**NATA Board Meeting Minutes**

**February 25, 2021**

**7:30-9:00am**

**Zoom Virtual Meeting**

**Meeting Recording:** [**https://youtu.be/1eaAmkXcycc**](https://youtu.be/1eaAmkXcycc)

**NATA Members (who signed in)**

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| **Steve O’Dorisio** | Adams County Commission | **Celeste Arner** | Federal Heights Council |
| **Lynn Baca** | Adams County Commission | **Tim Williams** | Federal Heights Staff |
| **Brian Stanley** | Adams County Staff | **Phil Greenwald** | Longmont Staff |
| **Kristen Sullivan** | Adams County staff | **Joan Peck** | Longmont Council |
| **Chris Chovan** | Adams County Staff | **Julie Mullica** | Northglenn Council |
| **Greg Mills** | Brighton Mayor | **Sara Dusenberry** | Northglenn Staff |
| **Malcolm Fleming** | Erie Staff | **Karen Stuart** | SCMN |
| **Sarah Grant** | Broomfield Staff | **Carson Priest** | SCMN |
| **Liz Law Evans** | Broomfield Council | **Tammy Herreid** | SCMN |
| **Nicole Frank** | Comm. City Mayor Pro Tem | **Jessica Sandgren** | Thornton Mayor Pro Tem |
| **Joe Wilson** | Commerce City Staff | **Kent Moorman** | Thornton Staff |
| **Brent Soderlin** | Commerce City Staff | **Debra Baskett** | Westminster Staff |
| **Todd Fessenden** | Erie Staff | **Anita Seitz** | Westminster Mayor Pro Tem |
|  |  |  |  |

**SCMN Members (who signed in)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chris Fasching** | FHU | **Mark Shotkoski** | NWP |
| **Neal Goffinet** | FHU | **Pedro Costa** | NWP |
| **Sam Taylor** | Broomfield Chamber | **Robin Stoneman** | RS&H |
| **Shawn Plichta** | Graham | **Joyce Downing** | SCMN Chair |
| **Carla Perez** | HDR | **Craig Eicher** | Xcel |

**Agency Partners (who signed in)**

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| **Julie George** | CDOT | **Shelly Cook** | RTD Board |
| **Andy Stratton** | CDOT | **Chris Quinn** | RTD |
| **Ryan Sorenson** | CDOT | **Henry Stopplecamp** | RTD |
| **Danny Herrmann** | CDOT | **Troy Whitmore** | RTD Board |
| **Jan Rose** | CDOT | **Vince Buzek** | RTD Board |
| **Michael Davies** | RTD | **Erik Davidson** | RTD Board |

**Guests (who signed in)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Jeremy Rodriguez** | Cong. Perlmutter  | **Meghan MacKillop** | CML |
| **Kevin Vargas** | Cong. Crow | **Alex Gordon** | NFRMPO |
| **Kari Linker** | Senator Hickenlooper | **Heather McDaniel** | Souder Miller |
| **Max Haynes** | Senator Hickenlooper |  |  |
| **Mike Washington** | Senator Bennet |  |  |

1. **Welcome by Chair Jessica Sandgren**

*A welcome was given by Chair Jessica Sandgren, and instructions were given to sign in using the chat function.*

1. **Introduction of new representatives and attendees**

*Karen Stuart:* If you don’t mind madam chair, I would like to add in this agenda item in order to welcome some new members and attendees that we have joining us. Mayor Pro tem Harold Thomas from Federal Heights is a new member. Others that are new are Senator Hickenlooper’s regional representative Max Haynes, (*Max introduced himself)* and from Senator Bennet’s office Mike Washington (*Mike introduced himself).* Craig Eicher from Xcel energy is here from Smart Commute (*Craig introduced himself, as the replacement for Preston Gibson).*

1. **Approval of January 28, 2021 NATA Meeting Minutes**

***Approval of* January 28, 2021 *Meeting Minutes:*** *Motion to approve minutes by Malcom Fleming (Erie), seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Anita Seitz (Westminster) and approved unanimously.*

1. **Smart Commute Update**

*Karen Stuart:* We are pursuing three grant applications right now. First is the Can Do Colorado eBike program, which would serve as a companion piece to the FlexRide grant. There is a multimodal component to that FlexRide grant that would leverage those funds through this eBike grant program to purchase some loaner to owner eBikes for essential workforce within 10 miles of that service area. We hope to roll this project out in three phases and have those eBikes be a first-last-mile solution for workers to get to essential work places. We are also looking at a telework grant through CDOT. We are engaging a wellness and ergonomics expert to produce three 15-minute videos focused on ergonomics, physical health and mental health for teleworkers. And, we are also pursuing the E-470 safety grant. Last year we went after this grant for senior driver safety at community outreach events but weren’t successful.

