

Minutes

RTA Operational Planning & Infrastructure Committee

9:44 a.m. May 12, 2020

Committee Members: Joyce (Chair), Lucas (Vice Chair), Byrne, Moss, Pellot, Serrano

Other members: Bibb, Clough, McCall, Weiss

Not present: None

Also Present: Anderson, Benford, Birdsong, Bober, Brown, Burney, Caver, Cottrell-Peiffer, Dangelo, Feliciano, Ferraro, Fields, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Goodwin, Kirkland, Lewis, Pickett, Schipper, Sutula, Togher, Wilson, Young

Mr. Joyce called the meeting to order at 9:44 a.m. The secretary called the roll and reported that six (6) committee members were present. This meeting was conducted by teleconference for members of the Board in accordance with House Bill 197 of the 133rd General Assembly, signed by the Governor of the State of Ohio on March 27, 2020, the March 9, 2020 order of the Governor of the State of Ohio declaring a public health emergency and the April 30, 2020 order of the Director of the Ohio Department of Public Health prohibiting any gathering of ten (10) or more people, the Board Committee meetings was live-streamed on RTA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/rideRTA) for staff and members of the public.

Service Update

Joel Freilich, director of service management gave the presentation. This presentation is on the June 2020 schedule adjustments. A key feature of the adjustment is the Blue/Green Line Track project awarded by the Board earlier this year. There will be a six week period beginning June 28 when the track project will necessitate a suspension of light rail service east of Tower City. The area west of Woodhill Station will be worked on. While train service is suspended, the replacement bus service will be operating. The replacement bus service was designed recognizing that some downtown jobs will still be working from home. In designing the bus route, they stressed the stations with high or medium ridership. It was discussed with Shaker Heights officials, including Mayor Weiss. When the Blue and Green Line is running as trains, the Blue Line stations are moderately busy. Most riders board the Green Line at Green Road Station with a few more at Warrensville Center Road. Other stations are lightly used. The service is designed as picking up the shared Blue/Line Stations, including Shaker Square, then visiting all stations along Van Aken Blvd. where there is commercial as well as residential activity. Then at the end of the line at Warrensville, the bus will travel North on Warrensville to pick up the busier stations.

By using one alignment to serve both branches, the customers of the low ridership stations will walk, bike or drive further to board the replacement bus service. Low ridership stations, pre-COVID would pick up 8-28 weekday inbound boardings per day. Those stations which will not be directly visited by the replacement bus route, will have an added walk distance depending on the station. For some as little as 4/10 of a mile and as much as a mile. About 4% of all the light rail customers are affected. These stations tend to be populated by office workers who are more likely than the Van Aken workers to be working from home. Adjustments to regular bus routes include partly restoring the frequency to the #1, #3, HealthLine and MetroHealth Line. These routes were chosen because the streets where they operate have a high concentration of transit usage. Staff will watch the ridership and expense to determine if other adjustments are required.

Mr. Joyce asked if Mayor Weiss had anything to add. Mayor Weiss was briefed on the proposed bus route. Some adjustments were made for more frequency on the Van Aken Line. No action is needed on this agenda item.

Capital Improvement Program - 2021-2025

Carolyn Young, manager of budgets in the Office of Management & Budget and Mike Schipper, deputy general manager in engineering and project management, gave the presentation. The capital planning session began last year in August allowing time for the department to submit their capital needs. The projects that were submitted were reviewed and prioritized by the Capital Program Working Group (CPWG) and submitted to the Capital Program Oversight Committee (CPOC) with recommendations. In April, projects were finalized by CPOC based on CPWG recommendations, funding availability and the strategic plan. A Public Hearing will be held near the conclusion of this presentation. They will request the Capital Budget and Capital Improvement Program be moved to the full Board to be adopted. It will be submitted to NOACA for their review for funding.

The competing projects are ranked on six criteria; State of Good Repair (SOGR), safety and government mandates are the top rated criteria. The goal of CPWG and CPOC are to prioritize the projects based on the criteria, Strategic Plan and funding availability. The proposed 2021 CIP totals \$114 M. The projects are typically budgeted in eight major categories. They have identified nine categories to show the Rail Car Replacement Program. The following category budget has been identified as followed, \$21.3 M for bus improvement program, \$4.9 M for equipment and vehicles, \$14.8 M for facility improvement, \$2.5 M for other projects like planning studies and project contingency, \$18 M for preventative maintenance, \$20.9 M for rail projects such as track rehabilitation, station upgrades and signal reconstruction, \$31.2 M for rail car replacement and \$300K for transit centers for ADA enhancements. The five year CIP proposed budget totals \$563.6 M of which \$150 M is planned for the replacement of rail cars.

