

An adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on February 11, 2008, beginning at 12:00 noon, at the Martha Jefferson Hospital Outpatient Care Center, Kessler Conference Room, 595 Peter Jefferson Parkway, Charlottesville, Virginia. The meeting was adjourned from February 6, 2008. The purpose of meeting was to hold a joint meeting with staff from the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission and Charlottesville City Council to discuss a Regional Transit Authority.

PRESENT: Mr. Ken C. Boyd, Mr. Lindsay G. Dorrier, Jr. (arrived at 1:00 p.m.), Ms. Ann Mallek, Mr. Dennis S. Rooker, Mr. David Slutzky and Ms. Sally H. Thomas.

ABSENT: None.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Robert W. Tucker, Jr., Assistant County Executive, Thomas Foley, County Attorney, Larry W. Davis, and Senior Deputy Clerk, Meagan Hoy.

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. David Brown, Ms. Holly Edwards, Mr. Satyendra Huja, Mayor Dave Norris and Mr. Julian Taliaferro.

THOMAS JEFFERSON PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION STAFF: Mr. Harrison Rue, Executive Director, Mr. David Blount and Ms. Melissa P. Barlow.

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m., by Mr. Rue, Executive Director of the TJPDC, Mr. Boyd, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors and Mayor David Brown, City Council.

The following agenda was used as the basis for the meeting:

I. Welcome: Overview of Background, Work Session Goals, and Expected Outcomes

The purpose of this work session is to solicit direction from decision makers regarding the extent to which a Regional Transit Authority should be implemented in this area, to help focus the next phase of the consultant study.

1. **Review of Regional Vision for Transit and Project Activities To Date:**
Vision: The Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Transit Authority will provide fast, frequent, dependable, and seamless transit service throughout the area.
Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Study: The RTA Study is examining three core elements for establishing a regional transit authority: management and governance, service and operations, and cost estimation and funding (operating and capital). The project includes a fourth task that addresses the development of a transition and cost allocation plan, once a service strategy and preferred governance structure are selected.
2. **Work Session Goals:**
Goal: Sufficient guidance to finish RTA study and prepare for 2009 legislative session.
3. **Expected Outcomes:**
Expected Outcomes: During this work session, decision makers are expected to reach a joint consensus on the desired governance structure, range of revenue options to further investigate and draft legislation for, and begin to explore interim steps to take between now and the establishment of an RTA.

II. Brief Review of RTA Reports and MPO Policy Board Recommendations

Comments and questions by decision makers are expected and encouraged at any time during this segment.

1. **Task 1a and 1b Report- Regional Transit Management and Governance:** "What type of management and governance would best meet our regional transit needs?" Discuss the types, composition and authority of different institutional structures that could serve as the regional transit organization, as well as any legislative actions that may be required, and the additional revenues, if any, that may be available with each.
2. **Task 2a and 2c Report - Transit Supportive Corridors and Areas:** "Where will our ridership come from?" Discuss the corridors and development areas that may have greater potential for the use of transit.
3. **Task 2b, 2d, and 2e Report - Transit Service Strategies:** "What scale of service should we provide?" Discuss the varying scales of service that could be provided in the future.
4. **Addendum - Transit Service Strategies:** Report closes the transit "loop" by adding a more direct service connecting the Pantops area with the northern portions of the Route 29 corridor, service on Rio Road east of Belvedere, and more frequent service on the CTS routes operated in the City of Charlottesville.
5. **Review of Recommendations from the MPO Policy Board:**
Mode: initially focus specifically on regional transit, but not preclude the possibility of other transportation modes, and
Service: significant investment, expansion, enhancement, and reorganization of the existing transit service both in the County and City, and
Governance: the RTA governance structure shall not preclude the future inclusion of other interested partners (i.e. UVA, The Thomas Jefferson Foundation, JAUNT), and shall maximize existing revenues and include potential mechanisms for generating new revenues, and

- Jurisdiction:** the RTA will initially be comprised of the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle, but shall not preclude the future participation of other jurisdictions.
6. **Revenue/Taxing Options:** Decision makers will discuss several mechanisms under existing statutory authority available for creating alternative sources of revenues to support transportation projects in the region.
 7. **Desired Outcomes:** Decision makers will reach a consensus regarding the long-term preferred governance structure and level of service for transit in this region, and help define remaining questions to be answered in the next phase of the study.

