

**JOINT SPECIAL MEETING
CITY COMMISSION AND THE
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
CITY HALL**

**Tuesday, February 4, 2003
12:30 P.M.**

Mayor Naugle called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m.

Present: Mayor Naugle
Commissioner Cindi Hutchinson
Commissioner Gloria F. Katz
Commissioner Carlton Moore
Commissioner Tim Smith

Absent: None

Present/DDA: Jack Loos, Chairman
Charles B. Ladd, Jr.
Alan C. Hooper
Walter Morgan
Tony Stallworth
Doug Eagon
Gale M. Butler
Jerry Sternstein
Chris Wren, Executive Director

Also Present: City Manager
City Attorney
City Clerk

Mayor Naugle called to order the joint meeting with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the City Commission.

Jack Loos, Chairman of the DDA, thanked the Commission for holding the joint meeting. He asked that Chris Wren, Executive Director of the DDA, to explain what they were going to be doing. He further stated that the City and the DDA had been working together, as well as independently, on various transportation issues in and around the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. He felt they now needed to come together and determine what types of vehicles were needed, whether the same types were needed throughout the City, and what the best way was to unify their efforts and move forward together and turn dreams into realities.

Chris Wren, Executive Director of the DDA, stated they were going to discuss transit equipment. He explained that they had hired a transit expert, Carter Burgess, who would be represented by Joe Yesbeck. He further stated they had also invited the TMA, RTA, and the MPO to join in the discussion regarding transit. He stated that some of today's outcome was to obtain more knowledge regarding upcoming purchases, and to discuss coordination.

Commissioner Moore asked if an invitation to today's meeting had been extended to Broward County Mass Transit. Mr. Wren explained they attempted to invited everyone who had a similar "stake" in the matter.

Commissioner Moore left the meeting at approximately 12:40 p.m. and returned at 12:45 p.m.

Joe Yesbeck, of Carter Burgess, stated they were going to give a presentation on the different types of transit technology that would be appropriate for Fort Lauderdale. He further stated that some of their senior planners and experts were also in attendance at today's meeting to assist in answering questions. He explained that updates would be distributed in connection with the reports everyone had received previously and a copy of the powerpoint presentation that was going to be made at today's meeting.

Commissioner Hutchinson left the meeting at approximately 12:46 p.m.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that updates would be distributed in regard to reports which had previously been distributed to everyone, along with the powerpoint presentation that he was going to make at today's meeting. He stated that they were going to review various types of transit technologies. He further stated that they were very aware of the overall goals for a pedestrian-oriented design for the City. He explained that he was going to divide today's presentation into two parts. The first part would list factors to be considered when assessing transit technology, and its appropriate use for the local area. The second part would be a review of various modes, including rubber tired and rail vehicles.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that in considering some of the factors, there were some specific technology factors that needed to be discussed. He explained that the first factor to consider was "system capacity." He further explained that when one was designing a transit system, one factor to consider was how to handle demand. He stated that demand could be handled by either adding more cars on a single-car or train set, or increasing the frequency by which the vehicles passed by. Another factor to consider was operating speed and where the system would be operating in the City. He reiterated that in longer distance travel, a higher speed was more important, and a lower speed should be used in more heavily pedestrian areas.

Commissioner Hutchinson returned to the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that another factor to be considered was maneuverability. He added that capital and operating costs were a major issue in choosing a transit vehicle. He explained that an issue related to capital costs which differed between rubber-tired and rail alternatives was that on a rubber-tired vehicle, one was typically operating in the street and costs for stations and street amenities had to be considered. In rail transit such costs had to be considered, along with the guiding or rail system. An important distinction was that the rubber-tired vehicle operated in traffic, and speeds could be slower due to congestion.

