NEVADA LEGISLATURE
REGIONAL RAIL TRANSIT ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

(Assembly Bill 256 [2025])

MINUTES

March 18, 2026

The third meeting of the Regional Rail Transit Advisory Working Group for the 2025–2026 Interim was held on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 1 p.m. in Room 165 of the Nevada Legislature Office Building, 7230 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3137, Northern Nevada Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and video recording of the meeting are available on the Working Group's meeting page. The video recording may also be found at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/. Copies of the video record can be obtained through the Publications Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) (publications@lcb.state.nv.us or 775/684-6835).

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Assemblymember Max E. Carter II, Chair
Hugh Anderson, Managing Director and Partner, Hightower Las Vegas
Tommy Blitsch, Secretary-Treasurer and Principal Officer, Teamsters Local 631
Ann Barnett, Chief Executive Officer, Nevada Contractors Association
Justin Jones, Commissioner, District F, Clark County Commission
Ross Kinson, Teamsters Local 533, and President, Northern Nevada Central Labor Council
M.J. Maynard-Carey, Chief Executive Officer, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada
Jacob Snow, Business Development Specialist, GCW Engineering, Inc.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Skip Daly, Vice Chair
Gabe Christenson, Nevada Safety and Legislative Director, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers
Tara Frank, Rail Program Manager, Nevada's Department of Transportation
Angela Fuss, Assistant Development Services Director, City of Reno
Jim Gee, Director of Public Transportation and Operations, Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County, Nevada
John Hester
Christopher Martinovich, Transportation Manager, Transportation Division, Carson City Public Works

WORKING GROUP MEMBER ATTENDING REMOTELY:

Ed Lawson, Mayor, City of Sparks, Nevada

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chris Burke, Vice President of Regional Operations, Granite Construction, Inc.
Cole Mortensen, Principal Consultant, Parametrix

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Alex Drozdoff, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division
Keely Latham, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division
Crystal Rowe, Assistant Manager of Research Policy Assistants, Research Division
Asher Killian, Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Aaron MacDonald, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.
[Indicates a summary of comments or clarification.]

AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS

Chair Carter:

Good afternoon and I appreciate you all being here. Welcome to the third meeting of the Regional Rail Transit Advisory Working Group. Ms. Rowe, will you please call the roll?

[Roll call was taken and reflected in members present.]

Chair Carter:

If anyone is absent and excused, please mark them absent excused. If anyone is missing, please record their name as present when they arrive.

As you probably heard, we have added some, a few members to this Committee. Two representatives from the general contracting world, and I cannot remem— I know, Ann Barnett down at the end and I cannot remember his name from up north, so he is probably already mad at me, but he did not show up today anyway. Then, we have Ross Kinson has replaced the previous member from labor up north. We have Mayor Ed Lawson, the Mayor of Sparks, which is part of the critical areas where we got to figure out transportation between his community and the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center (TRIC). We have a representative from the rail industry, Gabe Christenson, and Tara Frank. I really appreciate you all joining us. We are trying to make sure that we have the proper voices in the room and that everybody gets heard.

With that, we are going to— I guess I have to do housekeeping, excuse me. Before we begin, I would like to cover some housekeeping reminders for the members and those who are here to provide testimony. Please set your electronic devices to silent. When speaking, identify yourself for the record each time you speak. When testifying, turn the microphone on to speak and off each time you have finished speaking. For those joining us in the audience, please sign in at the table near the entrance at each location, even if you do not plan to testify. Meeting materials received prior to the meeting have been uploaded to the Working Group's web page. You can receive electronic notifications of the Working Group's agendas, minutes, and final report by signing up on the Nevada Legislature's website.

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Carter:

With that being said, I should have read, never mind. We are going to move into Agenda Item II, public comment.

If there is anybody here in Las Vegas that wishes to make public comment, please step forward. Seeing none.

Let us move up to Carson City. Is anybody up there wishing to make public comment? And does not appear so.

With that, we will move to AVS [sic] [Audio Visual Hearings Unit (AVH)]. Is there anybody on the phone lines?

AVH, Information Technology Services, Administrative Division, LCB:

If you would like to provide public comment, please press *9 now to take your place in the queue.

Caller with the last three digits 774, please press *6 to unmute your phone.

You may begin.

Damian Cole, Nevada Resident:

Greetings. I am a current employee of the Gigafactory outside of Reno, Nevada, where I make a daily commute using the complimentary shuttle bus provided by Tesla. I am absolutely for rail heading out to the TRIC complex, but it must be light rail, not heavy rail. Heavy rail will not work. Why is this? During good traffic, a car trip from Reno to TRIC usually takes about 30 to 40 minutes. We already have free buses which can hold roughly 50 people. If often, they are not often at full capacity, if ever. Car owners who elect to take the shuttle, drive their car to a location, park it, exit their car, wait for a shuttle, board the shuttle, take the trip, and with good traffic, it usually takes 30 to 40 minutes. I examined the area that RTC [Regional Transportation Commission] recently published a feasibility study and looked at the routes that we are recommended. The recommended route that they have is infeasible. My calculations show that it is about 17 percent maximum grade. Your average rail commuter can only go about 7 percent, and with four or five cars at maximum, depending on if you pull or push it. This means that car drivers would have to exit their car, get on a rail commuter, get off on a station, and then have a shuttle take them to their final destination. This means it is going to be even less— We need to get people out of cars, that is the idea. The only way you can do that is to have a light rail system within the Reno Sparks regional area so that way people do not have to get in their car in the first place. If you do that, then rail suddenly looks way more attractive and you have way— If you look at the San Diego rail system, and even the one in Los Angeles, there are way more attractive routes that might take a little bit longer due to their layout, but for us it would make way more sense and that is basically it. Ironically, we have to get people out of their cars to go to the car factory to make more cars. It might actually not be a good idea to put a car factory out there in the middle of nowhere in the first place.

Chair Carter:

Sir, could you please wrap it up?

Mr. Cole:

That is about it, that is pretty much it. We basically need to use light rail instead of heavy rail, otherwise the inconvenience— If people are not taking the shuttle now, they are not going to take heavy rail because it is going to be just as inconvenient, so we have to use light rail. Thank you very much.

Chair Carter:

Thank you, AVH next caller please.

AVH:

Chair, there are no other callers to provide public comment at this time.

Chair Carter:

Thank you all very much. There will be a second period of public comment at the end of today's agenda.

Please mark, Commissioner Jones present.

AGENDA ITEM III—AN OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEMS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS THE STATES

Chair Carter:

We will move into Agenda Item III, an overview of public transit systems and recent developments across the states.

Arthur L. Guzzetti, Vice President of Policy, Mobility, Technical Services and Innovation, American Public Transportation Association (APTA):

Mr. Chair, that might be, would that be me on the agenda?

Chair Carter:

Yes sir, that is you. I apologize. You are up.

Mr. Guzzetti:

Very good, thank you. Let me pull up the slides here. Is my screen being shared?

Chair Carter:

Yes, it is. Thank you.

Mr. Guzzetti:

It is. Okay and let me do this, except I am a little bit ahead of myself here.

Good afternoon, Chair Carter and distinguished members of the Regional Rail Transit Advisory Working Group. Thank you for the invitation to speak with you today about the national experience with rail investments and how such rail systems are planned, developed, and funded in various states around the country (Agenda Item III A).

I first want to acknowledge several members of the Advisory Committee who I work especially close with in my daily activities. M.J. Maynard-Carey, Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada. M.J. is the immediate past Chair of my organization, the American Public Transportation Association, where she served with distinction in leading the nation's transit industry. Also, Jim Gee, Director of Public Transportation and Operations at the Regional Commission of Washoe County [sic], gained experience as a transit executive, not only in Nevada, but in Ohio and other states. And much appreciation for Justin Jones who serves as the Clark County Commissioner, on the Clark County Commission, but also as Chair of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada.

A bit about APTA. APTA is the national association for all the North American public transit agencies and the businesses and other organizations that support them. If you are a transit agency in North America, you are likely a member of APTA. We cover like 95 percent. We are a full-service association, generating industry statistics, training,

research, conferences, publications, standards, advocacy, all of that. Our roots go back to 1882. For many decades we have navigated change in the public transportation community. You see the photo there of the horse-drawn streetcars, that is, our roots go back before the internal combustion engine. I bring greetings from Washington, but in the case of today, it happens to be Wenatchee, Washington, the apple capital of the world, working with the transit system here on some issues they are facing—that is what we do at APTA. I went from one Washington to the other. Personally, I have a long and rich career in public transportation at the New Jersey Department of Transportation, New Jersey Transit, Pittsburgh Regional Transit, and APTA. Whoops, I am sorry, I was not flicking my slide. Here is the slide I meant when I referenced the horse-drawn streetcar. These are APTA's roots, 1882.

Real quickly, here is what I am going to talk about for the next ten or so minutes. Why rail? Rail projects of all kinds. You heard a couple mentioned already, heavy rail, light rail, et cetera. Some recent commuter rail and regional rail projects, recent light rail projects. Then, a lot of emphasis on getting it done. How do you get, how do other places that have brought these systems into place, how have they done it? Let me highlight this phrase, *federal-state-local partnerships*. Talk a little bit about the momentum, and then if there is time, Mr. Chair, we can have questions and discussion. Happy to do that.

Why rail? Here are eight reasons. One is importance to tourist economies. I take it that is a big thing in Nevada. A lot of people like to come there, myself included, but a lot of people come there without a car. They come to the airport. They will soon come by rail from California. If they get there without a car, maybe they can get around the community without a car—I will have more to say on that in a minute.

Second reason would be more people with less space, geospatial. It adds to your community, I think the overall effect of your community, when you can have that movement of people, but without the myriad of cars and myriad of parking that is required.

Perhaps close to that is focused development. We call it sometimes transit-oriented development, transit-oriented communities. Development land goes hand in hand with the transportation system it is built upon. Always has been, always will be. Centuries and centuries of evidence to base that on.

Focused development is another thing. I think of places, again, coming from Washington D.C., how the Washington metro system has transformed the area. I could give you one neighborhood after another—Bethesda, Arlington County, U Street, the Noma neighborhood, Potomac Yards, et cetera.

Long-term community vision, wide lanes of congested traffic. Probably there might be a different vision for the community that is walkable, balanced. You are certainly going to need streets. You are certainly going to need automobile traffic.

