

**ADVANCED TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT
AD HOC COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016
1:00 P.M.
MEDIA BRIEFING ROOM**

Members Present: Councilmember Ray Lopez, *Co-Chair, District 6*
Councilmember Rey Saldaña, *Co-Chair, District 4*
Alex Briseño
Victor M. Boyer
Patti Radle
James Lifshutz
Darryl Byrd
Sid Martinez

Members Absent: Brad Parscale
Eddie Aldrete

Staff Present: Peter Zaroni, *Deputy City Manager*; Martha Sepeda, *Acting City Attorney*; Mike Frisbie, *Director, Transportation and Capital Improvements*

Others Present: Nelson W. Wolff, *Bexar County Judge*; Jeffrey Arndt, *President and CEO, VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority*; Brian Buchanan, *Senior Vice President for Development, VIA Metropolitan Transit Authority*; Rolando Bono; Rhett Smith, *Producer, PATV*

Call to order

Co-Chair Saldaña and Lopez called the meeting to order.

1. Briefing on the Historical Perspective of VIA Metropolitan Transit. [Judge Nelson W. Wolff]

Judge Wolff stated that 20 years ago the community was pleased to have a Bus System. He noted that in 2001, cities such as Dallas were funding Rail Systems. He stated that a Rail System in San Antonio was brought before the voters that year and failed 70% to 30%. He noted that along with that loss, the City missed the opportunity to receive Federal Funding. He noted that in 2003, a campaign for an Advanced Transportation District (ATD) began and only a portion of the Sales Tax was requested due to competing interests. He stated that the campaign was successful; however, VIA mandated how the funds could be spent and excluded funding for Light Rail. He noted that following said campaign, an opportunity for a Streetcar System which would convert to a Light Rail System was lost. He stated that San Antonio was the only major city in the country without a Light Rail System. He noted that a comprehensive system which represented all forms of transportation was needed and it would be necessary to identify a funding source for such a system.

No action was required for Item 1.

2. Briefing and Committee Discussion on the ATD Ad Hoc Committee Charge and Timeline for Development of Committee Recommendations. [Peter Zanoni, Deputy City Manager]

Peter Zanoni stated that the charge of the ATD Ad Hoc Committee was to evaluate the funding model of the VIA Metropolitan Transportation District and determine if the City of San Antonio should allocate funding to VIA, to include all or a portion of the City's ATD Tax, to enhance VIA Services. He added that future Committee Meetings would be held on the fourth Wednesday of each month beginning in February 2016 and ending in May 2016. He stated that the dates for future Committee Meetings were:

February 25, 2016
March 23, 2016
April TBD 2016
April 27, 2016
May 25, 2016

Mr. Zanoni stated that staff would contact Committee Members to identify a second date in April 2016 for a meeting. He noted that said meetings could be adjusted if necessary. He stated that the Committee would complete its charge on May 26, 2016, prior to June 8, 2016 when the City's Budget Process would begin. He advised the Committee Members that said meetings would be held in the City's Municipal Plaza Building or City Hall. He stated that VIA would present its draft Comprehensive Transportation Plan to the Comprehensive Plan Committee tomorrow, and VIA and the City would present their initial Transportation Plan to the Technology, Transportation and Utilities Council Committee in March 2016. He added that Light Rail would be recommended in both plans.

No action was required for Item 2.

3. Briefing on Meeting Procedures and Other Considerations. [Martha Sepeda, Acting City Attorney]

Martha Sepeda stated that Committee Meetings would be subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act. She noted that said Act required that: 1) Committee agendas be posted three days prior to the meetings; and 2) All deliberations must be held during the meetings. She suggested that members keep emails concerning the business of the Committee in a separate file for easy retrieval. She added that this Committee was not required to allow citizens to speak at the ATD Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

No action was required for Item 3.