Mr. Yesbeck continued stating that other factors to be considered were environmental issues, accessibility, and integration with other systems throughout the County. Other criteria they had been asked to consider when reviewing the various types of transit vehicles were operational considerations, such as slow-moving, minimal vibrations, human drivers, low-floor, narrow, protection from the elements, and pedestrian scale. Mr. Yesbeck mentioned that aesthetics were an important feature regarding a transit system. He stated that other issues involved in reviewing a transit system were crossing the FEC track on 2nd because there was a vertical elevation to get up and over the track. It was not a technical issue because a rail system could cross a freight line, but it was a policy issue involving an agreement with the FEC Railroad and working with the Federal Railroad Administration.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that of equal importance would be the parking garage and the reason was the vertical height because some of the rail options that look at overhead electric power, draws power from an overhead cantonary which was a small rod that ran from the car up to the powerlines. Those lines were about 18 feet to 20 feet above the rail car and the clearance was about 16 feet. He explained that the cantonaries adjusted to various heights.

Mr. Yesbeck proceeded to explain that the fundamental difference between rubber-tired vehicles and rail

was implementation. Rubber-tired vehicles were more flexible. He stated that with a rail system the community was making a firmer commitment and serious investment and normally came up with development and land use plans to support it.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that the first option for rubber-tired vehicles was a tram that was commonly used for recreational and amusement areas. Many were used for sight-seeing tours and consisted of a motored unit in front with cars being pulled behind. They were equipped to protect people from the elements and some were even fully enclosed. Pictures were showed of various types of trams. Mr. Yesbeck explained that some of the operating characteristics of trams were that the capital costs would be about \$55,000 to \$175,000 per vehicle. The operating costs ranged from \$33 to \$39 per revenue hour, and their life cycle was about 5 to 10 years. He stated they ran on diesel, electrical and natural gases. They were flexible and there was a wide range to choose from. He further stated they had a tight turning range of about 20 feet to 30 feet and were good for tight areas.

Mr. Yesbeck proceeded to state that another type of rubber-tired technology was replica or trolley buses which were widely used for downtown circulator services, and were meant to resemble an old-fashioned trolley car but were on tires. They could be partially or fully enclosed. He explained there was a wide supply of these types of vehicles so maintenance and upkeep were reasonable and available. The cost for this type of vehicle was generally about \$250,000, and the operating costs were in the \$30 + range. The average speeds were about 12 to 15 mph, and the turning radius was comparable to the tram.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that the last type of rubber-tired vehicle was a small bus which was basically 30 feet in length, and wide varieties of shells were available. The operating characteristics were similar to the other vehicles, and the cost was around \$175,000 to \$225,000 per vehicle. There were various types of power sources available and the speeds were similar.

Mr. Yesbeck then proceeded to explain the various type of rail vehicles that were available. He stated there always tended to be interest from every group in monorails, automated guideway transit, and personal rapid transit. Pictures were shown of these types of systems. He stated further that these types of systems were not going to be discussed because they were expensive, on aerial guideways and were not appropriate for the type of transit service being considered for Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Yesbeck explained that one type of rail system was a light rail and was the most popular throughout the United States. The system could operate either on a street or an exclusive right-of-way, or a right-of-way which appeared like a separate train. There were a variety of manufacturers, and typically there was a single driver to operate the system. He further stated that they operated exclusively on overhead power, but it was possible to get them with diesel engines. He stated that the denser the area the more environmental issues arose. Therefore, looking at alternate power sources such as electricity and natural gases were an important issue in urbanized areas. Some of the costs for light rail were about \$25 to \$60 Million per mile for the system. Capacity and speed capabilities were higher and operated from 25 to 70 mph. He further stated that these types of vehicles were used more to move people from suburban to urban areas, and were not meant for closely spaced stops.

Mr. Yesbeck proceeded to show a video of examples of various rail systems. Most of the systems shown were used in Europe due to the fact that they were more challenged for space.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that streetcars and trolleys typically included historic and modern vehicles. Some old streetcars and trolleys had been acquired and refurbished. They traditionally operated in mixed street traffic and did not need any type of exclusive right-of-way. They normally were operated by overhead electric, but could be self-propelled. He explained that maintenance of historic cars could be difficult due to the fact that technology and parts were outdated and hard to get. The capital costs for a historic system could be \$2 Million to \$8 Million per mile. Mr. Yesbeck stated that a lot of transit costs were based on labor for operations and maintenance.

