

**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA
BOARD WORKSHOP**

FRIDAY

9:03 A.M.

March 17, 2023

PRESENT:

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

**Bill Thomas, RTC Executive Director
Adam Spear, Legal Counsel
Tracy Larkin Thomason, Director of NDOT (Arrived 9:06 a.m.)**

**Dale Keller, Director of Engineering
Mark Maloney, Director of Public Transportation/Operations
Christian Schonlau, Director of Finance/CFO
Dan Doenges, Director of Planning
Laura Freed, Director of Administrative Services**

The annual Board Workshop meeting was held at the Reno Sparks Convention Center, Rooms C2/C3, and was called to order by Chair Lawson. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call, which included RTC Directors, the Board conducted the following business:

**NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AT THIS WORKSHOP
EXCEPT TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AND TO ADJOURN**

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

4. WORKSHOP

4.1 Opening Remarks from Chair Lawson

Chair Lawson gave opening remarks to set goals for the retreat, including identifying a vision for our Region and how to lead the Agency into the future. This

included having a regional mindset rather than specifically for the City of Reno, City of Sparks or Washoe County.

Erica Olsen welcomed everyone to the workshop. She invited the Board participate in an activity to envision what the future might look like, and to help inform decision making on a variety of levels. Key themes from the visioning exercise were as follows:

- North Valleys Congestion
- Pursue new and innovative ideas
- Get after downtown walkable/bikeable connected
- We are delivering customer service, customer experience, rider experience, etc.
- Following up on a public transportation session
- Diversifying our outreach

Erica Olsen referred everyone to the Board Retreat packet that everyone had a copy of, as well as what was also to be presented on the screens for visual reference. Erica also reviewed the agenda for the day.

4.2 Board Norms, Procedures and Operations – Chair Lawson

Mayor Lawson spoke to his goals for Board norms and operations. Specifically, to get to two-hour Board meeting or less, beginning meetings at 10:00 AM, and having Commissioners vote to place items onto an agenda. The example was given that if a Commissioner wants more information on Plumb Lane, but they are the only Commissioner that wants that information, that discussion could take place offsite. The expressed goal of these changes is to enhance efficiency for the Board, and to maintain focus on the things that are most important.

4.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL

Erica Olsen gave a recap on the Strategic Planning Model for RTC. The Strategic Plan currently has four overarching goals. These four goals came about based on last year's retreat in January, and the retreat was anchored on those, along with the themes from interview with the Board Members ahead of the retreat.

Bill Thomas provided big picture of what RTC does, and how RTC does it. It was discussed that projects are not a one-touch, one point in time decision. There are multiple touchpoints for the Board, multiple times along the journey of a project where things can be altered and adjusted, or priorities changed. Bill Thomas requested the Board's help to think regionally. He expressed the RTC team's priority of working very closely with the local governments and that the Agency is most successful in creating a collaborative culture.

Bill Thomas reviewed challenges the Agency is facing, including decreased per capita fuel consumption, the cyclical nature of sales tax, workforce issues with consultants, designers, and contract providers, increasing pressure from the local

agencies and NDOT for RTC to fill gaps, and Federal policy change regarding funding capacity projects, and multi-county transportation issues.

Adam Spear lead the Board through work that was done on the 2022 Board retreat strategy goal related to RTC's regional role. He introduced that at the 2022 Board retreat, the Board discussed regional roles and responsibilities with regard to anticipating and meeting roadway needs in the region. To address this Strategic Roadmap goal, staff reviewed the overall process, not just RTC's roles and responsibilities, and with extensive internal discussion, compiled and analyzed multiple plans, documents and other available information. Staff also reached out and talked to regional partners and, ultimately, created the report that was sent to the Board in the packet, which is the current state of the process that addresses categories of roadways, roadway needs, how needs are determined, available funding sources, and decision-making processes. The report includes seven initial opportunities that staff has identified to improve that process and the Board expressed interest in staff looking into these opportunities further.