4. Briefing by City and VIA Metropolitan Transit Staff on the City's Advanced Transportation District Sales Tax Allocation and Alternative Use Options. [Peter Zanoni, Deputy City Manager; Mike Frisbie, Director, Transportation and Capital Improvements; Jeffrey C. Arndt, President and CEO, VIA Metropolitan Transit]

Mike Frisbie stated that both the City and VIA would issue a Comprehensive Plan at approximately the same time and each would be integrated with the other. He noted that Advanced Transportation was defined in the Texas Transportation Code, Chapter 451 as Light Rail, Commuter Rail, Traffic Management Systems, Bus Ways, Bus Lanes, Transit Centers, Stations, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

Lanes, Traffic Signal Systems, etc. He stated that Mobility was defined as Streets, Roads, Highways, HOV Lanes, Sidewalks, Infrastructure Improvements, Equipment, and Debt Service utilized for said facilities. He noted that the Advanced Transportation District (ATD) Dedicated Sales Tax, approved by voters in 2004, was one-fourth of a cent with \$64 million collected annually. He stated that the City received 25%; Bexar County and TxDOT received 25%; and VIA received 50% of said tax. He reviewed the VIA/ATD Board of Trustees. He reported that the ATD purpose and original objectives were to:

- Improve traffic flow at busy intersections
- Add and improve Sidewalks to enhance connectivity between neighborhoods and major roadways
- Minimize highway congestion by expediting state projects
- Utilize technology to provide faster bus trips and extend bus service hours
- Offer more transit options, passenger facilities, and other rider conveniences

Mr. Frisbie reported that ATD actual sales tax receipts were based on sales and varied from year to year. He noted that the ATD actual sales tax receipt for 2015 was \$61 million. He stated that from 2005 through September 2015, the total ATD sales tax receipt was \$495 million, with the City receiving \$124 million, Bexar County/TxDOT receiving \$124 million, and VIA receiving \$247 million. He noted that the sales tax for San Antonio was 8.25%, the maximum allowed by State Law, and was distributed as follows:

City of San Antonio	1.000%
Edwards Aquifer	0.125%
Pre-K 4 SA	0.125%
ATD	0.250%
VIA MTA	0.500%
State of Texas	6.250%
TOTAL SALES TAX	8.250%

Mr. Frisbie reported that \$16 million in ATD Revenues is budgeted for 2016. He stated that said revenues would be utilized for Sidewalks, Traffic Signal Systems, and Intersection Improvements. He presented the following ATD FY 2016 Budget and Plan:

ATD Program	FY 2016 Budget	FY 2016 Plan	
		Projects	Positions
Sidewalks	\$ 5,099,611	27	1
Traffic Signal System	\$ 8,068,727	TSSM	11
Intersection Improvements	\$ 875,000	25	N/A
Bike Facilities	\$ 1,101,267	11	1
Ped Safety/Traffic Calming	\$ 313,238	51	1
Infrastructure Project Planning	\$ 369,496	N/A	3
Bus Pads	\$ 400,000	16	N/A
Markings & Signs	\$ 320,194	N/A	6
Indirect Costs/Fiscal	\$ 387,888	N/A	1
TOTAL	\$16,935,421	130	24

Mr. Frisbie noted that the Sales Tax Revenue that VIA received was less than that of other major Texas Cities. He stated that Councilmember Saldaña proposed reallocating the City’s entire ATD to VIA. He noted that the City’s ATD Revenue for FY 2016 would result in a 7% incremental increase in revenue for VIA. He stated that transferring the City’s ATD Funds to VIA would result in:

- Eliminating 130 ATD funded projects and 24 city staff positions, or
- Reducing the General Fund to continue funding the City’s 130 ATD Projects and 24 city staff positions

Mr. Frisbie noted that the Traffic Signal System and Sidewalks were previously funded by the General Fund.