Bud Bentley, Assistant City Manager, asked what was the difference between light rail and streetcars or trolleys.

Mr. Yesbeck stated they were very similar, but the difference was in the size of the car and the operating speed. Light rail normally ran about 70 mph, and trolleys ran about 50 mph. He explained that acceleration was slightly slower with light rail.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that another type of technology was narrow gauge rail and in the past this type of system had been associated with historic rail lines, recreational, and service areas. The reason it was referred to as narrow gauge was because the distance between the two rails was closer than it would be for a standard railroad. Both historic and modern versions of this type of vehicle were available, and he proceeded to show photographs of this type of system. He explained that the capital costs were about ½ Million to \$1.3 Million per mile for the system, and operating costs were about \$26 per revenue hour. He explained there was also a system safety issue depending on how the system was procured and installed. Typically, if you went with a transit system and were going to use Federal funds, the Federal Transit Administration permitted one to get a couple of vehicles as prototypes to be used on a trial basis. Ultimately, the FTA made equipment manufacturers go through a testing phase to make sure it withstood certain types of crash worthiness, and increases could occur in costs due to the difference of using this in private service versus public service. The life cycles were long and the power sources available were diesel, electric and steam. The average speed was 5 to 10 mph. He felt this closely replicated the tram vehicle. He explained that this type of vehicle would probably require some ADA add-ons or modifications. He explained that the turning radius was tight at about 38 feet to 50 feet.

Chairman Loos asked if the maximum grade of 3% would pertain to any issues in this area.

Mr. Yesbeck stated the two issues were the rail crossing at the FEC that involved a short length, but the approach to the tracks would probably have to be reconstructed or tapered regardless of which system was used. He stated that if the system had to go over a bridge that would become more problematic.

Charlie Ladd, DDA Board Member, stated it appeared from the photographs that were shown that the line between a streetcar/trolley system and narrow gauge rail was very close, but the price difference was huge. He asked if that was because of the spectrum where the definitions met.

Mr. Yesbeck replied that with the streetcar/rail system more of those were in place and more information could be drawn on because of use in other cities. Whereas, with the narrow gauge rail there was no operating history. Mr. Ladd stated that it would be reasonable to expect a narrow gauge rail would be similar to streetcar/trolley systems in cost. Mr. Yesbeck stated when the systems were built in an amusement park or a recreational setting, you typically ran through an area going under construction and would not require any retrofitting or other engineering issues. He explained that trolley costs would be reflected typically in the average capital cost, but with the narrow gauge rail they did not know the average cost because there were no real applications.

Cecelia Hollar, Director of Construction Services, asked if the numbers included any thought about acquisition of private property or were they assuming the right-of-way would be used that already existed.

Mr. Yesbeck replied the answer was "yes" and "no." He stated that due to the fact that light rail operated in an exclusive right-of-way, the average cost per mile was high due to the acquisition of right-of-way and infrastructure costs. The streetcar/trolley vehicle included some right-of-way costs.

Reed Everett-Lee, of Carter Burgess, suggested not focusing on one item such as cost because decisions to implement new transit systems involved a lot of factors, and trade-offs had to be balanced. He explained that generally with rail one received more economic development potential than money, but higher costs were involved. He further stated that he was aware that here potential connectivity was

involved. He reiterated that it was important to decide which criteria were important and prioritize them.

Mr. Yesbeck proceeded to show different examples of technologies being used in various cities, including Portland and Denver. He further stated that Seattle had a streetcar line which operated along the waterfront and a tunnel had been constructed to permit transit to go below the city streets.

