



MEETING: EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021

TIME: 3:00 – 4:30 PM

LOCATION: VIA WEBEX

MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Landino called the January 12, 2021 Meeting of the External Stakeholder Relations Committee to order at 3:02 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee Members Present

Amy Landino, Chair
Trudy Bartley
Jennifer Gallagher
Timothy Skinner

3. APPROVAL OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Trustee Skinner motioned to approve the December 8, 2020 External Stakeholder Relations Committee minutes. Trustee Gallagher seconded the motion. Motion carries.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Patrick Harris, AVP, Government Affairs/Corporate Communications gave an update on the latest federal government affairs activities. In December 2020, the Trump Administration signed a stimulus bill, including \$14 billion for transportation in supplemental COVID relief funds. The FTA announced the Columbus UZA will receive \$55 million, of which, COTA should receive the majority. Patrick also explained that the bill included transit formula apportionments for FY 2021 at the same level as 2020 with a one-year extension of the \$10 billion FAST Act. He noted that COTA received \$18 million in 2020.

Patrick went on to discuss the new D.C. Political climate with the election of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris. With transit-friendly leaders now in the majority in both chambers, the Biden legislative agenda has an easier path to success. U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown will now become chair of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee that oversees suggested funding amounts for various programs that support COTA. Congresswoman





Marcia Fudge has been nominated as the next HUD Secretary. Patrick explained that from a LinkUS perspective this could be very helpful for COTA'S work around affordable housing.

Trustee Bartley noted that Congresswoman Joyce Beatty is the newly elected Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Patrick continued his presentation with an overview of FTA grant programs that COTA has been awarded and/or applied for. He noted that both the Bus/Bus facilities and Low/No Emissions programs are extremely important as COTA continues to invest in the fleet. COTA will continue to seek Capital Investment Grants (CIG) funding through either new starts or small starts for LinkUS. Innovative Mobility Innovation (IMI) grants had enabled COTA to implement Waycare technology, which is helping COTA create a 13-county region for a safer transportation framework. He noted that COTA applied for the Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) grant last year, but unfortunately, did not receive the funding. COTA will continue to pursue AIM grants as they could be used to help support regionalism and county connections strategies. COTA does not only apply for grants through the FTA, but also the DOE and DOJ to secure additional funding with mobility partners, like ODOT, MORPC, City of Columbus, Franklin County, DriveOhio, TRC and OSU.

Patrick went on to layout early federal priorities for 2021. With the FAST Act reauthorization, COTA knows that the new Biden Administration may present opportunities to advocate for changes to programs within the FAST Act that are important to LinkUS, like CIG funding requirements. The Government Affairs team will also focus on addressing the solvency of the Highway Trust, which is supported by the federal gas tax. He noted that COTA will be working with partners at APTA, OPTA and ITS to help find new funding streams for the Highway Trust. COTA will also advocate to protect the V2X safety spectrum. The FCC released a decision, but not a final ruling, that would take part of the spectrum away from safety. COTA will advocate for the safety spectrum to stay intact as to not be detrimental to connected vehicle technology that is working to save lives.

Q1: Chair Landino: Is there anything top of mind that the organization and/or Board can do to support you as you dive in?

A1: Patrick Harris: We will need your help by continuing the conversation and advocating for COTA through your positions, knowing the important role we play in the region's success.

Aslyne Rodriguez, Director of Government Affairs, gave a presentation on COTA's state government affairs early priorities. COTA was awarded \$1 million through the Capital Budget for the Rickenbacker Area Mobility Center (RAMC). This development will serve as not only a transit center offering fixed-route and regional connections, but will also provide access to wrap-around services including food, healthcare, and childcare. She noted that this effort is supported by the Columbus Regional Airport Authority, as they own the land. COTA will continue to pursue additional opportunities for funding through MORPC and other avenues. Aslyne continued on to the State transportation budget for 2021 and highlighted that COTA's goal is to increase and/or protect state investment in mobility initiatives. She noted that COTA expects the budget to be conservative, but also forward thinking.





