



## NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF MPOs TRANSIT WORKING GROUP

June 19, 2017

In-Person Meeting @ NYSAMPO Conference  
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

### MEETING NOTES

#### 1. Participating

- BMTS – Scott Reigle
- CDTC – Anne Benware
- CDTC – Carrie Ward
- DCTC – Mark Debald
- GTC – Alex Kone
- SMTc – Mario Colone
- WJCTC – Barbara Cadwell
- WJCTC – Jennifer Cross-Hodge
- UCTC – Brian Slack
- Tompkins Co. – Dwight Mengel
- Planning4Places – Jim Levy

#### 1. Introductions

M. Colone opened the meeting and participants introduced themselves.

#### 2. 5310 (& 5311) Discussion/Update

It was noted that NYSDOT Main Office staff could not attend the meeting today, however, they announced that they hope to have a solicitation for 5310 out by the end of the week.

The 5311 solicitation is currently out. Revisions are due on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### 3. Roundtable Chat

The meeting flowed from the previous agenda item into this one. M. Debald discussed the current transit situation in Dutchess County. There are currently two operators – a County system with 42 buses and the City of Poughkeepsie system with 8 buses. For nearly two decades there has been discussion of looking at consolidating into one provider. In a few weeks, there will be only one operator – the County. There is concern about people looking at this as if the County is trying to take over the City system. M. Debald asked how other MPOs are involved in this type of process. This issue in Dutchess County has become very political.

B. Slack stated that Ulster County is in a similar situation where the City of Kingston is looking to consolidate with the County transit system. The MPO expects to be highly engaged in this discussion and effort, especially because of 5310 and 5311 funding. It is anticipated that this effort will move forward in the County. There is concern, similar to Dutchess County, about the County taking over the City transit system but it doesn't seem to be nearly as much that voiced in Dutchess County.

UCTC is providing a forum for discussion(s) and the traditional role of project manager for a consultant team that will be hired to provide recommendations on the potential merger. Elected officials will ultimately be deciding on how this project proceeds. The labor contract is a major item that will need to be worked on as part of this effort.

D. Mengel stated that Tompkins County, Cornell University, and the City merged their systems about 20 years ago, though not fully. The driving force at the time was the positive economic outcome from a merger and the ability to provide a more robust transit system. The system was completely rebranded (now TCAT). Eventually everything was consolidated and ridership increased from approximately 2.3M passengers/year to approximately 4.2M passengers/year now. The fleet has the same number of buses today as it did 20 years ago but routes were consolidated. The labor contract was a major item. After all the work was completed, a non-profit was formed (1 of only 36 in the country) from the three entities with all three having representation on the Board. In 2005 a single Union was formed from the multiple Unions that had remained through the earlier years of the merger.

Grant management and FTA oversight is managed by Tompkins County. TCAT is a subrecipient of the County.

B. Slack asked how the local match is handled within a non-profit framework. D. Mengel stated that with each of the three organizations (Cornell, City and County) each pick up 1/3 of the net deficit. The mortgage recording tax goes toward the transit system. In general, each of the three is paying less with consolidation – local shares have all decreased. Cornell University also has a cost-share option for their employees where they pay approximately 70% of the revenue for employee ridership.

D. Mengel noted that TCAT has deployed an ITS system with real-time information which is in the soft launch period. It will be in full use by August 2017. Also, AARA funding helped update the fleet which was desperately needed. Currently, the capital needed to support the fleet as it begins to age is not available.

B. Slack noted that Ulster County undertook several significant changes including changes to rates, restructuring, and other recommended changes. After this effort, the ridership on the County system increased. No such changes have been made to the City system and ridership in the City has been decreasing.

S. Reigle discussed the system(s) in Broome County. Binghamton University has its own system which overlaps with the County system in some locations. The University system is student run. Both systems are facing serious challenges. The University system has focused more on shuttle type runs and less on fixed-routes and this has helped reduce the overlap to some extent.

D. Mengel discussed mobility management as a service and asked that it be discussed at a future Working Group meeting. He also discussed the need to look at business development for mobility as a service and the need for money to undertake business planning and modeling. It would be important to look at unmet needs and demands – access to healthcare and commuting to work across county boundaries. Rural counties need to look at how to develop a rideshare market – there is a big need for more drivers.

TCAT currently has a \$600,000 mobility management program. A call center provides information but it is not an on-call call center. The method used to get funding for activities in the Tompkins County area is to find funding available that is not programmed for other work and identify a method to plug it into specific TCAT transit needs/projects. Often there are relatively small pots of money from large infrastructure programs. For instance, Map 21 5307 and 5310 funds can be used like the JARC program as the formula is generally equivalent to the JARC program.

M. Colone noted that SMTC is looking at BRT and LRT on 2 corridors with the highest ridership. Both corridors are approximately 8-9 miles in length and run through two of the main EJ communities in the City of Syracuse. The estimated cost for these projects is approximately \$50M. SMTC has conducted on-board surveys using SMTC staff and had a great response rate to their non-rider survey distributed through corridor neighborhoods. SMTC also sent out an employer survey to nearly 600 businesses and had a poor return rate so the survey results could not be used.

#### **4. FTA Performance Measures Transition**

M. Colone asked if there has been any performance measures work completed. Targets are due at the end of the month. In Syracuse, the targets were provided to the MPO last week. There aren't any issues if targets aren't adopted by June 30<sup>th</sup> if progress on them can be shown. B. Slack noted that in Ulster County the County transit agency developed performance measures very quickly. M. Colone asked attendees to send him a draft and any other related resolutions.

In the GTC region, A. Kone noted that performance measures have been amended to the LRTP. The 5307 and 5311 performance measures reflect the region.

A. Benware noted that CDTC is hosting an FTA webinar tomorrow on performance measurement and how the MPO is working with the transit agency. A recording will be available. In the CDTC region, CDTA has taken over responsibilities related to car share and is also managing the newly created bike share program. It was also noted that there is no longer a one-call, one-trip service option in the region.

#### **5. Development of Transit Working Group Fact Sheet(s)**

M. Colone discussed the Working Group Work Plan goal of developing Transit Fact Sheets. The audience for these would be the public and member agencies. We don't want to recreate what has already been done by APTA and others but do want to create information sheet(s) created by and for use by NYS MPOs. J. Levy discussed a few formatting ideas including developing a single handout instead of multiple sheets like the example distributed in the meeting. He believes that a single handout – like a double-sided 11x17 – is more likely to be read than a packet of 5-10 pages. Regardless, the fact sheet(s) would have high-level information on certain topic areas – just like the example distributed, reference other information sources like APTA, and have blank space(s) available for the MPO to customize the document for their region. This would allow the fact sheet(s) to generally portray the same message statewide but also allow for local information to be provided,

hopefully making it more useful for each MPO. J. Levy will begin working on document ideas.

### **Action Items**

The following were noted for follow-up by the Chairperson:

- Discuss mobility management, particularly if transit partners can attend the meeting.
- Discuss business planning and modeling needs and how to fund this activity.
- Send draft and other related Performance Measures resolutions to M. Colone.
- J. Levy to begin working on ideas for Transit Working Group Fact Sheet(s).