*Carson Priest:* We have heard from our DRCOG colleagues at Way To Go that BTWD will be postponed again this year to September 22. However, Smart Commute is planning a Summer Bike Campaign because we believe that people like to bike all the way through the summer and we want to capitalize on that momentum.

*Tammy Herreid:* We wanted to give you a brief rundown of the presentations we have planned for this year. We plan to have a brief overview of the CO7 Corridor Plan from CDOT. Kyle Harris of McWhinney, has an interesting presentation on the new Baseline development that focuses on mobility connectivity and sustainable neighborhoods. Pedro Costa from NW Parkway has a presentation on transportation efforts in the area of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resilience. We believe Front Range Passenger Rail continues to be of interest to our group and will look to the FRR Commission to give an update later this year. There will also be a presentation on the proposed ETRP regulation being written right now and plan to offer a presentation to both the Broomfield Chamber and AC-REP. The production of a video on Tips for How to Host a Successful Virtual Meeting is also in the works.

1. **RTD Directors’ Reports**

*Director Vince Buzek:* One thing that I think is important to report is an Equitable Transit Oriented Development Policy was passed at our Tuesday night Board meeting this week. That policy relates to RTD owned property that is ripe for TOD and allows for more parking flexibility, etc.

*Director Erik Davidson:* Thank you Vince for bringing up the Equitable Housing Policy as I think it will be really important moving forward. We had a meeting with the Town of Superior this last week, and already there are things in motion around this new policy. Thank you for having us.

*Director Troy Whitmore:* One final thing to add before we jump into the meat of the discussion is that we voted unanimously to extend the collective bargaining agreement for our local union for another year. Kudos to our senior management staff in getting that done for added stability in the next year.

* **N-Line Operational Issues**

*Chair Jessica Sandgren:* I’ll introduce this discussion with this: , I fear that the ending of the Pilot Fare Program on the N Line combined with ongoing operational issues is going to lead a decline in ridership.

*Director Vince Buzek:* (*showing a series of slides*) We are aware of the N Line operational issues and they have been due to 3 main problems. (1) Wabtec (software company for the train systems) has been doing software updates that can cause problems with the trains running; (2) Denver Transit Operators (DTO) near Union Station is causing operations issues on the tracks where the N Line terminates at Union Station; and (3) Operator shortages are causing trains not to be able to run; RTD is working on hiring and training as fast as possible. In terms of performance metrics, the on-time performance has improved since the opening, but the service availability is where RTD has room for improvement due to some of the issues I mentioned before. The EAGLE train lines have had better overall performance than the N Line, but those have been running for a lot longer period of time. We know that these performance metrics indicate people’s willingness to ride the train, so we will keep on these issues closely. There have also been more Positive Train Control (PTC) and Transportation Demand Management Software (TDMS) issues on the N Line than the Eagle Line. RTD will be holding 3 upcoming Quiet Zone Public Meetings from noon to 1pm on March 3rd, 4th and 5th, with the 5th being specially for the N Line.

*Henry Stopplecamp:* The cancelations that happened today were due to operator shortages. We do have classes underway right now for new operators and we are hiring them as fast as we can to get them out on the lines.

*Mayor Pro Tem Anita Seitz:*  Is there no validity on the reduced fare data program due to the pandemic? Does program need to be extended to get better data snapshot for the study?

*Director Vince Buzek*: We are continuing to hire and train as fast as we can.

*Chair Jessica Sandgren:* There are issues with inconsistencies of delay notices. I only get the notices about the delays and cancelled trips because I signed up to receive these rider alerts. If our riders are not signed up to receive these messages, where can they go to find out this information? I don’t see anywhere where it is consistently shown or information on delays and cancellations displayed, it’s not on social media either.

*Henry Stopplecamp:* I will talk with our communications staff and Debra Johnson to do better at getting the word out.