III. Public Comment Period:

IV. Identify Next Steps:

Moving forward, decision makers will discuss possible incremental strategies that will set the stage for regional transit in this area, until legislation is passed which authorizes additional revenue options and the desired governance structure. These decisions will guide the consultant in the completion of a cost allocation and implementation plan, which are the final work products in this study.

(Note: A synopsis of the meeting was provided by Jeanne Cox, Clerk to Charlottesville City Council:)

Mr. Harrison Rue, Executive Director of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, said this is an opportunity for City Council and the Board of Supervisors to advise the Metropolitan Planning Organization and move toward a consensus on a governance structure for regional transit. Mr. Rue reviewed the regional vision for transit and the project activities to date.

Mr. Frank Spielberg of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB), lead consultant for the community's RTA project, said that a successful transit system matches land use with transit. He said transit potential exists in the following circumstances: residential and employment density; road congestion; parking availability; connectivity; transit friendly use plans and policies; and U. Va. employees as a percent of residents. He presented potential service strategies that were presented to the MPO, and a fourth, (4a) that was developed after the MPO review because the MPO wanted to see a higher level of service. He said the possibility of bus rapid transit (BRT) and a streetcar was discussed as part of the service. Service under option 4a is projected to be 55% in the County and 45% in the City. The projected annual operating costs for the options are as follows: baseline: \$5.9 million; option 1: \$8.8 million; option 2: \$9.4 million; option 3: \$10.9 million; option 4a: \$10.5 - \$16.7 million. The projected capital costs are as follows: baseline: zero; option 1: \$4.6 - \$10.3 million; option 2: \$6.4 - \$13.3 million; option 3: \$8.1 — 17.6 million; and option 4/4a: \$31.8 - \$138 million.

Responding to a question from Mr. Rooker, Mr. Rue said that a BRT bus typically costs approximately \$1.3 million, and Mr. Bill Watterson, City Transit Manager, said that a regular bus costs \$350,000.

Responding to a question from Mr. Huja, Mr. Spielberg said that the cost per mile for a small streetcar system is approximately \$10 million per mile and for larger systems approximately \$30 million to \$35 million per mile.

Mr. Norris noted that the \$138 million in capital costs for option 4/4a includes building a road for a dedicated lane.

Mr. Boyd asked what would be expected in return for option 4a. Mr. Spielberg replied a 10 to 15% reduction in traffic would be a reasonable expectation over a period of 10 to 15 years.

Mr. Rue said there could be a 42% reduction of those choosing to move into high density areas that are within half a mile of a bus route.

Mr. Brown asked if there is evidence that the cost of energy impacts people choosing to use transit, and it was noted that people are absorbing the increased cost of energy now, but another increase could have that effect.

Mr. Boyd asked if there is a plan for park and ride lots in the proposal. Mr. Spielberg replied, "yes".

Ms. Thomas asked if there is any indication that federal funding would increase for this. Mr. Rue said he thinks so, but said the federal government is also looking to localities for funding.

Mr. Geoff Slater of Nelson Nygaard, transit consultant, said that organizational objectives for management and governance were based on interviews with stakeholders. Mr. Slater said that a regional transit authority would be composed of at least the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, and there would be the opportunity to include JAUNT and U. Va. He said this would involve local control and equitable cost sharing. Mr. Slater said that other organizational options include: transit coordinating council; joint powers agency (City and County only); joint powers board (City, County and others); transportation district; and service district. He said that State legislation is needed to form a transit authority, and a transit authority is the only option that can generate new revenue.

Mr. Brown suggested working with other jurisdictions that are interested in establishing transit authorities as they seek State enabling legislation.

