

[All items in the Board packet for all agenda items are incorporated herewith to these minutes by reference. The original Board packet is on file in the Regional Planning Authority office.]

Chair Holian emphasized this is a workshop focused entirely on transit, not on roads, even though the RPA does make decisions on roads in that some of the County Capital Outlay GRT can be used for roads. The question to keep in mind today and to be answered at some point is, How should regional planning for transit in Santa Fe County be done in the most efficient and effective manner, and how can the important stakeholders be included. Chair Holian made the point that details will not be discussed nor decisions made today, but that discussion on process and procedure for the planning process will be held.

Chair Holian added that, in June 2011, the RPA will update the Regional Transit Plan that was created through the RPA in 2010. This particular transit plan only deals with the Transit GRT that goes to the NCRTD. Part of today's discussion will be on the procedure to be used in updating that plan.

Commissioner Mayfield introduced the former Governor of Tesuque pueblo, Charlie Dorame.

TRANSIT BACKGROUND

- **NCRTD Overview of Transit Through The Entire District
(Power Point Presentation)**

Ms. Josette Lucero, Executive Director of the NCRTD, explained that today's presentation was given in full detail to the NCRTD board on Friday, February 4. She distributed a handout of the slide show on governance of the RTD, which she will review, and said that Ms. Linda Trujillo will speak about just Santa Fe County. Some questions from the audience at the board meeting will also be addressed.

As history, in 2003, Governor Richardson signed into law the Regional Transit District Act, authorizing the creation of regional transit districts (RTD) throughout the State of New Mexico. Because there was no taxing authority, in 2004, the Governor signed legislation allowing city and county governments that were members of an RTD to go to voters for approval of an increase of up to ½ of 1 percent of the GRT to fund their RTD. Using the Power Point presentation, a copy of which is a part of these minutes, Ms. Lucero reviewed the history of the NCRTD in New Mexico.

The final agreement made with Santa Fe County was that half of the GRT transit revenue would go to the Rail Runner. Funds started to be collected through the GRT in October 2008.

A startup grant from NMDOT of \$250,000 was given to the four RTDs within the state. This was spent seeking and applying for grants for the RTD, which is an ongoing process. Using the slide presentation, Ms. Lucero reviewed federal, state and local funding. The total thus far from the past two years for GRT revenues received from the four counties is \$33.3 million.

Santa Fe County is the third largest rural transit system in the state, compared to Roswell at number one. A transit center in Española has been purchased and is in the bid process for construction beginning early March, with an end date of November 1. Ridership has shown a 1,000% increase over the last three years.

Ms. Lucero pointed to memoranda from attorneys Basham & Basham answering questions concerning the RTD GRT and an executive summary of the statute that defines roles and states that the RTD Act is the original source of the NCRTD's authority.

Mr. Jack Valencia stated that the award the RPA made in fiscal year 2010 was the first year in which the GRT became available for consideration and distribution. Since the funds began coming in October 2009, there was only a nine-month period in which funding was made available for FY10. In FY11, \$263,937 of NCRTD funds went to tribal entities that are included in the Santa Fe County jurisdiction, excluding Ohkay Owingeh.

Ms. Linda Trujillo, NCRTD Service Development Manager, focused on Santa Fe County and reviewed the update to the implementation of the NCRTD service plan that was presented to the RTD board on February 4. There are four routes that are funded through the GRT for \$1 million, Route 2, Cerrillos with Rail Runner connection; Route 4, south side with Rail Runner Connection; Route 22, HSD and Rancho Viejo; and Santa Fe Pick-Up. In addition there is \$486,000 provided to the RTD for 10 county routes, which includes tribal as well as NM 599 and Santa Fe to Eldorado. There is a total of 14 routes that the NCRTD provides service for with usage of the GRT funds.

Ms. Trujillo also addressed a question that was brought up at the board meeting by a concerned citizen about the NCRTD's admin/operating ratio in the DOT statewide prioritization packet regarding the 5311 funding and explained that the presentation examples used were from the 2010 packet that was presented in 2009. She said that there is a more current packet that was presented in April of 2010 for FY11 that shows a remarkable improvement in the comparison of the two years.

Another question posed at the meeting was the cost per passenger trip, the information for which came from FY07-08, at which time ridership was 24,966, with a cost per trip of \$59.70. The next year, ridership was 44,632, with \$34.55 per trip. Utilizing the most current information available, ridership will be 112,000 and the cost per trip \$13.73.

Ms. Lucero explained that NMDOT's transit manager is pleased with the progress made by the NCRTD. It is expected to improve even more, due to the greatly increased ridership and relatively flat federal funding.