But a balanced vision and generation appeal. Appeal of vibrant, exciting places is perhaps the way looking forward.

Economic return, we have just reproduced a report, we can commend it, share it with you. Every $1 spent, let us say $1 billion spent on public transportation brings a five-to-one economic return through the access and productivity improvements.

Alternatives to traffic, if we cannot totally do away with traffic congestion, maybe provide an alternative to it is a good thing.

A few years ago, and I mention this because I know we partnered with the Las Vegas community in doing it. We also partnered with the U.S. [United States] Travel Association, that is the national association of all the convention bureaus. I said wow, if they are clamoring for transit, I would like to partner with them. They showed that it makes a difference for conventions, for the big hotels that you have to have a rail connection connecting to the airport and increases their competitiveness.

Now, let me just flag this. I will not go into depth, although I certainly could. There are different kinds of rail. There is heavy rail. This is basically the subways and sometimes elevated in Chicago. It is that kind of big trains. Contrast that, and I will say around the country there are 16 of those types of systems. Then streetcars. Streetcars is maybe the opposite, it is a train, but it is operating on the street. There is not as much infrastructure. Light rail's sort of in between. It is not heavy rail with the capacity that heavy rail can provide. It often goes in the streets. There is not as much infrastructure as heavy rail, so it is somewhere in between streetcar and heavy rail, light rail. We also have commuter rail. These are what some people would call the rail trains, often going into the suburbs. At one time it was for commuting primarily. Now, that is changing in different ways. There are 30 commuter railroads around the country, 22 light rail systems—according to our statistics, 25 streetcars. Then, there is also intercity rail—high-speed rail would be part of that. Regional rail, which sometimes can be commuter rail, but sometimes that might be something in between commuter rail and intercity rail in terms of distance.

I would like to talk, and I have too much to say for the time I have, so I will keep it short. We just mentioned three commuter rail projects to give you some examples to consider as you think of your own thing. I want to say, about commuter rail, how they came to be. Commuter rail systems are evolving; I alluded to this before. They are in a period of change. They are moving more towards service throughout the day, not just during the commute periods. I think that is part of the rationale for changing the name away from commuter rail to regional rail. Denver is an example of systems, and by the way, Denver has it all. It has commuter rail, it has light rail, it has bus rapid transit. It has ten train lines altogether, but the commuter rail lines were built through a public-private partnership known as the Eagle P3. I would say significantly, the development of this rail system, both commuter rail and light rail, was sparked by a 2004 ballot measure called FasTracks. That is a testament to the collaboration and the power of collaboration when you get your business community, your elected officials, your grassroots folks all working together, big things can happen.

Again, there are challenges as well, I do not want to overlook those. For example, Denver has faced challenges to keep very ambitious projects, ten rail lines, to keep a schedule on that. Twenty years later, take a look at it, the proof is in the pudding. But also, it is a continuous challenge with deadlines. Infrastructure projects are hard. The funding all has to be in place. The public-private partnership was based on risk, assigning a lot of risk to the business sector, but then there was dispute. What is a reasonable risk?

Dallas, I mentioned because they just opened a commuter rail line called the Cotton Belt Line and Silver Line in October 2025. It is 26 miles long connecting the suburbs to the airport. They purchased a freight line to get it done. They got a federal low interest loan to help facilitate the construction. They are using something called hybrid rail, that is a light rail train on heavy rail tracks. It is actually operating on part of what they call the national railroad system, which requires a crashworthiness standard, but there are ways that they could do it. A lighter vehicle is going to provide a different kind of service, perhaps a more appropriate service that they wanted to provide on that line.

Salt Lake City, I highlight them because, again, another system that operates the light rail, another system connects to the airport, another system sparked by a referendum by the voters. They are considering opening a new line. They want to increase the frequency. They have opened the line, I am going to say, 20 years ago, 15 perhaps. Now they are to the point where they want to increase the frequency, and to do that they are going to have to build more tracks. Portions of the line are single track, so they are advancing that. The funding plan includes a combination of sales taxes, state vehicle license, federal formula and discretionary grants, fare box collections, all of the above.

Let me move to light rail and offer several examples of some systems. Here are four systems, I might offer a few more. Each of them developed through a federal, state, local partnership. FTA, the Federal Transit Administration, is typically, not always but almost always, a partner in this. They have a planning process they go through, a capital investment grant process. They have criteria under which they evaluate projects. They put projects into what they call a pipeline to advance them. Among the various criteria—which includes economic criteria, community development criteria, efficiency—you do not get past square one if you do not have the financial capacity. You want to go into this process with a strong self-help foundation from your community. If you go in and say, "We do not have any money, but maybe we can get federal money," that is absolutely the wrong way to begin. Typically, even when you get strong federal support, it is only going to be 40 or 50 percent, you have to come up with the rest of it on your own.

I will just mention a few of these. San Diego is notable because it was the first. Again, I mentioned you had heavy rail, subways. You had streetcars. But then in the early 1980s, they said, how about something in between that takes the best of both worlds? Light rail was developed. San Diego and Portland were the first two. It has been steadily growing. It is not huge; there are systems bigger. There are currently 67 miles, the last extension opening in 2024, but it is productive. It carries 124,000 people, riders a day, every workday so that is second highest among all systems.

Let me mention, Phoenix is a city that grew up around the automobile. The development patterns are automobile-oriented, but they said they had some visionary mayors and a visionary business community. They said maybe that is the way we develop, but that is not the way we need to be going forward. It started with a voter referendum. They had some champions to push it, and they have been steadily opening a system over the years that connects universities, Arizona State, for example. It connects sports facilities. They had a Super Bowl there a couple of years ago. It connects their airport. It connects all the communities in the Valley of the Sun. They had a recent opening just last year as well.

Other openings last year—Honolulu opened a line. Seattle opened another extension; they are building a lot in Seattle.

Let me make a note here about federal funds just to give you some illustrative examples of the cost. We have to have our eyes wide open. These things are expensive, they are complex, they can be done—one example after another on that. There are federal grants, capital investment grants, that often help. There are other sources too. I will mention those in a minute. The Phoenix capital extension currently under consideration, another extension, $397 million. The plan they are working on, you negotiate this to a degree, 49 percent federal funds, so the federal share will be $195 million. That is the cost the feds, so far, are willing to put up. Eventually, you get to what they call a full funding grant agreement, which is a legally binding deal. Austin has a project in the pipeline, $8 billion—big. They passed a referendum in Austin a few years ago, so the voters approved this. The voters say this is what they want, and they are willing to pay for it through their taxes. It is $8 billion, 49 percent federal. The feds will say they are going to come through with $4,000,067,000.

Portland and Vancouver line to connect them, $183 million, 55 percent feds. The feds are willing to pony up because they have advanced with the criteria, $100 million. Minneapolis Blue Line extension, $3.5 billion project. In that case, 21 percent federal money, so the feds say they are in for $750 million for that. Now let me mention one other one here, and that is Los Angeles East Fernando Valley; that is what they call expedited project delivery. That means the feds say, "We will help move your project along quicker, but you have to settle for 25 percent." You settle for 25 percent, and we will work with you to help move it along.

Mr. Chair, please, cut me off when I start to get long, but I do have some things that I would like to share.

Chair Carter:

[Inaudible.]

Mr. Guzzetti:

I am getting into the funding now, which is, by the way, my long career, and put me down as one of those baby boomers, please, but that has been the core of my career, getting funds to support transit. This is what I do. FTA, here are some of the potential federal funding sources. Again, I could give a speech on every one of these. FTA formula money, that is driven by your service data in your region. There is a formula that brings money back to you based on a bunch of determined factors—route miles, passenger miles, population to a degree.

Then there is the federal capital investment grant (CIG) program, that is the one I was talking about a minute ago. You are competing for that against other regions of the country on criteria, and yes, politics comes into play here too. But there is a good process for sorting out a lot of those questions.

FHWA, that is Federal Highway Administration flexible funding. The law allows you, if your state DOT [Department of Transportation] says, "We have highway needs, but transit needs for this particular year are especially acute," especially needy. You can flex money. A lot of people have done it, about $2 billion a year nationwide gets flexed from highways to transit.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), if your project is that regional rail type thing, you can qualify for some of these. They have, as we speak right now, $5 billion, that is billion with "B," is on the street in what they call a notice of funding availability, NOFA, for these kinds of projects. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act made a big commitment in this area and there is money to be used.

The FRA Corridor ID program is more of a planning program. It is to say, "We are just getting started here, how can we do the basic thinking to get our project ready." U.S. DOT [United States Department of Transportation] discretionary infrastructure grants, they are programs called infra build. You are just putting out a proposal to say you have infrastructure money going to the highest need, the best projects. We have one of those right in our community.

Real estate, that is great to think about because that is why the private sector sometimes, like Brightline, they are interested in real estate. Real estate gains value because of the access provided through your transportation system, so there is a way to connect one with the other. A lot to talk about there.

Private assumption of risk, this is not really a revenue source. Usually when you have a public-private partnership, this is what is going on unless there is money to be made

through real estate. You are talking about the private sector coming on as a partner so they can take the risk. If there is, say, an increasing costs, they sign up for that going in. They say you pay us according to this schedule; we will take the risk. We will deliver your project for you. Again, you pay more for that upfront, but they take the risk through the project. There are federal low cost loan programs, TIFFIA [Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act] is one. There is another one called RRIF [Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing].

There is momentum for rail. The Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act, we are at a high level right now. We want to sustain that. We need to get that reauthorized. We need all your help on that this year. When I say momentum for rail, there are international trends. We are, in a way, catching up to the world on a lot of this, but there are the funds to do it. There is the commitment to do it. We need to sustain that, and the public is voting with its feet. I will talk about that in a minute.

State and local revenue sources, look at this list—so many different ways and so many different communities fund transit in different ways. I commend this list to you. You might say which one is best? The one that can get the votes is the one that is best on that. Again, a lot to talk about here, but I will move on.

Innovative finance, here is a project. This is in Washington D.C., the Dulles Airport extension of the Washington Metro system. They funded through tolls, road tolls. They have done that in Denton County [Texas] too and in other places. Tax increment financing, special tax district, airport facility charges. Every air ticket has a 3 percent PFC [passenger facility charge] fee on it, and you can use it for whatever regional needs you have, whether that be for the airport or access to the airport. They got money from the state, and they got a full funding grant agreement.

