



Policy Committee Meeting
Friday, October 21, 2022 – 9:30 AM
Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Persons wishing to address the Board can do so in either of two ways:

A. Comments no more than 400 words may be sent to publiccomment@tbarta.com and will be read into the record. Written comments must be received no later than the day before the meeting. Comments must include the name, address, organization and topic or agenda item.

B. See staff prior to the meeting to complete a comment card. You will be able to provide comment for three (3) minutes when recognized.

- 4. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**
 - A. Approval of August Policy Committee Meeting Minutes
- 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Strategic Planning (David Green)
- 6. OTHER BUSINESS**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

****NEXT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING****

November 18, 2022 – 9:30 AM
West Pasco Government Center
8731 Citizens Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34654

Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority meetings are open to the public. If a decision made at a meeting is appealable, any person who decides to appeal will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, including testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based. Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in a Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority meeting is asked to advise the agency at least 2 business days before the meeting by calling 1(800) 998-7433. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1(800) 955-8771 (TDD) or 1(800) 955-8770 (Voice).



Policy Committee Meeting
Friday, August 26, 2022 – 9:30 AM
Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Starkey called the meeting to order at 9:42 AM.

PRESENT

Commissioner Kathryn Starkey
Commissioner Rene Flowers
Commissioner Janet Long
Commissioner Jeff Holcomb
Mr. Jim Holton
Councilmember Deborah Figgs-Sanders
Secretary David Gwynn
Commissioner Pat Kemp
Councilmember Lynn Hurtak
Mr. Cliff Manual
Secretary L K Nandam
Executive Director David Green
Legal Counsel Jennifer Cowan
TBARTA Staff

PUBLIC COMMENT

TBARTA received public comment via email from Andrew Morris Planner/GIS Technician for Madeira Beach Florida:

TBARTA Policy Committee,

It is unfortunate that CSX does not want to cooperate in the Tampa Bay Metro Area, but TBARTA still should pursue studying rail transit. The CSX Passenger Rail Study funding should be shifted into a feasibility study for building an Automated Light Metro between Downtown Tampa and Downtown St. Petersburg via I-275 and the Howard Frankland Bridge. Automated Light Metros in the last few decades have become a popular alternative from conventional Light Rail, Commuter Rail, and Heavy Rail. The automation helps keep labor costs low compared to conventional Light Rail and Commuter Rail. Since the equipment is smaller and lighter than conventional Heavy Rail, the construction cost per mile is lower also. The electrification and automation allow Automated Light Metros to operate high frequency service with 2.5-minute headways.

TBARTA's Regional Rapid Transit BRT, TECO Streetcar, and HART's Arterial BRT, Brightline, and Amtrak could connect into the Automated Light Metro at a Multimodal Hub in Downtown Tampa.

Tampa International Airport's Automated People Mover and express buses from Pasco and Hernando Counties could connect into the Automated Light Metro at a Multimodal Hub in Westshore. A Multimodal Hub in Gateway could connect the Automated Light Metro into various PSTA bus routes, TBARTA's US 19 Regional Rapid Transit BRT, and St. Pete–Clearwater International Airport. PSTA's SunRunner BRT could connect into the Automated Light Metro at a Multimodal Hub in Downtown St. Petersburg. Future extensions of the Automated Light Metro could connect to Downtown Clearwater and USF via existing publicly owned right of ways like State Roads. Vancouver has had a massive success with their automated light metro system called SkyTrain. SkyTrain has become one of the busier rail transit systems in North America and has attracted a significant amount of high-quality transit-oriented development.

An Automated Light Metro via I-275 and the Howard Frankland Bridge has the potential to connect various existing and proposed transit corridors to major population, tourism, and employment centers, Tampa International Airport, St. Pete–Clearwater International Airport, Brightline, and Amtrak. An Automated Light Metro Feasibility Study would be an important step towards improving regional travel in the Tampa Bay Metro Area.

