

MINUTES  
METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
NOVEMBER 15, 2007

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Metropolitan Transit Authority Board of Directors was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Chairman David S. Wolff. Vice Chairman Gerald Smith, Board Secretary Jackie Freeman, and Board Members Burt Ballanfant, George DeMontrond, III, James W. E. Dixon, II, Carmen Orta and Trinidad Mendenhall Sosa were present and constituted a quorum. Board Member C. Jim Stewart, III was absent.

Chairman Wolff first called for approval of the Minutes of the Board Meeting of October 18, 2007. Board Member Orta moved approval of the Minutes. Board Secretary Freeman seconded the Motion and all Board Members present voted to approve the Minutes, as written.

MOTION NO. 2007 – 47

Chairman Wolff next called for consideration of the Summary Agenda, containing Agenda Items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12. Board Member DeMontrond moved approval of the Summary Agenda. The Motion was seconded by Board Member Sosa and all Board Members present voted in favor.

MOTION NO. 2007 – 48

By way of Summary Agenda, the Board of Directors approved the following:

1. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and deliver a contract with Truck Trailer Transit, Inc. for the purchase of brake kits for METRO's fleet of buses for an amount not to exceed \$2,919,305.00.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 90

2. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and deliver a contract with Siemens Transportation Systems, Inc. for METRORail brake discs for an amount not to exceed \$257,400.00.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 91

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3. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to execute and deliver a contract with North American Bus Industries, Inc. for air conditioning parts for transit vehicles for an amount not to exceed \$336,750.00.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 92

4. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and deliver a contract with Kellogg, Brown & Root Services, Inc. for construction services under the Job Order Contracting Program, for an amount not to exceed \$20,000,000.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 93

5. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and deliver a modification to the contract with Marsh USA, Inc. for insurance agent and record services, to provide for additional services for a pre-construction survey and development of a safety incentive program. The maximum authorized expenditures under the contract shall be increased by One Million Dollars.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 94

6. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and deliver an agreement to engage the services of Arup, Inc. for cost confidence and risk assessment services for Phase 2, METRO Solutions, and expend up to \$750,000 towards the cost of the services.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 95

7. Authorization for the President & Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and deliver a modification to the contract with Lewis Realty Advisors to provide additional services and increase the maximum authorized expenditures under the contract by an amount not to exceed \$190,000.

RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 96

Chairman Wolff then called upon those members of the public who had requested to speak before the Board. The persons who spoke and the substance of their comments were as follows:

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1. Mr. Mark Smith – complained that the new fare structure only permits 2 hours to make a trip without having to pay an additional fare. He stated that 2 hours is insufficient for those patrons who must transfer one or more times to reach their destination.

President & Chief Executive Officer Frank Wilson explained that 90 minutes was initially proposed as sufficient time to reach a destination, even when transfers are necessary. However, in response to patron comments, the time period was expanded to 2 hours.

Mr. Smith gave examples of trips that might require two or more hours, and requested reconsideration.

Mr. Wilson explained that 2 hours is sufficient to “complete [your] transfer”. More time may lead to abuse of the system by permitting persons to make a return trip on the same fare.

2. Mr. James Dabney – accused METRO of violating the State Constitution and federal law by continuing to recognize the Transport Workers Union as the representative body for the bargaining unit, and failing to recognize his organization.

Mr. Wilson responded that the most appropriate recourse is to seek elective office as a member of the Transport Workers Union.

Mr. Dabney replied that a majority of voters supported his organization, but Chairman Wolff noted that only a very small number of persons actually voted. He added that Mr. Dabney’s mischaracterization of facts has lessened his credibility.

3. Mr. David Thorne – claimed that METRO illegally “appointed” the Transport Workers Union as the representative body for the bargaining unit, and claimed that METRO has lost federal funding.

Chairman Wolff stated that METRO continues to receive federal funds.

