

Minutes

RTA Committee of the Whole Meeting

9:09 a.m., Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Committee Members: Lucas, (Chair), Moss (Vice Chair), Biasiotta, Duarte, Joyce, Koomar, McCall, Pellet, Weiss

Not present: None

Staff: Benford, Birdsong, Burney, Caver, Dangelo, Darden, Davidson, Fesler, Fleig, Ferraro, Flachbart, Freilich, Garofoli, Gautam, Gettings, Hudson, Jones, Miller, Mothes, Schipper, Walker-Minor

Public: Ferenczy, Gibbons, Julien, Loh, McGrady, Rodriquez, Romanoff, Watts

The meeting was called to order at 9:09 a.m. There were nine (9) committee members present. In accordance with the Ohio Open Meetings Act and House Bill 51, signed into law on February 17, 2022 and effective immediately through June 30, 2022, this meeting will be live-streamed on RTA's Board Page www.RideRTA.com/board via the meeting date for staff and members of the public. House Bill 51 allows Board members to participate by telephone or video and be considered present as if in person. It also allows Board members to vote and be counted for the purpose of determining a quorum while attending by telephone or video.

Public Square

Mike Schipper, Deputy General Manager, Engineering & Project Management; Nora Romanoff, Associate Director, LAND Studio and Sanaa Julien CEO, Group Plan Commission made the presentation. Today's presentation is just an overview. A vote will not be required from the committee today.

Public Square Overview:

- The perimeter and internal roadways of Public Square were reconstructed by GCRTA as part of the HealthLine project in 2006. The interior roadways for Superior and Ontario were also rebuilt.
- Superior Avenue was reconstructed by the Group Plan Commission as part of the Public Square Reconstruction in 2016
- In 2017 temporary barriers and planters were placed in the square to mitigate safety and security concerns and remain in place today

Public Square was also part of the Transit Zone piece, which had huge transportation benefits in our ability to get FTA funding. When Group Plan Commission went forward with the reconstruction of the Square, Ontario was removed and Superior was reconstruction as part of their 2016 work. RTA has been working behind the scenes with GPC and others to come up with permanent solutions that would address the safety and security concerns. Today's presentation is moving from five years of temporary barriers to a permanent solution that will benefit RTA operations.

RTA runs a lot of bus service through the Square. We serve stations and shelters that are in four locations on Superior. The temporary barriers are removed for events, which takes time, money and disrupts service. Because of the concentration of buses, the pavement, border and bricks have deteriorated rapidly. Unfortunately, it affects the longevity of our vehicles. When the Square was originally designed, the handicap ramps were in place, but now temporary ramps are in place, which can be moved for events. The temporary ramps are unacceptable.

Ms. Romanoff spoke about the permanent plan that has been developed by the Group Plan Commission. Ms. Romanoff works at LAND Studio, but is here today on behalf of GPC. The Square opened June 30, 2016 after a 15-month (16 year) process. A lot of study was done with RTA and their traffic consultant Nelson Nygaard (33 intersection traffic and transit study multi model to close Ontario and reduce the width of Superior). After the opening of the Square, Superior remained closed for continuity for riders because the Square was going to remain closed for the RNC in July. There was some positive feedback when the Square was closed. The barriers were placed there in March 2017. A team was called to the Mayor's Office in March 2017 to look at the temporary measures and proposed a solution with the design team. They were engaged for input by Mayor Bibb, which brings them to today. They have had wonderful conversations with Ms. Birdsong and continue to do so.

The City of Cleveland is discussing legislation that was first introduced March 7, 2022. Ms. Nomanoff represents LAND and GPC. They are working on contract updates and a definitive agreement, which allowed them to perform the project. They brought back the original team for budget and timeline efficiencies. They are working on updated drawings, which are rudimentary and a continuation of their "as built" but in terms of a proposal, are 30-40% design development. They are working on utility coordination. The scope priorities include the Superior bollards, which are removable, Superior hardscape repair, raptor install (closure at east and west Superior), other entries that are not as relevant, but where there are planters placed in the walkways, they will retrofit with bollards and hard/soft costs.

They have a proposed cost estimate they are now discussing. The cost estimate was created before they understood the City and RTA's motivation to help leverage their support. They are currently fundraising. The assumptions are continuity of design, bikes, timeline and that the width needs to be 26 ft and not 24 ft. per RTA Engineering. The barriers will be removed. The signals and crosswalk will be removed and replaced. ADA crossings will be installed. The proposed bollards will need to be engineered individually because of the below grade condition. They will be security core installed and some will be removable for ease of access and programming. The planters in the Square will be removed. The plating and reconstruction of the central crossing will be replaced. A raptor system, similar to what they are proposing, is being retrofitted at the Federal Reserve.

Mayor Koomar asked once the bollards go in if Superior will open up to four lanes again. Ms. Noranoff said the original four lanes would taper down to the two lanes that they are today. Mr. Schipper requested the lanes be 26ft each. Ms. McCall asked about the maintenance of the bollards and if art will be incorporated. Ms. Julien said GPC would maintain the bollards through a maintenance contract with the company that installs the bollards. Their staff will have instructions on the removable bollards and raptors. It cost the City of Cleveland \$15,000 to remove the jersey barriers for special events. GPC also incurred expenses when the streets needed cleaning for events. Ms. McCall asked if there will be collaboration with Sherwin Williams on the bollards and if the planters will be replaced to show continuity between the bollards, planters and raptors. Ms. Romanoff said art would be incorporated. Mr. Ferenczy with Osborn is working with Sherwin Williams on their maintenance of traffic. When they do go into construction, they will have the knowledge of what Sherwin Williams is doing with their closures to put a system in place. They will ensure that design, creativity and ownership of these pieces continues with the original park.

Mayor Weiss asked where they are in the scope of the project and the budgeting. Ms. Noranoff said as of yesterday the City of Cleveland legislative process in terms of their \$1.5 million contribution was submitted March 7 and has been referred to two committees. It is expected to be approved in the next few weeks. They took their budget, which was preliminary and conservative and factored in a COVID premium into the overall cost due to supply chain and material conditions. They continue to look at that

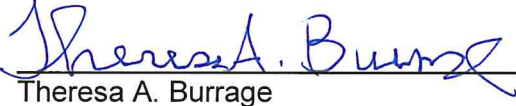
budget. Ms. Moss asked what RTA is expected to contribute. Ms. Julien said the full budget is \$3.5 million. They will come back and ask RTA for \$500,000. They are actively fundraising for the balance of \$1.5 million. Dr. Caver added that when buses do not leave downtown on time, they rarely get back on schedule west of the river. Pre-COVID, when buses had to go around the Square, it decreased on-time performance by 5%. The benefits of having a reconstructed Square will result in better timing of the traffic signals and improved street improvements to assist buses in safe passage through the Square.

Ms. Birdsong said this is a good example of collaboration. She recommends the Board continue to follow the updates with the City and GPC. RTA staff has presented numerous questions to GPC about where RTA's contribution would go and the functionality of the Square to best benefit the riders. The operational component far reaches any other benefit that could be achieved by RTA's participation. Additional updates about funding and scope can be brought to the Board in April. Mr. Joyce asked if RTA will have access to the perimeter and will it make it easier to navigate future construction. Mr. Schipper said the proposed MOU is to have the Superior part of the construction done in an intense manner to lesson disruption of the system.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 a.m.



Rajan D. Gautam
Secretary/Treasurer



Theresa A. Burrage
Executive Assistant