

## **MINUTES**

### **MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### **PLANNING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

#### **METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**March 26, 2012**

The Board of Directors Planning & External Relations Committee met on March 26, 2012 at 10:04 a.m. in the Board Lounge on the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor of the MARTA Headquarters Building, 2424 Piedmont Road, Atlanta, Georgia.

#### **Board Members Present**

Juanita Jones Abernathy  
Harold Buckley, Sr.  
Wendy Butler, Chair  
Frederick L. Daniels, Jr.  
Jim Durrett  
Roderick Edmond  
Noni Ellison-Southall  
Barbara Babbit Kaufman

MARTA officials in attendance were: General Manager/ CEO Beverly Scott; Deputy General Manager/COO Dwight Ferrell; Chief, Business Support Services Theodore Basta, Jr.; AGMs Davis Allen, Sharon Crenchaw (Acting), Deborah Dawson, Wanda Dunham, Georgetta Gregory, Charlotte Harris (Acting), Robin Howard, Cheryl King, Rich Krisak, Ryland McClendon, Elizabeth O'Neill and Gary Pritchett; Sr. Directors Kevin Hurley and Donald Williams (Acting); Directors Cynthia Moss Beasley, Anton Bryant, John Crocker, Reginald Diamond, Garry Free, Lyle Harris, Jennifer Jinadu-Wright, Pat Minnucci, Knox O'Callaghan, Fred Remen, Carol Smith and Elvin Tobin; Managers Farouk Baksh, Donna DeJesus, Gregory Snyderman, Robert H. Thomas, Marvin Toliver and Denise Whitfield; Executive Manager to the Board Rebbie Ellisor-Taylor; Sr. Executive Administrator Tyra J. Wiltz; Executive Administrator Renee Willis; Finance Administrative Analyst Tracy Kincaid. Others in attendance Doug Chambers, Ricky Chambers, Yvonne DeBellotte, Louis Grisoglio, Jason Morgan, Josh Piermarini, Anthony Pines, Srinath Remala, Charisse Richardson, Janide Sidifall, Toni Thornton, Jason Ward and Tameka Wimberly.

Also in attendance Charles Pursley, Jr. of Pursley of Pursley, Lowery & Meeks; Joel Black and Dorian DeBarr of Maulding & Jenkins; Ashton Carter of Bank of America; Jeff Darby of Darby Studio; Trish Edge of Stonecrest Mall; Kris Edwards,

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**Brad Grulke and Mike McLeod of Woodland Hills; Commissioner Larry Johnson of DeKalb County; William Jones of City of Atlanta; Sarah Kendall of Cadillac Fairview; Tom Lauth of McKenna, Long & Aldridge; Michael McDaniel and Scott Trommer of PFM; Desiree Morgan of Wells Fargo; Matt Pollack of MATC; Thayra Riley of CDC; Thomas Sabucis of The AJC; Michael Sullivan of Emory Grove; Woodrow Vaughan of King & Spalding; Felker Ward of PIA; Alice Wiggins of PB; Betty Willis of Emory.**

### **Approval of the January 30, 2012 and February 27, 2012 Planning & External Relations Committee Meeting Minutes**

**On motion by Mr. Buckley seconded by Mr. Daniels, the minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 4 to 0, with 4 members present.**

### **Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of the Clifton Corridor Alternative Analysis LPA (Locally Preferred Alternative)**

**Mr. Williams presented this resolution for Board of Directors' approval authorizing the adoption of the Clifton Corridor Alternative Analysis LPA (Locally Preferred Alternative).**

**The purpose of the Clifton Corridor Alternative Analysis (AA), conducted by MARTA along with the Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association, was to identify a high-capacity transit investment that provides reliable and competitive travel times to and from the Clifton Corridor. The project team has finalized the screening process to determine the Locally Preferred Alternative.**

**Staff is recommending a LPA identified as Light Rail Transit 1 (LRT 1). The LPA will operate adjacent to CSX right-of-way from Lindbergh Center Station to the median of Clifton Road at the CDC/Emory University Areas, to Clairmont and North Decatur Road. Service would then extend south within the medians of Scott Boulevard, North Decatur Road, DeKalb Industrial Way and North Arcadia Avenue terminating at Avondale Station.**

- LRT 1 best meets the established Purpose and Need for the Clifton Corridor for the following reasons:**
  - Provides seamless rail connection across the entire corridor**
  - Provides reliable travel time to and from Clifton Corridor employment centers**

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- Connects Corridor with existing heavy rail system and other potential rail projects
- Light rail technology received the strongest public support throughout the study process
- LRT 1 is easier to integrate into the topography of the Clifton Corridor
- LRT 1 provides internal access to several proposed redevelopment sites such as Sage Hill, Suburban Plaza and DeVry site

The adoption of the LPA allows the project to move forward in the development of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration. It also allows the updating of the project in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) developed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

Mr. Daniels asked where MARTA stands with CSX.

