Electric District fleet. Pace bus has maintained the top ranking for operating cost per vehicle revenue hour for six years in a row, and performs well for the reliability measure miles between major mechanical failures, ranking second for two years in a row. Pace's vanpool service also performed well for operating cost per vehicle revenue hour, ranking first or second for the past six years. The final mode, ADA Paratransit, continued to rank well among peers for 9 of 10 measures, particularly in the efficiency, effectiveness, and solvency areas.

Ms. Allen then presented some up-to-date peer ridership data from the NTD, which allows a look at current trends among peer agencies and regions. RTA Service Board ridership was better than the peer average for urban bus and heavy rail, and worse for commuter rail, suburban bus, vanpool, and ADA Paratransit. Notably, CTA rail had the highest ridership in its history in 2014. Metra and Pace were impacted by falling gasoline prices, particularly in the fourth quarter, with Metra also feeling the impact of a significant fare increase implemented on February 1, 2015. On a regional basis, Chicago ridership compared quite favorably and was stable to 2014 with a 0.2% decline, whereas seven regions experienced ridership losses ranging from -2.3% to -5.1%.

Chairman Dillard commented that he wanted to drill down on the data for CTA related to miles between failures and fleet age. He noted that ADA service has experienced the greatest ridership growth of all the modes, yet the State has targeted funding cuts for this service. He also praised the Service Boards for again performing first among peers in operating cost per passenger mile, a critical measure of service efficiency. Finally, he stated that the report demonstrated that we do not invest enough in our mass transit system and we need a new state capital funding bill.

Update on Regional Consumer Marketing Program

Mr. Minor presented an update on the Ride On. regional marketing campaign. The campaign is progressing according to schedule and the advertising has met, or exceeded, nearly all performance metrics. The research shows that the quality of the advertising has been high and the campaign is well recognized by consumers. Consumers who recognize the ads are able to appropriately link it back to the RTA and Service Boards and they believe in the messaging of the ads. In regards to achieving the campaign's objectives, the research shows we are making progress. Awareness of the Service Board brands – CTA, Metra and Pace – has increased since the campaign launched and we are seeing improvements in perceptions of the transit system. In 2016, we are increasing our spending during the spring and summer months, yet maintaining an always-on presence through fall and winter. We will highlight various benefits of transit in each batch of creative and increase our emphasis on CTA and Pace to help shape positive opinions of these brands. We also plan to integrate the Ventra mobile app into the campaign, where appropriate, to supplement and complement the efforts of the Service Boards.

Director Hobson asked about the connection between 2016 actions and growing ridership. Mr. Minor responded that the expectation is that the campaign as a whole will help increase ridership, not just 2016 efforts. Changing behavior is not something that happens fast and the expectation is that cumulative effect of the campaign will help grow ridership in our target markets, which we hope to see evidence of later in 2016.

Chairman Dillard asked about how tourists navigate and utilize our system. Mr. Minor responded that we are using the findings from our recent Visitors' Survey to guide our efforts to reach tourists. Use of the Choose Chicago visitors guides, contextual digital marketing, mobile ads and other tactics we are using are intended to reach tourists and visitors to the region.

Chairman Dillard asked if he was being 'targeted' by our ads. Mr. Minor responded that we use both contextual and remarketing tactics for digital marketing. Chairman Dillard added that he is comforted by the marketing industry honoring us with awards and is pleased with the quality of the ads.

Director Ross encouraged staff to continue to use Street Teams. Mr. Minor responded that the use of Street Teams is part of the 2016 media plan.

Director Fuentes mentioned that he appreciated the diversity of the campaign, especially in regards to diverse messaging since plunging gas prices have driven down the cost of using transit's competitors.

Update on the RTA Availability Study

Ms. Lacombe reminded the Board that it had approved a contract for the performance of an availability/disparity study to support the agency's DBE and M/W/VBE programs. She then introduced Colette Holt, Principal in the firm of Colette Holt and Associates, the vendor conducting the study. Ms. Holt presented information regarding the nature of an availability study, its use in defending the legality of affirmative action programs and status of the RTA study. Discussion was had re the lack of data at both the federal and state levels for veteran owned businesses and the unfortunate fraud that has plagued these programs through the years. Ms. Holt discussed her experience with such litigation and the fact that she currently serves as the federal monitor on a matter involving a large Chicago construction company that was forced to return millions of dollars to various municipalities because of falsifying records on federally funded projects. Ms. Holt explained that the availability/disparity study is not specifically designed to prevent fraud. Ms. Holt further explained that she would provide a preliminary report within a few months, which would then be finalized during late summer of 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting of the Planning & Administration Committee, Director Frega moved and Director Hobson seconded that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried on the following voice vote:

7 Yeas: Directors Durante, Frega, Fuentes, Hobson, Pang, Ross, and Totten

The meeting ended at 9:45 a.m.

Audrey MacLennan

AUDREY MACLENNAN

Secretary of the Authority