Ballot measures, let me talk about this for a moment. Look how they are passing, 84 percent. What could be more reflective of the public sentiment than that? You are asking them straight up. Here is a project for you and are you willing to raise your taxes to pay for it. Last year, $12 billion was raised on November 5 alone in one day, $12 billion long term, dedicated, multiyear funds. Charlotte was the big project last year in 2024. Again, 80 plus percent. Nashville, Columbus, Miami, and Phoenix were among the projects there. This happens every year. I could give you more stats. I would say it is the most dear of all funds because it is dedicated, it is multiyear, it is local, and it is endorsed by the voters. That is a pretty powerful statement. To show that they come in various ways, you can have a ballot measure for any of these reasons.

Here are some of the systems this year, the regions that are looking at the ballot this year. Not all of these are official, but all of them are in the news, in the newspaper, so I think that is official enough for me to talk about it, and you will see that here on this chart. And by the way, Alex, I have updated this a bit since the slides, Mr. Chair, in your packets, so I will make sure this updated list is available to you.

I think this is interesting, and this is not intended to be a political statement. It is just saying that transit has appeal. We say, how did people cross— If people voted for Trump, how did they vote? Here is to show in different regions around the country, people who voted for transit also voted for Trump. Of course, people who voted for transit also voted for Democrats too, but it shows that it certainly goes both ways.

APTA has something we call the Center for Transportation Excellence that helps with ballot measures. There are people who have been through campaigns, people who know the campaign drill, and have the experience of having done so. We do have a little team that

could be helpful to communities considering ballot elections and the pre-campaign activities that are absolutely necessary.

Final slide, it is not all about ballot measures. It is not all about local revenues, it is states as well. How are the states doing? This is just in the last couple of years. All of these states have stepped up to support transit. I could, again, talk about each one Illinois, Michigan, Washington State, Minnesota, Colorado, Indiana, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

With that, I will close. If we have time for discussion, I am happy to do it. I am happy to also follow up with any materials that would be useful, and I thank you for your time and attention.

Chair Carter:

Very good. Thank you very much, and we will open it up. We will start up here in Las Vegas, if any members of the Committee have any questions.

Mr. Anderson:

Thank you for the presentation, sir. I just had a question, in your presentation, the slide about federal resources is not in the package, so forgive me. In looking at the Dallas Metro Rail extension pie of resources, that 16 percent segment, was that derived from that long laundry list of federal resources or was this done before all of those resources were available since you said some of them are fairly new?

Mr. Guzzetti:

Let me pull that up here. Thank you. Yes, you are right. The federal resources was one of the ones I added. Actually, it is not that I added it, I forgot to put it in, initially. Yes, the question is the 16 percent, that is the county contribution. Was it?

Mr. Anderson:

According to the pie chart, it was the federal contribution.

Mr. Guzzetti:

Federal, and the question is, is that what eventually came to be?

Mr. Anderson:

I guess the fairytale question is, with that long laundry list of federal resources there, is it conceivable to cobble together a significantly larger portion of the funding pie from those lists.

Mr. Guzzetti:

Yes, that is a very good question. I use that as a way to show that it can be innovative. Innovation helps. It was a big project, so even 16 percent federal money is a lot of federal money, and capacity is a big factor. You come in with more weight, the more you bring to the table. I think rather than to say we got shortchanged only 16 percent, I think it was probably a good strategy because they come in with money, and you can see the money is derived in a whole bunch of different ways. It is not just taxes. There is a nice mix of revenue ideas here and that is partly how they sold it. It is not only leveraging that money to attract federal money, it is leveraging that money in other ways too. You can leverage it

for bonding. You can leverage it for private sector interest. Thank you, that is the way I would answer that.

Chair Carter:

Mr. Snow.

Mr. Snow:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Art Guzzetti, it has been I think 13 years since we last spoke. You are looking well, and it is great to see you. I have a quick question here. Since this is a state-appointed Committee to advise the Nevada State Legislature. I know one of the things we are seriously looking at are funding sources, potentially, from the state to fund rail transit. In your vast experience, and you alluded to this recently with one of your last slides, I seem to remember that there are several states that have big commitments to fund rail transit, not just for state-operated transit systems, but for local and regional rail systems. Could you maybe give us just a quick thumbnail sketch of which state funding sources are primarily used to fund local and regional rail transit, just off the top of your head, and maybe just give a couple of states that do really well? I think that would be very valuable for this.

Mr. Guzzetti:

Let me say this, there is a huge range in what, call it, the big state contributors give in the lesser ones. Now, I will say in fairness, sometimes that is by design. The eastern states, they typically do not have a referendum. You go to your state legislatures and if you want a referendum, you have to get permission from your state—so it is the state legislatures that often call the shots and that is my roots in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Those states typically provide a lot. I would say though, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. Illinois, by the way, just passed a bill in October to really step up their commitment to transit. Some of those other states I mentioned, Washington State, had a big measure a few years ago. California does provide a lot. It tends to be the transit-oriented states, but you have other states. Minnesota provided a lot. Colorado is another state. You have Virginia, more and more coming from Virginia. Those would be some of the states that come immediately to mind.

Chair Carter:

Thank you very much, and to Director Maynard.

Ms. Maynard-Carey:

Art, always great to see you and thanks, it was a great presentation. It might be helpful if you talk about the cost to build a light rail has significantly increased over the last ten years. Have you seen, does that deter the number of projects that are in the CIG program? Secondly, do you see a difference in what is being federally supported depending on who is in the White House or which Administration is in place?

Mr. Guzzetti:

Yes, thank you, M.J. Cost escalation is a problem we have to just confront, it is out there. Some projects have slowed down, even say, put on pause because of the costs, but it is our job to get that under control, and we are very dutifully doing that. Yes, I think you get a good project that probably means with some dropping off, that means that is less competition for the funds. I would say yes, you go in with your eyes wide open. These

things are expensive. There are ways to control the cost. There are best practices out there, but it is going to be a lot.

As far as who is in the White House. We were not sure what to expect when the Administration transition occurred in 2025. The Trump Administration came in at record levels of transit funding, record levels of rail funding and a year and a half later, there are record levels of transit funding and record level of rail funding. Infrastructure has always been viewed as an issue that transcends party lines. If you do not believe it is true, I think this current example is evidence of that, that it is true.

I will say one thing, possibly also amplifying Jake Snow's question, and that is some states give a lot, how about the state sources? Some states allow their gas tax to be used, which is the typical way to fund highways, but many states view it as a multimodal source. Some states allow their gas tax to be used. I would say that is, at least, maybe the indexing of it or something. When you look at states, that is one possible avenue there.

Another thing is, there is a talk in Washington about registration fees. The gas tax, the federal gas tax will not be raised this year, it has not been raised since 1993, so what are we going to do instead? There are ideas about mileage-based user fees, but those do not seem to be politically right either. Registration fees seem to be an idea that might have some resonance so you might say if your state has registration fee revenues to fund your highway program, maybe that is a good source for transit as well.

Circling back to you M.J. Also, the projects are expensive, but all infrastructure projects are expensive. It is not just transit. We are confronting it and there are best practices and there are ways forward. Just last year a bunch of projects opened. Projects opened in Phoenix. Projects opened in Seattle. Project opened in Honolulu, and the list goes on and on. We are figuring out ways.

Chair Carter:

Are there are other questions? Commissioner Jones.

Commissioner Jones:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Guzzetti for your presentation. If, hypothetically, southern Nevada or northern Nevada were to pursue a ballot initiative in 2028, what would you expect the transportation leaders to be doing in 2026 and 2027 to be successful?

Mr. Guzzetti:

That is an excellent question. Thank you for it, because in my view, pre-campaign activities are vital. You want to get the public ready for it. First of all, you want to do polling along the way to make sure you know where you stand, but also make sure that the people do feel good about transit going into the election and prepare for that, talk about all the good things that are happening. Talk about the ways that your current service is making a difference in people's lives. Stories have power. I think all the new ways of media to get the word out. You want to build up a crescendo, going into it. Of course, you want your local coalitions to be in place as well, both with business community, with political leaders. There

are a lot of case studies in that regard of people that have done it right. One, I would mention, I mentioned, Nashville and Columbus and some of those other cities. Charlotte was an interesting one last year, because they had to overcome a public narrative that was quite difficult, that involved urban crime, but they made some good decisions along the way and they won, notwithstanding that narrative.

Commissioner Jones:

Thank you.

Chair Carter:

Any other questions here in Las Vegas? Ms. Barnett.

Ms. Barnett:

Art, thank you again for your presentation, and I am looking through what we have, it looks like we are missing a couple of pages. I am just trying to gather all of the state and local revenue sources that the other projects have used. From a state and local funding perspective, how significant is property tax being used as a funding mechanism? Is it maybe the highest?

Mr. Guzzetti:

Property tax is a very common source to support transit but the referendum, typically, very often are sales taxes or bonds. There are property tax referendums, but they tend to be smaller communities. That is the way I would answer that. It is a good funding source, it is one of the biggest, but it tends to not be the source in larger ballot questions.

Chair Carter:

Any other questions down south? [There were none.]

Let us move up north. Senator Skip Daly, is there any questions or comments from up in Carson City?

Vice Chair Daly:

Yes, we have a couple. Mr. Gee does. I have one as well, but I will defer to my friend here to my left.

Mr. Gee:

Thank you, Senator Daly.

Chair Carter:

I just want to state that we are going to take, and we will push out the new— I am sure that Mr. Guzzetti is going to get us an updated presentation, and we will push that out to the members once we get it.

Mr. Gee:

Chair Carter, thank you. Art, great to see you again, welcome back to the Pacific time zone. I have a quick question about federal funding and the use for operations. I know on the bus side there is some opportunity to use Section 5307 dollars for primitive maintenance or for smaller systems directly for operations. Is there such a mechanism on the rail side for funding ongoing operations and maintenance for passenger rail?

Mr. Guzzetti:

There are some things you can do to capitalize certain costs. I have a list of things because in my prior roles I have been a grantsman. That comes up at APTA, should there be more flexibility in using capital money for operations? Let me say this to Jim, that the State of Pennsylvania was facing a transit fiscal cliff just last year, and the solution they have was to allow capital funds to be used for operating. While that did fend off an immediate crisis, in the long term it is probably not the best policy. APTA has shied away from a widespread use of capital for operating. Yes, you should have flexibility to a degree, but, I think, there is a distinction between capital funds and operating.