Mr. Yesbeck reiterated that many options were available for consideration, but the most important factor to remember was that this was not just a quantitative decision, but also a qualitative decision.

Commissioner Moore left the meeting at approximately 1:05 p.m.

Jack Loos stated that when you looked at some of the systems, the height and width comparisons involved appeared tall and overpowering.

Mr. Yesbeck stated that height for streetcars and trolleys differed, but the width of the vehicles were narrow at about 7 feet to 9 feet, not counting the cabin area. Mr. Loos asked how these figures would compare to the narrow gauge system. Mr. Yesbeck replied that narrow gauge limited the height of the vehicle, and generally speaking 7 feet to 8 feet was the maximum height. Mr. Loos felt those types of vehicles were less imposing in appearance.

Commissioner Smith stated he was glad this meeting occurred and the Commission had received a lot of input from the residents. Some of their concerns were that growth was imminent and cranes were in the skyline, but they were not sure if the City had a handle on things. They were also worried if the City had a growth strategy. Commissioner Katz reassured everyone that a master plan was presently in the works. He stated the residents were also concerned that with growth was there sufficient infrastructure in place to manage things properly. Commissioner Smith felt the infrastructure that was not in place dealt with transit opportunities.

Commissioner Smith remarked that the T-Max buses had burned and had to be replaced which presented an opportunity for the City to do something. He stated that after today's meeting, he had hoped the DDA and the City could form a partnership to make something happen soon. He realized there were details to be determined as to what type of system should be used, but he felt mass transit needed to be addressed before all the new structures were completed and filled with residents.

Commissioner Smith stated that the criteria which had been adopted by the DDA was right on target, and suggested that the City Commission adopt the same criteria. He felt that protection from heat needed to be included in that criteria. He felt at some point a different structure would be needed due to the people involved.

Commissioner Moore returned to the meeting at approximately 1:10 p.m.

Jack Loos felt this was an educational process for everyone involved, and did not feel the DDA had come to any type of firm conclusion on what system should be used for the downtown core. He felt at today's meeting they needed to exchange ideas on what type of system should be used, and to partner together and come to some agreement and understanding to meet the City's needs.

Mr. Wren stated that he had also hoped that a partnership could be formed because he felt this was bigger than any one entity and they needed to solve the issue.

Commissioner Hutchinson stated she felt the partnership had already been formed when the DDA helped fund the subarea mobility study, and she felt these meetings were helpful to the partnership in order to determine what type of system should be used.

Doug Eagon, DDA Board Member, stated that it was encouraging to hear talk of a partnership and he

hoped it would continue. He felt the DDA, in regard to mass transit, needed to look beyond the central business district, into the neighborhoods, into Broward County, and the South Florida region. He stated there were different components to the transportation system and to a mass transit system, and went beyond the taxpaying representatives sitting at this table. As part of the partnership, this fact needed to be recognized and they needed to continue with the SAC studies and draw on as many people as possible through the Federal Government. He stated that the DDA had committed to fund up to \$3 Million for a demonstration project which was a significant, but small, step in that direction.

Mr. Eagon stated they were sitting here today to discuss the big picture and the demonstration project. He felt they needed to do something imminent which would move the greatest number of people in the highest concentration through the City. He stated that the DDA agreed they wanted to do something sooner, rather than later and if things could be done together, they welcomed that because a lot of cooperation was needed. He stated that they had some money available, but when things were said and done additional monies would be needed, and the City's cooperation was needed both legally and otherwise.

Mayor Naugle stated that Mr. Eagon had mentioned the Regional Transit Authority and he hoped they would get behind the Legislature to support the funding for that organization to attract significant funds. Today, short range goals were being discussed to implement something to handle the short range needs. He hoped that they were thinking for a long range goal how they could tie into the Tri-County effort. He explained that the Mayors had been meeting and they were certain that the FEC corridor would be affected because it went through all the downtowns, and could possibly be the backbone of a future system that could link with various areas.

