NITA
NORTHERN ILLINOIS TRANSIT AUTHORITY

RTA Ad Hoc Committee on NITA Transition Report

Lessons learned and recommendations for the incoming NITA Board

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DATE September 2026

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A NOTE TO OUR COLLEAGUES

To Our Colleagues on the NITA Board

When the Northern Illinois Transit Authority Act became effective on June 1, 2026, the three of us were serving on the Regional Transportation Authority Board and had also been appointed to continue our service as members of the new NITA Board.

We believed the time between June 1 and the first meeting of the new Board should not be a period of institutional pause. It was a chance to get ahead of the questions that would arrive in September and begin working together before the formal handoff.

We therefore urged creation of the RTA Ad Hoc Committee on the NITA Transition. We invited the leadership of CTA, Metra and Pace, our fellow RTA directors, agency staff, transition advisers, outside experts, advocates, and members of the public to join us in three public hearings. We had no authority to make decisions for the future Board and did not try to do so. Our purpose was to ask hard questions, surface choices, identify deadlines, and create a useful record so the new Board could move more quickly from transition to action.

The hearings focused on the issues we believed would demand early attention: the regional budget and capital program, transit-supportive and joint development, public safety and customer experience, organizational design and governance, executive leadership, regional planning, and performance management.

Collectively, our experience on the RTA Board and key takeaways from the hearings and discussions with colleagues convinced us the success of NITA will depend on more than statutes, organizational charts or funding. How the Board works together will matter. We therefore include in this report a proposed set of Board expectations and operating norms, not as legal rules, but as commitments that can help us build a strong, collaborative culture from the start.

This report does not attempt to prescribe every answer. Those choices belong to the full NITA Board and its leadership. We offer these observations and recommendations as a starting point and record of the work undertaken during the transition.

We hope the report will help you prepare for our work ahead and we ask you to consider some of our lessons learned as we move toward action in support of a new, more unified regional transit system.

Dennis Mondero
NITA TRANSITION MEMBER

Brian Sager
NITA TRANSITION MEMBER

Tom Kotarac
CHAIR, AD HOC COMMITTEE

> A GIFT OF TIME AND TREASURE
>
> *The General Assembly and Governor have given the Northern Illinois Transit System new authority, new resources, and time to plan and build differently. That combination will not come again soon. If we do not act quickly and as a unified system, the fragmentation the Act was written to overcome will reassert itself.*

PART ONE

The three hearings

Each hearing is formatted to identify its purpose, relevant aspects participants identified and explored through dialogue, and the central lesson learned from that dialogue.

The Committee and its work

The Ad Hoc Committee was created to make productive use of the transition period between the June 1 effective date of the NITA Act and the seating and first meetings of the new NITA Board. Three RTA directors who had already been appointed to NITA were selected to serve, and all other

RTA board directors as well as leadership from CTA, Metra, and Pace and other RTA directors were invited to participate. The first meeting described the Committee as a public forum for directors to dig deeply into issues that would become urgent once NITA began operating.

Committee members

MEMBER	ROLE
Tom Kotarac	Chair; RTA director and incoming NITA director
Dennis Mondero	RTA director and incoming NITA director
Brian Sager	RTA director and incoming NITA director

Public hearings

DATE	FOCUS AND CORE QUESTION
July 22, 2026	**Budget, capital investment and transit-supportive development.** How should NITA use its new financial and development powers differently from the RTA?
August 13, 2026	**Public safety and customer experience.** How could NITA coordinate regional resources to improve safety and the rider and employee experience?
August 26, 2026	**Governance, organization and performance management.** How should NITA organize itself to produce results without becoming another layer of bureaucracy?

Participants identified in the hearing record

Roll calls and participation varied by meeting. The following individuals were identified in the transcript record as attending one or more hearings. Additional staff, agency representatives, outside partners, advocates and members of the public also participated.