Next, the following bullet points were discussed:

- **Improve Our Community's Network Experience** – Bill Thomas/Dan Doenges

Dan Doenges reviewed the Guiding Principles in the RTP, input points for the Board and local jurisdiction staff, and what the next RTP update will look like, specifically with the inclusion of scenario planning. The Board responded positively to the inclusion of scenario planning in the next RTP and also asked that staff work in FY2024 to improve public engagement by making the process both inclusive and community-minded and demystifying the planning process for all stakeholders.

- **Enhance RTC's Role in Anticipating and Meeting Future Transportation Needs** – Dale Keller

Dale Keller presented more in-depth information on some of the seven opportunities outlined in the Regional Role report. This included the completion of a new Street & Highway Policy, maintenance and construction of local, regional, and state roadways, the ITS Master Plan, and active traffic management options. The Board affirmatively wished to pursue the creation of a regional traffic management center similar to the one operating in Las Vegas. The Board agreed with the roles that RTC is taking on and also encouraged further conversations between staff at RTC and NDOT regarding projects that could be worked on together.

- **Financial and Organizational Stewardship** – Bill Thomas/Christian Schonlau

Christian Schonlau presented a brief overview of the Agency’s revenues and expenses, along with the community impact of project expenses. The Board asked questions about bonding capacity and strategy. Christian Schonlau facilitated a discussion regarding the use of a 5-year fund map to encompass the RTIP, RRIF CIP, and financial plan. The Board agreed that approaching a 5-year project funding concept similar to TRFMA would be beneficial. The tool should ultimately allow the Board to know where Agency funding is at any time during the year.

Christian Schonlau also discussed fuel tax uncertainty with the Board, including the increase in vehicle miles per capita and the decrease in gallons purchased per capita. The Board requested that RTC staff actively take part in Road User Charge (RUC) conversations, starting now, to benefit the future planning of fuel tax.

- **Re-Build Public Transportation** – Mark Maloney

The final presentation of this retreat was presented by Mark Maloney and focused on public transportation. The Board was provided with an overview of both the public transportation system and the public transit planning process. The TOPS Pillars, upcoming TRANSIT APP, TOPS Marketing Plan, and contractor success measures were reviewed with the Board. The Board had an active discussion on this topic, which included a performance dashboard to provide a high-level view of overall performance by Keolis to be presented to the Board and a future, larger Board workshop on public transportation. They requested that staff also direct the contractor to conduct regular surveys of bus drivers and other staff. The Board stated desired future goals of having deeper understanding of public transportation, and to increase RTC’s reach to diverse populations of our community through increased marketing and communication.

Erica Olson summarized the key points made during the workshop as follows:

- Plan for the Future is something we all want.
- Envisioning where this community wants to go.
- Making use of what we value.
- Smart public engagement earlier in the process. Demystifying the planning process.
- Possibly replacing some of our acronyms so it’s easier to understand.
- Being a partner in completing projects as needed. Specifically, the state roads.
- Move towards a regional approach to traffic management.
- Continue to advocate for regional funding.
- Be on the forefront of the conversation with fuel tax.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ky Plaskon, Truckee Meadows Bike Alliance said it's been really refreshing to hear all of these ideas that you've brought to the table and sit in the back and listen. I think follow through is a key element that was brought up. We need to look at some of our past experiences if we're going to understand how we can correct them. Downtown has a safety problem and we're working towards fixing that, which is refreshing and wonderful and we support that. Safety downtown is the number one thing for the Placemaking Study. We would like to lift the pause on the Center Street Cycle Track and move towards safety downtown immediately with the project that's on the table, that would be wonderful. Slower speeds would be welcome.

6. ADJOURNMENT (*For Possible Action*)

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.



ED LAWSON, Chair
Regional Transportation Commission

Presentations copies are available upon request. Contact mkraus@rtcwashoe.com.