

**MINUTES OF THE
CITY OF SANTA FE / SANTA FE COUNTY
REGIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY**

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

4:00 PM

Santa Fe, New Mexico

The Regular Meeting of the City of Santa Fe / Santa Fe County Regional Planning Authority (RPA) was called to order by Chair Patti Bushee at approximately 4:10 PM on the above-cited date in the Santa Fe County Commission Chambers in the County Administration Building.

ROLL CALL

County Commissioners Present:

Harry Montoya [*arrived after roll call*]
Liz Stefanics
Virginia Vigil

County Commissioners Excused:

Kathy Holian

City Councilors Present:

Patti Bushee, Chair
Matthew Ortiz [*arrived at 5 PM*]
Rosemary Romero
Rebecca Wurzbarger

Santa Fe RPA Staff:

Mary Helen Follingstad, Executive Director

Santa Fe County Staff Members:

Penny Ellis-Green, Assistant County Manager
Robert Griego, Planning
Andrew Jandácek, Transportation Planner
Steve Ross, County Attorney

Santa Fe City Staff Members:

Jon Bulthuis, Santa Fe Trails
Mike Kelly, Santa Fe Trails

Others Present:

Consultants

Jacob Riger, Charlier Associates

Ken Smithson, KNS Resources, LLC

NM State Corrections

Jolene Gonzales

Tony Marquez, Director of Administrative Services and Mayor of City of Las Vegas

Raphael Torres

Ivan Guillen, NCRTD

Jennifer Parks, Trust for Public Land

Don Pearson, Environix

Deborah Post

Mark Tibbetts, Santa Fe MPO

Jeanette Yardman, PNM

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilor Wurzburger moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilor Romero and approved unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 18, 2009, MEETING

Commissioner Stefanics moved to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2009, Meeting, seconded by Councilor Romero and approved unanimously.

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

COMMUNICATIONS FROM AGENCIES

- **Rail Runner Transit Connections**

Mr. Tony Marquez, Director of Administrative Services, Corrections Department, spoke regarding a request for a proposed shuttle service from the Rail Runner station at I-25 and NM 599 to the Corrections Department on NM 14. He said that he has been working with service providers on behalf of employees who will utilize the Rail Runner. Many Corrections employees live outside of Santa Fe, and a great majority live in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho, with some even coming from Las Lunas. Other employers in the area are the Santa Fe County Adult Detention Center and the New Mexico Army National Guard. He added that the employers are willing to be flexible in their working hours to allow the employees to utilize the Rail Runner and shuttle services. Of the 700 employees -working at the Corrections Department, 50 have responded to a survey with a strong interest to utilize the transit service on a daily basis for convenience, cost and save the wear and tear of their vehicles.

Mr. Ivan Guillen, NCRTD, updated the RPA on the Greater Eldorado Express Service (GEE). He said the contract between All Aboard America and the NCRTD is scheduled to terminate at the end of September 2009. They have negotiated with the provider for continuation of service in order to stay with the adopted priorities for the first year of the transit GRT, to meet existing routes and services, including the GEE, through June 30, 2010. All Aboard America has proposed a 2% increase, which means that the total cost for the October 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010, service period will be \$253,291.50. He explained that available funding for that period is \$40,000 from rural transit FTA5311 funds, job access reverse commute (JARC) funds, Section 5316 funds of \$30,000, and the Los Alamos GRT match to those funds of \$62,400. (there seems to be three types of federal funds) To continue the service, the administrators of the transit GRT would need to come up with \$128,000. If the RPA wishes the NCRTD to proceed with the GEE service, Mr. Guillen said they will execute a contract and go forward.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- **Transit**
 - **NCRTD member report**

Commissioner Stefanics reported that Santa Fe County contributed the funds to pay for the service Mr. Guillen spoke to for July, August and September of 2009. She explained that Mr. Guillen was asking if the RPA would pay for the GEE for the rest of the fiscal year, knowing that the RPA will be voting on the service plan.

She added that there is an upcoming NCRTD meeting on Friday, September 18.

- **Energy Task Force**
 - **Report from the Chair on Energy Task Force meeting September 11, 2009**

Chair Bushee noted that Commissioner Holian was not available to give her report and so briefly summarized the meeting notes in the members' packets.

Ms. Follingstad added that the Energy Task Force meetings come under the Open Meetings Act, which means they have to be noticed in the newspaper and they will need to be recorded and minutes taken. She said this will be discussed under Matters From Staff on the agenda.

Ms. Follingstad explained that the Energy Task Force is discussing the new program that will be put into place by Santa Fe County having to do with the stimulus funds and a program to implement the two pieces of legislation enacted last year. It is also looking into the PNM case and intervention, and other financial discussions for implementing the ideas they are discussing. The formal minutes of the task force will be presented at the next RPA meeting.