Darryl Byrd asked of past funding for the Traffic Signal System and Sidewalks. Mr. Frisbie stated that past expenditures for the Traffic Signal System and Sidewalks were not at current levels and were funded by the General Fund in the past. He added that the ATD allowed the City to invest in a new Traffic Signal System. Mr. Byrd asked of the qualitative measure for Sidewalks. Mr. Frisbie replied that a measure of safety was a qualitative measure for Sidewalks and Peter Zaroni added that the Vision Zero Initiative, an initiative to minimize pedestrian fatalities, would be utilized as a quantitative measure for Sidewalks. He noted that there were 54 fatalities in 2014 and 46 in 2015. He stated that historically, \$5 million was allocated for Sidewalks. He noted that there were \$1.2 billion in sidewalk needs but only \$8.9 million allocated for Sidewalks in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, and \$15 million allocated for Sidewalks in FY 2016. He added that Sidewalks were prioritized for placement around elementary schools and public gathering places such as parks.

Victor Boyer asked if new sidewalk construction was tied to bus stops. Mr. Frisbie replied that a significant percentage of new sidewalk construction was tied to bus stops and other VIA Projects.

Sid Martinez asked if the City forecasted future tax increases and ATD Funds and if so; were those funds reflected in a future budget. Mr. Zaroni replied that a five-year financial forecast was available for the General Fund and some Enterprise Funds. He noted that a forecast for ATD Funds was not published but was created, and service delivery with ATD Funds was anticipated.

Patti Radle pointed out that Sidewalks aided in the conservation of housing stock in that Sidewalks prevented flooding of property.

Jeffrey Arndt presented the amount of sales tax dedicated to transportation for VIA, Capital Metro (Austin), Dart (Dallas), and Metro (Houston) in Calendar Year (CY) 2015:

	VIA	Capital Metro (Austin)	DART(Dallas)	METRO(Houston)
Sales Tax Revenue	\$166.6 million	\$211.1 million	\$519.5 million	\$542.5 million
Population	1,785,704	1,046,404	2,437,820	3,695,527
Service Area	1,213	529	696	1,285

Mr. Arndt noted that the amount that VIA received included the MTA Tax and the ATD Tax. He stated that the population of San Antonio was projected to increase by 1 million people by 2040, which was the same as the current population of Austin. He mentioned that the current service area for Houston was approximately that of San Antonio. He reviewed the Sales Tax per Capita of Service Area and the Sales Tax per Square Mile for CY 2015 for VIA, Capital Metro, DART, and METRO:

	VIA	Capital Metro (Austin)	DART(Dallas)	METRO (Houston)
Sales Tax per Capita	\$93.30	\$201.74	\$213.10	\$146.80
Sales Tax per Square Mile	\$137,345	\$399,055	\$746,408	\$422,179

He discussed the following Cost per Hour of Service for 2014 for VIA, Capital Metro, DART, and METRO

	VIA	Capital Metro (Austin)	DART (Dallas)	METRO (Houston)
Cost per Hour of Service	\$96.07	\$119.30	\$114.82	\$112.99

Mr. Arndt stated that this demonstrated the efficiency of VIA compared with the other Transportation Systems in Texas. He reviewed the following source of funds for the Adopted FY 2016 VIA Budget Revenue:

Revenue Source	Total Budget
Sales Tax – MTA	\$142.9 million (61.9%)
Sales Tax – ATD	\$32 million (13.9%)
Grant Revenues	\$28.9 million (12.5%)
Farebox Revenues	\$24.3 million (10.5%)
Other Net Revenue	\$2.56 million (1.1%)
Total Revenue (All sources)	\$230.67 million

Mr. Arndt noted that the total sales tax for MTA and ATD made up 75.8% of VIA’s FY 2016 budget. He stated that ATD Funds are currently utilized for services such as:

- Express & Limited Stop Bus Service
- Primo (Bus Rapid Transit) Service
- Vanpool Service

He noted that ATD Funds had been utilized, in the past, for projects including:

- US 281 Superstreet contribution
- SmartMove Capital Program
- Transit Technology (i.e. maintaining and upgrading Automated Vehicle Locator (AVL) System)