4. Mr. Clifton Cassimire – complained of rude and disrespectful bus operator behavior.

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5. Mr. William Barker – stated that some bus operators do not know the routes. They should be provided with better maps of the individual routes.

6. Mr. Allen Ueckert – of the Neartown Association and the Neartown Super Neighborhood, supports the University corridor alignment that proceeds along Richmond to Cummins, and then Westpark. The Neartown organizations want to work with METRO in the planning and construction phases. They want involvement in determining station locations, avoiding adverse construction impacts, and ensuring minimal disruption to area businesses.

Chairman Wolff voiced METRO's ongoing commitment to address these issues with the community. He also asked that Mr. Ueckert and other Neartown residents inform Congressman Culberson and other public officials of their support for the METRO Solutions project and the University corridor alignment.

Mr. Ueckert stated his opposition to the alignment that had been suggested by Congressman Culberson.

Mr. Frank Wilson also requested that Mr. Ueckert and members of the Neartown organizations attend the next meeting of the Houston-Galveston Area Council to express their support for the University corridor alignment, as adopted by the METRO Board.

7. Mr. Mark Hogue – suggested the construction of cement blocks or fences adjacent to the rail line to prevent motorists from driving on the tracks. He also requested more service on the #53 bus route.

8. Mr. Wilbert Harden – requested extensions of the #79 bus route and the #44 bus route. He suggested that the safety and security of neighborhood residents might be enhanced if the buses proceed under the North Freeway.

Board Member Dixon stated that he is familiar with the area and agreed that there are safety concerns at or near the bus stop.

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9. Mr. Howard Rose – an Assistant Vice President at the University of St. Thomas and member of other civic organizations, requested that the University light rail alignment include a station close to the western side of Montrose Boulevard to provide better connectivity for the University of St. Thomas.

Chairman Wolff stated that a key element of the University Line is to provide transit access to the universities in the corridor, including the University of St. Thomas. METRO will be responsive to the area's needs. He also suggested the Mr. Rose let others know of the University's support for the alignment.

10. Ms. Jamie Brewster – supports the University alignment and wants to work with METRO to ensure that the stations are constructed in locations that provide access to neighborhood venues and support pedestrian friendly environments.

Chairman Wolff thanked Ms. Brewster for her support and suggested that she let elected and public officials know of her support for the University alignment.

11. Mr. Dennis Leibham – claims that current METRO service is unsatisfactory and unsuccessful. He believes that the light rail vehicles move too slowly.

12. Mr. Mike McMahon – of the Gulfton Area Community Association, asked that two stations be included on the University Line to serve the Gulfton community, and especially the apartment residents in the area.

Vice Chairman Smith and Board Member DeMontrond added that Gulfton is a high density area with a diverse population. METRO should make a special effort to address the critical public transportation needs in this community. Chairman Wolff suggested that additional bus service may also address area needs.

13. Mr. Michael Griffen – suggested wider use of HOV lanes by permitting single-occupancy vehicles on the lanes. He also volunteered to organize a meeting between METRO Board Members and business owners to address some of their concerns about the impact of construction on Richmond Avenue. Mr. Griffen also questioned how far persons would be willing to walk to access a rail station.

Chairman Wolff stated that Board Members and staff will gladly respond to the business owners' concerns. Additionally, one of METRO's major projects is the conversion of the HOV lanes to HOT lanes, or "high occupancy toll" lanes. Chairman Wolff noted the different opinions expressed by the various speakers regarding the location of the University alignment and of rail stations. When the alignment is built, most people will recognize its benefits, the same as the Main Street Line. University Line construction will proceed in shorter segments. Store front offices will also be placed along the alignment to address area concerns during the construction phase.

14. Ms. S. Rivers – complained about rude bus operator behavior. She stated that she did not receive a satisfactory response to her complaint.

Board Member DeMontrond left at 2:17 p. m. and was not present for the remainder of the meeting.

15. Ms. Carolyn Calhoun – complained of rude bus operator behavior, and complained that the bus operator failed to adjust the temperature on the bus.

