**NATA Board Meeting Minutes**

**July 27, 2017**

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

**Adams County Economic Development, 12200 Pecos Street, Westminster**

**Welcome by Chair Herb Atchison and introductions.**

**NATA Members (who signed in)**

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| **Chaz Tedesco** | Adams Cty Commission | **Brook Svoboda** | Northglenn Staff |
| **Kimberly Dall** | Brighton Staff | **Catherine Sanders** | SCMN |
| **Randy Ahrens** | Broomfield Mayor | **Cathy Bird** | SCMN |
| **Kevin Standbridge** | Broomfield Staff | **Joely Tynes** | SCMN |
| **Rick Teter** | Commerce City Council  | **Karen Stuart** | SCMN |
| **Sean Ford** | Commerce City Mayor | **Eric Hansen** | SCMN/Adams Cty Cms |
| **Mark Gruber** | Erie City Council | **Eric Montoya** | Thornton City Council  |
| **Gary Behlen** | Erie Staff | **Kent Moorman** | Thornton Staff |
| **Daniel Dick** | Federal Heights Mayor | **Kevin Forgett** | Thornton Staff |
| **Will Lindsey** | Federal Heights Staff | **Shannon Bird** | Westminster Council |
| **Phil Greenwald** | Longmont Staff | **Herb Atchison** | Westminster Mayor |
| **Brad Harvey** | Metro North Chamber | **Debra Baskett** | Westminster Staff |

**SCMN Members (who signed in)**

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| **Ed Icenogle** | ISP | **Bob Marusik** | TSH |
| **Rick Gabel** | Jacobs Engineering | **Troy Whitmore** | United Power |
| **Denny McCloskey** | Smart Commute | **Ina Zisman** | WSP/PB |

**Agency Partners (who signed in)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Danny Herrmann** | CDOT | **Dave Genova** | RTD |
| **Lizzie Kemp** | CDOT | **Heather McKillop** | RTD |
| **Stephanie Alanis** | CDOT | **Henry Stopplecamp** | RTD |
| **Nick Farber** | CO HPTE | **Lindsey Smith** | RTD |
| **Doug Rex** | DRCOG | **Sherry Ellebracht** | RTD |
| **Terry Blackmore** | NRFMPO | **Paul Solano** | RTD Board |
| **Ashland Vaughn** | RTD |

 **Guests (who signed in)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Jeremy Rodriguez** | Rep. Ed Perlmutter | **Lily Griego** | Sen. Bennet |
| **Ben Stein** | Rep. Mike Coffman | **Andrew Dunkley** | Sen. Gardner |

* **Approval May 2017 Meeting Minutes**

***Approval of May 25, 2017 Meeting Minutes:*** *Motion to approve minutes made by Eric Montoya seconded by Daniel Dick and approved unanimously.*

* **Treasurer’s Report- Mayor Pro Tem Eric Montoya**

**Eric Montoya:** All dues have been received, and there are no outstanding bills at this time. The contract for facilitation for the priority list is $10K. (The Treasure’s report will be sent out to NATA prior to the next meeting for approval at the August meeting).

* **SCMN Update- Karen Stuart, Catherine Sanders**

**Karen Stuart:**  Thank you to everyone who came to the TransForum, especially Mayor Pro Tem Gruber who gave the welcoming remarks on behalf of our host, the Town of Erie. It was wonderful to have the event up in Erie at the Community Center. A big thanks to all our sponsors.

We have some staff changes, and two new staff members to introduce. Will Drier who was with us for two years left for a new job at Navigant at the end of June. Joely Tynes is our summer intern from CU majoring in Political Science. Joely helps us out with our community outreach events, keeps our website current and trouble shoots our technical issues. And Cathy Bird is the new I-25 TDM Program Manager replacing Will Drier. Cathy has years of TDM experience working at other TMOs and we look forward to her ideas for improving our program.

