

**Fastracks Citizens Advisory Committee  
Quarterly Meeting  
June 17, 2015  
RTD Administrative Office  
1600 Blake Street, Denver, CO 80202**

### **1. Introductions and Welcome**

Co-chair Cynthia Stovall introduced herself and welcomed all in attendance. Attendees then introduced themselves and the committee meeting began.

### **2. Welcome from Pauletta Tonilas RTD Senior Manager of Public Relations**

Pauletta Tonilas briefly explained the state of affairs within the RTD administration. She noted that former General Manager Phil Washington had accepted a position with the Los Angeles Metro and in the meantime, Dave Genova has been appointed interim GM. She also stated the important role the Citizens Advisory Committee plays in the selection and public outreach process to determine the new head of RTD. Tonilas explained that while the RTD Board of Directors will make the final decision in appointing a new GM, public input from within the organization as well as the public will be taken into consideration. Board members have hosted listening sessions with employees at various RTD facilities in order to learn what employees would like to see from the new General Manager. Input has also been gathered from an online questionnaire and findings will be provided to the Board for consideration. The Board is in the process of selecting a recruiting firm that will conduct a national search to determine a list of the most qualified individuals, after which the Board will narrow the list to the top candidates for interviews before making a final decision.

#### Questions and Comments:

- How will the community be involved in the final selection process of the new General Manager? *The last time a new GM was appointed in 2009, five leaders in the community interviewed the finalists and provided input to the Board who made the final decision. A similar process may be implemented in choosing the new General Manager.*

### **3. Brief history RTD and where it is now**

Tonilas gave an overview of the history of RTD which was created in 1969 by the Colorado Legislature. It was noted that early on, RTD evolved as it briefly experimented with the idea of Personal Rapid Transportation (a Jetson like mode of transit) but ultimately settled on bus transit in 1976. In 1979, RTD received a federal grant to create what ultimately became Denver's 16<sup>th</sup> street mall, along which RTD provides its free shuttle service. In 1984, the express lanes along I-25 were opened and the first RTD rail line was completed, running from I-25 and Broadway to 30<sup>th</sup> and Downing. It wasn't until 2000 that the Southwest Light Rail line from I-25 to Mineral Avenue. In 2004, voters approved a .4% sales tax for the

FasTracks expansion still underway. In 2006 the transportation expansion project was completed (aka T-REX) which included 19 miles of light rail down the Southeast Corridor along I-25 and in 2011 RTD was awarded a \$1 billion grant for the East Line and the Gold Line, which was the fourth full funding grant agreement for an RTD project. Tonilas stated that after 2016, despite all the hurdles RTD has faced, 70% of FasTracks will be completed.

Tonilas discussed the Federal Transit Administration's public private partnership pilot program (Penta P) which sought to open the door to public-private partnerships (P3s) and lessen the risk inherent to public funding of major projects. RTD was one of three transit systems that were chosen for the Penta P program along with San Francisco BART and Houston Metro, however only RTD succeeded in the program, proving that public-private partnerships (PPP's) are beneficial and cost effective. Pauletta made the point that P3's are similar to buying a home – most people don't have the money to outright buy their home so they make a deal with the bank to pay it off over an extended period of time. The construction of express lanes on US36 to help pay for the new construction was mentioned as another example of a successful P3 and a promising strategy moving forward. Tonilas finished her presentation by reviewing the GM search process.

#### **4. Member Discussion**

Darcy Wilson noted that RTD is a unique culture and despite some of the issues ahead, it has been very successful. Hiring a new General Manager who is eager to make major changes to the system may not be the best mode of action. The new GM needs to gauge what is working well and adjust what is not without implementing sweeping changes that risk backfiring on the agency.

Vivian Stovall voiced the concern that hiring a new General Manager with a very different vision for RTD could prevent progress and discourage collaboration. Tonilas noted that historically, Denver has been very collaborative in the implementation of new projects which is a quality that isn't found in many large municipalities and that willingness to work in collaboration would be a factor in the GM selection process.

Anne Hayes discussed the importance of hiring a new GM who has an understanding of technology. New services like Uber are convenient and popular and it's crucial that RTD finds a way to collaborate/incorporate that sort of service. Tonilas agreed with the Hayes' and noted that RTD will have real-time location information for buses by the end of the year and for rail by 2016 as a way of including tech and making the trip planning process more simple. Hayes added that the new GM will also have to promote negotiations with other businesses and organizations similar to San Francisco's BART transit system who is working with neighborhood HOA's to potentially include public transit membership in HOA fees as a way of increasing use of public transit. She added that another way to increase ridership is the potential for a partnership with event ticket sales vendors and sporting events to include public transit costs in the price of their tickets.

Tyler Kealy explained that the next GM needs to be competitive minded and technologically knowledgeable. Services such as Uber, Car2Go and b-cycle are popular and complementary

to RTD, however Kealy noted that those services could potentially steal market share from, or even replace RTD. It is becoming increasingly important to embrace new technologies and collaboration with complementary sources in order to stay relevant. Millennials are moving away from cars and it's a question of where they are moving to. RTD has a great opportunity to grab the millennial market share. Debra Wilcox voiced her support but also noted that traditional taxi services should not be ignored as startups like Uber and Lyft are facing legal legislative backfire in some areas. He also noted that a big part of increasing ridership is filling the transit gaps and making more areas accessible and convenient for transportation within the urban core.

Karen Stuart noted that it is important to get someone who has transit experience with organizations like RTD and to form both public – public and private – private partnerships public private partnership. She discussed the importance hiring a GM with the ability to build connections with other leaders and organizations on a national scale – Phil had connections with people from all over which was a benefit to RTD. The next GM will need to be charismatic and convincing. Stuart stressed the fact that here needs to be a commitment to finishing all of the FasTracks plans in a timely manner.

Closing remarks:

- It was suggested that the RTD rail line map should be altered (currently lots of different colors) so that one color shows existing and running lines while a dotted line shows the projected/under construction lines in order to make it easier to understand.
- Although there are issues with funding, RTD needs to complete FasTracks as promised. It is critical to continue to bring focus on the importance of completing the Northwest Rail Line.