* **Pilot Fare Program End discussion**

*Director Vince Buzek*: The N Line Pilot Fare Program ends on March 27 and unfortunately with the COVID pandemic we are not getting accurate ridership data. Pilot programs are governed by federal regulations and are strictly not allowed to be extended without a full equity analysis on the entire N Line – something that would take a long time to complete and may not yield our wanted response. The directors on this call fought very hard to get this program in place and were excited about it, and now we are in a situation where we simply won’t get the data we hoped for when we started it.

*Director Shelly Cook*: We do have ridership data for the N Line through the end of December and it was showing neck-in-neck with the G Line. That’s good news. On March 9th Debra Johnson is calling a meeting to discuss what she is calling the *growth ridership action plan*.

*Chair Jessica Sandgren:* Does the G Line have any regional fares on it?

*Director Shelly Cook:* No, the G Line is local all the way. In comparison, the last stop on the W Line is regional fare.

*Phil Greenwald*: Would RTD be open to doing a “buy up” program like we do in Longmont for our local busses to provide the difference between the local and regional fare for the last 2 stops on the N Line?

*Director Troy Whitmore*: We can definitely run that up the pole to the leaders. We are aware that our fares are in the top end category of fares in the country; Debra Johnson and the Directors are fully aware of this issue and want to prioritize it as a topic of discussion in the near future.

*Councilmember Julie Mullica*: If there is *anything* we can do to reduce the fare, we should look at doing it. The fare structure makes no sense. Northglenn has one stop on the N Line, and it’s a regional fare. We have a large community of color and of lower income, so there is no reason why we should have to pay a regional fare from an equity perspective. “Helping make the numbers work” is not an acceptable explanation for the overall fare structure and the regional/local boundaries. I’m glad that you all are bringing this conversation up, and I know that people are working towards a better system. Directors, please let us know how we can help you from the local level in furthering this conversation.

*Director Vince Buzek:* The “buy up” program is a great option. The indication from staff when we started analysis on the pilot fare program was that we would be losing, in a 6-month pilot program period, roughly $180,000. That’s how much it would cost, roughly, to do a buy-up of the fares based on previous ridership projections. The difference in making up these funds would come from the local jurisdictions.

*Director Erik Davidson*: We are re-starting the ReImagine working group and we are going to be focused on improving the customer experience across our system. The group will also be focused in on partnerships, so thank you Phil for that idea and discussion you raised. I did also want to address the operator shortages in that we are going through a peer review of our audit by the state with APTA. As Vice Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, I did get a chance take a look at some of this information and hope to be able to pull out some issues that we identify.

*Kent Moorman*: Can we do another pilot fare program after this one ends?

*Director Vince Buzek*: No, I don’t think we can. We have to do a detailed equity analysis before approaching any additional pilot programs.

*Chair Jessica Sandgren*: I ask all of our congressional representatives in attendance to run this up the chain to see how your elected officials can help address these issues.

*Chris Chovan*: Is the “buy up” program eligible for federal aid through DRCOG funding and the local jurisdictions could help with the local match to those funds?

*Phil Greenwald & Kristen Sullivan*: We have had no luck in these efforts to leverage DRCOG funds so far.

* **RTD Fare Zone discussion**

*Director Vince Buzek*: When we started the initial discussion about the pilot fare program, we brought up more of a conversation about the entire fare system and how we could improve it. The way you attract riders is to make is simple and affordable, neither of which is the case here. Debra Johnson and RTD Board understand this. Some time ago, before any of us were directors someone drew some circles on a map and decided that if you were inside of the circle, you are a local fare and outside means you are regional. There was certainly a financial analysis that went into that decision, but it’s time now to reevaluate it.

*Karen Stuart*: It’s important for the congressional representatives to understand the differences in the fare prices, this is a system-wide issue. There is a significant difference between the local & regional fare in that a local fare is $3 and a regional fare is $5.25. It’s not just the northern area that is affected by this. This is a region wide issue as our friends to the south and west experience the same issues.

*Chair Jessica Sandgren*: Thank you to our Directors for coming on and discussing all of this today.

1. **RTD Accountability Committee Update**

*Councilmember Julie Mullica*: *(showing a series of slides and showing a list on the slide*) These are the committee members, with a purpose of having a diverse set of expertise from across the district. The mission was to provide feedback and set of recommendations for improvement to the operations of statutes related to RTD, the board and staff of the RTD, the Governor, the General Assembly, and the public. This is an extremely broad charge, so each committee has tried to hone in on some of the most important issues. We started in July of 2020, released our first report in January 2021, and our final report of recommendations is due on July 1, 2021. There are three subcommittees, Governance, Finance and Operations.