Mr. Ladd stated that Mr. Eagon had addressed the FEC study, but felt that the ultimate answer was the development of transit for downtown before they could link regionally. Planning wise, he felt it was going to be a couple of years before the first demonstration project would be put into place. The DDA discussed what would happen in the interim, and agreed that something needed to take place now. The idea of bringing in a trolley on a temporary basis had been discussed, and he felt that could be the precursor to a long-term system. He felt the connection from downtown to I-95 and the Tri-Rail was something very critical and was being discussed, but the time frame he was hearing involved 10 years, and he felt that was too long a period of time.

Bill Scherer, DDA Board Member, stated that in 1985 through 1988 the DDA had committed \$50,000 which the City had matched to begin running rubber-tired trolleys which had been done for quite a few years, but there was no ridership. He felt it was too early for such a system because traffic had not reached the point we were at today. He believed that ridership patterns needed to be established before "tracks were sunk into the pavement" and large sums of money spent. Mr. Scherer suggested that past failures should be reviewed so they could be overcome to increase the ridership.

Commissioner Katz stated that it was important to have a partnership and work together so a budget cycle could be planned for the future. She further stated that they needed to establish a ridership pattern and encourage people to use the system. She believed the rubber-tired vehicle or trolley system made sense because routes could be changed, and when funds were received patterns would already have been established. She felt they needed to put something on the roads now and start the transition.

Mr. Loos stated that the first trolleys had been initiated by Commissioner Harrigan and cost \$200,000 from the DDA, County, City and the State. He continued stating that he was pessimistic regarding rubber-tired vehicles attracting ridership. He stated he was not comfortable with a big commitment from the DDA taxpayer's bond issue money for rubber-tired vehicles until someone could prove they would work. He stated he was concerned that the DDA not invest significant monies in something which failed to work, and questioned attracting ridership with this type of system.

Commissioner Moore stated that he felt there were some fundamental questions that should be asked.

He agreed about the partnership but felt more groups should be included. He felt the FDOT should be included, along with Broward County Mass Transit, and the TMA.

Commissioner Hutchinson left the meeting at approximately 1:26 p.m.

Commissioner Moore continued stating that he was disappointed with the report which had been distributed because he felt nothing new had been stated regarding the equipment that could be used, and did not find it very informative. He stated that he was further concerned about the quality of their expectations in dealing with this contractor. He felt the "5 W" situation was most important that involved "who, what, when, where and why." He further explained that the "who" was the partnership, and the "what" was the type of system to be chosen. He felt the destination point was critical. He explained that Tampa had a rail system which worked very well, but it had a venue which had a center of interest.

Commissioner Hutchinson returned to the meeting at approximately 1:27 p.m.

Commissioner Moore further stated that it needed to be a rubberized situation and they needed to be more creative to deal with the issue of certainty for the economic investment. He stated that the "where" was also important because since the downtown area did not have a major people driver right now and until large numbers of people were involved, the rail system should not be considered. He felt if any type of mass transit was going to be used in downtown, it should be a tram since it was the least expensive and something that could be done immediately and ridership could be encouraged. He felt they needed the head time so creditability could be drawn on and people became dependent on the system.

Bob Bekoff, Water Taxi, stated that the ridership was approaching 1/4 million passengers per annum. He felt the biggest problem the TMA had pertained to the type of equipment that was on the road. There was no marketing budget and the equipment was unattractive. People needed something reliable. He stated there were so many different applications which focused on the downtown area, but did not focus going to the beach, the courthouse or places that were difficult to get to. He stated rail was not the cure-all, nor was rubber-tired. He further stated that at a TMA meeting, a vendor had come in and showed a trolley/historic tram which was low in height, narrow in width, but very appealing to the public. The price range was over \$100,000. He felt if some system was going to be used on a trial basis, it could not be a fixed-fast system.

Commissioner Moore left the meeting at approximately 1:35 p.m. and returned at 1:40 p.m.

