

ARC COMMITTEE MEETING FOLLOW-UP

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE January 15, 2015 Meeting Notes

Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Tim Lee, Chair
Commissioner Buzz Ahrens
Commissioner Charlotte Nash

Voting Members Absent:

Mr. Kerry Armstrong
Commissioner Tom Worthan
Mr. Sonny Deriso
Mr. Robert Ashe
Commissioner John Eaves
Interim CEO Lee May
Mayor Kasim Reed

Non-Voting Members Present:

Mr. Christopher Tomlinson
Mayor Bucky Johnson
Commissioner Jeff Turner
Mr. Doug Hooker
Mr. Keith Parker
Commissioner Charles Oddo
Jonathan Lewis (City of Atlanta)

Non-Voting Members Absent:

Mr. Dan Moody
Ms. Carol Comer
Commissioner Richard Oden
Commissioner Pete Amos
Commissioner David Austin
Commissioner Bob Blackburn
Commissioner Keith Ellis
Commissioner Chipper Gardner
Commissioner Pat Graham
Commissioner Kevin Little
Commissioner Tommy Smith

Actions Taken:

A quorum was not present, and the meeting was held for informational purposes. There were comments given from the public.

1. Welcome, Chair's comments, Approval of 10/09/14 meeting summary, Public comment period

Chairman Lee welcomed everyone to the Regional Transit Committee meeting. Chairman Lee introduced two new board members: GRTA’s newly appointed Executive Director, Christopher Tomlinson, and Fayette County’s Charles Oddo.

2. MARTA – Clayton Update

Mr. Kelly Hayden (MARTA) presented on MARTA’s Clayton County transit expansion plans. MARTA is planning to implement transit in Clayton County in three phases over the next year, and will spread the hiring of new personnel and the purchase of new equipment over several months. Because uncertainty over the referendum delayed any procurement of equipment that would be needed for the transit expansion, the procurement process is now taking some time to acquire new vehicles needed for delivering the new transit service. MARTA expects to collect revenues of \$46 Million a year towards transit service from Clayton County’s sales tax. The initial phase of transit service will begin March 21, 2015. Phase 2 will be implemented on August 8th, with the remainder of transit service starting by December 12th (including ADA and paratransit services). Total build-out of the Clayton transit expansion will include 30 to 35 buses, as well as 20 mobility vans. The transit expansion will include 103 new fixed route drivers, and that requires substantial time to hire and check backgrounds. Other staffing includes increases in police, administrative, as well as customer service staff.

Mr. Hayden discussed some highlights of Clayton County’s demographics, including a population of 265,888, a large transit dependent population and a sizeable population of millennials. MARTA desires to make the transit service desirable for everyone in the community. The new transit service will include bus routes that connect into several existing MARTA Rail stations, including Decatur Station, 5 Points Station, College Park and East Point Station. There was an initial desire to connect the bus service into both north/south and east/west MARTA rail lines. Additionally MARTA will be creating “bus hubs” and transfer locations within Clayton County to further assist local riders. There will be six hubs, including Mountain View, Fort Gillem, Morrow, Riverdale, Justice Center and Lovejoy.

Mr. Hayden closed by reviewing next steps for the service implementation, which include receiving public comment and feedback on their transit implementation plan.

Board Comments and Questions:

Mr. Jeff Turner (Clayton) offered that he was pleased with what he had seen, and looked forward to providing the presentation to his fellow county commissioners.

Mr. Cain Williamson (ARC) asked Mr. Hayden to go into a little more detail about the proposed you go Flex Route Service.

Mr. Hayden mentioned that the flex route service gives MARTA the ability to have nimble transit service that can go into areas of the county that a larger vehicle wouldn’t necessarily fit the neighborhood characteristics.

3. Evolution of Atltransit.org Website Update

Landon Reed (ARC) provided the RTC with an update on the regional trip planning website, Atltransit.org. The website is in the process of transferring from GRTA's ownership to ARC's management. Mr. Reed is currently working to make that happen, and in the final phases of transferring ownership. This transfer was expected to be completed by the end of January. Next steps will involve RTC staff reconvening transit partners on the direction and future of the website.

4. Regional Transit Marketing Update

Janae Futrell (ARC) provided the RTC with a project update on the regional transit marketing update. Ms. Futrell provided a recap and timeline of recent work that has been completed on the marketing project. The RFP on the project was posted on October 31st, collaborative work sessions with the transit providers took place in November and December, seven proposals were received in December, the top three firms were identified by January 9th, and final in-person interviews were conducted. The finalist has been contacted, and work is expected to commence by February 2nd.