Mr. Slater noted that a transportation authority, which would go beyond just transit, is also an option.

Mr. Brown asked if Council and the Board are in agreement to move forward with a transit authority. He said he would not want to confuse transit with larger transportation needs at this time. He said fundamental issues are will the City give up control and is the County willing to put in more money.

Mr. Norris said he thinks a regional transit authority is the right direction to go, and gives the area the most flexibility.

Ms. Thomas agreed with Mr. Norris, but said that for strategic reasons localities may have to pick revenue sources that can also be used for transportation.

Mr. Taliaferro said it is a good concept and he supports doing it. He said he would like to know more about the County's commitment.

Ms. Mallek said she supports the authority idea, and would support keeping a broader approach.

Mr. Rooker said he supports a regional transit authority, contingent on additional revenue sources. He said the County cannot afford the increased cost with existing revenues.

Mr. Dorrier said he favors a regional transit authority. He questioned whether it would be a good idea to use these funds for roads as the State may stop their road funding. He said competition between roads and transit may not be healthy. He would like to look at issuing bonds.

Mr. Slutzky said bonds are a great idea and may be a good way for the County to step up funding with the other mechanisms. He said the City conceding control is necessary. Mr. Slutzky said he is receptive to allowing funding to go to roads, but thinks the focus of the legislation should be primarily on transit.

Ms. Edwards said she supports a regional transit authority with the emphasis on transit.

Mr. Huja said he supports a regional transit authority with the focus on transit, and is interested in having U. Va. join. He said before the City gives up control there should be reciprocal funding from the County at the same time.

Mr. Boyd said he agrees with most of what has been said. He said we need new funding sources for transportation. He said he likes the idea of incorporating a referendum.

Mr. Brown noted that U. Va. has made it clear that they prefer to have a wait and see posture. He said UTS and CTS are cooperating well. He thinks U. Va. should be represented at the policy level to assure that we have a good system.

Mr. Rooker said we need to continue to consider the importance of JAUNT, and we need to assure that we do not jeopardize their funding.

Ms. Thomas said that school buses are the largest part of the County's fleet, and we need to make sure to involve the schools.

During the public comment period, Mr. Morgan Butler, representing the Southern Environmental Law Center, reiterated SELC's support for a regional transit authority, and he urged City Council and the Board of Supervisors to move forward.

Mr. Chad Freckman asked that school children be considered as we look at a regional transit authority because if they see transit as an option they may make the decision to use transit as adults. He encouraged that routes be established to Albemarle High School and Monticello High School.

Mr. Spielberg said he is hearing support for moving on with an implementation plan for a regional transit authority which will lay out the options for a governance structure.

Mr. Boyd said he thinks the authority should be composed of elected officials. He is not sold on an all or nothing approach, and said he would like to look at how we can incrementally increase transit.

Mr. Slutzky said that that debt service on \$100 million in bonds would amount to five cents on the County's tax rate. He said the proposed new revenue sources can cover this amount.

Mr. Rooker said there is a big jump with a BRT, and before we go there he would want to get a good estimate of the cost. He does not support BRT without a lot more information. He suggested that representatives from the City and County work together to meet with other localities that are seeking similar legislation, and suggested that Mr. Slutzky be the County's representative.

Mr. Norris said it is possible to have a BRT-like system without a dedicated lane. He would like to have a place holder for a streetcar system which could be part of the mix.

Ms. Thomas said this conversation is bound together with Places 29.

Mr. Dorrier said we need a plan that includes Crozet and Scottsville. He said it is important to have a good system from the beginning.

There being no further discussion, **motion** was offered by Mr. Rooker, **seconded** by Ms. Mallek, to adjourn the Board of Supervisors to February 13, 2008, 2:30 p.m. Roll was called and the motion carried by the following recorded vote:

AYES: Mr. Dorrier, Ms. Mallek, Mr. Rooker, Mr. Slutzky, Ms. Thomas and Mr. Boyd.

NAYS: None.

Chairman

Approved by Board
Date: 10/01/2008
Initials: EWJ