**Catherine Sanders:** We staffed two Bike to Work Day stations, one in the morning, one in the afternoon. Our morning ridership was lower than last year-we think because of the closed pedestrian tunnel under I-25 at 120th which is very close to our station. The closure of this underpass due to the I-25 Managed Lanes constructions caused riders to cross a mile north or a mile south of this location – we had 75 riders come through. Our afternoon bike party at The Orchard Town Center had 400 people, between those that came for our station and those people at the mall who came through and talked with us. We also saw an increase in the bikers, especially parents with their children. We also did station planning support for numerous employer stations in our region.

* **RTD Pass Program Working Group Update- Karen Stuart**

**Karen:** Back in March, RTD initiated a Pass Program Working Group Task Force of about 30 stakeholders representing diverse interests to evaluate the existing Pass Programs and work toward consensus recommendations to the RTD staff for the numerous RTD Pass programs. The guiding principles of the process are cost effectiveness, equitable access, convenience and increased ridership. The underlying considerations for these programs are brand loyalty, revenue certainty and the simplification for operator and rider interaction. On Monday, Smart Commute hosted meeting number 4 here. We are working through the many preliminary options brainstormed at our June meeting to move viable options forward for more thorough discussion. This working group will continue to meet through December before making recommendations

**Dave Genova:** I wanted to thank everyone who is working on this group – it is a half-day commitment once a month, plus some time in between. We have a diverse group of stakeholders, and we appreciate their thoughts. At the end of the day, the recommendations will be consensus based and fiscally responsible for RTD. Then recommendations will go to the RTD Board.

* **RTD Update- Dave Genova, Heather McKillop, Henry Stopplecamp**
* **Update of Strategic Business Plan and Annual Program Evaluation (APE)**
* **Discussion of alternatives to balance rail lines for service revisions**
* **G Line and N Line status updates**

**Dave Genova**: We were asked to give a pretty big update this morning, and will be presenting a lot of information. We’ll be presenting information about our projects, about our service adjustments, and about our financial piece from Heather.

**Henry Stopplecamp**: We have a handful of slides to show where we stand on the A-Line, B-Line and G-Line. On the A-Line, our current waiver expires on Sunday. We’ve asked to lift the waiver based on approval of a procedure document. That document hasn’t been approved by FRA at this point, and the FRA will instead be granting us an extension. We will be up and running on Monday morning. Ridership is over 20K a day on A-Line; ridership keeps going up. We have 97% on-time performance for June. The Year to Date ridership is 500K. We have 94% YTD on-time performance on the A-Line. Our contractors worked out many of the bugs, and it’s running smoothly this year.

Two weeks ago the FRA came out to RTD and inspected our systems. They compiled information and passed that along. Last week, folks from DC came in, and we’re deciding what happens next.

On the G-Line, we’ve verified the positive train control system, and are waiting for the procedures to go under review. The next to be reviewed will be our wireless crossings. The schedule for opening on the G-Line is still not determined, we need PUC and FRA approval.

North Metro Rail Line is moving forward. The stations are moving along nicely, the contractor is working, and working with extra crews to speed up the process. We’re still working with their senior management on finding a new opening date. We’re working on how to get to a schedule and speed things up.

(Presented updates on the 112th Station, 104th Station, 88th Station, 72nd Station, Skyway Bridge, National Western Station, including photos from each station/segment). We’ve worked through the problems on the walls moving into Denver that were mentioned at our May update here.

**Discussion:**

**Karen Stuart**: What did you give as the projected date for completion and opening of the N-Line?

**Henry Stopplecamp**: I didn’t give you one. We are working with our contractor.

**Karen Stuart**: Can you give us something to hope for?

**Henry Stopplecamp**: Between now and when it opens. We are working with the contractor to come up with a realistic date. The north end will get done before the south end, but we can’t run a train on the north section without the south section. I think this says a lot of the community up here, that our contractor has been able to work on this first and work with the local governments through the process.

**Karen Stuart**: I’ve asked this question because, as your TMO, we’ve been out at public events constantly for the past 2 years talking about the N-Line. The first year, people said, “yeah right,” and last year we were able to build up public confidence, show maps and station details. We’ve built up public confidence, but now we have to tell people we “hope” it’s still close to 2018. It’s tough we can’t give them certainty.