Commissioner Mayfield asked about routes, specifically in northern Santa Fe County. Ms. Trujillo replied that service is provided as a split cost from Española to Santa Fe. There is service from Española in the Chimayó area that goes through Cortados, Santa Cruz to Sangre de Cristo church to La Puebla turnoff. It has a stop at the turnoff to the Santuario. At the Benny Chavez community center, there is a connection that goes up to Las Trampas. Service has been approved through the funding the RPA granted last year. There is no service at Nambé Pueblo,

but there is small service to the Head Start center and the church that is part of the Pojoaque Pueblo route.

Councilor Romero pointed out that there is some overlap with Rio Arriba and Santa Fe counties. The routes that are served are analyzed on a regular basis for ridership and efficiency. Nambé Pueblo chose not to be part of the membership, but Pojoaque Pueblo chose to share some of its resources with Nambé.

- **RPA Orientation**

Chair Holian noted that the packet includes a great deal of background information on the state statute that developed the transit districts, as well as a transit chronology regarding the City and County involvement in an RTD, the NCRTD, and establishing the role of transit for the RPA.

Mr. Robert Griego explained that the chronology shows the involvement of the RPA in transit planning and how the role was established. He pointed to the last page of the packet, a map of the Santa Fe County Sustainable Growth Management Plan political boundaries and the boundaries of the RPA when the Land Use Plan was created. The Sixth Amended JPA for the RPA gives the RPA authority to do transit planning for the entire County, including the City. The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MR COG) has some authority to do transit planning for the southern part of the county. Also included in the packet is an overview of the 2009 RPA Transit Plan and Analysis prepared by Charlier and Associates, consultants.

Mr. Andrew Jandácek gave an overview of what went into establishing the 2009 Transit Plan that the RPA approved and submitted to the NCRTD. In October 2009, Charlier & Associates prepared a Regional Transit Survey Plan for the RPA outlining the transit GRT that was passed by voters in the November 2008 general election. A similar transit GRT was passed by the other entities of the RTD. The RPA has the responsibility for allocating the transit GRT revenues within the City and County of Santa Fe. This plan was initially intended to function as a five-year service plan, and cost revenue analyses were conducted for the period 2010 through 2014. Ultimately, details that were provided were specifically for FY10 and FY11, due to the changes in the forecast for the returns of transit GRT and the fact that there is difficulty in determining likely changes to the transit GRT.

The Plan provides a recommended process for updating it in terms of assessing existing services, evaluating feasibility of proposed new services and coordination with NCRTD and other partners.

Following the conclusions, the report evaluates each of the routes that were proposed for study and ranks them based on criteria. It outlines existing services and provides an introduction to project evaluation for rural and urban routes. Also, an important consideration the report alludes to is that of the pueblos' role in determining their transit needs, and it recommends there should be greater analysis into looking at the pueblo-oriented services. The plan recommends that decisions about such services should be made for these pueblo routes strictly as a matter of policy and through an inter-governmental perspective and not simply through evaluating each of the routes based on their technical merits, to including ridership or feasibility.

Each of the potential routes considered in the service plan was evaluated in terms of the efficiency of its connections to regional services, the viability, the cost per passenger, which was one of the issues that came up specifically regarding the southern extension of the Greater Eldorado Express, which was looked at and at that time determined to be a rather expensive route in terms of cost effectiveness, the transit share rating and whether the route is supported by transit service.

Following this evaluation, an overall recommendation was made. The 2009 Transit Plan was presented, and recommended service plans were established for FY10 and FY11. This was all based on projected low GRT returns to be sure the budget as submitted would be in reach of the GRT revenues.

Councilor Romero noted that modelings for the two service plans as developed by the RPA and the RTD follow a parallel path on planning efforts and evaluation.

Chair Holian stated she would like to open up the discussion wider than what procedure will be used to go forward with the 2012 plan. She felt that there is the need to have an effective way of doing transit planning for the entire region and all kinds of transit planning, not just for this one GRT for Santa Fe County. Should the RPA expand its scope or should it disband and become another kind of transit planning board.

Councilor Romero added that the RPA is evolving even from the strategic plan it developed in 2010. From a planning perspective, the RPA spent \$50,000 of its own funds to develop its own service plan. The RTD did the same service planning for other entities. In an effort to be efficient and effective with funding, she expressed concern with the duplication of parallel efforts that are absolutely similar. The conundrum for the RPA is doing what it was mandated to do through agreement and what it might evolve into, including transit issues.

Chair Holian added it is worth pointing out that the RPA is mandated to do this particular planning, which does not mean that the RPA could not rewrite resolutions and MOUs.