Chair Carter:

Thank you. Next one, Senator Daly.

Vice Chair Daly:

Yes, down at the end here.

Mr. Hester:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could you tell us, here in northern Nevada we are hearing a lot about the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system possibly needing to contract, could you tell us about, if that is happening very much around the country and what are the reasons. The things that we should look out for should we develop a new system?

Mr. Guzzetti:

The Bay Area is in, when we talk about the fiscal cliff, they are facing it now. It is caused by a number of factors. I will not go into that because that would be the presentation in itself. I think a lot of the things are like, for example, before the pandemic you work five days a week. That was pretty much the thing, the way it was. After the pandemic, either you work at home or maybe you work two or three days a week. You are talking about, say you work two days a week instead of five days a week, that is 60 percent less trips.
Two compared to five, so your ridership is down, your revenues are down, your federal support for operating is down because during the pandemic we got a lot of federal funds, Jim Gee, that could be used for operating. And, by the way, thank goodness, because it kept things going, kept people working, kept the economy functioning. But we have lost those things now. We do not have that federal emergency aid. We do not have, in some places, the ridership that they had, the fair box revenues they had. We are in that transition period. I would say, my judgment would be, do not back off the commitment to transit because of that, because it is our duty to provide balance system. The alternative is not very good and that is more traffic, more cars. We need balance, we need to provide choices, and I think that is the vision. That is the vision. People are still improving these ballot measures even with those changes, and changes always are going to happen. I would say, what is your vision? What kind of community do you want to be? If you want to be a community that has that balance system with the options and with the places, placemaking,

I would say stick with transit. I think that is what they are going to do in the Bay Area. I think the voters will stand by their transit system. They do have a good one. Muni and BART and all the other ones are assets to the region. Other regions want what they have.

Chair Carter:

Very good, thank you. Senator Daly.

Vice Chair Daly:

I think I am last, and I have two separate but related questions, real quick. In your slide, and they do not have page numbers here, but, where it says possible 2026 transit ballot measures. Not to put too fine of a point on it, and I am a little bit familiar with the measures that are coming up in the Bay Area as well. How many of those ballot measures are not just transit broadly, but more specific on rail? I know the Bay Area has probably got a combination of several because they have all of those modals right now. Are any of the ones on your list just rail?

Mr. Guzzetti:

A couple of things, thank you. All good questions, your whole group here, thank you for all. One is that the— First, let me mention, Tucson passed. It passed last week so we are already one for one for 2026. The Front Range Colorado referendum is all rail. They want to build a, that is what I would call probably not commuter rail, that would be a regional rail linking all the cities in the front Range of the Rocky Mountains. That is, certainly, a rail project. As you say, some of these systems are multimodal. Saint Louis, for example, multimodal. Sacramento is multimodal. King County is multimodal. Yes.

Vice Chair Daly:

Understood.

Mr. Guzzetti:

The Front Range [in Colorado] is all rail.

Vice Chair Daly:

I know that there is— We are talking about rail here in this particular Committee, but transit overall is a big issue. There have been ballot measures in the north here on transit and in the south. When do you start that planning? As soon as possible is the answer.

When I look at that, and I looked it up quickly. San Diego, 1.4 million is the population, Phoenix proper, 1.6. The MSAs [metropolitan service areas] are much bigger. Seattle at 800,000, Charlotte at 943,000. Then, I looked up the Reno Spark MSA, metropolitan service area, and we are not even close. We are almost to 600,000 and that does not include Carson City and the rest, because, I guess, our MSA is Reno, Sparks, Storey County, and Lyon County. Where in your mind, if you will. I think Las Vegas, on the population side, if you did their MSA, is 2 million, a little over 2 million. Where is the critical mass for some of this stuff to actually make sense when you are moving forward? I know the time to start is yesterday, but I am just wondering what you have seen as far as population critical mass for this type of stuff, rail specifically.

Mr. Guzzetti:

Certainly, commuter rail goes into— A lot of commuter rail projects are lengthy, you have Indiana that goes all the way to— Where does Notre Dame play football? South Bend, it escaped my mind. It goes all the way to South Bend, so you are getting out there in lower density areas. Of course, it does go into Chicago, which is a strong destination. I would say that is the answer. Put together both ends of it, you have the origins, you have the destinations, and you have points in between. Your questions are all fair. Is there a critical— You had Burlington, Vermont? A few years ago had a commuter rail, they do not anymore. Maybe they were not quite big enough to pull it off. I would say, it does have to be studied, and you are probably in a position with your type of population you would need to take a good look at it. I think you will find examples of places where it is worked in similar circumstances.

Vice Chair Daly:

Thank you for that, and I am just trying to get a feel for it on the various things. Of course I see Clark County, Las Vegas, that metropolitan service area as a different animal. Much larger population, probably much more viable as a commuter type thing to get people from the various locations around the Valley into other locations in the Valley and try to get people off of the roads. Of course, that would tie in with the buses and all the other things we have talked about.

Here in northern Nevada, I know, let us try to have a, and the title of our Committee is Regional Rail, not necessarily commuter. From all the experience and things that I have seen, talking about transit in northern Nevada, I think the Reno Sparks area, wherever you start from, getting out to TRIC and then the rest of it to the actual work locations. To me, I think that there is an appetite there. I think it could work, and I think there would be the ridership. I do not know if you are the right guy to ask the question, or later to a different presenter, on what does the ridership need to be, when does it become viable? How much do you have to charge to ride these trains in order to at least have operation and maintenance of money? Once you get it built is one thing. Then you have to—

Chair Carter:

Senator. Can we take and move along? We got a big discussion period at the end, and we are getting into discussion right now.

Vice Chair Daly:

So sorry, Mr. Chair. I was just curious about the one issue on ridership and then we will stop.

Mr. Guzzetti:

Yes, I would say you have to do a planning study. There are, take for example, the Salt Lake City system. It goes through the Wasatch Valley; it connects Provo to Salt Lake City to various other smaller communities. You would say on their own one probably could not justify a rail system, but when you link it all together, there is the multiplier effect that makes it viable. You have to do a planning study to figure that out. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

Thank you very much. Mayor Lawson on Zoom, do you have any questions?

Mayor Lawson:

No, we did have a presentation at the RTC last week and Art was there. I thank you for that. There is a lot more to this. I do not know if the Chair has seen that report yet, but it is very enlightening for the ridership and the cost to the two cities together.

Chair Carter:

Very good and thank you for that. We will take and make sure that we get a copy of that report and distribute to all of the members of the Committee.

With that, I got one more question down here, Mr. Kinson.

Mr. Kinson:

I just have a quick question. In the beginning of your presentation, you talked about return on investment (ROI) and that, typically, you are seeing five to one on that return on investment. My question is, where, what studies are you seeing to get to those numbers? Then, two, are there specific types of rail projects that have a higher ROI or a specific community that has a higher ROI.

Mr. Guzzetti:

Yes, two answers. One is that we have a study that is brand new, and I will make sure it is shared with the Committee (Agenda Item III B). I will send it right after this along with my updated presentation. That is point one. Point two, the five to one is a national number. That is the national aggregate effect to the national economy. To determine your local impact, locally. How does it play locally? We do have calculators for that. It is called My Economic Impact Tool that can figure it out. I would say the kind of factors that I would just generalize them is to say access. Are people able to connect in ways that make the economy thrive? Are regions, is the regional connectivity— Sometimes, you want to connect the, what is it called? There is a word, an economic term for how economic connectivity creates performance. I will think of it in a minute. And productivity, you want to make sure that there is not lost time, people can get there. Part of that is the congestion factor and getting around the congestion and alleviating congestion. Those are the kind of factors that drive the data. Agglomeration, that is the word I am looking for, agglomeration fact. When you, that is why there are tall buildings downtown, because you get that kind of economic performance of working together as a regional economy.

Chair Carter:

Very good and thank you very much, Mr. Guzzetti, for a very thorough report and fielding all of these questions perfectly.

AGENDA ITEM IV—PRESENTATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND CONCERNS

Chair Carter:

With that, we are going to take and move back to Agenda Item IV, presentation on environmental considerations related to rail and public transit development, including potential benefits and concerns. To present we have Jackie Spicer, Coalition Coordinator with the Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition, and Aaron Harris representing the Toiyabe

Chapter of the Sierra Club. The floor is yours. Remember to state your name each time you turn the mic on.

Jackie Spicer, Coalition Coordinator, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition:

Thank you, Chair Carter and members of the Regional Rail Transit Advisory Working Group. We are a statewide coalition of now 13 community organizations fighting for intersectional climate action and environmental justice through grassroots organizing and policy advocacy. We are here today because transportation choices significantly impact community health and equity (Agenda Item IV A-1).

Globally, greenhouse gas emissions are the most significant drivers of climate change and in Nevada, transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, making it a central issue in the fight against climate change. Expanding access to reliable public transit, such as passenger rail or light rail, can help reduce emissions from personal vehicle usage and mitigate the worsening impacts of deadly heat, drought, and air quality degradation. Access to safe and dependable public transportation is crucial for the sustainable growth and well-being of our communities. How we travel affects health outcomes, particularly in Las Vegas neighborhoods like the East Side, West Side, Downtown, and areas surrounding the Strip, which are at higher risk for respiratory illnesses such as asthma. More cars on the road lead to more traffic and emissions, exacerbating these existing health risks. Additionally, rail and public transit enhance walkability, increasing foot traffic to local businesses and support vibrant communities with good jobs. Electrified rail, in particular, offers significant environmental benefits by reducing emissions, improving air quality, and alleviating traffic congestion. Electrified rail is a proven solution, not a new experiment. Los Angeles once thrived on a robust electric rail system from 1902 to 1955. The Pacific Electric Railway connected Los Angeles to Long Beach and fueled unprecedented economic growth between the cities. It was abandoned by the transition to personal automobiles in the U.S. Prioritizing rail is not about reinventing the wheel, it is about ensuring that our communities have access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options.

Between 2023 and 2024, our Coalition surveyed over 1,000 Nevadans between 11 counties statewide. We also hosted 18 community listening sessions in 5 different cities or towns in our state. The result was a report produced by the UNLV [University of Nevada, Las Vegas] Public Communication Initiative housed in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs on Nevadan's priorities and opinions on affordable housing, public transportation, extreme heat, and water. A copy of this report has been provided to all members of the Committee for your review (Agenda Item IV A-2). We asked community members during these surveys and listening sessions about their experiences using public transit, and what changes they would like to see in the future. I am going to share a little bit of this feedback and want to mention that I am doing so with nothing but respect and appreciation for the work done by the RTCs in Nevada.