**Henry Stopplecamp**: Looking at the schedule, we should be able to do it in 2019. When in 2019, though, we don’t know.

**Karen Stuart**: So we can say we’re shooting for 2019, that we’re working toward it, work is being done.

**Henry Stopplecamp**: That’s what we say; we’re still working, we have a critical path for construction. We’re working with our contractor on the schedule every Friday. Our challenge, and Ashland’s challenge, is 2019. We’re looking into 2019. We have to get the contractor up and running. Just because the contractor turns the system over to us, we still have to bring in crews, do brief testing, do training, etc. That’s what was pushing us to late 2018 originally, and now what is pushing us to 2019. We’re working on getting the system turned over and running for 2019. That’s the goal.

**Cathy Bird**: When you say brief testing can you tell us how long that will be? So when we’re talking to people, we can say, “Once you see trains being tested, it will be such and such amount of time before the line opens.”

**Henry Stopplecamp**: I can’t say. We usually assume 6 months. We’ve done it in 2 weeks on a light rail system, and where we were working with our own folks. When we have total control over a project, we can go fast, but we have a third party in this case. We are going to hold our contractor for a 21 day performance period with a level of service defined up front. 21 days is a perfect world, but it’s going to be longer than that.

**Mayor Atchison**: Last time, we heard you were working with BNSF on the design on the south end, where is that at?

**Henry Stopplecamp**: it’s done. The design on the south end is done.

**Heather McKillop: Strategic Budget Plan & Annual Program Evaluation**

**Heather McKillop:** I’m going to talk about our Strategic Budget Plan and our Annual Program Evaluate (APE). (Heather presented presentation with budget charts and more detail, available on the NATA website.). For the Strategic Budget Plan, we project Sales and Use Tax from the CU Leeds School of Business. We used the “low forecast” last year, instead of the “baseline” forecast. This year, they redid their modeling, and we think their baseline is much more compatible. The Board is moving forward with the baseline projections for not only the 6-year forecast, but all the way out to 2040. We also review grant funding as well.

We presented our budget to the board (too small to read). We’ve adjusted our fleet out to 18 years from the 12 year useful life, and even with that we are still $220M in the hole with our project requests. These are our “must haves” because of legislation, auditing, licensing, state of disrepair is what is included in this category, and we’re still short, even after using up our capital acquisition reserve fund. We’re trying to find ways to cut back projects further. We started at $592M in the hole and whittled down the projects on the list. We got rid of “wants,” and got rid of “needs” and are moving more projects to deferred maintenance, which will bite you eventually. We have no capacity to issue more debt to cover fleet or any other capital acquisition projects. We need to go with the “pay as you go” process. As we continue to whittle this down, we’ll be returning to the board in August and September to approve this list.

The Annual Project Evaluation is in the same boat. Same forecast was used for APE as the SBP. The only thing that is different right now is that sales and use tax went down and farebox revenue is trending down. We also shifted farebox revenue from the base system to FasTracks. We’re seeing a shift in ridership from the base system to the FasTracks system. We needed to shift how our revenues were being allocated.

**Commissioner Hansen**: When the projections for farebox recovery were made a long time ago, was the assumption that the FasTracks would cannibalize the base system, or the reverse?

**Heather McKillop**: I don’t have an answer to that.

**Dave Genova**: We’d have to dig for that information. What I’m guessing, is that we would have assumed a shift toward the new lines, *and* an increase in base use. But, we’re seeing nation-wide that bus ridership is decreasing, and seeing that here in Denver too.

**Commissioner Hansen**: Did FasTracks create an increase in the number of people riding transit, as a result of FasTracks?

**Dave Genova**: We’d have to review those trends.

**Heather McKillop**: We eliminated a lot of airport routes in the base system and directed those buses into the A-Line – we fed routes into the A-Line.

**Dave Genova**: We can review and report back.

**Heather McKillop**: We decided this year that we need to adjust how we allocate this revenue. We now have data to support shifting the allocation around.