ORGANIZATION	PARTICIPANTS
RTA / Committee	Tom Kotarac; Dennis Mondero; Brian Sager
Other RTA directors	Kirk Dillard; William R. Coulson; Elizabeth "Liz" Gorman; Christopher J. Groven; John Retondo; Nora Cay Ryan; Lara Sanoica; and other directors as reflected in individual roll calls.
CTA	Lester L. Barclay, Chairman; Nora Leerhsen, Acting President; agency leadership and staff.
Metra	Joseph H. McMahon, Chairman; James M. Derwinski, Executive Director/CEO; Janice R. Thomas; Romayne C. Brown; Gary Gordon; Brian Shanahan; agency leadership and staff.
Pace	John D. Noak; Erin Smith; Terry R. Wells; Melinda J. Metzger, Executive Director; agency leadership and staff.

> A NOTE ON THE RECORD
>
> *This is the Committee members' report of the three public hearings, not official minutes or a legal reading of the NITA Act. Automated transcripts occasionally distort names and acronyms. We have used verified spellings where available and summarized discussion. Where precision is required for Board action, the statute, official agendas, minutes, meeting recordings, staff memoranda and counsel should control.*

Hearing one - July 22, 2026

BUDGET, CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT

The first hearing established the transition calendar and focused on decisions that could *not wait* for the new Board to get fully organized. Chief Transition Officer Maulik Vaishnav outlined major statutory workstreams and early deadlines. Staff then addressed the FY2027 budget and public funding process, new capital resources, and NITA's new transit-supportive development responsibilities. Service Board leadership and participating directors tested how these tools could be used on a regional basis.

What the Committee explored

- **A single regional budget.** The NITA Act calls for moving away from a sequence in which each Service Board publishes a standalone budget and the RTA later combines them. The transition creates the opportunity for one NITA budget with clear Service Board components inside a regional framework.
- **Flexibility during transition.** Because NITA must establish new functions while permanent organization decisions are still being developed, the Committee emphasized preserving room for the new Board to set priorities rather than fixing every cost too early.
- **Efficiencies as an accountability commitment.** The discussion supported common definitions and public tracking of required savings, with statutory efficiency requirements treated as a minimum expectation rather than a ceiling.
- **Capital by project and rider benefit.** Rather than defaulting to agency shares, new capital resources can increasingly be evaluated by the benefit a project produces for a corridor, hub, or regional network. The Committee also stressed visible near-term improvements alongside major long-term state-of-good-repair needs.
- **Development as a transit strategy.** NITA's new land-use and joint-development authorities can support housing, ridership, and economic development, but the hearing emphasized that service capacity, municipal partnership, market feasibility, equity, and public benefit have to be considered together to leverage transit-oriented development for increased ridership.
- **Leverage and professional capacity.** NITA should be ready to match competitive federal grants and should build specialized real estate and transaction expertise before scaling a joint-development portfolio. Directors emphasized that transit-oriented development can look different in different contexts throughout the region, and cautioned against focusing on just one geography or development typology.

> CENTRAL LESSON
>
> *Funding should follow regional outcomes informed by the scale, ridership, and needs of each part of the system rather than institutional boundaries alone. The measure of a project is what it changes for riders and for Northern Illinois.*

Hearing two - August 13, 2026

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The second hearing examined public safety as both a security responsibility and a customer experience challenge. The discussion included NITA transition staff; CTA, Metra and Pace leadership and safety teams; law enforcement and prosecutorial partners; workforce representatives; advocates; and participating directors. The central question was how NITA can create regional coordination without losing the expertise of agencies that operate the system.

What the Committee explored

- **Safety is broader than policing.** The hearing repeatedly connected law enforcement with behavioral health response, transit ambassadors, technology, station conditions, employee protections and customer communication.
- **Coordinate regionally, deploy locally.** The safety environment spans transit agencies, municipal police, county sheriffs, prosecutors, state agencies, and human service partners. NITA can add value by defining roles, common protocols, shared information, and regional outcomes while local partners retain operational responsibility.
- **One simple way for riders to get help.** A regional reporting tool should work the same way everywhere. The customer should not have to determine which transit agency, police department, or social service provider has jurisdiction before reporting a problem.
- **Common data and comparable measures.** Different agencies and jurisdictions classify and store information differently. NITA should build comparable regional safety data and track not only incidents but response time, rider perception, workforce perception, and the results of interventions.
- **Frontline employees are a core source of evidence.** Operators and other employees experience system conditions continuously. The Committee discussed sustained workforce engagement and a regional measure of employee safety and experience.
- **Treat pilots as experiments.** Promising interventions should begin with a baseline and a measurable objective. Successful programs should scale and weak ones changed or stopped.

