



# SPC Transit Operators Committee

## Meeting Minutes: November 6, 2024

### Attendance

#### Members

Amy Mathieson (ACTA)  
Nancy Basile (MMVTA)  
Seth Davis (PRT)  
John Paul (BTA)

Anthony Hickton (SPC)  
Sheila Gombita (WASH)  
Mary Jo Morandini (BCTA)  
Alan Blahovec (WCTA)

#### Guests & Transit Staff

David Wohlwill (PRT)  
Mark Cassel (Bowman)  
Ashley Cooper-Brounce (WCTA)

David Totten (HDR)  
Brandon Leach (PennDOT)

#### SPC Staff

Chris Jaros  
Ronda Craig  
Devon White  
Lillian Gabreski  
Leann Chaney

Matt Fisher  
Chuck Imbrogno  
Russell Singer  
Julia Ferri  
Dan Bernazzoli

#### 1. Introductions

- a. The meeting was called to order by Sheila Gombita

#### 2. Minutes

- a. The draft minutes from the previous meeting in October were not made available to committee members early enough for voting at the time of the meeting. The minutes of the October meeting may be voted upon jointly with November's minutes at the following committee meeting in December

#### 3. Transit Participant Updates

- a. BTA (John Paul): shared the status of BTA's new bus lift installation. With delays from the manufacturer, the project is expected to complete in late December
- b. BCTA (Mary Jo Morandini): BCTA's new Midland Microtransit service will start on January 6. On the same date, restructured fixed-route lines will begin running with 60-minute headway service. This is a small change down from 65-minute headways, but will make a large impact on riders' ease of planning, since every stop will receive service at the same number of minutes after the hour, every hour.
- c. PRT (Seth Davis): PRT is hosting a public meeting November 14<sup>th</sup> at the August Wilson Center. It will be an in-person meeting dedicated to the busline redesign effort. This is a second round of engagement after the first draft of the redesign plan was shown to the public, and will be used to inform further revisions before the next draft is publicized in the spring of 2025.

- d. WASH (Sheila Gombita): There is progress on the construction of new facilities, all pre-existing buildings have been demolished at the site. Currently the new building is at 90% design stage and it's expect to finish the design within the next two months, at which point the project will be put out for bid.

4. PennDOT and FTA Updates

- a. PennDOT (Brandon Leach): The program center sent an email regarding Metropolitan Planning Agreements, which includes any agreements that SPC has with the transit providers in the area. The communication shared best practices for such agreements and should be used to make sure all current agreements are up to date. The most recent records for these on file at PennDOT are from 2019, so this is something that will be happening in the coming months.

5. TIP Amendments and Administrative Actions

- a. MMVTA: Presented six (6) TIP actions:
  - i. **CMAQ Buses (MPMS #119316)**: This adjustment is for the reprogramming of \$2,500,000 of 5307 funding from FY25 to FY26 due to project timeline changes
  - ii. **Speers Terminal Construction (MPMS #121269)**: This adjustment requests an increase in 5307 funding of \$152,000 in FY25 based on updated cost estimates for the project, plus state and local match for a total TIP change of \$190,000
  - iii. **Speers Terminal Engineering and Design (MPMS #118163)**: This amendment programs \$104,000 of 5307 funding originally granted in FY24 before the changeover to the 2025 TIP period, but the project was delayed during environmental assessment. Requesting the same amount programmed on the 2025 TIP in FY25, plus state and local match for a total TIP change of \$130,000
  - iv. **Facility Equipment Replacement (MPMS #121268)**: This adjustment requests an increase of \$188,000 of 5307 funding in FY25 due to increased project costs, plus state and local match for a total TIP change of \$210,000
  - v. **Office Equipment & Furniture (MPMS #114618)**: This amendment requests the programming of funds originally granted in FY24 on the previous TIP. The project was not ready to proceed before the changeover to the new 2025 TIP period. Requesting the original amount, plus an increase of \$50,000 for the purchase of additional remote meeting equipment, to be programmed in FY25
  - vi. **Replacement Buses (MPMS #118166)**: The reprogramming of \$1,500,000 of 5307 funding from FY25 to FY26 due to project timeline changes, and requesting an increase of \$448,000 in Federal funding to accommodate increased cost of buses, plus state and local match for a total TIP change of \$560,000

On a motion by John Paul and second by Mary Jo Morandini, all six actions were voted on collectively and **approved**.