He stated that Grant Funding had diminished in previous years and noted that with the passing of the Fixing America's Transportation Act (FAT ACT), increased funding was expected. He stated that based upon national research, the National Academy of Sciences compiled and adopted a Transit Service Quality Manual which defined the different levels of routes in a Bus System:

1. Routes which were serviced every 10 minutes or less
2. Routes which were serviced every 20 minutes or less
3. Routes which were serviced every 30 minutes or less
4. Routes which were serviced every 30 minutes or greater

Mr. Arndt stated that the Express Service and Primo Service provided service every 10 minutes or less during peak times and was optimal to attract the Discretionary Riders. He noted that regular Bus Service provided service every 30 minutes and was at the upper limit of tolerance for transit reliant riders. He stated that regular Bus Service which provided service every 30 minutes or greater was designed to cover the area and was not necessarily appealing to discretionary riders or transit reliant riders. The greater than 30 minute service is intended to provide more of a life line of service for riders who have no other choice but to use transit. He provided the following comparison of VIA with Metro Houston:

VIA		METRO (Houston)	
Bus System Peak Period Frequency	% of System	Bus System Peak Period Frequency	% of System
10 minutes	2%	10 minutes	13%
15 minutes/20 minutes	20%	15 minutes/20 minutes	41%
30 minutes	50%	30 minutes	34%
Over 30 minutes	28%	Over 30 minutes	13%

Mr. Arndt provided the following summary for METRO's Rail System and Park and Ride/High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) System:

Peak Period Frequency Rail System	% of System
10 minutes	33%
15 minutes/20 minutes	66%
30 minutes	--
Over 30 minutes	--

Peak Period Frequency Park and Ride/HOV System	% OF System
10 minutes	61%
15 minutes/20 minutes	33%
30 minutes	6%
Over 30 minutes	--

Mr. Arndt pointed out that VIA had neither of these systems. He noted that METRO's Main Light Rail Line carried over 50,000 people per day. He stated that if VIA converted its 60-minute Bus Service to 30 minute Bus Service, the cost would be \$13-\$15 million per year, which was at the full level of the ATD Sales Tax. He noted that an additional \$11 million would be needed for capital expenditure to support the

increased level of service. He stated that funds from the low frequency system could be reallocated to the high frequency system but many residents were dependent on the low frequency system to travel to work. He noted that METRO did not reallocate funds but instead added funds to their budget. He reported that VIA's vision included three layers and began with the foundation of a Better Bus System and would include additional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridors and additional Express Service. He stated that the second layer was the Rapid Transit Network (RTN) or Light Rail System, and would include a dedicated right of way in which the RTN would operate. He noted that the top layer was innovative solutions, which would include: 1) Carpool and Vanpool; 2) HOV Lanes; 3) Smart Systems; 4) Real time arrival info; 5) Mobile fare payment; 6) Transportations Network Companies; and 7) Bike share/car share. He stated that with the current ATD Funding VIA could: 1) Increase frequency on less frequent routes; or 2) Invest in an additional Primo Corridor. He noted that METRO made its transformation by saving its money and installing the first Light Rail Line. He stated that once the first line was in; it generated interest and opened up federal funding for the remainder of the lines.

James Lifshutz asked of the cost to double VIA's under 20 minute service. Mr. Arndt stated that he would calculate that amount and provide it to the Committee.

Alex Briseño asked of opportunities to leverage VIA Funds. Mr. Arndt replied that funds could be leveraged and noted that Light Rail Projects required a 50% local match, under current federal funding formulas.

Patti Radle asked if the use of smaller VIA vehicles had been considered at those bus stops with lower ridership. Mr. Arndt replied that the use of smaller vehicles was being considered but the cost of an operator would remain the same independent of the size of the vehicle.

The members of the committee discussed current and future demographics and its effect on transportation.

Co-Chair Saldaña stated that members could present ideas at the next meeting for discussion.

No action was required for Item 4.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Denice F. Trevino
Office of the City Clerk*

Rey Saldaña, Co-Chair

Ray Lopez, Co-Chair