The three primary themes that emerged from this project in regards to public transportation were—one, a repeated comment that public transportation was confusing or unreliable, so people had to make use of other options. Residents also discussed issues with bus arrival times or complained about delays that impacted their ability to use public transit for work or other necessities. Second, many residents expressed a strong desire to use public transportation but felt that the routes were not expansive enough to cover their travel needs, indicating a lack of access across the state. Respondents also highlighted broader safety concerns associated with taking public transit. A lack of bus stops often necessitated walking longer in unsafe conditions such as extreme heat, which in 2021, the Guinn Center reported southern Nevada community members experienced the most heat when driving a personal vehicle without functioning air conditioning or walking their children to school or

walking to a bus stop. The lack of safety also includes a lack of sidewalks, lighting at night, shade during the heat, or benches for those who need them. Safety was also a gendered issue in the responses we received, with women and nonbinary-identifying people in particular voicing concerns about harassment and vulnerability while using public transportation. Community members also spoke about their dreams for alternative modes of transportation in our community, such as light rail, trains, and expanded bike share options. Almost every comment included a direct comparison to other metro areas with existing light rail, and how having those features in Nevada would improve the quality of life for residents and address many of the issues they are experiencing today.

Ensuring our communities have access to safe and reliable transportation options is critical to the long-term sustainable growth of our state. With that, I will pass it over to my co-presenter Aaron Harris, Volunteer Chair of the Transportation Committee for the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter.

Aaron Harris, Volunteer Transportation Chair, Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club:

Thank you, Chair Carter and members of the board for your attention today. I am filling in for Olivia Tanager, who could not make it today due to an emergency. Today I will discuss a variety of topics surrounding the benefit and need for regional rail transit system (Agenda Item IV B-1). I will try to avoid overlapping with the first speaker as much as I can, but I do want to take what he said and connect it to Nevada specifically. Specifically, what are the mechanisms that it is going to take to make it happen, as well as, how Nevada can benefit from these investments in the long term.

As we know, Nevada is growing rapidly, it is one of the fastest growing states. Nevada and— Las Vegas and Reno are both very fast growing metro areas, but our development pattern has been primarily around highway expansions and the expectation of individual car ownership and operation, which comes with the financial burden for Nevada families, which affects affordability. Nevada's transportation system is dependent on private vehicles, which leaves limited alternatives to residents and visitors. What ends up happening is that we have a lot of different users ending up on the same congested corridors, like I-15, I-80, and U.S. 395. Residents, visitors, freight, and trade are all competing for the same road space on the roadway. We are also seeing rising infrastructure costs, not just for rail, but for also highway maintenance and expansion. In some cases, up over 60 percent since the pandemic. We also have to look at the opportunity cost of sinking additional dollars into an already built interstate freeway system over more scalable transportation modes that will meet our needs. We also have to look at that there is a report from the Reason Foundation that ranks Nevada as 49th in terms of highway administrative disbursements (Agenda Item IV B-2) (Agenda Item IV B-3). What that means is that we are the second highest in administrative costs per lane mile of roadway, so we have to look at ways that we can try to lower those costs and provide alternatives for how we build out our transportation system.

As we know, tourism is one of the strongest arguments for improved regional transportation. We welcomed 52.4 million visitors in 2024—that is all of Nevada. Visitors spent $58.5 billion statewide last year, and the overwhelming majority of visitors are using cars to get around during their trip, whether it is their own private vehicles, taxi, rideshare, or rental car. However, tourism generates $12.8 billion in tax revenue annually. Including $6.2 billion for state and local governments. As Las Vegas transforms into a sports and entertainment capital, we are seeing more constraints on our roadways that require major investments to handle surges when we have big events like Formula One, conventions, concerts, and sporting events. We want to avoid transportation becoming a bottleneck to visitor growth, whether we are visiting our resorts or our public lands. Regional rail can

provide a complement to our road network and provide more efficient mobility within our major economic centers.

What does regional rail look like in Nevada? Specifically, in southern Nevada, we see this as a system that connects the far corners of the valley to downtown in 30 minutes, which enables regional trips via transit in under an hour. This would be transformative for the region as residents would have a viable alternative to driving, and I am basing those time with the Cal train in San Francisco, which covers the same amount of, similar amount of distance in that time period that I have given. The only permanent solution to traffic congestion, as we know, is viable alternatives to driving. We have also discussed potential corridors as recently as 2015. We have been studying the rail question in Nevada for close to 50 years. There was a study in 1975, was one of the first studies to look at light rail in southern Nevada. It found it economically viable back when we had a population of only 600,000. As recently as 2015, it was concluded that if we were to build some kind of rail system between the airport and the Strip and Downtown, it would be the highest ridership rail line in the west of the Mississippi. I will also mention that Las Vegas airport is the largest airport in the U.S. that currently does not have any plans to be connected by rail.

In Nevada, from 2010 to 2020, Nevada's population grew by 15 percent, but vehicle miles traveled in the state grew by 34 percent, meaning both new and existing residents are adding more cars to the road at a higher rate. Compare us, on our growth, to similar fast-growing regions like Seattle, which from 2017 to 2023 added 80,000 residents to their population, but only added a net of 3,300 cars due to their investments in multimodal mobility.

We also have to consider the cost of doing nothing. If Nevada does not diversify our transportation options, highway expansion costs will continue to rise as we spend billions on widening projects, as well as the maintenance of those wider projects. Road widenings do briefly reduce traffic, but induced demand leads more people to choose to drive more or drive further, so congestion quickly returns to previous levels. Air quality will continue to deteriorate, and climate impacts increase as we continue to sprawl outwards. This also leads to missed opportunities. We are seeing competing states, like Utah and Arizona, are investing in modern rail systems that attract the types of high-tech workers and industries that we hope to bring to Nevada.

We want to look at the benefits of investing in rail. I want to look at this not just from a purely transportation standpoint but really from a land use standpoint, which affects a number of things from housing to our economic development. Investing upfront in alternative travel modes like rail have lower long-term costs than continuing to widen and maintain our highway infrastructure. Rail is unique in that it enables denser, more productive land uses that generate more tax value than if were to continue to expand outwards and annex low density land while also reducing our infrastructure maintenance burden. Rail corridors also provide certainty. Businesses invest because the routes are visible, permanent, and reliable. Rail also extends the reach of walking, biking, as well as e-bikes and scooters. In addition, it also offers better mobility for those in wheelchairs as it does not require driver intervention to board and to use the system. I will also mention that the RTC of Southern Nevada does have a high number of people who use, who bring bikes and scooters on the bus for that last mile, and rail is something that makes it a lot easier to do that. Anyone that has taken that bookshelf onto the New York subway knows what I am talking about.

Ultimately, when you look at rail, it solves a type of problem that any kind of vehicle—Ultimately, rail solves an issue that cannot be solved by other forms of personal rapid, personal mobility, and that is one of geometry. I think this picture does a good job of

highlighting that example. You look at the number of cars in the circle, and it is about 50 cars, and that takes up a lot more space, not just on our roadways, but also our land itself is taken up by having to move people. Each person in the picture is using up to about 200 square feet and that is not including the buffer space that you need between each car.

We also know that rail efficiently moves a large number of people for long distances, especially where travel demand converges. A single lane of free-flowing highway traffic only moves about 2,000 vehicles per hour per direction. A single rail corridor, on the other hand, can move the same amount of people as a 20-lane highway or 40,000 vehicles per person per direction. That is about twice the size that would— A 40 lane highway would be twice the size of what we have with the Neon Gateway project here in Downtown. I will also mentioned that when you look at who benefits from a wider highway like this, it is not just, it is not necessarily the people that are in the immediate surrounding area, but it is the people that are having to drive in from long distances, from exterior parts of the Valley, from other states as well as trade also relies on that as an important corridor. The fact that everyone is competing for the same road space leads to the types of congestion issues that we really want to avoid as we continue to grow.

We know that rail systems are already proven. If you, this graph shows the amount of people that can be moved on different modes, and it has been discussed about different types of rail. What we want to see here is, what is the maximum number of people and really we want to look at— When you are talking about a multimodal system, every type of mode is going to have it is own benefits and drawbacks, and really we have to look at what is the benefit of rail that allows us to really hit that surge demand. When we have those big events, we are able to move people efficiently and without a lot of friction.

Personal rapid transit projects are a component of that as well. When you look at, not just the immediate resort corridor, but also the wider southern Nevada region. We want to look for the types of transit that are going to give us that long-term potential. Personal rapid transit projects, certainly, offer those lower upfront capital expenditures. But when you look at the length of the time that those, that we are able to use those investments, it is a lot longer for rail.

Rail systems, like have been mentioned previously, are already proven. They are used in over 200 cities on 6 continents. Rail infrastructure typically lasts about 100 to 150 years, with some of those systems seeing lifespan beyond that. For reference, a highway's expected lifespan is about 50 years. Rail is also futureproof technology in that it uses standardized tracks, vehicles, and power systems that do not lock us into a single vendor for the lifetime of its usage. Rail also has a number of studies, well understood costs, and risks with decades of data, case studies, and delivery experience that gives us predictable performance and maintenance needs.

Like I said at the beginning, really the major benefit that I see from transit is the land use benefits. The benefit that is unique to high-capacity transit is that we have the opportunity to do something called placemaking. That offers us the opportunity to create walkable, human-centered environments that attract housing, jobs, and long-term economic activity. It also enables the type of infill development that we want to see, especially here in southern Nevada as we do have limited lands, and we want to make better use of those lands. You can see, oftentimes, it comes to this sort of chicken and egg problem. Do we have enough of a potential ridership capacity in order to justify this investment? But when you look at it from a long-term lens, you see that the ridership follows where the investment goes. When we spend, when we dedicate 90 percent of our transportation funding, let us say to roads, 90 percent of the people are going to be more intense to using that type of mode. When you have those infrastructure investments that allow us to build

without the need for parking, that allows us to build higher density, allows us to build more courtyards and walkable spaces, and that way it does not come with the types of traffic and frustration that— Traffic is oftentimes the number one complaint that you will hear from residents about why they do not want to see new development and having a high-capacity transit system is one way to ameliorate that concern.