**Dave Genova**: We usually give it a year to assume people will make the change. It takes time for people to determine what works best for them.

**Mayor Ahrens**: The shift from 12-year to 18-year, is that based on the actual vehicles? With the increase in rail ridership, is bus ridership decreasing? And is that being accounted for in the budget?

**Dave Genova**: The average national for fleet is 12 years, but we have great maintenance team that usually sees 18-year life on vehicles. We know where everything is, although it is concerning that we’re pushing out the rolling stock window from 12 to 18 years. We’re doing this in order to keep our budget ok. We’re concerned about maintaining a state of good repair. We don’t want to have a big backlog like other legacy systems. The thing about how much bus ridership decreases, we review all our bus service three times a year. But, we also need to maintain equity. The bus routes and rail routes work together. We do three service plans each year, so we’re looking at ridership over the entire system, and make small changes that add up over time.

**Mayor Ahrens**: Could you look at smaller vehicles for routes?

**Dave Genova**: That’s possible, especially for the local routes. We’re going to look at the private sector for technology questions as well, to determine efficiencies and economies as well to fill in our efficiency gaps.

**Mayor Atchison**: You are looking at the pass programs now, how can you build in pass programs with all the discounts the way you’re losing money?

**Dave Genova**: Fiscal accountability is a big concern. We have a lot of requests for discounted programs. One thing that the Pass Program Working Group is looking at is eliminating the discounted programs to reduce the overall farebox cost. Many of our board members are concerned about this process, as well, and want to preserve our farebox revenue.

**Heather McKillop**: This is a recap of the revenues through 2020 (presented slide). Changes for the APE are that we have savings on the free metro ride, and we also have increased overall expenses. APE issues right now are mostly related to the North Metro projects and the incomplete remaining 4 projects. Since June, we had about a $200M shortfall. We were able to get that shortfall down. We are drawing down the FISA account, and had to draw down FISA a lot more this year than anticipated, and the account will likely be exhausted sooner than 2023 which is what we projected last year, we’re looking at 2020. We don’t have money in the base system at all in 2023 and 2024. Even with all these adjustments, we have an $80M shortfall in 2023. We’ve looked at possible service revisions, for instance, on the N-, R- and W-lines. We’re also reviewing all the FasTracks projects in the closure phase – for instance, the R-Line. We might be able to get some dollars from some of these projects. We’re still looking at the N-Line to see what the costs will be. We’re hoping to get the $80M shortfall down. Right now, we don’t have the projected money in 2023 going out to forever, which is a change from last year’s APE.

We’re looking at our long-range financial plan, which hasn’t been presented to our board yet. We’re trying to get better numbers for the next six years before presenting the long-range financial plan to our Board August 8. We’ll be having a public meeting on this as well.

**Councilmember Bird**: You had a slide about revenue assumptions. Can you talk to us more about other revenue producing strategies? As an elected official and RTD consumer, I’m worried about paring things down and deferred maintenance isn’t a good long-term strategy. We don’t want to cut projects; we also have new service demands. What are your strategies to grow your revenue?

**Heather McKillop**: It will be a combination of several things. I don’t think the sales and use tax is good – the Baby Boomers are the spenders, and the Millennials don’t spend a lot of money on anything. They like to spend their parent’s money, and that’s running out. I don’t think sales tax will grow, and it won’t be an answer. We’ve been lucky it’s still been growing in our communities at 6%, which is great compared to other parts of the country. Fare revenues will always be 20% or so. We need to look at more strategic ways of operating. Maybe a new tax, a new kind of tax, for funding into a long term. I’m not advocating for a tax, but we need to find new sources in the future to be sustainable.

**Councilmember Bird**: What about working with partners and intergovernmental agreements?

**Heather McKillop**: We’re definitely doing that, we’re listening to things like Karen’s forum in Erie. We’re looking at the future, and maybe different ways of doing business. Working with partners around last-mile. Going out to 2040, we can see where our future will be if we continue on this path that we’re on now. But, this is a snapshot in time, and lets you look at things differently and look at other ways of doing business. We can decide whether we do things the same, or do things differently.