- b. BTA: Presented two (2) TIP actions

- i. **Support Facilities (MPMS #114529)**: This amendment programs funding for the installation of bus lifts that was originally programmed on the 2021 TIP and is still ongoing with funds remaining. Due to cost increases, BTA is requesting an additional increase of

\$289,471 over previous values for FFY25, for a total amount of \$651,140 in Federal 5311, plus state and local match for a total TIP change of \$813,935

- ii. CNG Bus Purchase (**MPMS #TBD**): This amendment is adding the purchase of four (4) CNG buses to the 2025 TIP. Federal 5311 funding is to be available in the amount of \$2,079,974 plus state and local match for a total TIP change of \$2,600,000

On a motion by Mary Jo Morandini and second by Seth Davis, both actions were voted on collectively and **approved**.

## 6. SPC Updates

- a. FTA Circular Updates (Devon White): Presented updates for four FTA Circulars including: Award Management Requirements Circular (*C 5010.1F*), Urbanized Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance (*C 9050.1A*), Rural Areas Formula Grant Programs Guidance (*C 9040.1H*), and Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Guidance (*C 9070.1H*)

Primary changes from a high level view is that some of the requirements that are shared across the specific programs are being shifted to be contained within the Award Management Requirements. FTA is offering live planning sessions to help with the changes, the videos will also be posted on FTA's official YouTube channel, available here: [usdotfta - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdotfta)

For summary of all changes as presented, please see the presentation at the end of this document included as Appendix A

- b. 2025 TIP Review (Russell Singer): A few weeks earlier the newest, currently adopted version of the TIP was sent out for your review. Please check it against your records for any errors, needed additions, or changes in project timelines that may have occurred during the time when the 2025 draft TIP was frozen pending adoption.

## 7. Other Business

- a. Discussion on TOC Mission and Vision: Russell Singer restarted the discussion from the previous month's meeting with a recap of the current TOC's mission statement:

*"The Transit Operators Committee provides technical assistance to our region by serving as the forum for advancing programs and projects, providing public transportation options, regional transit coordination, alternatives to fixed group transit service and economic opportunities linked to land use and transit oriented development."*

- i. Russell Singer: Based on this statement, the discussion from last meeting, and the survey responses we received about TOC meetings, I put together a word cloud to be used for a brief pre-discussion activity. These represent overarching themes of the discussion and possible areas of collaboration or responsibility for the TOC as a group. (For a full image of the activity see Appendix B)
- ii. Participants spent two minutes silently considering the prompt words on screen, before offering input. Key comments from the activity are:

- iii. Sheila Gombita: Capital Planning is present on there, but also Service Planning is another, possibly Workforce
- iv. David Wohlwill: I'd like to stress the importance of Coordination and Connection as, from the perspective of a lot of outside officials, they're saying we have multiple different systems that aren't coordinated. There's perception problems that there is over-redundancy in the system and that's not true, but the TOC has the potential to solve these information gaps on how the different offerings work together, how they are connected, and how people can go further than they think
- v. Sheila Gombita: Joint Procurement is another one worth calling out
- vi. Seth Davis: Regionally we have seen a big funding push but it seems like some providers in the region are struggling with capacity to manage the projects or all of our individual plans don't exist in some sort of collective funding coordination. Even for PRT we have more capacity than others but still not as much as we need, it's been a challenge to pursue and some shared support there might be a help for all of us
- vii. Alan Blahovec: A shared marketing aspect would be helpful. We're not big enough to have someone dedicated to marketing full time and it's a challenge to do a good job letting people know about our services
- viii. Devon White: Can we do a poll of agencies in the room, which agencies have marketing departments? *Hands indicated PRT, Washington, Commute Info, BTA, and BCTA, 4 out of 10 operators*
- ix. Anthony Hickton: What does that look like to you, Alan? Somebody that's capable of sharing information on all of the providers in the region, or is it materials that might be interchangeable with logos and color schemes with the content sort of setup already? How do you see that working?
- x. Alan Blahovec: I would say all those things and then add in, how do we get that out to people? Advertising on television and radio and all those things.
- xi. Dave Totten: Coming from the National Transit Conference in Philadelphia a few weeks ago, there was a session about stop coordination. Drawing examples from Los Angeles where stops are the purview of the Department of Public Works, and so managed centrally not by the transit agencies. In Atlanta where you have the large MARTA system that meets up with the outlying counties, they have coordinated signage. Even if we use different logos for each operator here, it may be a good practice to coordinate the signs themselves. This could also help coordinate marketing too
- xii. Russell Singer: As we have been discussing I have been trying to move the entries in the word cloud into three groups of like things in an attempt to categorize some of the ideas that have emerged. *What follows is a discussion of moving items around on the screen, to view the final results please reference Appendix B. After which, the original TOC Mission Statement was re-presented for alteration and comment based on previous discussion*
- xiii. Sheila Gombita: What stands out to me is that "technical assistance" is part of it, but it's more than just that. The forum is for us to get together collectively for more than just technical assistance
- xiv. Seth Davis: Land use and TOD is bigger than us as a transit agency and it's very difficult for us despite a concerted effort already. When it comes to infrastructure and zoning municipalities are reluctant and understaffed but it's necessary for success of our services, it's just something much bigger than us.
- xv. Russell Singer: So in a way, you're saying the TOC could help with problems that are big enough to be common through the entire region?

- xvi. Mary Jo: One of the primary roles of the commission and the TOC is to promote the value of public transportation
  - xvii. Seth Davis: That also fits into the bucket of big problems, the value of public transit is huge but we're concerned about funding and having a tax base to support it. In other places like Nashville and Columbus they just passed voter referendums in support, and I think letting people know how we help, what the values are, would be helpful
  - xviii. Mary Jo Morandini: It could be at a high level like that, but it also be telling personal stories, how we help individuals, the important things we do for people with disabilities who rely on us
  - xix. Anthony Hickton: I think the environmental benefits of, of mass transportation, eliminating vehicles from the roads, all of the positive outcomes with respect to the environment need to be highlighted
  - xx. Devon White: One thing that I believe the transit operator committee could do is bring projects before they're due. We don't talk about projects before they're on the tip or before you guys have money for them. And at that point, it's too late for anyone else to coordinate. So if we talk about the things that you're thinking about doing before we find the money for them, maybe the money can come from two counties, maybe there's synergies that can happen there. We don't know there's opportunity for that because projects aren't talked about till that phase has gone
  - xxi. Anthony Hickton: So what we're doing both individually here for us at, at SPC and with our TDM program, is pointing out to people through a marketing program that transit is a viable alternative or a viable option to and from work. So I wanna highlight that only from the standpoint that we are at SPC right now are doing things to benefit transit beyond our own commute info program. So, and that information and that plan overall and those materials are available for anyone in our region that might want to use them or perhaps there's even an opportunity to tweak them in some way. We're open to that, it's open and available to everybody, but what we're doing up to this point is regional. It's not to any one county, it's not to any one mode, it's TDM overall. So we are making efforts as an organization to do that, but it's the whole, you know, behavior change for folks in our car centric world. That's the key. That's what I don't feel like I've been able to break. I didn't think it would be as difficult as it has been over time, but it's about changing their behaviors
- b. Lillian Gabreski, Director of Transportation: Devon White introduced Lillian Gabreski as SPC's new Director of Transportation. Lillian has been with SPC in various roles for over 6.5 years, and this role represents a move back into the Transportation department. Congratulations to Lillian, the TOC welcomes you!

## 8. Adjournment

- a. The next meeting will be 10:00 am December 4
- b. The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Seth Davis and second by Mary Jo Morandini