> CENTRAL LESSON
>
> *Safety should be measured both objectively and experientially. Incident counts tell us little if riders and employees still feel unsafe on the journey.*

Hearing three — August 26, 2026

GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The final hearing turned from what NITA should do to how it should organize itself to do it. Chief Transition Officer Maulik Vaishnav and the transition consultant team discussed organizational design, committee structures, relationships between NITA and the Service Boards, regional planning, staffing, and leadership. Directors and public commenters pushed the discussion toward a governance model that is lean, adaptive, transparent, and tied to measurable rider outcomes. Written submissions from Michael Archey and Ed Zotti are attached in full at the end of this report.

What the Committee explored

- **NITA *is not* a fourth operating agency.** The Authority should be strongest where regional policy, standards, funding, planning and accountability are required, while day-to-day transit operations remain clearly owned by CTA, Metra, and Pace.

- **Start lean and evolve.** The Committee heard support for a limited number of standing committees aligned to where the Board holds decision rights rather than creating a committee for every topic. Structure should be reviewed as NITA's responsibilities mature.
- **Committees need metrics they own.** Deep work should connect to a small number of rider-facing metrics. Committees should understand trends, question management, surface disagreement, and bring a reasoned recommendation to the full Board.
- **One regional planning cadence.** Strategic planning, service planning, the budget, and the capital program should speak to one another. NITA should establish regional direction early enough for Service Board plans and actions to follow within that framework.
- **Share functions now; refine structure later.** Functions such as communications, external and governmental affairs, planning, data, and shared staffing may benefit from immediate coordination even while the permanent organizational structure is still being evaluated.
- **Leadership processes should reinforce the regional mission.** Executive selection should be professional, transparent, and sequenced so NITA leadership and Service Board leadership operate from common expectations.

> CENTRAL LESSON
>
> *The measure of the structure is whether riders throughout Northern Illinois get service that is safer, more reliable, more frequent and better connected.*

What the hearings tell us

The General Assembly created NITA with broader powers, new resources, and a stronger mandate to plan, fund and oversee public transportation as an integrated Northern Illinois System. The transition hearings were designed to help the incoming Board begin that work with a clearer view of the decisions, deadlines, and institutional choices ahead.

The three hearings addressed different subjects, but the same operating philosophy appeared repeatedly: use regional authority where it adds value, keep operational accountability clear, measure what riders and employees experience, avoid recreating the same function four times, and change course when the evidence points to a better way. Six observations ran through all three hearings and lead into the recommendations that follow.

- **Think as one Northern Illinois System.** Begin with the network and its riders, not historic institutional boundaries.
- **Organize around the rider.** Customers should not need to understand ownership or jurisdiction to use transit or get help.
- **Measure outcomes, not activity.** Judge budgets, capital programs, safety work and governance against the same short list of rider outcomes.

— **Pilot, measure, and improve.** Establish baselines, publish results, expand what works and change what does not.

— **Coordinate rather than duplicate.** Align regional policy, data, planning, and resources without recreating the same functions four times.

— **Start fresh and build the right Board culture.** Learn from the past without governing from old disputes. Let geography, appointing authorities, and experience inform judgment rather than predetermine it.

PART TWO

Recommendations for the region

Sixteen recommendations follow, in four groups. They synthesize the three hearings and the transition members' experience on the RTA Board. They are offered for consideration by the full NITA Board, but are not intended to substitute for future Board votes, statutory processes, management analysis or public engagement. Each group opens with a short note on what the Act requires and what is ours to decide.

Budget and capital stewardship

WHAT THE ACT REQUIRES

NITA prepares and adopts a regional budget and a regional capital program, sets the funding framework for the Service Boards, and administers the new State resources with defined efficiency requirements.

WHAT IS OURS TO DECIDE

Whether the budget is built from regional priorities or assembled from three distinct plans; how capital is prioritized and how transparently; and whether the efficiency requirement is treated as a target or a minimum expectation.

