

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

REMARKS OF GUY MATTOLA

NOVEMBER 24, 2010

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN. GOOD MORNING FELLOW MEMBERS.

THIS MONTH'S MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WAS AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ONE. WITH NO RESOLUTION TO THE STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING CRISIS, WE ARE FORCED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A 35% REDUCTION IN SERVICE WHICH WE HAD HOPED AGAINST HOPE WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY.

OF GRAVE CONCERN IS THAT THIS CRISIS IS BEING VIEWED AS ONE AFFECTING PORT AUTHORITY CUSTOMERS ONLY. IN FACT, THAT IS THE FARTHEST FROM THE TRUTH. MORE THAN 9,000 CARS WILL COME INTO AND OUT OF DOWNTOWN ADDING TO OUR ALREADY CONGESTED DOWNTOWN STREETS. DRIVERS WILL BE LOOKING FOR PARKING SPACES THAT DON'T EXIST. AND THE COMMUTE INTO DOWNTOWN IS GOING TO TAKE 14 MINUTES LONGER. MORE CARS ON THE ROAD, MORE CONGESTION, LONGER COMMUTING TIME AND MORE POLLUTION!

WHO WILL WANT TO CONTINUE COMING DOWNTOWN UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES? CAN WE REALLY EXPECT BUSINESSES TO REMAIN DOWNTOWN WITHOUT EMPLOYEES AND WITHOUT CUSTOMERS; AND CAN WE EXPECT NEW BUSINESSES TO CHOOSE TO LOCATE HERE?

AS THE CITY IS STRIVING TO IMPROVE ITS ECONOMIC VITALITY, IS THIS THE SCENARIO THAT ANYONE WANTS TO ENVISION?

IT IS TIME TO REALIZE THAT THIS IS NOT JUST A PORT AUTHORITY ISSUE. THIS IS A REGIONAL PROBLEM AFFECTING ALL RESIDENTS OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY.

ON AUGUST 19TH AT AN ALL DAY PUBLIC HEARING, WE HEARD HEART WRENCHING STORIES FROM OUR CUSTOMERS ABOUT HOW THE ELIMINATION OF ROUTES AND SERVICE WILL IMPACT THEIR ABILITY TO GET TO WORK, SCHOOL, DOCTORS, GROCERY STORES AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES. SO MANY OF THESE PEOPLE TOLD US HOW TRANSIT IS THEIR CONNECTION TO LIFE!

WE HEARD FROM BUSINESSES HOW THEY WOULD SUFFER WHEN EMPLOYEES WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO GET TO WORK.

SO WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN: A 35% SERVICE REDUCTION MEANS THE ELIMINATION OF MORE THAN 45 ROUTES AND THE REDUCTION OF SERVICE ON ALMOST ALL REMAINING ROUTES IN THE SYSTEM.

THIS WILL LEAVE MORE THAN 50 NEIGHBORHOODS WITHOUT ANY SERVICE AND A MUCH HIGHER NUMBER WITH LESS SERVICE THAN THEY HAVE TODAY.

WE ESTIMATE THAT MORE THAN 15,000 RIDERS WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO USE THE SYSTEM ON A DAILY BASIS.

A 35% SERVICE CUT ALSO ENTAILS THE CLOSING OF TWO PORT AUTHORITY OPERATING DIVISIONS AND A REDUCTION OF MORE THAN 500 POSITIONS.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE NOW AT THE POINT THAT ALL OPTIONS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED. WHILE WE WANT TO REMAIN HOPEFUL, WE CANNOT WAIT ANY LONGER. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A BALANCED BUDGET FOR THIS

FISCAL YEAR, IT IS NECESSARY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THIS SERVICE REDUCTION PLAN RECOGNIZING THE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES FOR RIDERS AND NON-RIDERS ALIKE.

AND, AS WE ARE FINALIZING OUR PLANS FOR THIS DRAMATIC AND DEVASTATING 35% SERVICE CUT, WE MUST IMMEDIATELY BEGIN TO PLAN FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF SERVICE CUTS FOR FY 2012. ONE WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED BY OUR BOARD IN MAY 2011 FOR IMPLEMENTATION AT THE START OF FY 2012 IF THERE IS NO SOLUTION TO THIS STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING CRISIS.

AT THIS POINT, HAVING NO OTHER OPTIONS, I RESPECTFULLY REQUEST APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING THREE RESOLUTIONS:

FIRST IS THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED FARE INCREASES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2011, IN ORDER TO BALANCE THE AUTHORITY'S OPERATING BUDGET AND MAINTAIN THE AUTHORITY'S FINANCIAL STABILITY IN SPITE OF THE ONGOING STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION FUNDING CRISIS.

THE SECOND AUTHORIZES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED SERVICE REDUCTIONS TO TAKE EFFECT ON MARCH 13, 2011.

FINALLY, THE THIRD RESOLUTION AUTHORIZES THE ADOPTION OF THE REVISED FY 2011 AMENDED OPERATING BUDGET.

THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN. THAT CONCLUDES THIS MONTH'S REPORT OF THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.