

Committee Members Present

Councilman Mike Suarez
Dan Malloy
Catherine Coyle
Jack Rodriguez
Tony Garcia
Ed Johnson
Bob McDonough
Katharine Eagan
Ray Chiaramonte

Staff Present

Lena Petit
Gisela Rivera-Rios
Lorena Hardwick

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Councilman Mike Suarez.

Councilman Suarez introduced Joe Calabrese, CEO of Cleveland RTA. He joined the committee via phone and presented a 71 page power point presentation. (A hard copy of this presentation was given to each member present)

Questions

Mr. Suarez asked about creating a dedicated lane versus utilizing an existing lane. Mr. Calabrese shared that after traffic studies were done, it became clear that a dedicated line would not be possible. This has still proven to be successful. Mr. Suarez also asked what the total investment for their fare collection system was and whether they already had transit police in place or was it a new investment: Fare collection system investment was 10 million dollars and they already had transit police.

Ms. Eagan asked what their fare evasion percentage was: 3-5%

Mr. McDonough asked about fares: BRT & Regular Bus Service \$2.25 – Park & Ride \$2.50 – All Day Pass \$5

Mr. Suarez asked about downtown buildings: In downtown all buildings were repurposed, there was really no vacant land to contend with, unlike their Midtown and University Circle area where tracts of land were purchased by developers. After the BRT project land value doubled.

Ms. Coyle asked about the width of the corridor: Joe noted that some parcels had to be bought in order to achieve the 100 ft. expanse needed.

Mr. Suarez inquired about public/private partnerships: in Cleveland it was primarily private investments and development. RTA bought construction easements and bought three parcels which they then sold once construction was completed. There were no major City/County contributions. The County is now moving their headquarters to Euclid Avenue – repurposing an old building.

Mr. Rodriguez asked about the population of Cleveland: 400K

Mr. Suarez thanked Mr. Calabrese for his time.

Discussion

Mr. Suarez considered it interesting that more choice riders used BRT opposed to rail. As well as the fact that the public sector drove the Cleveland corridor's development and direction.

Ms. Eagan pointed out that the rail stations in Cleveland have had no improvement, while their BRT landed a twenty five million naming rights deal.

Mr. Suarez and Ms. Eagan briefly discussed the antiquated fare collection system that is currently in use in Tampa. It would require three million dollars to upgrade – five to six thousand per vehicle.

Ms. Coyle remarked how they managed to create an entire public realm from building face to building face as all the redevelopment and new development was pushed by property owners and not the riders of the new BRT system.

Mr. Suarez questioned all the conversations that take place where stakeholders want to invest in rail but no mention of economic development.

Mr. Malloy pointed out that Cleveland invested into this BRT project because development was ripe and about to occur. All the factors were stacked in their favor as the development center was ready. Although this is a great success story he does not believe it is a good example for Tampa.

Ms. Coyle and Mr. Garcia agreed. Cleveland put all their money in one basket because they knew it would work. It would be more appropriate to look at it as a good example for the Dale Mabry or Kennedy corridors. A major disadvantage for Kennedy is that it is 80 feet wide and to have a two way dedicated system on it would obliterate the traffic, but Kennedy does have an important piece: redevelopment opportunity. Mr. Garcia advised that if you are going to make that kind of financial investment you have to get the community's buy in.

Ms. Eagan noted that Kennedy is number three of six on the BRT corridor development. As of right now the ridership on Kennedy is under a million a year. Nebraska right now has about 1.2 million and is expected to increase 30-50% with BRT. Total ridership is about 14 million trips in a year.

Mr. Suarez agreed that Kennedy may be the best corridor for development.

Ms. Coyle indicated that the corridors south of Kennedy are asking for circulators and more transit options. There are about one thousand units being built within a mile of each other on Howard. You cannot buy right of way there. Could that be considered to become a transit corridor as it is already pedestrian friendly? She believes a cultural shift has to occur, new branding, and placement are necessary to attract people in the community to ride a transit system.

Ms. Eagan sees it as an attractive investment and it may make sense to leverage transit dollars in that area.

Mr. Suarez added that he has proposed to those businesses on Howard to pool their monies together to invest in a circulator to alleviate traffic and parking congestion. It makes business sense for the owners to come together and work as a district. When they individually try to solve parking woes they create silos and kill any type of collaboration. Mr. Suarez is very interested in further discussing Kennedy Boulevard and wondered why MLK was targeted ahead of Kennedy.

Ms. Eagan responded they looked at ridership numbers and not at the potential of creating development.

Mr. Suarez added that this is the reason he wanted to have this committee, as a community we cannot discuss TOD if transit ridership is the only focus.

Ms. Coyle reiterated looking at Cleveland and Platt, although Kennedy makes sense it is state run and it cannot hold dedicated lanes. Cleveland and Platt are one way; you can easily take one of those lanes and make it a dedicated lane.

Mr. Rodriguez pointed out that in Cleveland; Euclid had two parallel streets to take on the traffic shifts. So the Platt/Cleveland scenario would make sense.

Mr. Malloy mentioned that for most of these projects in order to justify matching federal funding you had to show your existing ridership and asked how HART would do and whether that was still the case.

Ms. Eagan explained that this administration (Obama) allows transit agencies to make strong cases for redevelopment, revitalization and quality of life, opposed to the previous one which relied solely on ridership levels and leveraging private development dollars. Smaller projects BRT/BRT style will be more visible.

Ms. Eagan further offered that she will have numbers and studies on Kennedy as well as Dale Mabry, including data from TBARTA and other entities.

Mr. Suarez is interested in seeing what the planning team has on Kennedy as this is the corridor most looked at by developers. The challenges they face are with the neighborhoods as residents feel businesses are encroaching into their space.

Ms. Coyle would like to have HART's information so she may layer it in the GIS system; she will additionally add Platt/Cleveland to share that data as well.

ADJOURNMENT



*Transit Oriented Development Committee
Minutes
Friday, May 13, 2013
9:00 a.m.*