Rail stations anchor that compact development and the households near high-quality transportation centers spend less on transportation, effectively lowering their cost of living. It is worth mentioning that the Las Vegas area does have some of the highest transportation costs in the country. When you look at more broadly, this is also a part of Brightline's business model. Brightline is not just focused on operating the trains, but also building out destinations at each of their stations that they can then sell and collect the revenue from tenants and that kind of stuff. You also see this for Hong Kong's MTR [Mass Transit Railway] system operates in a similar way and that is how they are able to fund, not just the operations, but transit, but also future expansions. All this to say, where rail goes investment follows.

I want to highlight one of the studies that was done, which is surrounding the transit cost report (Agenda Item IV B-4). This came out of NYU's [New York University's] Marron Institute, and it looked at the question of why does building transit in the United States cost a lot more than what we see in other countries? It is a really fascinating to read. I will not go into it too much for the sake of time, but a lot of it has to do with minimizing our contingencies as well as looking at how do we scale our projects faster, and as well as looking at different funding mechanisms to try to front load that development.

We have seen examples of where, even here in North America that we have seen progress on this regard. A good example I like to bring up is the Montreal REM [Réseau express métropolitain] system, which is a regional transportation system that complements their existing metro system. They were able to build it for about $6 billion U.S. dollars for a 42-mile automated light metro system. They wrote the enabling legislation in 2017, they broke ground in 2018, and they opened in 2023 at a cost of about $140 million a mile, that is in U.S. dollars.

When we look at transportation costs, a lot of times we look at the capital costs, but what ends up happening is that our roadways end up shifting the cost of using that transportation system to the user in a greater degree. We know that these costs are rising, and I have already covered about the need for more affordable mobility especially as an economic driver to, for people to be able to access jobs.

Also, I will bring up a comparison to another state that has both a lot of highways and a lot of roads. What they are seeing is that from their latest budget, they are spending about 25 percent more to maintain their highways than they are to maintain their passenger railways. For reference, Pennsylvania has about 5,700 miles of highway and about 1,000 miles of passenger rail, and that is including Amtrak and that sort of thing.

We also know that transit is a wealth accelerator. Like I mentioned previously, transit is able to increase the land value around those transit stations and therefore we are allowed to, we can expect to see more tax revenue from those property taxes around those stations, even without increasing the ad valorum rate at which we are assessing those properties. The example here I have shown is Indianapolis, which currently does not have any metro transit system, they just have a single Amtrak station. You see that the effects of investing in rail transit are felt for generations. There, this is a pic— The black lines of their original streetcar system, and you can see that the development followed the transit investment,

not the other way around where we wait for development to happen first and then go and build the transit.

This is that same picture, but just shown on a 3D [dimensional] scale to just show how, where especially transit lines meet. You see that confluence, the agglomeration that was mentioned previously, that is where you see the true value of having a rail investment in terms of building on your land value.

Without going into too much detail, there are a lot of different ways, besides just sales tax and property taxes, that we can fund transit. I think one that is worth mentioning is the tax increment financing district, which is where we know that those investments are going to increase the value of those properties around stations, and so we can borrow, we can bond against those future expected revenues from that investment. We also see other interesting, what I mentioned previously about Montreal's REM system. There is actually a public-public partnership, and the public entity is on one side of the city. The other public entity is the Ontario Retirement Fund. They were looking at where they could invest their money outside of the traditional stock markets, and has something that is a win-win-win for everyone. Where when they invest in their city, it does better for their citizens, as well as their population continues to age, it gives them a greater source of revenue as within by building up the local economy, as opposed to just kind of investing in traditional methods. It is all about diversification for them. They are a large investment firm not too dissimilar to like Cal [California] PERS [Public Employees' Retirement System] or Nevada PERS.

Also mentioning, when combined with zoning changes around those transit stations, you are going to see increased housing and development. We saw recently in California SB 79 automatically upzoned to, I believe, six stories around transit stops. This ensures that you are not having a situation where you have very poor ridership, like we have seen in certain places where the transit stop is simply a parking lot and there is no development around it, so they see very low ridership. By upzoning around those transit stops, they are able to ensure that local developers— You have made the investment in the transit, now it is time to allow the private investment to come in and really develop that community around that station. That station really becomes a third place for people to be able to come and enjoy and small businesses cannot— You have the market, the vendors that are on the platform, that kind of thing.

What can the Legislature do next? Specifically, we want to coordinate with state, and we want to coordinate with other states as well as our federal partners to see how we can fast track the building of the systems that we want. We also want to ensure that rail and rail corridors are included in, not just our long-range transportation planning, but also our long-range land planning. When we are plotting out a new area, we will often by default, we will always make sure that there are roads in place, but really want to also make sure that there is a corridor for future transportation to be in place, especially as we continue to build outwards both in northern and southern Nevada. Finally, we have to start somewhere and by doing that we can gradually expand over time, and we will see the kind of benefits that we have seen from our interstate highway systems. We are able to take the benefits and extend them over a longer period of time that allows us to really go bigger when it comes to the amount of money that we want to spend, because it really is not just investing for a generation but generations upon generations. With that, I will open up to any questions. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

With that, thank you very much. Are there any questions up here? [There were none.]

Senator Daly, any questions in Carson City?

Vice Chair Daly:

It does not appear to be. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

And Mayor Lawson?

Mayor Lawson:

No questions, thank you.

Chair Carter:

Thank you very much, and thank you very much. I appreciate you letting us move the previous presenter ahead and very good presentation; thank you.

AGENDA ITEM V—PRESENTATION ON THE STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS RELATED TO RAIL TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT

[This item was taken out of order.]

Chair Carter:

With that, we are going to take and move on. We are going to go slightly out of order at this point and move to Agenda Item V; as our presenter has a timing conflict. With that, we will now hear from Dr. Leffel on the study of environmental impacts related to rail transit development. Please remember to state your name for the record every time you speak.

Ben Leffel, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Public Policy and Leadership, UNLV:

Since Assembly Bill 256 [2025] calls on the Regional Rail Transit Advisory Group to consider feasibility and benefits of regional, and hopefully, statewide metro rail or light rail, I am going to share some findings from a recent study by myself and colleagues at UNLV, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Berkeley, and including all my Ph.D. students—Alejandro is in the room with us—on the ecological benefits of metro rail, including light rail and regional rail, including in Nevada and globally and derived some recommendations from that (Agenda Item V).

When I say ecological benefits, I mean that we are looking at the cities of the world, including across Nevada, including across the entire planet. We look at trees and other kinds of vegetation. We are finding that tree cover, the loss of tree cover, is dominating global urban vegetation loss. We are losing more trees than were cropland, grassland, and shrubland. One of the biggest reasons for this is private transportation. This is a common sight from our daily lives is traffic congestion. The reason why is because as cities become more dependent on cars, they are forced to expand and literally pave paradise into a parking lot or an extra road or an extra lane. Those, in that expansionary forces, what it means is that it competes for the same physical space as vegetation, which in Las Vegas it can save lives if we have tree cover because it combats the urban heat island effect. But that is in many cities that are very traffic congested.

Not all cities are built the same, as shown in minimalist form here, this is actually an art piece, is the metro lines of the world. Some cities have just one metro line, maybe two or three, and some have up to 30 or so. The alleviation that metro and intercity rail, think Amtrak, provides to cities is that it takes cars off the road, and it can allow for more space to plant vegetation. We actually take to this question and test it formally. From 2005 to 2020, we look at car use per capita, traffic expansion, and all manner of rail. About one-third of the humanity, about 1,000 of the biggest cities, accounts for 63 percent of the GDP [gross domestic product]. We look at metro. We look at light rail. We look at intercity rail, the kind that connects regions and cities across city borders, across regional and international borders as well to see, does in fact car use drive tree loss, including in Vegas and Reno and other Nevada cities, but also globally. Does rail infrastructure allow for us to stop the bleeding, so to speak?

What this chart shows is, on the bottom are cities that have no rail whatsoever. That horizontal black zero line, everything below it is a tree loss as cars go up. What the chart is answering is as cars go up, what happens to trees? Everything below that zero line is red, and it is cities that do not have any rail whatsoever—no Amtrak, no connectivity—and it is on a global scale and also locally. Above the line is green, it shows cities that have at least an intercity connection or at least one metro line. The horizontal axis is cars per capita. The x axis is cars per capita. As you can see the green line, cities that have any even minimal rail, they are able to retain trees no matter how car dependent it gets. But if you do not have that shield, you are going to lose more trees as cars go up, and you see that with the steep slope on the bottom line. I want to point your attention to two particular cities on this graph, and that would be Reno and Vegas. They are both roughly equal in terms of their car dependence, about 0.35 cars per person, but Reno has at least an Amtrak, and that is what allows it to retain trees relative. When I say this difference, what is the difference here exactly? I mean, on average we are talking about a square kilometer of tree cover—that is roughly a quarter of New York City's Central Park or two Vatican Cities. There are other ways to measure it, in several different football fields, but you get the idea. We can do better in this region if we have at least an Amtrak or at least a regional rail of that sort, particularly within the cities. This is just looking at; do you have some or do you have none at all?

Larger systems actually yield more benefits. On the top left, it is the same vertical axis, right below that black zero line is none. You see cities. There are many cities on the zero line on the far left and below the zero line. As you add more metro lines, as shown in purple, or metro stations, as shown in gold, that benefit compounds. Larger metro systems allow us to, in a linear monotonic form, save more trees. Also, in cities around the world, on the top right, it shows that as car per capita. As car dependence increases, it is more and more difficult to build metro stations and metro lines, but we are relatively early in that area. We are only like 0.35 cars per capita, so there is still room to build. In any city, generally, you can build rail, it is just a matter of being able to spend the money. In terms of what the gold standard is, on the bottom we look at light rail versus tram versus metro. Light rail is shown in green. Light rail is the most resilient, more or less, depending on how you measure it, number of stations or lines. Metro is shown in red, or light rail is shown in green, is we are able to retain the most trees, and tram not so much. Also, we do not include monorail because although we do have a monorail in Las Vegas, by volume and by ecological advantages, it is kind of negligible, so it is not really a gold standard at all. We should be looking at, at least in terms of the ecological benefits, we should be looking at light rail or metro.