In order to better understand the transit issues, Commissioner Anaya sought further information about the allocation of the GRT, cost of administration, and routes. His questions were addressed by Mr. Valencia, Ms. Lucero and Mr. Griego. Commissioner Anaya added that the basis for how he represents the County of Santa Fe is making sure that he has a practical, pragmatic, and functional understanding of the history before moving forward.

Councilor Romero suggested that it may be helpful for the RPA to hold another planning session, such as was done in July 2010, to look at the JPA, to look into what other entity might do planning for transit issues better than the RPA, and how to maximize the GRT dollars coming into the RPA. She felt it is time to think about what the RPA should be doing and it is time to have the seventh amended JPA come forward with those things. There is an opportunity to save time and energy as well as money in the future, and it behooves the RPA to look at this carefully. The attorneys have already drafted some of the language that would clean up the JPA, but the

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RPA has not had the opportunity to act on that. Changing the JPA would help to refine the issues.

Since it is late in the budget process, Councilor Calvert said he feels that the RPA should stay with its current course of action, but that he would be willing to talk about changing the process in future years. He said he was not suggesting that the RPA not take advantage of whatever information is already out there and available. He added that the RPA has had the amended JPA on the agenda for the past several months, and it keeps getting pulled from the agenda. Part of the reason is that staff on both sides is occupied with their budgets. Even if the RPA were to decide how the JPA should be amended, it still has to go to the respective governing bodies, both of which are in the budgeting process. He did not feel that an amended JPA would get the attention it needs if it were to be recommended for approval at this time.

Especially since the 2012 plan will be needed by June or July, Chair Holian said she was hearing that the RPA should at least start discussion and filling in some of the information on the work plan. As this process is being worked on, the RPA can continue the discussion about what its vision is with regard to transit planning.

Commissioner Mayfield asked for a definition of specials for routes. Ms. Lucero replied that a special would be anything over and beyond the Santa Fe Trails regular route schedule, such as the Fourth of July, Octoberfest, something at the racetrack, or the International Folk Art Market.

Commissioner Mayfield asked about the service for picking up individuals from their residences. Mr. Jon Bulthuis explained that the City has in past years contracted with the County. The program is called Santa Fe Ride. Santa Fe Trails now has a contract with Christus St. Vincent to provide service for seniors and the disabled within the City limits and within a ¾-mile buffer of any bus route that extends beyond the City limits.

Commissioner Anaya agreed with Councilor Romero that the RPA should look at any and all possibilities and alternatives to garner efficiencies and the best service possible and that he is open to potential change. Chair Holian asked him if he would be interested in participating in another workshop and exploring the possibilities. Commissioner Anaya said that he would.

Commissioner Stefanics suggested that staff update the existing plan and bring the information to the RPA so that it can determine whether or not there is an interest in changing the prioritization.

As Chair of the RTD, Councilor Romero said publicly for the record that she has tried to focus on efficiencies of the RTD and that the RTD may be able to address some of the issues that are surfacing from specific areas that might create inequities. As a board, she looks at the picture as a whole and not to hone in on one small piece. The door is open to look carefully at the RPA mandates, and she would like to have another workshop to maximize use of the GRT dollars.

Chair Holian summed up the discussion and said she would meet with Andrew Jandáček and Robert Griego about updating the transit plan to bring it forward at the next RPA meeting for discussion.

She will also work with staff to set up another workshop to talk about the fundamental issue of the vision for the RPA and will poll the RPA members to see if they want to be part of that.

MATTERS FROM THE REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY MEMBERS

Councilor Romero thanked the RTD staff who put a great deal of effort and time into addressing concerns. In the interest of transparency and to be more inclusive of all the RTD's members, she and staff will continue to work on having the audit made public. From an RPA perspective, the RTD is working to understand how to be better collaborative partners. Today's presentation by the RTD staff is one it can use for orientation of the RTD and in other contexts.

Chair Holian agreed it is helpful to have all the information in historical perspective and gave a special thanks to County staff. She said that Mr. Griego did an outstanding job of putting together all the background information.

Mr. Jandácek passed out a brochure for Santa Fe Trails that discusses the proposed fare increases and potential service reductions as a factor to be weighed between now and the next RPA meeting.

Commissioner Mayfield requested a copy of the operational costs for the NCRTD. Ms. Lucero stated that information is on the website and updated every month and that she will send Commissioner Mayfield a copy.

DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT RPA MEETING

The next Regular Meeting of the Regional Planning Authority will be held at 4 PM, Tuesday, March 15, 2011, in the County Commission Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

This special Transit Workshop of the RPA was adjourned at approximately 5:40 PM.



Approved by:

Kathy Holian

Chair, Regional Planning Authority
Kathy Holian, Santa Fe County Commissioner

Minutes transcribed and drafted by Kay Carlson

Attest:

Valerie Espinoza

Valerie Espinoza
County Clerk

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