- **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)**
 - **Report from MPO Staff**

Ms. Follingstad stated that the report from the MPO staff is on the agenda as the result of a request by the RPA at its last meeting because the RPA reports to the MPO, it was felt it would be appropriate for the MPO to report to the RPA.

Mr. Mark Tibbetts explained that the staff of the MPO is working on the Metropolitan Transportation Long-range Plan dealing with elements of the transportation network that is due in June of 2010. They will include the results of the transit service plan being developed by the RPA for the NCRTD. The MPO will incorporate some of the recommendations from that document into its long-range plan. The MPO is also working with the County of Santa Fe with its growth management plan and roads network.

Councilor Romero asked for an update on the St. Francis corridor study.

Mr. Tibbetts confirmed that public hearings are being held on the study. Typically, corridor studies look at investment for expansion of roadways and capacity. There is no similar parallel process to look into an in-depth comprehensive study for transit, and there are many issues that are currently treated piecemeal. Now that there is rail transit, the MPO are interested in pursuing coordination with roadways, bicycle, and improving pedestrian facilities.

Commissioner Montoya commented this is the mechanism to look at transportation more globally than the way it has traditionally been done.

Mr. Tibbetts agreed that hard decisions will need to be made on global priorities, and the MPO is definitely the venue to step back and look at the bigger picture for the future.

Councilor Wurzbarger briefly reviewed what she called the tortuous history of the MPO and the RPA and said there was a clear indication at the time that the MPO would focus on the transportation planning side to relieve the RPA of that aspect. She felt there would be significant work to be done to move toward the MPO doing the decision-making with respect to prioritization of transit.

Commissioner Stefanics pointed to redundancy between the MPO and RPA and said she would like to know more about the history and why they are kept separate, because in some ways, the RPA is repeating what the MPO is doing. From her point of view in being on the two boards for a partial year, it appears the MPO carries the precedence for being able to utilize federal funds, while the RPA is discussing the use of local funds. She agreed there needs to be more coordination between the MPO and the RPA.

Councilor Romero noted that she is an alternate to the MPO and has seen the overlap between the two boards, even though there is the history and variety of reasons for separating the two. She suggested a planning session that would bring the two entities together to look at opportunities, and perhaps there is something to work out in the near future to see where there is overlap and how the board members could be more efficient with their time and energy.

Chair Bushee agreed that there should be a reevaluation of the responsibilities and purposes of the two boards.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

- **Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the RPA for the next six months**

Commissioner Stefanics moved that Commissioner Harry Montoya serve as RPA Chair and Councilor Rosemary Romero serve as RPA Vice Chair for the next six months. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wurzbarger, voted upon and approved unanimously.

- **Presentation, discussion and possible action on the Transit Service Plan**

Consultant Jacob Riger explained that his group has worked over the past couple of months to put the service plan together to identify potential universal projects for the City, County, NCRTD, tribal, rural and urban, and to start costing the projects out and comparing them with revenues for the first cut of evaluation. He said that he will walk the RPA members through the spreadsheets to make sure they are on the same page and that the information is understood. Following that exercise, he would like direction going forward to finish the service plan in terms of what projects should be prioritized and those that should not be included. This direction will allow him to then finalize the report.

The information on the spreadsheets is the beginnings of a tool for having objective data, quantifiable data, and to use as a methodology for now and in the future. He repeated that the

tool can be used today for the service plan, and going forward in the future as a way to reassess over time and change priorities. Changes to fundings or costs can be updated as well.

As a second point, this information was received from the project partners (Santa Fe Trails, NCRTD, MPO, Santa Fe County), and as much as possible accurately reflects all the inputs, discussions and data. He said that everyone is seeing this information for the first time so that they can all start on the same page with the same knowledge base and learn together. The input received today and input received from the partners over the next couple of weeks will help to refine and use this tool to finish the service plan report.

As a piece of background information, Mr. Riger pointed to the spreadsheet that was considered as adopted at the June RPA meeting to allocate the GRT for the three-quarters of the first fiscal year, October 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010 (FY 2010). The table includes existing NCRTD services – the GEE and others for which they were seeking GRT help, as well as the enhancements that Santa Fe Trails had been making, such as the Pickup.

At the July meeting, the RPA approved a set of funding eligibility criteria for the GRT and how the money can be spent on eligible projects now and in the future. The RPA adopted three criteria, along with one from Councilor Romero that called for quantifiable objective data to assess the services over time. The main criteria adopted were that the services be regional, that they connect to the Rail Runner, that they connect to the existing urban metropolitan transit network, Santa Fe Place and downtown, and that they have a regional purpose in the nature of the service being provided.