When I said that there is kind of a monotonic scaling, what I mean is that the bigger metro systems are—they yield greater ecological benefits. On the bottom, the red line below the

zero line, that is cities including Las Vegas that have nothing. They do not have a single metro line. As car dependence—as shown in the horizontal axis—increases, they are losing more and more trees. But as you add at least minimal metro lines, this is what the metro line by size looks like. If you have 1 to 10 lines, then it is able to be above the zero line. You are able to retain trees and 11 to 20 lines, even more. The biggest—the Seoul and Beijing and New York City of the world—they are able to maintain the most. No matter how you measure it—be it metro lines on the top or metro stations on the bottom or on the on the right side, all rail lines, that is light rail plus metro plus tram—the larger the public transit rail-based system, the greater the ecological advantages in a linear form.

With that, we are able to divide the cities of the world, including Reno and Las Vegas, into those that are rail protected versus those that are traffic vulnerable. To just put it in one map, blue is relatively good, particularly the dark blue. As cars increase, you are able to retain more trees. Red, and particularly dark red, is bad. You are losing trees. You are more car dependent. You are losing trees as car use increases. Take a look at Europe. We know that it is very densely connected by rail networks, and they are able to maintain their tree cover and all of the various environmental and, the hotter it gets, more lifesaving advantages. Particularly, look at China. The reason why China is so blue is because it has the world's largest high speed rail network. Then, look at the United States, take a good long look at it. In one picture we see how red it is, and that is Henry Ford's god-awful legacy on the country. We are so car dependent, and we are reaping. He has sold the country a vision that goes nowhere purely for the profitability of the auto industry, and we reap the ecological disadvantages of that.

Just to be sure, when I say that Europe and East Asia have bigger metro networks, here is what it really looks like. By measuring the metro stations where bigger and greener dots indicate cities with larger metro systems by number of metro stations. It is very, very populated. The same is true for Europe, it is very densely connected. But in the United States, it is relatively paltry. The picture becomes even more clear when we look at where are the cities that have zero. In those same regions and so I represented as such. In East Asia, it is a very rare phenomenon for cities there to have absolutely nothing. The same thing is true for Europe; it is very relatively rare. But in the United States, it is one thing that we have plenty of. Nothing. It is not too late, and it is a good thing that this Working Group is looking at this.

In Clark County, in particular, we have a safety and a medical concern that we can make the case for rail because in terms of the ecological advantages—tree cover. This is a distribution of tree cover; the areas of the city that have the most tree cover, which is shown in yellow and green. As opposed to those that are orange and red, that have the least tree cover, that roughly corresponds to the heat peaks and valleys. If we look at the heat distribution in the city, the areas that are the most deep blue, or the relatively coolest, also tend to be those with the most trees because the more trees we plant, the more ecologically sound. The more that they can combat the urban heat island effect. The more red, in this area, the less tree cover we have. Roughly, that corresponds to the hot areas of the city.

I also show the hospitals, as shown in black dots here. The size of the dots correspond to the number of heat-related illnesses, ER [emergency room] visits, and that overlaps heavily with the deaths. Because there is a lack of tree cover in those areas, which we cannot really solve until we build metro or intercity or light rail because of the expansionary forces of car dependence, that area has the most ER visits for heat injuries. That area, the east and the north will remain a death trap until we can plant more trees, and we cannot plant more trees until we reduce our car dependence and build more rail that includes, at least, as

indicated by the study, at least, a regional stop can make a big difference, and it will in fact save lives.

Those are my recommendations is to build within city rail, but also across the regions. The Clark County Department of Public Works should be able to fund the first mile of light rail, apply for federal grants to pay for the rest. There is tax increment financing that can also fund this, and Las Vegas passed a bill last Legislative Session to enable that. I can also recommend to the Committee, specialists on responsible transportation from cities that have championed rail. If we do all of the above, we can reap the benefits. We can move more people more quickly, more cheaply, improve quality of life, retain trees, save lives because we are combating the urban heat island effect, reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions because that is good for the all-in climate action plan, and reduce particulate pollution—that is good for our lungs, and lowering. Also, if we take more cars off the streets, there will be less car accidents. If there are less car accidents, then over time that can reduce our car insurance rates, because here in Nevada we have the nation's leading car insurance rates, and I think that is something that we can all get behind. So, that is how you do public transportation right.

How you do not do public transportation right is The Boring Company's Loop. Now, the Loop by The Boring Company is the biggest, most absurd transit scam I have ever heard of, and here is where the scam comes in. The Boring Company has been lying to policymakers all around the world that their form, which is Tesla and tunnels, can transport more people more quickly than any kind of rail. Take it from me, that is physically impossible. Any policymaker that they are saying this to should challenge them to provide even a shred of material evidence that is true, but they cannot. Again, Elon Musk owns the Tesla Company and The Boring Company. Tesla and tunnels, which is what the Loop is, depends upon Tesla. What they are doing—

Chair Carter:

Let us keep it on what we can do, not an ad hoc going on about a company that is not here.

Dr. Leffel:

Sure. Yes, I would recommend not to expand rail in those cities. I have also been in contact with journalists that are in cities where Loop is being expanded, and real estate companies are lobbying to have stops being put at the foot of their door where they are spending the most money. As opposed to light rail, public light rail where stops are determined by maximum usership.

Lastly, there is a certain forfeiture of that subterranean real estate. You cannot necessarily build a metro or subway rail.

Chair Carter:

Let us focus on what we can do, not what is what else is being done. I appreciate it. I just do not want this to turn into an attack on a company that is not here.

Dr. Leffel:

Of course. My recommendation would be do not expand the Loop and accept no substitutes, no loopholes, so to speak. I can recommend specialists for your Working Group for successful cities, or from successful cities, with rail. Happy to take questions. Thank you for your time.

Chair Carter:

Thank you very much. Any questions up here? Commissioner Jones.

Commissioner Jones:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. You recommend that Clark County Public Works should build the first mile of light rail. Have you ever had any conversations with anyone from Clark County Public Works?

Dr. Leffel:

I am in conversations with interlocutors who talk often with the Clark County Public Works Committee. They believe that the money is there to, at least, fund the first mile, and I can recommend to the Committee after the hearing.

Commissioner Jones:

What is an interlocutor?

Dr. Leffel:

I mean various people that, experts that I am in contact with that are in contact, that often talk to Clark County Public Works. I can put you in touch with them after the hearing.

Commissioner Jones:

Okay. What is your estimate for what it would cost the Department of Public Works to put in the first mile of light rail?

Dr. Leffel:

At this time, I do not have those exact estimates, but I can be in contact with the Committee afterwards.

Mr. Anderson:

Thank you for that presentation, very interesting data. By implication, you are saying that if we do create a rail system, we would have less cars on the road increasing the tree canopy. By implication, does that mean we start ripping out roads, or how does the tree canopy automatically expand as we are removing cars?

Dr. Leffel:

Well, let us think about the project on Maryland Parkway. It is expanding Maryland Parkway, and as you expand the roadways, you cannot plant trees in those same areas. I might think of Paris as the city that kind of defeated the cars, so to speak. Rather than, during this time period also, what they did was that they started building more light rail during that time and it is kind of the same trajectory we could take. It is not exactly a tearing up roads, but if certain roads are, if traffic reduces as a result of more ridership on public transit, then that can be repurposed. The way it would be a deliberate effort by the government to repurpose the certain areas that are less used as a result of less traffic for tree cover, which is exactly how Paris and a few other places did it.

Mr. Anderson:

Just one follow-up question. Since you did this survey of a global nature, did you find any purveyors of equipment and construction who are more cost effective. For instance, loop brings to the table a concept of conceivably new technology to create tunnels very rapidly. Did you find any place in the world where they are putting down rail lines at more cost-effective numbers than we consistently hear about?

Dr. Leffel:

We did not look at the cost effectiveness of the rail, but rather just a global inventory of the different kinds of rail and how many lines, et cetera. Although it is a very good question.

Chair Carter:

Anybody else down here? Skip, Senator Daly, anybody up north?

Vice Chair Daly:

I do not believe we have any questions up here. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

And Mayor Lawson?

Mayor Lawson:

No, no questions. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

Very good. Well, thank you Professor Leffel and safe travels.

AGENDA ITEM VI—DISCUSSION ON EMERGING PRIORITIES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY THE REGIONAL RAIL TRANSIT ADVISORY WORKING GROUP

Chair Carter:

With that, that brings us up to Agenda Item VI, discussion on emerging priorities, recommendations, and concerns identified by the Regional Rail Transit Advisory Working Group—us. Moving forward, we will go to Agenda Item IV—I already read that. Because this

is our third meeting, and we have heard from a variety of stakeholders so far, I think it is important that we check in as a Group on our work and where we want to move next. To guide our discussion, you have a handout in front of you (Agenda Item VI).

First, as a reminder, this is a Working Group that is charged with studying the current state of regional rail and public transit, the need for regional rail and transit, four, three, the potential funding sources to support the development of regional rail transit, and finally, public and private entities that should be involved in its development. We are going to speak more specifically about funding shortly, so I want to hold off on that. However, for the other items on this list, I would like to open the floor to the Working Group. What is on anybody's mind?

Director Maynard.

Ms. Maynard-Carey:

I think, correct me if I am wrong, Chair, that next month we will be talking about funding, correct?

Chair Carter:

That is tentatively the plan. That is dependent on if we have suggestions, because that is going to be my final ask is if there is any suggestions from anybody on the Committee for other organizations or groups that I should reach out to for presentations. Yes, funding, we are going to save that.

Ms. Maynard-Carey:

If I may, it may be worthwhile to have an executive summary type presentation from the transportation investment business plan that the RTC was part of. It really was a regional effort, locally here in southern Nevada, the business community, and major stakeholders. We could invite, potentially, someone that— We are just part of the—we are part of it. We could bring somebody in that was really courting the effort to provide— Again, it was a look at, certainly, the connection between mobility and economic growth here in southern Nevada. If that is something that you would like to see.

Chair Carter:

Yes, thank you very much.

Senator Daly, is there some discussion topics that we should take and look at or suggestions for the next meeting?

Vice Chair Daly:

We have a couple from Mr. Gee and my friend down here on the right. Go ahead first.