The CIP was developed using revenue neutral assumptions. Some of the major funding sources used to support the capital program are federal formula funds, discretionary funds, SOGR grants and bus and bus facility grants. Competitive grant consists of CMAQ funds and Federal Highway Administrative grants. Based on the current financial policies, there is a minimum of 10% of local dollars transferred from the GF sales and use tax to support the capital program. In prior years, ODOT has awarded the Authority funding under the Urban Transit Program and the Ohio Transit Preservation Program. For the 2021 budget the funding source includes 51.6% federal dollars estimated at \$57.6 M, 6.7% of state funds estimated at \$7.5 M, 17.9% local and local match funds estimated at \$20.1 M and 23.7% of to be determined funds estimated at \$10.1 M. These are pending applications under the TRAC grant and Build grants. If revenues come in higher than anticipated, funds will be used to address the unfunded projects of which Mike Schipper will discuss.

The next five year plan they anticipate funding to be receipted at the following levels which is, 4.9% from federal grants, 7.2% from State funds, 16.9% from local and local match funds and 27% of TBD funds. The Authority has determined to replace light rail and heavy rail vehicles. The total cost is estimated at \$240 M. Based on the year end estimate, they anticipate \$34.5 M set aside in the reserve fund for rolling stock at year end. Five million dollars will be transferred from the General Fund each year to support the program, bringing the total rolling stock balance to \$38.2 M in fiscal 2023 after expenses. The reserve fund will be in addition to the \$150 M identified in the CIP.

The following are projects that will be brought to the Board in 2021 and some of the projects that will be awarded later this year and carry into 2021. Ongoing projects for 2020 and continuing in 2021 include design on the W. 117th Street Bridge and Platform and Waterfront Line Bridge repairs.

Construction include Tower City tracks 10 and 13, E. 79th Street Station and Warrensville/Van Aken Substation. Some building upgrades for the airflow at Triskett garage related to CNG will come to the Board before the end of the year. There is nothing designated for bus garages. Rail projects include the design of the third phase of the light rail reconstruction. Next year there will be construction of the 2nd phase of the light rail track reconstruction for Buckeye/Woodhill to Shaker Square, E. 120th substation replacement, overhead catenary repairs and signal system upgrades will come to the Board next year. Design for facilities include the light rail track bridge over Conrail, HVAC system at Hayden and construction on the western end of the Cuyahoga Viaduct Phase I and Hayden roof replacement for next year. Vehicle improvements include replacing 10 Paratransit vehicles a year through NOACA funding and eight, CNG BRT HealthLine vehicles. Rail Car replacement includes HRV design ongoing and 2021 HRV contract for 2024 delivery. An RFP will be put out this year for the HRV replacement with an anticipated award next spring.

There is a backlog of \$401 M of unfunded projects. Unfunded needs include rail vehicles. Even though there is \$122 M to go, \$118 M has been identified, which is a significant improvement due to local work, within the State of Ohio and strategy for using federal funds. Rail facility and infrastructure has \$29 M, track rehab has \$52 M, bus improvements has \$55 M, Engineering, passenger, facilities has \$61 M, technical support, which includes fare collection has \$53 M, bus/rail maintenance has \$21 M and bridge, stations and equipment has \$8 M. Because of these needs, the FTA formula grants is the base level of the program, which is \$45 M, which is matched 20% locally. Last year, the ODOT Office of Transit got an increase in funding to \$70 M. RTA obtained \$15.6 M. The State fiscal year 2021 funding probably won't be \$70 M, but they will obtain as much as possible. They are preparing grants for this program. RTA could possibly get \$12 M. Competitive grants at federal, state (ODOT, EPA) and local level through NOACA or the Paradox Prize and Cleveland Foundation provide funding beyond the base of \$45 M.

Last year they were successful bringing in \$40 M in competitive grants. For bus improvement, CMAQ grants brought in \$16.6 M. This grant is awarded every other year. ODOT UTP brought in \$3.6 M and NOACA Section 5310 for Paratransit vehicle replacement brought in \$600,000. The Rail Car Replacement program brought in \$9.6 M from NOACA through surface transportation funding and a commitment for future year of funding. This has been transferred from FHWA to FTA and they are in the process of turning it into a grants. ODOT OTP2 brought in \$5 M. Preventative maintenance funding brought in \$600,000 from ODOT OTP2 to fund track rehabilitation. This year will be a similar program except the CMAQ money will not be available.

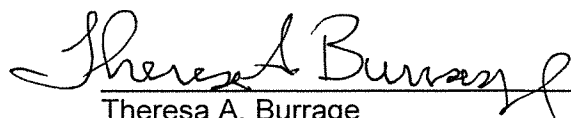
Upcoming grant submissions are for \$3.6 M ODOT UTP and \$600,000 NOACA Section 5310 for bus improvement. Last year, our Build grant was highly recommended, but not selected. They are working with the advocacy firm and congressional delegation to be recommended and selected. They are working on eligibility issues on ODOT TRAC. This is where they need help from Columbus. They will go for another OTP2 grant for rail funding and \$8 M for light rail track reconstruction. ODOT has been helpful over the last five years on track rehabilitation.

This meeting was suspended to hold the Public Hearing. After the Public Hearing the meeting was reconvened. It was moved by Mr. Serrano, seconded by Ms. Moss to move this to the full Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.



Floun'say R. Caver, Ph.D.
Interim Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage
Executive Secretary