Mr. Williams said MARTA is working closely with CSX upper management and plans to continue discussions next month.

Mr. Daniel asked can light rail vehicles handle inclines.

Mr. Williams said yes; as well as curves.

Mr. Daniels asked how the community feels about transfers.

Mr. Williams said the community has asked that transfers be minimized.

Mr. Daniels asked about the historical areas.

Mr. Williams said MARTA is looking to minimize the impacts to historical areas by avoiding major construction.

Mrs. Southall asked if the project is being funded by TIA.

Mr. Williams said approximately half of the project funds will come from TIA.

Mrs. Southall asked where the rest will come from.

Mr. Williams said MARTA is working with the FTA on funding.

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Mrs. Southall asked if MARTA is certain about receiving the funds.

Mr. Williams said staff feels that the Clifton Corridor project will fare well with the Federal New Starts Program.

Dr. Scott commented that there will be no Federal funding unless MARTA can show the ability to maintain the project. MARTA is in good standing.

Dr. Edmond asked if the project is dependent on TIA passing.

Dr. Scott said yes, up to Emory. Any point beyond that is still subject to the Federal process.

Mrs. Southall said Board Members need to remain clear of the funding caveat.

Mr. Daniels asked that the Board be kept abreast of agreements made with CSX. He requested quarterly updates be given to the Committee.

On motion by Mr. Daniels seconded by Mrs. Kaufman, the resolution was unanimously approved by a vote of 6 to 0, with 6 members present.

**Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of the I-20 East Transit Initiative LPA (Locally Preferred Alternative)**

Ms. Sidifall presented this resolution for Board of Directors' approval authorizing the adoption of the I-20 East Transit Initiative LPA (Locally Preferred Alternative).

The purpose of the I-20 East Transit Initiative is to provide transit investments that enhance east-west mobility and improve accessibility to residential and employment centers within the corridor. In addition, the LPA would provide rapid transit service to a population currently only served by bus and support corridor economic development and revitalization.

Staff is recommending a LPA, identified as Heavy Rail Transit 3 (HRT3) Alternative, which is the 12-mile extension of the existing MARTA east-west heavy rail line from the Indian Creek Station. The line would extend south parallel with I-285, the east parallel with I-20 to the Mall at Stonecrest in eastern DeKalb County. This alternative best meets the stakeholder identified goals and objectives of the project by:

- Providing fast travel times and high ridership

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- **Providing transit access to Decatur and proposed Clifton Corridor LRT line**
- **Serving heavily congested areas of corridor with first phase implementation**
- **Avoiding the major construction issues associated with the implementation of other alternatives which would require very complicated and expensive bridges or tunnels to avoid impacts to historic neighborhoods**
- **Supporting economic and Transit Oriented Development**
- **Providing the lowest cost**
- **Utilizing existing infrastructure**
- **Minimizing the number of displacements for residents and business**
- **Garnering strong public support**

**The LPA would also provide premium limited stop Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along I-20 inside the Perimeter. Operational scenarios for BRT service could potentially range for in-street or in the shoulder of the interstate to HOV, HOT or dedicated lanes.**

**The adoption of the LPA allows the project to move forward in the development of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration. It also allows the updating of the project in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) developed by Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).**

**Mr. Daniels said trying to move buses in and out of HOV lanes is not a viable solution.**

**Mr. Buckley said he is not in favor of BRT if a dedicated right-of-way does not exist.**

**Dr. Scott said the planning has not shown a dedicated right-of-way.**

**Ms. Sidifall said the Authority is looking at moving toward a managed lane system.**

**Mr. Daniels said the DeKalb Commissioners are concerned; they are looking at dedicated lanes – it's not efficient otherwise.**

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Ms. Sidifall said you would need a large footprint to put a median down the middle of I-20. The interstate shoulders would be compromised.

Mr. Durrett said he recalls the restrictive nature of the corridor.

Ms. Sidifall said MARTA can work with GDOT in moving the managed lane project up early.

Mr. Buckley said Board Members were given the impression in earlier briefings that a managed lane would exist. He said the resolution should be delayed or forwarded to the full Board without recommendation. This would give the Board Members representing DeKalb County an opportunity to talk to the DeKalb Commissioners.

Ms. Sidifall said MARTA staff briefed the DeKalb Commissioners and they have been very supportive of the project.

Mr. Buckley said two MARTA Board Members were present during the briefing and did not get the understanding of what has been presented today.

Dr. Edmond asked how much of the project would be HOV.

Ms. Sidifall said 12.8 miles.

Mr. Buckley made a motion to forward the resolution to the full Board without recommendation. Dr. Edmond seconded. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 8 to 0, with 8 members present.

**Other Matters**

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Mrs. McClendon made the following announcements:

- Georgia's General Assembly is scheduled to vote today, March 26, on MARTA legislation
- City of Atlanta Jurisdictional Briefing will be held on March 28

**Adjournment**

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The Planning & External Relations Committee meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.