This is basically a four-and-three-quarters, or five-year plan, for FY 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The consultants have had productive discussions with the project partners about longer-term structural changes to the multi-agency transit network in this region. Because needing to build political support in the longer-term investments is beyond the scope of this work, the immediate concentration will be on the priorities that have already been placed on the table.

Commissioner Stefanics asked why the FY 2011 project costs are so much greater than FY 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Mr. Riger explained the basic reason for that is they did not attempt to prioritize the projects. In costing out all of the projects, a fair number of them are new services and routes that take an initial start-up investment, such as buying new vehicles and operational costs. Based on the input received for how the projects are arranged, costs for the first year may come down and costs for subsequent years may go up.

A summary of the costs that have been identified in the universe of projects was compared for each fiscal year with the revenue scenarios that were presented by Ken Smithson at the June RPA meeting. These are consistent and based on DFA and other state forecasts of revenue availability and state methodology.

As part of the scope of services, there is a table that shows a comparison of the project costs with low, medium and high scenarios for each fiscal year.

The bottom line is that the costs far exceed the available revenues and tough choices will have to be made about what is chosen to fund over the next five years.

The consultant looked at different criteria based on the kind of service in question for each of the projects. Rural service is evaluated differently from urban service, but in the table, they tried to accurately evaluate the different universe of projects. The color coding gives a first-glance visual sense of how the projects shake out in terms of things like whether they meet the GRT criteria identified, if it has a reasonable transit mode share, or if it meets thresholds for cost per passenger. He has not attempted to draw conclusions from these evaluations, but it is an overall summary to help the RPA to begin to form opinions about each of the projects.

The table on unit costs is part of the tool used to estimate the capital and operating cost for each of the projects, but they are not prioritized. There is a scenario game plan in terms of the kind of service that might be provided based on the origin and destination of the service with different route options. Based on Santa Fe Trails unit costs, assumptions were made for how many vehicles it would take to operate routes. Assumptions were made for percentages of other funding as a way to more accurately calculate what the GRT share would be for a particular service.

On the list of projects, Mr. Riger stated some of the service may not meet the established GRT funding eligibility criteria, and so other funding sources may need to be identified to supplement their portion of the cost of providing those services.

Commissioner Vigil asked why there were no matching funds in the perspective.

Mr. Riger replied that they wanted to be very conservative, and unless there were known matching funds, it was not included. The goal here collectively is to prioritize funding in the GRT that is available, and he said he did not want to understate the cost to provide these services. In some cases there may be some cost sharing, obviously with some of the pueblo services, and there is the possibility that routes entirely within the city may be eligible for some federal funding, but that is not known for sure.

The NCRTD has said that, although the pueblos have other funding and grants for some of the routes for the coming fiscal year, it is not guaranteed to continue beyond the next fiscal year. And so the game plan for the scenario is that the GRT will have to take most of or all of the burden of those costs.

With the assumption that the current three-quarters of FY 2010 is taken care of, the annual summation of both capital and operating costs took each service and laid them out over the next four years to see how it varies. As the service is rearranged and reprioritized, costs will change from year to year, but cumulative costs should not change.

Councilor Wurzbarger stated that she is impressed with the report and said that, personally, what she hoped would happen today is that the consultant would do exactly what he has done.

However, she said she would want to sit down first with her city colleagues and city staff regarding priorities and funding.

Mr. Riger went on to show the revenues of the high, medium and low scenarios over the next four-and-three-quarter years. He explained the formula for the GRT, that 50% of it goes to the Rail Runner; of the other 50%, 80% comes to the local transit service and 14% stays with the NCRTD. In that 14%, the NCRTD has indicated it is available for both administrative costs, their efforts to run their transit system, as well some funds for additional services connecting to the Rail Runner. The NCRTD has indicated in past meetings that, once administrative costs are taken out, the remaining amount is so miniscule it does not fund any major addition to the regional transit system. Potentially over time, it may supplement a run on an existing route or extend service, but it is a small amount of money. As a result, all of what is being focused on today is the 86% of the 50% or \$1.773 million.

Chair Bushee commented that the 14% seems high for administrative costs.

Councilor Romero explained that the NCRTD passed a budget in the last couple of months that indicated how the percentages will work, and that information is on line. Also, Ms. Marjorie Keplan from the NCRTD broke down the budget at the June RPA meeting. Councilor Romero stressed that she felt the focus of the discussion should be on the services that can be obtained for the 86% and the tool that will help prioritize based on several issues. She assured the RPA that the information regarding the 14% has been vetted.

