

Charlottesville Albemarle Regional Transit Authority (CARTA) Meeting

Draft Minutes, September 25, 2025

The recording of this meeting can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKBzq2QhD7M>

VOTING MEMBERS & ALTERNATES		STAFF	
Brian Pinkston, Charlottesville	x	Christine Jacobs, TJPDC	
Natalie Oschrin, Charlottesville	x	Lucinda Shannon, TJPDC	x
Diantha McKeel, Albemarle	x	Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC	x
Mike Pruitt, Albemarle	x	Taylor Jenkins, TJPDC	x
		Ben Chambers, Charlottesville	x
		Ann Wall, Albemarle	x
NON-VOTING MEMBERS		GUESTS/PUBLIC	
Grant Sparks, DRPT *	x	David Blount, TJPDC	x
		Tanya Schwarzendruber, Albemarle	x
		Katy Miller, DRPT *	x
		James Freas, City of Charlottesville	x
		Garland Williams, CAT	x
		Alex Joiner, IMPACT	x
		Mike Longue, VIA	x
		Mitch Huber, DRPT *	x
		Arielle Panitch, VIA *	x

* Remote attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Diantha McKeel called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA (MINUTE 2:02)

Motion/Action: Brian Pinkston made a motion to approve the agenda. Natalie Oschrin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. MEETING MINUTES (MINUTE 2:36)

Diantha McKeel noted that one of the attendees should be changed from Sarah Duncan to Sally Duncan.

Motion/Action: Mike Pruitt made a motion to approve the May 22 meeting minutes with the noted change. Natalie Oschrin seconded, and the motion passed with Brian Pinkston abstaining.

Motion/Action: Mike Pruitt made a motion to approve the July 16 meeting minutes. Brian Pinkston seconded, and the motion passed with Natalie Oschrin abstaining.



4. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC (MINUTE 4:40)

None.

5. PRIORITIZATION STUDY UPDATE (MINUTE 4:57)

Taylor Jenkins gave an overview of the scope of work for the study. She noted that the study should take about 20 months to complete. It was noted that services will be selected from both the constrained and unconstrained lists from the Regional Transit Vision Plan.

She continued with the proposal review timeline. Staff is currently at the consultant selection stage. Staff has received proposals from four consultants, AECOM, Michael Baker International, Kimley Horn, and RK&K. She gave an overview of the proposals with the Board and highlighted their strengths and weaknesses.

She noted that out of the four proposals, RK&K was the strongest and the staff recommends using them for the study. She said before there is a Notice to Proceed (NTP), they will be communicating in-person expectations at certain points in the study.

She provided the proposed study team and technical team members for the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Transit, and state support (DRPT and VDOT).

Mr. Jenkins provided the expectations for the Board's participation including service identification and prioritization, the implementation plan and approval of the draft and final plan documents.

Ms. Jenkins said the next steps are for the board to take action on the consultant selection and staff will coordinate with DRPT to issue the NTP and organize the project kickoff.

Ann Wall said there is expected to be a draft plan prior to the 20-month timeframe, possibly this time next year, that will inform CARTA's discussion about going to the General Assembly.

There was consensus to proceed with RK&K as the consultant for this study.

6. DRPT APPOINTMENT (MINUTE 30:13)

Diantha McKeel noted that Grant Sparks with Katy Miller as an alternate, have been appointed by DRPT to participate as non-voting members with CARTA.

7. VIA UPDATE: RIDERSHIP DATA (MINUTE 31:09)

Mike Longue, VIA, noted that they are focused with on-demand routes. Mr. Longue gave an executive business review of MicroCAT. Arielle Panitch introduced herself as the General Manager of MicroCAT.

He noted that from service launch, MicroCAT has become extremely popular. In July 2025, Ridership

passed 100K rides. Riders love the quality of service resulting in high engagement and retention. Riders take an average of 10 rides per month. The key destinations include Walmart, Rio Hill Center, Albemarle High School, Mallside Forest Court Apartments (affordable housing), Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital and more.

He reported that the demographics show that 71% don't have a personal car, 73% earn less than \$50K per year and 40% report having a disability.

Mr. Longue gave additional information on top origins and destinations for riders. He offered information on more granular maps if requested.

He noted that MicroCAT has become increasingly efficient through continuous tech and operational improvements. There are an additional 1,140 additional rides per month at the same budget.

Ms. Panitch said a central location for the drivers is near the library at Rio Road. The algorithm is also getting more efficient. They are continually optimizing the number of vehicles on the road on an hourly basis to drive increased efficiency. It was noted that because it is popular and demand has grown rapidly, it has led to corresponding wait-times and unmet demand for trips. Anything over 30 minutes becomes a typical "drop off" point for demand when riders do not want to use the service. She said their goal is a 25-minute wait or less.

It was noted that MicroCAT is a highly cost-effective mode within the CAT network, especially to serve less dense suburban areas.

Mike Pruitt said he sees incentive shift and structure changes vs Uber or Lyft. Garland said many of the routes are taking people where the fixed routes are not running or the streets are too narrow for the buses to run. There is an incentive to use the service because it is free for the rider for now. There either needs to be an addition of vehicles or add a cost structure.

Natalie Oschrein noted that many of these issues are tied to land use and housing issues. People have to live in the suburbs to afford housing and these developments are not designed for bus access.

9. OTHER BUSINESS/UPDATES AND REMINDERS (MINUTE 1:09:50)

Ms. McKeel noted that the next RTP meeting is October 23, 2025. Their last meeting will be on December 11.

Ms. McKeel reviewed the possible next dates for the November meeting. It was decided that the next meeting will be on November 18 at 5:00 p.m. in person at the Water Street Center in Charlottesville.

11. ADJOURN

Ms. McKeel adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.