Governance Subcommittee: I serve as the chair of this committee. We are looking at an alternative governance substructure for regional and sub-regional areas to create a more proactive and interactive community-based planning process; partnerships with other transit agencies and non-profit organizations; evaluation of RTD’s service area; and the size & structure of the RTD Board.

Finance Subcommittee: I try to attend these meetings, but there are a lot of them so I really appreciate Troy and Lynn for their presence in these meetings. This committee is working on a more sustainable financial model: best use of the COVID-19 relief funds, reviewing the RTD statutes, a resolution for the unfinished FasTracks Corridors, overall financial transparency, and partnership opportunities to enhance mobility services.

Operations Subcommittee: This group is working on an overall focus of RTD fares and pass programs; the service delivery to transit-reliant populations; community-based transit service planning & operations; an organizational assessment; and a social/environmental justice and equity analysis. I’m especially excited about the report coming out of this committee.

In January we released a preliminary report which included information about the committees, a status report for each subcommittee and proposed legislative recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly in the 2021 Legislative Session. The legislative recommendations include fare box ratio requirements; parking fees; commercial & residential uses at stations; and contracting with local governments and non-profits. That is a quick overview of everything going on. If we want to do another update next month, I think the regional and sub-regional recommendations will be finalized.

*Councilmember Joan Peck*: Are they talking about the sizes of local buses?

*Councilmember Julie Mullica:* I am not sure Joan; I will check and follow-up with you.

*Chair Jessica Sandgren*: I have asked Julie to provide an update each month at our NATA Meetings.

1. **Doodle poll on NATA Retreat Date Options and Retreat Topics**

*Doodle poll was launched for upcoming NATA retreat. The result is Friday, April 16th from 9am – 11am. Chair Sandgren said SPC will discuss the retreat content at our next SPC meeting in March.*

1. **CML Legislative Update**

*Meghan MacKillop*: CML is supporting SB21-84 that is currently being heard in committee, and it would grant local governments more authority over roughed-in roads that have been prepped but don’t qualify as technical roads. We are evaluating the developing transportation funding bill that might include gas tax fees, electric vehicle fees, delivery vehicle user fees, etc. The potential distribution of this new revenue is up in the air, but it’s CML’s decision to advocated for these funds to follow the existing HUTF distribution formula. There is an additional $30 million for the Revitalizing Main Streets and Safer Main Streets grant programs that is currently going through the senate. CDOT indicated to me that they are combining these two programs into one going forward resulting in the cap for the individual grants to be raised above the current $50,000 limit. New application information will be released in March / early April. If you have any specific questions, please send them to me via email.

1. **CDOT CO 7 Corridor Development Plan**

*Ryan Sorenson: (showing a series of slides)*  I’m a Region 1 engineer and CO7 falls within my district. I want to start off with a brief overview of the previous work done on CO7 and of the Corridor Development Plan (CDP). I also want to mention that the CO7/ I-25 Mobility Hub is acknowledged in the CDP but *not* including in the CDP as part of the work as it is its own CDOT project. The goals of the CDP are to prioritize the Corridor and define where and how to best perform the project objectives. The CDP is also based on the Multimodal Vision for the corridor and on past studies and ongoing efforts in the area. CDOT defines the goals for the project, defines the environmental analysis approach, identifies the technical methods for the design, identifies the priority sections of the corridor, and defines the plan to deliver the project. There is also a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), whose members (including SCMN) are involved in the CDP development and corridor project as a whole. The corridor is rapidly developing and this plan addresses the best way to conduct the project and meet the continually growing needs of the area. The CDP was approved by the CO7 Coalition at their January meeting. We are currently working on early action items which includes pulling together our Program Management Team, and an Aerial/LiDAR mapping of the whole 25-mile corridor at a detailed level. CDOT Communications is working on getting the Program website set up, getting the project Communications Manager on board, and identifying procurement packages. The goal is to have this $10 million portion of the program wrapped up by 2023 so that we be ready to move into advanced design and construction.

*Commissioner Steve O’Dorisio*: I just want to say that was a fantastic presentation. This project is vital to our region and we should keep pushing it forward. Thank you for presenting and I appreciate everyone’s effort on this.

*Chair Jessica Sandgren*: Thank you Ryan, this is a vital and important project to us and we would like if you could provide us with regular updates on the corridor.

**Adjourn 9:03 a.m.**