1 **Develop one regional budget.** Move beyond aggregating three separately conceived plans. Build the NITA budget from regional priorities while retaining transparent Service Board operating components. Address how the transition year relates to Service Board budgets, and preserve room for the new Board to set FY2027 priorities rather than fixing every cost before the Board has met.

2 **Prioritize capital by project outcome and regional benefit.** Evaluate investments by what they do for riders, corridors, hubs and the network, taking into account the volume of riders served and the state of existing infrastructure, not only by which agency owns the asset.

Publish the prioritization framework so the basis for decisions is visible and pair visible near-term improvements with long-term state-of-good-repair needs. From January 2027 the Act also divides responsibility for delivering improvements between NITA and the Service Boards. The framework should anticipate that split rather than be rewritten around it.

3 **Treat efficiency requirements as minimum expectations.** The Act requires $46.9 million in net savings in the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2027, drawn from service delivery, labor optimization and real estate. Use common definitions, track when savings materialize, and report savings and the deployment of the new State resources publicly rather than treating the statutory figure as the endpoint.

4 **Use NITA resources to leverage other investment.** Preserve grant-match capacity for competitive federal programs, and coordinate with State, municipal, philanthropic, and private partners where outside resources can accelerate regional priorities.

Safety and customer experience

WHAT THE ACT REQUIRES

NITA establishes an Office of Transit Safety and Experience and assigns it a defined list of responsibilities. A real-time reporting feature in the mobile application is required within 180 days of the effective date, late November 2026. The Law Enforcement Task Force reports at six months and the Coordinated Safety Response Council at nine.

WHAT IS OURS TO DECIDE

How quickly the office is established and operational, how well it is staffed, what we measure, and what we ask of it beyond the statutory minimum. The Act largely sets what it does.

5 **Make safety and customer experience an immediate regional priority.** Establish clear goals and public measures for both riders and employees, and make progress visible.

6 **Build the Office of Transit Safety and Experience quickly and well.** The Act sets the office's responsibilities and has the Executive Director designate a Chief Transit Safety Officer, subject to Board approval, with prior law enforcement supervisory experience. The Board's contribution is to insist on the expertise the office needs - operations, public safety, data, customer experience, and intergovernmental coordination - and to see it operating well before the statutory deadline.

7 **Set clear roles across jurisdictions.** Define roles, protocols and shared information across transit agencies, local police, prosecutors, State agencies and human service partners, while local partners retain operational responsibility.

8 **Use a comprehensive safety strategy.** Pair enforcement with behavioral health and social service response, technology, transit ambassadors, employee protections, service quality and customer communication. Allow the statutory Law Enforcement Task Force and the Coordinated Safety Response Council to report, at six months and nine months respectively, before the Board takes a position on long-term policing structure.

9 **Ask the Office for common regional safety data from the start.** The Act makes regional safety data the office's responsibility, with the Board setting standards; common

definitions across operators and partners, measurement of incidents, response time, rider and workforce perception, and intervention outcomes.

10 **Make it simple for riders to report problems.** The Act requires a real-time reporting feature in the mobile application by late November 2026. Meeting that date is the first task. Over time the experience should become fully regional, routing a concern to the responsible agency or partner without asking the rider to determine jurisdiction.

Planning, integration and development

WHAT THE ACT REQUIRES

NITA leads regional transit planning and holds new land-use and joint-development authority while CMAP remains the region's metropolitan planning organization.

WHAT IS OURS TO DECIDE

The sequence and cadence of regional planning; where to demonstrate integration first; and how far to build real estate capacity before transactions scale.

11 **Establish one regional planning and decision-making cadence.** Sequence strategic planning, service standards, budgets, and capital decisions so NITA establishes regional direction early enough for Service Board actions to follow coherently, and establish a new, much stronger relationship with CMAP, harnessing their expertise and regional success in planning. CMAP and NITA have new opportunities to leverage each other's strengths and investment portfolios to accomplish goals identified in the Regional Comprehensive Plan. Early efforts of partnership could include the Five-Year Capital Program and emerging transportation issues like driverless taxis.