Aslyne went on to discuss additional state priorities such as a State Employee Pass Program, where COTA will seek state dollars to support a C-pass “like” program for downtown state employees through a budget amendment. She noted that Government Affairs team will look for all opportunities to be an innovative and creative mobility solutions provider. The team will also monitor and support distracted driving legislation as long as the legislation supports equity. She noted that COTA continues to work with State and Local officials to ensure public transit frontline employees are included in an early COVID-19 vaccine group. To end, she noted that COTA will continue to be supportive and/or at the forefront of broadband policies and legislation. Equitable access to broadband is critical for how we operate in this new world.

Q1: Chair Landino: How are we educating COTA employees on the COVID-19 vaccine?

A1: Aslyne Rodriguez: Yes, we put together a timeline in which we are looking to send out our own survey to gauge employee interest in the COVID vaccine. We know that historically medical trials have disproportionately impact minorities, so we are working to create an educational campaign on the COVID vaccine.

Q3: Chair Landino: Has COTA had any initial conversations with the Minority Healthcare Strike Force? Particularly around the crisis of infant mortality in Columbus?

A3: Aslyne Rodriguez: The Minority Healthcare Strike Force was created out of the COVID pandemic. They just released their report, so we are working with them to determine how public transit impacts the work they are doing and how we can be most supportive. We do not have a direct alignment with them right now around infant mortality.

Q4: Chair Landino: Do we have any examples of other states and how they are classifying transit?

A4: Aslyne Rodriguez: Yes, every state has their own vaccine distribution plan. Some states have prioritized public transit at a higher priority than our state has.

A4: Patrick Harris: Yes, there is a National Governor’s Association document that we can share that shows each state’s rollout. This document serves as a cautionary tale and opportunity to help round out Ohio’s vaccine rollout and finalize it with advocacy. We are working to send the survey COTA develops to other transit authorities throughout the state to help coordinate so we can advocate.

Kim Sharp, Senior Director of Development, presented to the committee on LinkUS community engagement efforts. LinkUS corridors initiative is a strong collaboration between COTA, City of Columbus, MORPC and Franklin County. Goals of the engagement with public is that it’s truly equitable and diverse engagement and opportunities and that the outreach creates regional understanding and support for the bigger picture of what LinkUS’ end goal is. Kim explained that the effort worked to ensure they had diverse interests on their advisory committees resulting in a consensus on broad policy alignments and champions for the initiative.





Kim continued with what LinkUS is working to organize for 2021 and the years beyond. There is an Executive Leadership Group that is working closely with the directors of the policy groups with public interests to coordinate efforts. Another core group is focused on communications in conjunction with the consultants from the Saunders Group. Others are focused on stakeholder engagement by topics like equity and diversity, mobility and health, housing, land use and zoning and workforce and business development.

The Northwest Corridor kicked off engagement in summer of 2020. LinkUS expanded outreach efforts to ensure all groups are included. Kim noted that they need groups that have interest and knowledge that mobility solutions lead to opportunities for the future. There were targeted efforts in high minority and high rent neighborhoods to ensure equitable participation and that participation truly reflected the make-up of the corridor.

Kim noted that the group understands there is a difference in what happens in the public right of way within public transit infrastructure as well as what happens within private sector developments. There are great opportunities for collaboration on the type of development that is supportive of transit infrastructure.

She went on to discuss the East West Corridor efforts within LinkUS. The group continues to take a deep dive into the neighborhoods along the corridor and engage with key groups to learn from the community and understand their needs. She noted they like to use the word “co-create” as the engagement team works to development plans in conjunction with the community. Kim ended with informing the committee that there will be several public meetings in January and February, where the LinkUS engagement team will host ten different stakeholder groups for feedback as well as deploy a public survey.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Landino adjourned the meeting at 3:52 PM.

MARCH 16, 2021

Adopted: _____

Signed: *Amy M Landino*
Chair, External Stakeholder Relations Committee





Attest: _____

DocuSigned by:

Joanna M. Pinkerton

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President/CEO