Mr. Gee:

Thank you, Senator Daly and Chair Carter. Related to the funding, but a separate issue, is the organizational framework around passenger rail. As I understand, as a Regional Transportation Commission, RTC, we have the authority to run buses, but we do not have the legal ability to run rail. Likewise, I am told that NDOT [Nevada's Department of Transportation] themselves do not have the ability to operate passenger rail in the State of Nevada. I think as we talk about looking at funding and looking at potential grants and looking at grant opportunities, there needs to be a discussion on who those potential grant recipients could be. I mean, I cannot apply for an FRA grant if I cannot operate rail. It is just a look at how we can expand the authorities of an RTC or how we can support the creation of other entities who could perhaps operate passenger rail in that space I think would be really beneficial. Especially in our case in northern Nevada, we are talking about multiple jurisdictions across county lines and even potentially across state lines. Having the framework and legislative ability to actually organize and seek to obtain funding from federal sources would be beneficial to us.

Chair Carter:

Thank you very much, Mr. Gee, and yes, we will work on that finding, getting a report on all of those things you just brought up, that is a very good point.

Another one from up north?

Mr. Hester:

Mr. Chair, Mr. Gee pretty well stated what I was going to bring up. Do we have the correct operating authority and does that reach across jurisdictional lines and possibly state lines? Or are there other models that already are in place like joint powers, authorities, things like that that we could use? Same general topic as what Mr. Gee brought up.

Chair Carter:

Very good, thank you very much. And Mayor Lawson?

Vice Chair Daly:

Mr. Chair, I have one comment if I can.

Chair Carter:

We will let Mayor Lawson go, and then we will come back to you, Senator Daly.

Vice Chair Daly:

Perfect. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

I apologize for that.

Mayor Lawson:

The presentation that we saw at the Washoe RTC last week, I think we need to disperse and then talk about. It is very enlightening, as far as the ridership stations, the kinds of trains you need, the whole nine yards, and what we can and cannot do with the UP [Union Pacific]. The UP is notoriously not that open to sharing tracks. That report was an enlightening report. Mr. Gee has that report, and we will make sure that we get it dispersed to the Committee.

Chair Carter:

Thank you very much. Please make sure that gets to our Committee Director [sic] Alex Drozdoff.

And now Senator Daly.

Chair Daly:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was just—along the lines of what the other two people in northern Nevada were mentioning when I was looking at the four questions of the current state of regional and public transit. We have got a great deal of information there. The need for rail, I think the case has been made. We are going to talk about funding later and then public and private entities that should be involved in its development. Similar to what they were just saying on the authority to do this stuff and there is a lot of moving parts with that. I know there are separate labor issues, a lot of the rail, federal laws, and various things go back 150 years when we are trying to develop rail across the United States. There is a lot of things that we do not know about every single day. Then it reminds me, and sorry if I get

off track a little bit, when we are looking at the TRPA [Tahoe Regional Planning Agency] and the oversight up there. There is only one basin, so there is only one state for what we are looking at. But then there are five counties in the two states. There are two states, five counties in the two states, one municipality, and several other little turfs. I would think that we would try to set something up where we would eliminate as many of those turf disputes on who is in charge. We want RTCs to be involved. We want DOT to be involved and have input for planning and various things, but we might want to look at some type of entity that has joint power agreement powers and various things to be the point for getting grants and developing what would be the most feasible. What would have the most impact as we develop and try to eliminate turf disputes on who is in charge. If that makes sense, I am sure you have seen similar things in your career over the years that you have studied these types of things. I just think that we might want to look at a joint powers type agreement. I think there should be one in the north and one in the south. I do not think necessarily the whole state, but open discussion on that. That is just one of the things I think we want to be wary of and make sure we do not have too many people competing in the same lane.

Chair Carter:

Very good, Senator Daly. Yes, it is noted, and we are going to work on figuring out what we need to get, who we need to get reports from, who maybe we need to have presentations from, and setting us up so that our meeting in April we can have a robust conversation discussion going into, because we are rapidly approaching because we need to finalize a report by June so we have only got three meetings left.

With that being said, is there any comment that any of this is, or ideas that have been popped up because of the conversation?

Mr. Snow:

Mr. Chairman, I think we have heard some really well thought out, well structured, and well delivered presentations today. I want to thank everyone who has done so, and some of the things that have come to my mind. I know that across the country there are states that have their own rail compact agreements. Washington and Oregon comes to mind for their Amtrak service and several states across the country cooperate across state borders for joint rail commissions. From a policy standpoint, I think that is very interesting for us to consider, especially when we have Brightline service that is, hopefully, going to be coming soon between California and Nevada.

One of the things that I have tried to pay a lot of attention to and what was brought up today by our last presenter was, I thought, some very thoughtful discussion about the benefits of doing integrated. Not just separate land use planning and then separate transportation planning, but the integration of transportation and land use planning together, and that is when you come up with wonderful things like transit-oriented development. When you have that type of density that can come into a specific corridor where rail could go into, all of a sudden you have opportunities to finance rail that go along without raising taxes. Because you have all this development that can come in around a rail corridor, and if you can capture some of that property tax and set it aside to pay for transportation and land use infrastructure investment, that is how you can pay for some of these types of projects that have been successful around the country. That, I think, is really worth discussion.

Maybe another idea is, there has been a lot of discussion about, well we need to have passenger service on this freight corridor as well as the continuing operation of freight

corridors. There are some states that, from a policy standpoint, have passed laws regarding who can use and how they can use that particular corridor. I think from a policy standpoint that might be of interest to this Committee.

Chair Carter:

Very good points and—

Vice Chair Daly:

Mr. Chair, we do have one more comment up here.

Chair Carter:

Going forward in the interim between our next meeting, Alex will be reaching out to everyone to see suggestions in putting together the agenda for the next meeting.

With that being said, is there anybody else who would like to make a question or comment?

Vice Chair Daly:

We have one more.

Chair Carter:

Go ahead, Senator Daly.

Vice Chair Daly:

One more comment up north here, Mr. Christenson.

Mr. Christenson:

I think a good group to reach out to would possibly be the National Association of Rail Passengers. Then also, as far as working with Union Pacific, Mayor Lawson is correct. Union Pacific is difficult to work with regarding passenger rail. Majority of the Class One railroads are. I had reached out to Alex today, via email, to possibly give a presentation on existing infrastructure, at least up north, that is all UP owned and explain the benefits of a partnership with Union Pacific and a possible rail, passenger rail, transportation up here, how it would benefit them with us adding to their infrastructure. Hopefully, I could present next meeting.

Chair Carter:

Thank you very much. Anything else? None appearing.

AGENDA ITEM VII—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Carter:

We will go to Agenda Item VII, public comment. With that, we will start down here in the south, and do not forget that if you are not joining us in person in Carson City or Las Vegas, you can call (888) 475-4499 then entering the meeting ID of 838 555 6412, and then press pound. As always, you can email comments to regionalrailtransit@lcb.state.nv.us. With that, we will go to our first person down here in Las Vegas. The floor is yours.

Vinnie Spotleson, Clark County School District (CCSD) Teacher:

Thank you so much. I appreciate you having this on spring break so I could be here. I will see you again in June. I am going to keep this quick because we are over time. I am also a candidate for Assembly District 41. I have been campaigning about this. I have been pitching this to the building trades. I got an interesting question this morning that I thought I would like this Committee to consider as well in the long list. You, already, are right on the money in terms of, how do we structure this, how do we pay for it. But one more thing is, when we actually get to the building the stations and building around the stations and whatever tax we figure out. I got a question today from the building trades, which was how do we ensure those jobs are high-quality jobs that go to union, the workers, or provide PLAs [project labor agreements] or prevailing wage? I think if there is a way to investigate or look at if we are going to create special property tax districts or tax increment financing, can we do, is there a way to incentivize that we have those types of union work on the construction site? Because what we see in cities all across the country is that the areas around these train stations and around the world blow up. These become huge meccas of new developments, high rises, new businesses, transit-oriented development—we have been talking about. There is a way that we can ensure not just that the rail jobs go to union labor, but that the construction that is associated with the revitalization that comes in goes to project labor agreements and things like that as well. I think that would be helpful to have in the list of recommendations for the policies that come out. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

Very good, thank you very much.

Anybody else down here in southern Nevada? [There were none.]

With that, we will move up to Carson City. Does not appear there is anybody in Carson City.

We will go to AVS [sic]. Is there anybody on the phone lines?

AVH:

If you would like to provide public comment, please press *9 now to take your place in the queue. Again, if you would like to provide public comment, please press *9 now.

Caller with the last three digits 675, please press *6 to unmute your phone. You may begin.

Matt Parker, Nevada Resident:

Good afternoon, Chair Carter and members of the Working Group. I was not able to make the first part of the meeting, so forgive me if I am duplicating effort here. I just thought it was worth mentioning that today is National Transit Employee Appreciation Day, so please join me in recognizing our transit workers and thanking them for the work they do to provide us with safe transportation. Thanks to all of you for the working, on the Working Group for what you are doing to bring us forward to a brighter future for transportation and perhaps to bring a smile to Chair Carter's face. While you are all slaving away today, taking care of the governance of our state, I am spending a portion of this beautiful afternoon working on my railroad motor car. You all have a good evening. Thank you.

Chair Carter:

Thank you for that, Mr. Parker. Next caller, please.

AVH:

Chair, there are no other callers for public comment.

Chair Carter:

Well, thank you very much, and I want to thank everybody here, the presenters, the public that showed up, and all of the Committee members for a very good productive meeting.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Working Group, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Crystal Rowe
Assistant Manager of Research
Policy Assistants

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Keely Latham
Senior Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

_____

Assemblymember Max E. Carter II, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item III A	Arthur L. Guzzetti, Vice President of Policy, Mobility, Technical Services and Innovation, American Public Transportation Association (APTA)	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item III B	Arthur L. Guzzetti, Vice President of Policy, Mobility, Technical Services and Innovation, APTA	Report
Agenda Item IV A-1	Jackie Spicer, Coalition Coordinator, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IV A-2	Jackie Spicer, Coalition Coordinator, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition	Report
Agenda Item IV B-1	Aaron Harris, Volunteer Transportation Chair, Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IV B-2	Aaron Harris, Volunteer Transportation Chair, Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club	Report
Agenda Item IV B-3	Aaron Harris, Volunteer Transportation Chair, Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club	Report
Agenda Item IV B-4	Aaron Harris, Volunteer Transportation Chair, Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club	Report
Agenda Item V	Ben Leffel, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Public Policy and Leadership, University of Nevada, Las Vegas	PowerPoint Presentation

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item VI	Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau	Handout

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