



# New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority (NHRTA) Governance Options

Mike Izbicki

NHRTA Project Committee

February 28, 2014

# NHRTA Governance Options

- Purpose
  - Present Several Proven Governance Models for Discussion
  - NHRTA Must Change its Current Governance Model to Receive Future Federal Capital & Operating Funding (Grants)
- NH-RTA Background
  - Established by RSA 238A
  - Received Two Federal Grants FTA-\$1.9M, & FRA \$2.24M
- Description of Commuter Rail System
  - Commuter Rail Systems Connect Suburbs w/ Urban Centers
  - Travel Distance Between Termini is Generally 30-40 miles
  - Stations Are Typically 5-10 Miles Apart

# NHRTA Governance Options

## Potential Governance Structures

Governance Structure	Governing Authority/District	Commuter Rail Service Description
Regional (state) Transit Authority/District (Multi-Modal)	Sound Transit District, Washington	Sounder between Seattle and Everett and Seattle and Tacoma
	Tri-County Metropolitan District, Oregon Utah Transit Authority	Westside Express Service (WES) between Wilsonville, Tualatin, Tigard and Beaverton Frontrunner and Trax (light rail and bus transit)
Regional (State) Rail Authority/District (Single-Purpose)	Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit, California	Planned commuter rail between Cloverdale in Sonoma County and the San Francisco-bound ferry terminal in Larkspur, Marin County.
Joint Powers Authority	Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, California	Caltrain between San Francisco, San Jose, and Gilroy
	South Florida Regional Transit Authority, Florida	Tri-Rail between Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach
	Virginia Railway Express, Virginia	Virginia Railway Express (VRE) between northern Virginia suburbs and Alexandria, Crystal City and downtown Washington, D.C.
Division of State Department of Transportation	Maryland Transit Administration, Maryland	Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) between Maryland and Union Station in Washington, D. C., operating along three rail lines
Division of Metropolitan Planning Organization	New Mexico Mid-Region Council of Governments, New Mexico	Rail Runner Express between Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Belen

# NHRTA Governance Options

## Regional (State) Transit Authority/District

- Multimodal
- Appointed Board
- Larger Transit systems (MBTA)
- Management/Operation of Light Rail, Commuter Rail, Bus, Streetcar, etc.

## Regional (State) Rail Authority/District

- NH RTA Current Operating Model
- Modified Regional Transit Authority Formed
  - Legislative Statute at State Level
  - Direct Popular vote- voters opt in to form Regional Transit District
- NH RTA Does NOT Have Ability to Levy Taxes
- NH RTA Does Have Bonding Authority w/Legislative Approval

# NHRTA Governance Options

## Joint Powers Authority

- Common Model for Commuter Rail Transit Ops
- Permitted in Some States whereby Two or More Public Authorities can Operate Collectively
- JPA is Distinct from Member Authorities w/ Separate Operating Boards of Directors
- Relies on Funding Through Constituent Members
- Can Have Legal Standing at State Level
- Status in NH-Additional Research Required

# NHRTA Governance Options

## Division of State DOT

- Common Model in Small States w/ One Dominant Metro Area (i.e. Maryland)

## Division of Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

- MPOs Usually Not Responsible for Governance/ Administration of Commuter Rail Service

# NHRTA Governance Options

## Potential NHRTA Governance Structures

Governance Structure Option	Potential Advantages	Potential Disadvantages
Regional (State) Transit Authority/District (Multi-Modal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One transit service provider would create greater efficiencies and coordination between all transit modes to help ensure integrated regional system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lack focus; if NHDOT role is expanded to include commuter rail, it has typically focused on bus and paratransit services.</li> <li>• May be cumbersome political process to expand financing methods and authority to outlying service areas (could create equity issues).</li> </ul>
Regional (State) Rail Authority/District (Single-Purpose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single focus on commuter rail, rather than competition for resources being distributed among transit modes, may help ensure success.</li> <li>• With creation of new funding mechanisms, all funding partners would be equally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would require close coordination with NHDOT to ensure integrated regional transit system.</li> <li>• Adds another entity/layer to the mix.</li> <li>• If formed by popular vote, would be unable to serve jurisdictions which do not vote to join, leaving gaps in representation/service.</li> <li>• Cost and start-up time to form new authority may be greater.</li> </ul>
Joint Powers Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would provide maximum flexibility in the formation and responsibilities of a governing body.</li> <li>• Does not require legislative authority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May result in potential overlapping responsibilities among or within representative entities.</li> <li>• Each participating entity would be required to secure its own funding source(s) through annual appropriations and other financing mechanisms, which may result in less- stable funding.</li> <li>• May start “turf war” between entities if a new JPA is formed.</li> </ul>

# NHRTA Governance Options

- Key Considerations/Factors likely to determine success:
  - Balance local control with need for regional system performance
  - Provide stable funding opportunities from a variety of public and private sources
  - Facilitate growth of the network
  - Develop long range plans for system development
  - Coordinate with private freight railways
  - Manage operations (often w/private operators)
  - Build ridership by encouraging development at stations
  - Provide a seamless transportation service
  - Raise funds from many sources including fares, local/state/federal transit, TIFs, user fees, etc.
  - Coordinate with other providers re: schedules, integrated fare systems, etc.
  - Participate in priority setting processes

# NHRTA Governance Options

- Where do we go from here?
  - Determine Best Governance Model
  - Draft/Finalize Legislation

# NH Rail Transit Authority Governance Options



Thank You - Questions??