12 **Use multimodal hubs and corridors to demonstrate integration.** Target places where multiple operators and jurisdictions intersect and address service, safety, accessibility, information, capital, and development together.

13 **Treat transit-supportive development as a transportation strategy.** Connect development decisions to service capacity, ridership, housing and local planning, and build professional real estate expertise before transactions scale.

Organization and leadership

WHAT THE ACT REQUIRES

NITA is the regional authority for policy, standards, funding, planning, and accountability while CTA, Metra, and Pace remain the operators, each with its own board and executive. The Executive Director is appointed by the Chair with the concurrence of eleven of the other directors and is subject to Senate confirmation until July 1, 2030. The Executive Director may not be a director of the NITA Board.

WHAT IS OURS TO DECIDE

What to coordinate now and what to consolidate later; how executive leadership is selected and stabilized; and what performance we ask all three operators to report in common.

14 **Coordinate early where the value is clear; consolidate only after analysis.** Use shared services, common protocols, and dual-hatted staffing during transition where they add capacity, while allowing the permanent organization to be shaped by evidence rather than urgency. External affairs and communications should be unified from the outset. The statutory transition process reaches many of these questions and the transition consultant has begun looking at them early in their work. The Board should build on that analysis rather than run a parallel one.

15 **Use professional and transparent executive leadership processes.** The Act gives the appointment of the Executive Director to the Chair, with the concurrence of eleven of the other directors and requires Senate confirmation until July 1, 2030. Selection, evaluation, and succession should reinforce the regional mission, provide clarity to employees, and give the Board enough time to choose rather than ratify.

16 **Establish common expectations for reporting and transparency.** Set shared expectations for transparency, Board materials, public participation, capital scoring, and comparable performance reporting across CTA, Metra, and Pace, so the Board sees one region rather than three separate pictures.

These recommendations succeed only if public transportation in Northern Illinois becomes safer, more reliable, cleaner, more accessible and easier to use.

PART THREE

How we govern ourselves

Eight commitments the Board makes to itself, each followed by the operating norms that put it into practice.

The following section sets out ways we can work better together as directors of NITA and of our operating agencies. It incorporates lessons from the transition hearings and subsequent feedback. These are not bylaws and carry no independent legal force. They are commitments directors make to one another about how to use the authority the Act gives them.

Why we are writing this down

This Board takes office with broad authority and no precedent. Twenty directors, appointed by four appointing groups comprising eight separate officials, are accountable for a transit system that serves Northern Illinois. The Act sets out our powers. It says nothing about how we work together and the habits we form in the first months will likely become the habits of the institution.

Three features of the Act shape these commitments:

— **Supermajority.** Many consequential actions require either fifteen of the twenty directors, or twelve directors provided at least two of them come from each of the four appointing groups. Directors should assume a quorum is not enough to carry a significant item.

— **Two hats.** Most directors also sit on a Service Board. That dual role is part of the statutory design, allowing one person to carry the experience of deep operational oversight into regional decision-making that supports excellent transit.

— **Time matters.** Several review rights run on statutory clocks shorter than a normal meeting cycle. In some cases, failing to act changes the legal outcome.

These commitments are intended to make those facts governable. They are commitments we make to one another and we should expect to be held to them. Each is followed by the operating norms that put it into practice and by what we should expect of ourselves.

01 Decide for Northern Illinois, not for a single service area

Most directors bring deep knowledge of a community, appointing authority, or Service Board, and that knowledge should be used. But the NITA question is what serves the network as a whole - its riders, its finances, its capital program and its safety. When the answers diverge, our responsibility is to the Northern Illinois transit system and all the communities it serves

> **We build toward supermajority, deliberately.**
>
> Work backward from the vote. Significant items should ordinarily be discussed before they are presented for final decision, and staff and committee work should surface objections while a recommendation can still change. The Chair and Executive Director should identify supermajority requirements and statutory deadlines early. The Act's deadlines press for speed while sound decisions take deliberation. That tension is unavoidable and it has to end in a decision rather than a delay.
>
> **We disclose conflicts and treat structural conflicts differently.**
>
> Personal or financial conflicts are disclosed and handled under law and Board policy. Service Board affiliation is different because it is built into the NITA structure. Directors should state the affiliation when relevant, say plainly where interests diverge, and then vote the Northern Illinois interest. The same principle applies to appointing authorities; stay informed by them, but do not treat their preference as an instruction. The same principle applies to appointing authorities; stay informed by them, bring their perspective to the table, and exercise independent judgment when casting a vote on behalf of the region.

