



Citizen Advocates for Regional Transit

Universal Transit Mobility through Unified Transit Governance

www.C-A-R-T.org

January 10, 2024

Additional Comments to Written Testimony submitted to the Task Force on January 5, 2024:

“Transit: Essential Structural Changes Needed”

The referenced document recommends essential structural changes to Metro Transit governance and system development processes. We strongly urge the Task Force to include the following recommendations in its report to the Legislature:

- Metro Transit should continue to be part of the Metropolitan Council. Regardless of the decisions recommending the form of Governance structure, the Metropolitan Council is the best-positioned State Agency to be charged with the responsibility and accountability for developing, operating, and maintaining the Metro Transit System.

Suggestions have been made to separate Transit Operations from Transit Planning functions, either within the Metropolitan Council or by moving Operations to another agency. This would be unproductive because Best Practices for cohesive and responsive system design and effective operations require all stakeholders to be committed to the success of the System and accountable to a single responsible entity. Also, as explained in the referenced testimony, County Railroad Authorities should be consolidated into a Metropolitan Railroad Authority under the Metropolitan Council, preferably within Metro Transit.

- The Metro Transit System Planning and Development process should be re-structured. Metro Transit should be responsible for all phases of development, from visioning to operations. This should apply to all modes of transit and all types of funding, with input from all local government and public stakeholders. Funding and development priorities should be coordinated by Metro Transit based on overall System integrity and performance.

Currently, the responsibilities for route development are divided among the Counties and Metro Transit. Unfortunately, this has resulted in schedule delays, cost overruns, and a lack of trust from the public. The Riverview Corridor streetcar/ABrt project can serve as an example. The project has been under County project management for the development of a workable solution to their Locally Preferred Alternative since 2017...at a cost of seven million dollars...without satisfactory results.

We recognize that these structural changes are not the primary focus of the Task Force, but we ask that they be considered within the scope of the potential “*a la carte*” recommendations to be forwarded to the Legislature.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your deliberations!

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