**Henry Stopplecamp**: We have revenue coming in, and that has to be more than what’s going out. We’re looking at operating scenarios. We’re looking at our ridership on buses, our ridership on our rail system. For example, on the R-Line – we’re running 15-minute headways all day. We’re looking at reducing headways. On the N-Line, we’re looking at 20-minute headways, but also 20 min/30 min, 30 min /60 min. On the west corridor, we’re looking at the same thing. We’re looking at our operations trying to maintain our system. Heather is trying to find money, operations is trying to find ways to operate smarter. We’re looking at every piece of equipment, even what the public doesn’t see, and trying to find what to do.

**Mayor Atchison**: When you start to look for public funding. P3s are looking for ways to make money, and if you aren’t making money, it’s hard to sell a P3. I don’t see how we could do a tax increase. I think it will be hard to find a partnership. I don’t think we will see people interested in a tax until this system is built.

**Heather McKillop**: I think it is solvable. I think we’ll have good information back from the RFI, or whatever. We had “unsolvable “problems; back in my time at CDOT, and we figured it out. We have to move one foot in front of the other. Tax for transportation for anything is an uphill battle.

**Commissioner Hansen**: Your big costs are wrapped up in capital, and labor costs. Are you looking at something radical, like getting rid of buses, doing PRT, autonomous vehicles?

**Dave Genova**: We aren’t looking that radically, we think the major fixed network will continue to operate.

**Commissioner Hansen**: The horse and buggy people probably thought that the car was a niche. The buses replaced the rail system. This kind of thing has happened before, even in our lifetimes.

* **CDOT Update:**
* **Update on Segment 3 Managed Lanes Construction- Stephanie Alanis, Project Manager**

**Stephanie Alanis**: Things are moving along. We’re working on widening the corridor in Phase 2 of the project. We’ve shifted the road back to its original alignment at 144th for the Bull Creek Canal, and that’s completed. Structure work on the project is coming along well. Overall, it’s looking good, and construction is still expected in next year. The pedestrian bridge work is complete, but there is no lighting. Trail alignment isn’t done either, we’re hoping it will be open in mid-August.

**Karen Stuart**: What about the underpass that is closed?

**Stephanie Alanis**: That’s what we’re expecting to be open in mid-August. The work is complete, but the paths need to be realigned to make it as safe as possible for pedestrians.

**Karen Stuart**: When the underpass was originally closed, one of your contractors ran a pedicab. Do you have any feedback or numbers from that?

**Stephanie Alanis**: I don’t have those numbers, I don’t think they were huge. We saw some repeat riders. But it wasn’t huge

**Karen Stuart**: Do we have any indication that the whole Segment 3 project isn’t moving forward on a timely fashion?

**Stephanie Alanis**: At the last update, the project is maybe 3 days behind. We’re looking at expediting paving in phases. I don’t think there is a concern for massive delays.

* **HPTE update on I-25 and US 36 toll rate adjustments**

Nick Farber: (Passed around a packet to the group, available on the NATA website.) Plenary has been agreeable to working with us on our schedule for public involvement on rate increases. On average, tolls on US-36 have increased 10% in off-peak – some segments actually see a decrease in the peak. The maximum price will be $8.05 from Boulder to Denver. The roundtrip rate increase is only $0.30. To let the public know, we worked with our tolling authority to alert frequent users, asking for feedback. We had a 50% open rate, and out of 80,000, we only received 57 responses (55 of them were opposed). You can see more specific feedback in the packet. We also did a lot of media releases that got news coverage. We have VMSs out notifying the public. All our elected officials along the corridor also received a notice. If you want to see the letter, the rates, or anything, everything is on our website.

* **NATA Priority Project List – Draft Criteria Update– Debra Baskett, City of Westminster**

**Debra Baskett:** The NATA senior staff group have met twice now to discuss our prioritization list. We have a criteria list you can review with your staff. The projects on the list will look fairly similar to the 2014 list. Your staff was asked to bring forward additional projects to add to the list, which will be reviewed under the criteria we define. We hope the SPC will see drafts in August, so your time will be used best in the full group at our August meeting.

