



REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION


Metropolitan Planning • Public Transportation & Operations • Engineering & Construction

Metropolitan Planning Organization of Washoe County, Nevada

December 7, 2018

AGENDA ITEM 5.2

TO: Regional Transportation Commission

FROM: 
Lee G. Gibson, AICP
Executive Director

SUBJECT: RTC Funding Commitment to the Downtown Reno Business Improvement District

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Executive Director to negotiate a funding agreement between the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), the City of Reno (City), and, if necessary, the “Downtown Reno Business Improvement District,” a private Nevada nonprofit corporation, in an amount not to exceed \$140,000 per year for three years, for transit related purposes, including ambassador services, cleaning/maintenance services, enhanced police services, and other special services within a newly created business district located in the vicinity of downtown Reno.

SUMMARY

RTC has invested over \$200 million in transit related capital improvement projects located either in whole, or in part, within the boundaries of the newly formed “Downtown Reno Business Improvement District.” Those projects include the 4th Street/Prater Way Project, 4th Street Transit Station, various transit stops, the Center Street Project, and the Virginia Street Project. The City and the Downtown Management Organization (DMO), will provide services aimed at increasing safety, security, and cleanliness at and around these facilities, which should increase the return on the public’s investment in these facilities. Given RTC’s desire to protect the significant investment that it has made in the downtown corridor, and the importance of the downtown corridor to the transit system overall, the Executive Director has determined that \$140,000 per year is a reasonable amount to contribute towards the services that the City and DMO will provide. RTC would fund this agreement with sales tax revenues.

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated fiscal impact is \$140,000 annually, or \$420,000 over three years. The FY 2019 RTC budget contains \$150,000 for the first year of the program.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

In 2016, the RTC began discussions with the City of Reno, Washoe County Social Services, Catholic Charities, and other public and private interest groups, on how to improve the physical, aesthetic, and social environment in downtown Reno. RTC was particularly concerned with the safety and security of our passengers and others using 4th Street Station (4SS) – a \$40.0 million investment in downtown Reno and hub for the RTC RIDE system. Additionally, with work underway on the 4th Street / Prater Way BRT project, a \$42 million investment in the corridor anchored by 4SS, RTC felt strongly that improving the overall environment of downtown Reno and the 4th/Prater corridor was in the best interest of the community as a whole, and agreed to explore the possibility of the RTC making a contribution of up to \$150,000 toward these efforts.

At about the same time, the Reno City Council retained a consultant and began efforts to create a Downtown Action Plan aimed at identifying and recommending methods to address blight and blight-related issues in downtown Reno, as well as creating a plan for downtown revitalization. These efforts resulted in the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID) and an associated Downtown Management Organization (DMO) to govern and manage the BID. The BID will provide services related to security, sanitation, removal of graffiti, cleaning of streets and sidewalks and other services supplemental to those provided by the City. A special assessment district comprised of those properties specifically benefitted by the district was created and the “Downtown Reno Business Improvement District,” a private Nevada nonprofit corporation, was formed to act as the DMO. The new assessment district replaces two existing special assessment districts in the downtown corridor area. RTC was assessed and has paid \$10,019.59 as an assessment for 4SS.

The City and the DMO have asked the RTC to contribute the balance (\$140,000) of the \$150,000 to the BID effort. These funds may be used by the DMO in furtherance of one or more of the following purposes: 1) augmenting Reno police services which support activities, services and programs related to transportation, including enhanced patrols and policing services in and around the 4th Street Station, major transportation corridors such as 4th Street and Virginia Street and within streets located along RTC bus routes; 2) operation of the “clean and safe” program, including in and around the 4th Street Station, along major transportation corridors and along RTC bus routes within the downtown corridor; and 3) providing sanitation, street and sidewalk clean services including on demand spot cleaning in and around the 4th Street Station, along major transportation corridors and along RTC bus routes within the downtown corridor.

Given RTC’s desire to protect the significant investment that it has made in the downtown corridor, and the importance of the downtown corridor to the transit system overall, the Executive Director has determined that \$140,000 per year is a reasonable amount to contribute towards the services that the City and DMO will provide. RTC would fund this agreement with sales tax revenues payable in a lump sum on an annual basis. The agreement would be for a three year period, with a provision to allow the RTC to opt out of the agreement each year prior to the City

and DMO budget approval processes, if for some reason the City and DMO services are not providing sufficient benefits to the transit system.

RTC Staff will bring the negotiated agreement back to the Commission for approval at a subsequent meeting.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS BY BOARD

There has been no previous Board action or direction on this matter.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) RECOMMENDATION

There are no advisory committee recommendations pertaining to this agenda item.