16. Mr. Dominic Mazoch – gave suggestions for the sale of METRO souvenirs and items that could exhibit a METRO logo.

17. Mr. Carlos Villagrana – Director of Amigos Por Vida, a charter school in the Gulfton area. Mr. Villagrana requested that the University alignment include a light rail station for the region.

18. Ms. Robin Holzer – of the Citizens Transportation Coalition, stated that her organization supports the alignment for the University Line. She urged the continued involvement of neighborhoods along the alignment as METRO considers station locations, surrounding amenities, pedestrian access and aesthetics.

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Mr. Frank Wilson responded that personnel will be located at field offices along the corridor to address neighborhood issues. Community input is always welcomed.

Vice Chairman Smith thanked Ms. Holzer for her support.

Chairman Wolff then called upon Vice Chairman Smith for Agenda Item 10.

Vice Chairman Smith moved approval of area Job Access Reverse Commute, or JARC, projects and approval of area New Freedom Program projects for receipt of federal grant funds. The projects will assist the transportation needs of low income persons and provide expanded transportation alternatives for persons with disabilities. Vice Chairman Smith further moved that the President & Chief Executive Officer be authorized and directed to submit grant applications and execute any resulting grant agreements for receipt of grant funds for distribution to the local entities that will administer these projects. The Motion was seconded by Board Secretary Freeman and all Board Members present voted in favor.

MOTION NO. 2007 – 49  
RESOLUTION NO. 2007 – 97

Board Member Dixon left at 2:45 p.m. and was not present for the remainder of the meeting.

Following the vote, the meeting returned to the Public Comment portion of the meeting. The following persons then spoke before the Board:

19. Mr. Christof Spieler – presented a letter from City of Houston Council Member M. J. Khan, requesting light rail stations in the Gulfton area. Mr. Spieler added that additional bus service is also needed to serve the area's large and diverse population.

20. Ms. Kay Warhol – supports the University alignment along Richmond and Cummins. She urged continued communication between METRO and area residents so that community concerns are adequately addressed.

Mr. Frank J. Wilson explained that there will be significant and ongoing communication with the communities to minimize adverse construction impacts. Stakeholders' ideas for design and placement of amenities will also be carefully considered. "Store front" offices will open very shortly so that there will be continuing dialogue with area residents along the transit corridor.

21. Peter Wang – of Bike Houston and Citizens Transportation Coalition, gave a Power Point presentation about bike racks on transit vehicles. He asked that light rail vehicles be equipped with bike hangers and hand straps to accommodate bicycles.

22. Mr. Woody Speer – of Bike Houston, asked that rail vehicles be quipped to accommodate bicycles. He asked that the light rail alignments not destroy or impair existing bicycle paths. Mr. Speer also thanked METRO for installing bike racks on the buses.

Vice Chairman Smith left at 2:58 p.m. and was not present for the remainder of the meeting.

Chairman Wolff then called upon Mr. Frank J. Wilson for his monthly business report.

Mr. Wilson stated that he had intended to report on the success of the program to install bike racks on buses and thanked Mr. Wang and Mr. Speer for their comments. All buses, with the exception of the articulated vehicles, can now accommodate bicycles. A growing number of bicyclists are using the system and the response has been favorable. Mr. Wilson also reported significant ridership growth at the new Cypress Park & Ride facility and at the new Baytown Park & Ride lot.

Chairman Wolff noted the recent passing of Board Member Carmen Orta's sister and called for a moment of silence in her memory.

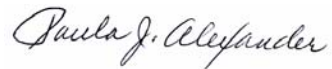
Board Member Orta expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Board and her commitment to serving the community. She also extended compliments to Chairman Wolff for his leadership, and commended the METRO staff.



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There being no other matters to come before the Board for consideration,  
the meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula J. Alexander".

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Paula J. Alexander  
Assistant Secretary