**Mayor Atchison:** It’s important that all elected officials are involved in this process. We want to make sure we have consensus on our criteria, to go after projects in the TIP process.

* **Metro Mayors Discussion of Regional Transportation Authority –Mayor Herb Atchison**

**Mayor Herb Atchison:** About two weeks ago, the Metro Mayors group met to determine what we’ll do about transportation projects in our area. We got 267 this year from the legislature, which really equates to nothing. If elected officials decide they don’t have money, CDOT will have to take projects off the list. The conversation is turning toward what we can do at a local level. There is a rumor that Denver will be doing an RTA, but the rumor is untrue, because they are focusing on thie bond issue. Denver is looking at bonding. The Metro Mayors have said we can’t continue going to the state legislature. We don’t know of anyone willing to carry a bill similar to last year, and are looking for candidates. CCA won’t be carrying legislation in the 2018 session, but maybe 2019. All their language that they had ready got messed up by 267 this year.

We’re now looking at independent RTAs. If this went forward at a metro level, we’d be looking at a board the size of DRCOG. We’ve started looking now at regional RTAs. There is legislation to govern this. People talk about what happened in CO Springs. Two things that are different in CO Springs from us: they didn’t have a transit authority like RTD and they didn’t include any CDOT roads in their funding list- they focused on local road improvements. About a week ago, Commuting Solutions asked for a meeting with 36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition. They are asking for them to put together an RTA.

Commerce City is an example of transportation funding at the location level. Their citizens voted in support of a tax for transportation. We talked about county-level projects and RTAs. If we look at a regional level, then everyone in the area needs to be involved, and that has to involve CDOT.

Transportation is not going to solve itself without anyone doing something. We’re still looking at the Metro Mayors to see who is looking at an RTA. Every jurisdiction in the RTA will need to be in agreement, and they’ll also need a vote. The conversation won’t go away, though, because we don’t have a way to fund transportation without an RTA.

If the state legislative body doesn’t change, we won’t be able to get a referred measure on the ballot. This year of our groups got together, lots of groups worked together, and we got a bill for a statewide ballot, and we couldn’t get it through. There won’t be a gas-tax increase, and the shortfall won’t be made up even if we did, because vehicles are more efficient. We need to find a way to fund transportation if we can’t rely on the state legislators. 36 MCC will continue to look at it, NATA will continue to look at it. I think the Metro Mayors will be the group to continue to push this forward. I’m asking you now to look at your communities and ask yourself, if you were to form an RTA, what would your biggest impediment be? Would you be able to get everyone to participate? It has to be equal, you can’t have someone in the center abstain and reap the benefits without paying into it. But, we don’t’ have an alternative.

**Karen Stuart:** One of the things that NATA did a few years ago is approve funding a feasibility study of a metro district. Originally we were considering I-25 and N-line. We wanted to model ourselves on South SPYMD. That special district relies on funding from development on either side of I-25; developers were interested in it. But, we came to the conclusion that this area isn’t ready for a metro district. SPYMD has been around for 30 years, and they have been very successful, not only for local roads, but for RTD and CDOT projects that need local match. We’ve done this feasibility study, and are ready to put it on the shelf for now. We’d like to use that study to think about what the Metro Mayors are thinking about. We need to do something, but would like to see what we could do with this feasibility study moving forward.

**Mayor Atchison:** Ed Icenogle did a presentation to Metro Mayors, and we’d like to have that presentation here, about what goes into RTAs. I’d like to put in a 30-minute block for Ed at our next meeting. An RTA is a very big task. If anyone would like to bring other elected officials with them to this meeting, we encourage this. Everyone needs to understand the challenge of doing this in our metro area. We need to find a way to fix transportation in this area. People aren’t going to stop coming, traffic won’t go away.

**Mayor Pro Tem Gruber:** If this goes forward, what is the timetable?

**Ed Icenogle:** It took Co Springs about 2 years to get it put together.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:53 am.**