Mayor Naugle remarked that it was important to establish the route before determining the type of system to be chosen.

Sam Poole, newly elected Chair of the TMA, stated that when "passing the puck," one needed to pass it to where someone was going to be. He stated there was a short-term need in the transit area represented by the cranes on the skyline, but there was a long-term need filled by the Gustafson's study. There was a need for something within the next 3-5 years that would provide service. Marketing would have to be done and the discussion today helped to provide focus for the project. He further explained that the TMA was 10 years old and had been the forum for transit which included all agencies, but their purpose was to facilitate the evolution of the City into one which used transit, and if it was more appropriate for the DDA or the City to assume the role of providing the service, that should be put on the table. He explained that the TMA represented the business community in partnership with the City, County and State, and the Universities. He felt if there was a more appropriate body, then he was in favor of it.

Mayor Naugle stated that the new units would come on line in 2004, and he did not think they should wait for the increased level of service to become available, and therefore, the people moving into those units could be captured. He felt they should be partners with all the parties.

Commissioner Smith stated it appeared a consensus was forming between the two bodies and a short-term strategy was needed. The long-term strategy would take 10 years, but new trolleys were needed which were accessible and friendly. He felt rubber-tired vehicles should be put on the street this year. He stated that the temporary provider was in a temporary mode with rental buses. Mr. Poole agreed and stated they had held off replacing three vehicles until a decision could be reached regarding the form of transit to be chosen.

Commissioner Smith stated that in Tom Gustafson's report, there appeared to be 4 necessary vehicles, and evidently Congressman Shaw had gotten \$2 Million for trolley/transit vehicles for the beach. He felt if they were not on the front line, they would be left out. He wanted to make certain everyone was agreeing that 4 vehicles would be replaced of either rubber-tired, tram or trolley types, and a \$1 Million commitment would be made for capital costs. Before everyone left today's meeting, he wanted to make sure everyone was on the same page. He stated he was going to ask for a resolution to be passed this evening committing the City to this project.

Commissioner Hutchinson stated that she kept hearing the City's half, and felt everyone needed to contribute and wanted that point known to everyone. Commissioner Smith agreed.

Chairman Loos stated that their Board would discuss some formal request from the City in connection with funding and then formulate a response.

Mayor Naugle stated that they needed to speak with the other partners involved also.

Commissioner Moore stated if the DDA was going to lead in the coordination of this, he had no objection to the TMA being a part of it, but they needed to be utilized in a manner which would help arrive at a cost effective way to do it immediately. He stated that his first desire was to have something which would be affordable and could be built around. Then, he felt they could bring in the other agencies and the vehicle chosen would be what could be purchased for the funds that were available. He asked if FDOT was willing to offer a commitment.

The City Manager stated that they were not discussing a one-time allocation of funds, but were discussing large amounts of money for a long period of time, and they needed to look at sources of revenue which could fund transportation.

Commissioner Smith stated they expected a new source of revenue from the application being made to the Federal Government for \$30 Million.

Chairman Loos asked Mr. Wren if he would be prepared to serve on this committee. Mr. Wren stated he also served on the TMA as well. He stated the first thing they needed to do was to discuss the long-term feasibility to accomplish the project financially. He stated he would be happy to proceed and undertake such a project.

Commissioner Moore stated that he felt they could come up with a dedicated source. He suggested they should review the matter of increasing parking rates as a dedicated revenue. He felt that through the application process, they could be awarded monies due to the partnership being developed today. He also believed they could design some sort of transit impact fee for the development of the RAC. He felt it had to be done in order to get the capital dollars needed.

Chairman Loos felt they were taking a very positive step today.

Mayor Naugle asked when a report could be given on this matter.

Rick Chesser, District IV Secretary, FDOT, stated that potentials were there and there was a public

transportation program hinged on the budget. He felt it was critical to have a dedicated local revenue source.

Action: Report to be provided to the Commission on March 18, 2003.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:50 p.m.