WATCH FOR *Allowing geographic or institutional loyalty to substitute for substantive analysis of the question before the Board.*

02 Start from this day forward

We learn from the past, but we do not govern from it. NITA is a fresh start. Old disputes and old judgments about agencies or individuals should not decide the questions in front of us now. From this day forward, proposals, agencies, and leaders should be judged on current evidence, current performance, and their willingness to work as one system.

Institutional memory matters when it helps us understand risk or avoid repeating mistakes. It should not become a veto on change or a license to settle old scores.

WATCH FOR *Re-litigating old agency disputes; using prior personalities as a substitute for current evidence; treating inherited practice as proof that something cannot change.*

03 Unify behind our decisions so the organization has clear direction

Directors should debate openly and may dissent plainly. Once the vote is taken, however, staff, Service Boards, and the public should know what the Board decided and what happens next. The decision belongs to the whole Board. Directors should not use side channels to undo a settled decision or privately direct staff toward an outcome the Board did not choose.

> **We disagree without undermining.**
>
> Challenge reasoning, evidence, assumptions and conclusions as hard as necessary. Do not attack a colleague's motives, competence or legitimacy. Do not conduct Board disagreements through the press and do not let a loss on one item become a posture on the next.

WATCH FOR *Signaling that a decision you opposed need not be implemented with urgency; reopening settled matters through unrelated items; describing the Board's action publicly as narrower than it was.*

04 Govern, do not manage

Our work is direction, standards, resources and accountability. Management's work is delivery. The line is especially important because NITA sits above three operating agencies with their own boards and executives. Directors should ask about outcomes, risks, standards, and tradeoffs, and direct management through the Executive Director and Board decisions rather than individual operational instructions.

> **We keep the structure lean and adaptable.**
>
> The Act requires one Board subcommittee; a standing Safety Subcommittee with at least one member from each appointing authority. Every other committee is ours to design. Create committees where the Board has repeated decision rights and needs deeper work. Review charters and structure as responsibilities mature. Do not institutionalize duplication.
>
> **We use committees to do the deep work.**
>
> Charters should define purpose, membership, meeting rhythm, delegated authority, and what comes back to the full Board. Committees should bring a reasoned recommendation the Board can act on.
>
> **We delegate, in writing, authority that would otherwise lapse.**
>
> Where a statutory clock is shorter than the full Board's meeting cycle, a charter should specify what a committee may decide on the Board's behalf, what requires a special Board meeting, and how delegated actions are reported.

WATCH FOR *Constituent casework pursued outside established processes; standing staff requests that no Board action authorized; rewriting management work at the table instead of giving clear direction and asking management to return.*

05 Focus on a small set of outcomes, and act when performance falls short

The Board will receive more information than it can govern. Choose a short list of measures that tell us whether Northern Illinois transit is getting better - at minimum safety, reliability, ridership, accessibility, connectivity, cleanliness and cost efficiency. Hold to the measures long enough for trends to mean something. Each measure should have a named response if it moves the wrong way.

> **We keep one short public scorecard.**
>
> Select a limited set of measures that show whether transit is improving, publish them, and hold them steady long enough to see trends. Resist adding a new measure each time an old one moves.
>
> **We make performance review a standing responsibility.**
>
> Every major Board committee should know which outcomes it owns, what the baseline is, what improvement is expected, and what action follows if performance slips.
>
> **We treat pilots as experiments.**
>
> Promising interventions should begin with a clear theory, baseline and measurable objective. Publish results, expand what works, and change or discontinue what does not.

WATCH FOR *Dashboards that grow indefinitely; new measures introduced to explain away old ones; accepting an explanation as though it were a corrective plan.*

06 Decide and deliver with rigor

Decisions should rest on evidence, more than one option, realistic cost and schedule information, and a date when the Board will see the matter again. Major projects should disclose assumptions and changes in estimates. Where the Act allows faster action for projects that have earned it through documented support and cost discipline, use that authority.