Best Regards,
Andrew Morris
Planner/GIS Technician
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Madeira Beach, FL 33708
727-391-9951 Ext 296
amorris@madeirabeachfl.gov

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Approval of May and July Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Long to approve the Policy Committee Minutes from May and July together. Seconded by Commissioner Flowers. Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Strategic Planning presented by David Green

The future of TBARTA is an extremely complex matter with no obvious solution. There are two parts to the conversation, 1) what is the best type of agency to oversee the mission, how is it governed and what are its focus or roles, and 2) how to fund such an agency. After looking at the financial forecast TBARTA has about two years before we run out of funding. The question now becomes what to do about it.

TBARTA requires about \$1 million per year to operate including anticipated local contributions and assuming we continue receiving CAP funds for Commute Tampa Bay. If we don't get those then that eliminates state funding completely and reduces us to federal and local funds only, and accelerates the timeline.

Merging with the Regional Planning Council has been a frequent suggestion. It is important to understand what Board members are comfortable with and to make sure all parties are on the same page. To start that conversation I have some questions I'd like your thoughts on:

- Is there collective support for a regional transit agency?
- Can we stand united and speak with one voice?
- Should TBARTA continue to exist in its current form?
- Should we reorganize?
- Should we request state funding again?
- How do we make up the shortfall

Commissioner Starkey commented she did listen to the conversation on the way in. Commissioner Long, I appreciate your diligent work. The question is what is the best way to move forward. We have an opportunity to find an answer to the problem. We need to find the answer to this problem, and we can't keep going around in circles.

Ms. Bemetra Simmons (President and CEO of the Tampa Bay Partnership) addressed the Board. The Partnership is a regional organization that represents the eight-county region. The Partnership has been vested and supportive of TBARTA since the very beginning and none of that has changed. We have one goal - to make sure we have regional transit planning in our community. The Partnership thinks it is crucial especially with the growth that we have experienced here in our community. The Partnership is more than happy help move the conversation along.

Commissioner Holcomb asked what the future is if no one attends. To me, it makes sense if we move something that everyone buys into. If other parties are not buying in, then that is a problem. Let's come up with a regional transit center and feed into it from the various counties to move people around and get people where they want to go. If we don't have anywhere to go then I can't move forward when asked if we should support this. Focus should be on practical transportation options and getting regional buy-in. We need to find a focus and get behind the focus whatever that is.

Mr. Holton commented he heard two really good ideas today and I think having a stakeholder workshop is a really good one. I suggest working with the Tampa Bay Partnership as facilitators for the workshop. The fundamental issue is the structure of TBARTA, whether that involves a merger with the RPC, a merger with some other agency, or consolidation. I think we need to talk about the overall structure before we get into specific plans. Right now, we are structurally flawed because Hillsborough County is not going along with the rest of the counties and that is an issue.

Commissioner Starkey commented I feel that when we have a workshop, I would love to have the heads of the airport, the port, someone from the Bucs, and people who are going to be the biggest beneficiaries of some sort of transit opportunity be involved as well. Their voices need to be heard. I also suggest we hold this in Hillsborough County.

Secretary Gwynn commented I think you would have to look at statutes to see what could happen. TBARTA could not be subservient or subordinate to another Board. TBARTA has a lot of powers: right of eminent domain, right to collect tolls, and a lot of things RPC does not have. So if the RPC is going to be the lead, then what legislation is required to allow for whatever we want TBARTA to be authorized to do.

Commissioner Flowers commented this is why I recommended having a meeting first before meeting with others. We need to understand what "unwinding" would look like to truly understand what happens. The first step should be for TBARTA to look at where we are and what we are doing. Here is what we would need to unravel, and these are the lanes we would have to travel to even see if this is possible. Also, what would be the timeframe for a merger to happen. We could direct the Executive Director today to schedule that workshop and then move to meet with other groups.

Commissioner Long asked whether a memorandum of understanding would work instead of tweaking a statute to merge with the RPC.

Mr. Ming Gao commented we are talking about two different scenarios. I think if you are talking about sharing resources then that is doable. There is nothing in the statute precluding you from sharing resources with another agency. That is something that can be looked at.

Commissioner Holcomb asked if TBARTA could be the lead agency with the RPC underneath them. Mr. Gao replied he thinks both agencies need to be equal but can share staff.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Starkey adjourned the meeting at 10:06 AM.

****NEXT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING****

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