Councilor Romero said she felt the next step should be to take the tool provided by the consultants and hold a study session with staff in the immediate future to prioritize the areas that are most relevant, based on the approved criteria. She did not think that a decision could be made today without the city members and county members first meeting with their staffs and then coming back together for decisions.

Commissioner Montoya said that, for his decision-making purposes and prioritizing of routes, he would like to see something that is broken down from a county perspective according to each district, for just new services and existing services. He suggested that might also be useful for the city members to have for their districts.

Councilor Ortiz referred to the FY 2010 budget on the spreadsheet and noted it was not broken down by expenses, although the prospective budget going forward in the following fiscal years has operating expenses. He asked if the decision that was made for FY 2010 is in compliance with the immediate deadline for the NCRTD, and would there be an opportunity to revisit that budget.

Ms. Follingstad noted that at the July RPA meeting, Councilor Wurzburger's motion to accept the FY 2010 Transit Service Plan was made with the understanding that the RPA has the option to amend the service plan with the NCRTD in three months. This means that there was a possibility of amendments to what was accepted when the plan was adopted.

Councilor Ortiz noted that the analysis going into the future routes needs to be done for the existing routes, and from his perspective, it is weighted heavily in favor of non-urban extension of routes in the non-urban areas.

Mr. Riger replied that the list of services acted on at the previous meeting represented the consultants' work with the project partners at the time to identify the absolute critical, immediate, near term priorities, and at the time there was an immediate deadline to meet. He added that they were the services that were collectively identified at the time to be critical, and to make sure of the continuation of funding through the first three-quarters of the first GRT fiscal year. This would get the RPA through the immediate situation so there was more time to plan proactively long term.

Councilor Ortiz agreed and said it was his understanding there would be a chance to revisit FY 2010 and suggested that decisions might still be made about FY 2010.

Chair Bushee noted that the FY 2010 plan is weighted toward rural expansion and said that the city has existing services that are used and utilized, but are about to be furloughed, and they are routes that directly connected to the Rail Runner that were not in existence last year. She said before she can vote on anything, she would like to have the other councilors' and staff's input.

Councilor Wurzbarger concurred with one addition. She said it is her clear expectation that the budget was used as a placeholder because there was a decision deadline. She again complimented the consultant on the extremely provoking and helpful tool that was developed. Her expectation is that the tool will be applied to the whole process in making decisions for future fiscal years without having an immediate deadline crisis.

Regarding the tool developed by the consultant, Councilor Wurzbarger asked if there is a clear definition of the efficiency factor that compares routes to other routes.

Mr. Riger said that he will definitely take the direction to work backwards and apply the tool in the same way to include FY 2010. He apologized for thinking that FY 2010 was settled and said he would be happy to go backwards and include that fiscal year.

Mr. Riger pointed out that the tool is set up by formula to automatically change once projects are prioritized, and that could be done on site within minutes.

Mr. Riger showed a spreadsheet that included cost efficiency and how the routes are rated using assumptions from service providers and how it compares to their cost per passenger threshold and what kind of ridership would be needed to be at or under the threshold.

Chair Bushee asked if that kind of assessment could be done for the routes that are funded for FY 2010. Mr. Riger replied it can be done to the extent of available data.

Chair Bushee asked that Ms. Follingstad invite Ms. Marjorie Keplan to attend the next RPA meeting with a breakdown for the 14%.

Following some discussion, consensus was reached that the members of the RPA would meet with their respective transit staffs to walk through a prioritization. Because of the commitments made for the budget to the end of September, it was decided that the RPA would meet for a transit study before the end of the month on Monday, September 28, at 3 PM.

Ms. Follingstad noted that Mr. Riger would like to be at that session, and based on the criteria adopted, FY 2010 costs will be included.

Councilor Ortiz moved to set a special RPA meeting for 3 PM, Monday, September 28, 2009, for continuation of the rest of today's agenda, and discussion and possible action on the Transit Service Plan. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wurzburger, voted upon and approved unanimously.

Mr. Riger said he would provide the new information to the RPA members as quickly as he can.

- **Presentation and possible action on Regional Capital Outlay GRT matters**

Moved to September 28, 2009.

MATTERS FROM STAFF

- **Budget for Energy Task Force**

Moved to September 28, 2009.

DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT RPA MEETING

A special meeting of the Regional Planning Authority will be held at 3 PM, Monday, September 28, 2009, to continue with the discussion and possible action on the Transit Service Plan and the completion of the agenda for September 15, 2009.

The next regular meeting of the Regional Planning Authority will be held at 4 PM, Tuesday, October 20, 2009, in the County Commission Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the RPA, this Regular Meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:45 PM.

Approved by:

Chair, Regional Planning Authority
Patti Bushee, Councilor, City of Santa Fe

Minutes transcribed and drafted by: Kay Carlson