5. Unified Bus Stop Signage

Aaron Fowler (ARC) updated the committee on the regional bus stop signage project. As mentioned at our November RTC meeting, we are partnering with MARTA on this implementation project. Mr. Fowler reiterated that because of MARTA's breadth of knowledge, RTC is utilizing their expertise in signage to perfect the final product. Mr. Fowler gave several examples of how MARTA has aided in improving the signage design, including making staff aware of upcoming changes in ADA signage height requirements, encouraging design tweaks to improve long-term maintenance and upkeep, as well as conducting a visual field review of all 80 signage locations to verify previous recommendations made by the consultant. What was initially estimated to cost \$500,000 in fabrication is now believed to have been reduced to less than \$300,000. Next steps include working with MARTA to ensure that they have everything they need to submit a competitive application for STP/TAP funds. STP Urban's fund application opens January 21 and closes April 6.

Additionally Mr. Fowler updated the committee on progress made towards implementing a regional bus stop numbering system. He stated that the project is about improving the customer experience, and eliminating confusion when riding transit. RTC staff have met with MARTA and Cobb to gain their feedback and buy-in, and will be meeting with GRTA and Gwinnett in the coming weeks. Next steps include RTC staff drafting a guidebook for operators to use when numbering their bus stops and a case by case use-scenario for expected bus stop changes.

6. Regional Fare Study Update

Aaron Fowler, ARC, updated the committee on the regional clearinghouse and fare collection audit. Mr. Fowler reviewed the current tasks outlined in the RFP, which now has three main tasks. 1) Determine the ridership and revenue data from the Breeze system by operator, 2) Determine the regional costs of the clearinghouse and fare collection system, as well as determine what the individual costs are to each operator to be a part of the regional Breeze system, and 3) the audit will review how much it costs Cobb, Gwinnett and GRTA to operate their non-Breeze fare media types. This last task is a new task, and is intended to be a tool to help Breeze partners understand any savings they might realize if they were to move all their transactions to Breeze.

Mr. Fowler praised the work all the regional transit executives have put into coming to consensus around a unified RFP, and that the RFP is expected to be released next week.

Next Steps include the release of the RFP the week of January 19th, with a closing date at the end of February. Interviews would be conducted in mid-March and work to commence in April. The project is estimated to take 6-7 months to complete, wrapping up in October 2015.

7. GRTA's Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)

GRTA's new executive director, Christopher Tomlinson, presented on the GRTA Comprehensive Operations Analysis and spoke to his new role as both executive director of both SRTA and GRTA. Mr. Tomlinson sees many ways in which the two agencies overlap in responsibilities and the ability to streamline roles, including operational overlap between SRTA's managed lanes and transit's usage of those lanes. He also highlighted the continued coordination with MARTA, and that his agency will continue to focus on regional commuter services that are complementary to the regional transit partners.

With GRTA's Comprehensive Operations Analysis, they are looking for ways to improve the service, and optimize existing commuter bus routes. Additionally GRTA is exploring opportunities for new routes. GRTA intends to maximize productivity and cost effectiveness of current Xpress system with the forthcoming changes. The COA will also be evaluating opportunities in marketing Xpress Bus to potential new riders, simplifying downtown and midtown bus routings, renumbering some bus routes for improved clarity, consolidating some routes, adding park-and-ride access to select routes, adding Xpress service in new areas of the region, making the service more reliable, making the system easier to understand, increasing the frequency of service, increasing parking access, and increasing the span of service.

Mr. Tomlinson stated that the next steps for GRTA on the COA would be to conduct public and stakeholder outreach, and develop a long-term implementation plan.

8. Meeting Wrap-Up

Chairman Tim Lee provided meeting wrap-up. Chariman Lee asked if there were any comments from meeting. No comments were given, and the meeting was adjourned.

Handouts supplied in advance on the ARC website: (www.atlantaregional.com/rtc)

- 1/15/2015 RTC Meeting Agenda
- 10/09/2014 RTC Meeting Summary
- 8/14/2014 RTC Meeting Summary
- Presentations
 - MARTA – Clayton Update
 - GRTA COA
- Handouts
 - 2014-2015 RTC Work Program Status Document