> **We meet on a rhythm set by our deadlines.**
>
> Publish a reliable annual meeting calendar, sequence committees before the Board decisions that depend on them, and add sessions when statutory clocks require them rather than creating last-minute emergencies. Directors attend prepared, with unavoidable absences followed by a briefing, not a replay of the meeting.
>
> **We set the agenda deliberately.**
>
> The Chair should set the agenda with the Executive Director and committee chairs, though any director may request an item with enough notice for staff to prepare it properly. Materials should arrive early enough for informed review. Inadequate time to prepare is a legitimate reason to defer.
>
> **We deliberate, then we decide.**
>
> Every director who wants to speak on a significant item should be heard before the vote. Questions to staff are expected, but cross-examination of colleagues is not. Defer when information is missing, but not to avoid a difficult vote. Management should bring significant recommendations early enough that the Board can reject, amend or defer them without creating a crisis. If a deadline makes “no” impossible, the Board was never given a decision.

WATCH FOR *A single option presented as inevitable; approvals without follow-up; optimistic estimates treated as facts rather than assumptions.*

07 Earn the public's trust

Public confidence is built mostly through how the Board conducts itself; substantive open meetings, timely materials, transparent conflicts, accessible performance information, and active rider and ADA advisory voices. Public comment should be taken as input to decisions and scheduled where it can still affect them.

> **We protect the integrity of executive session.**
>
> Use closed session only for legally permitted purposes; candor depends on confidentiality. Understandings reached in executive session should not be ratified in open session without substantive deliberation and a director's Service Board role creates no exception to confidentiality.
>
> **We speak accurately in public.**
>
> Directors should speak to the press, communities and appointing authorities, but should say whether they are speaking for themselves or for the Board. Only the Chair or a designated director speaks for the Board. Describe adopted decisions accurately, including your own dissent, and say when you do not know.

WATCH FOR *Decisions that appear predetermined; material information released too late to inform public or director review; executive session used for matters that belong in public.*

08 Revisit the model as our responsibilities grow

Directors should complete required training, ride the system, and use annual self-assessment as a governance tool. NITA responsibilities arrive in stages, so a committee structure or Board scorecard that fits 2026 should not automatically be assumed to fit 2028 or 2029.

> **We revisit the structure as responsibilities arrive.**
>
> Review the committee structure and the Board scorecard on a set rhythm and change them when new statutory responsibilities make part of them obsolete or incomplete.

WATCH FOR *Training treated as compliance rather than capability; committees that outlive their purpose and self-assessment that has no owner.*

Adopting and revisiting these commitments

These commitments have force only to the extent the Board uses them. The Chair should be expected to hold the room to them. Repeated departures should be addressed privately first and, if necessary, by the Board as a whole. They should be revisited each year alongside the Board's self-assessment, and sooner if a new statutory responsibility makes part of them obsolete or incomplete.

An early governance question remains for the organizing period. Such questions might include whether to adopt commitments formally by resolution, incorporate them into bylaws, or treat them as shared expectations and hold ourselves to their standards and spirit. Members of this Committee also promoted a governance best practice that should be considered alongside that choice; an annual Board self-assessment and follow-up process to improve our work.

APPENDIX

The hearing record

The original presentation decks and public meeting transcripts form part of the Committee record.

Each code below opens that hearing's presentation deck on the NITA website.

HEARING ONE — BUDGET, CAPITAL AND DEVELOPMENT

July 22, 2026. Transition milestones, FY2027 budget and public funding, capital resources, transit-supportive land use, and joint development. Presentation: RTA Ad Hoc Committee on NITA Transition slide deck.

HEARING TWO — SAFETY AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

August 13, 2026. NITA safety responsibilities, existing Service Board programs, interagency coordination, customer perception, data, and workforce safety. Presentation: RTA Ad Hoc Committee on NITA Transition slide deck.

HEARING THREE — GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

August 26, 2026. Governance models, committee structure, organizational design, regional planning, staffing, leadership and performance management. Presentation: RTA Ad Hoc Committee on NITA Transition slide deck.