

# ARC COMMITTEE MEETING FOLLOW-UP

## REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE

September 15, 2016 Meeting Notes

### Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Tim Lee, Chair  
Commissioner Charlotte Nash

### Non-Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Charles Oddo  
Mr. Christopher Tomlinson

### Voting Members Absent:

Interim CEO Lee May  
Commissioner John Eaves  
Mayor Kasim Reed  
Mr. Fred Daniels  
Mr. David Austin  
Commissioner Tom Worthan  
Mr. Kerry Armstrong  
Commissioner Buzz Ahrens  
Mr. Sonny Deriso

### Non-Voting Members Absent:

Commissioner Jeff Turner  
Commissioner Richard Oden  
Commissioner Pat Graham  
Commissioner Pete Amos  
Commissioner Keith Ellis  
Commissioner Kevin Little  
Commissioner Tim Lassetter  
Commissioner Tommy Smith  
Mr. Rudy Bowen  
Mr. Donald Hawbaker  
Ms. Carol Comer  
Mr. Keith Parker  
Mr. Doug Hooker  
Mr. Clark Boddie

**The committee did not have quorum, but was held for informational purposes.**

## **1. Welcome, Chair's comments, Approval of meeting summary, Public comment period**

Chairman Lee called the meeting to order. No public comments, and the previous meeting minutes were accepted as presented.

## **2. "Do you love traffic" Marketing Campaign Final Report**

Ms. Anna Okula with Porter Novelli presented on the results from the 8-week transit marketing campaign, "Do you love traffic?." The campaign wrapped up on May 6, 2016. Her presentation follows up on Ms. Janae Futrell's from the previous RTC meeting in May with more details and plans for next steps.

The primary target audience for the campaign was millennials. It was narrow intentionally to increase the likelihood of success by focusing on the one target population in depth. The campaign had messages related to "me time" on transit and stress reduction as compared to driving. A satirical approach was used to bring humor into the messages. The purpose of Phase 1, which ended in May, was to prepare future transit riders to start taking trips. Additional project phases could branch out to other demographics such as baby boomers. The budget was around \$250,000 for research, creative, and ad placement. Paid placement was on platforms such as You Tube and the Google Display Network along with various social media platforms. Outreach focused on social engagement and leveraging transit enthusiasts and their network. Web banner ads and images were used to market also. The approach emphasized taking people through the stages of change, taking people on a journey from "I have not thought about transit" to planning the trip and eventually taking it as a new option. Measured impressions and activity on ATLTransit.org demonstrated how aware and prepared people became during the campaign. Phase 2 will could focus more on action, i.e., actually taking transit trips. An increase in ridership would then be measured to track this.

The project team was excited to take an "out of the box" approach with humor and ads with more edge to them. Videos and other creative materials were used. The "Exerciser" video was viewed 200,000 times. There was also a satirical banner ad series. Phase 1 results of note include 14 million impressions and 1 of 2 trip planned trips on ATLTransit.org (since its inception in 2014) took place during this project. Now, people are wondering "where do we go from here?" For Phase 2, Ms. Okula has looked at the platforms which delivered the most clicks during Phase 1 to better understand future performance. Google display ads were most effective followed by Facebook ads. The "Exerciser" video was the most popular, but that could be due to being short (15 seconds as opposed to 30) as well as likable. There was a great interest in people talking about their transit experiences (largely positive), and it is important to not lose momentum. Facebook worked best of the social media platforms, and its reach was even more successful with images (as opposed to postings only of text). Also, 95 percent of visitors came from mobile (as compared with desktop). This means that the mobile experience needs to be efficient, especially the trip planning tool at ATLTransit.org.

Ms. Okula noted 3 paths forward: 1) to continue with the project as it was (reusing the same materials), 2) change the target demographic, or 3) change the step in the behavior change cycle (moving to action from preparation, for instance). ARC could do all 3 or pick one for later phases. Ms. Janae Futrell, the previous project manager, mentioned that the first option

would be very cost effective, as it reuses the materials and only allocates funding to the ad placement. For \$50,000, a round of this could be done in a similar vein as Phase 1. There is funding in the current RTC budget to allow for this. It should also be noted that Porter Novelli looked at the data for “saturation” of the audience receiving the message, and it is not yet saturated. They have indicated there is room for another round. The other options would require more funding and significantly more work, but could add new dimensions beneficial to the project as a whole. When the new marketing staff member joins Mobility Services, they and Mr. Cain Williamson will decide the best way forward

Chairman Lee added that he spoke with Senator Brandon Beach (an early supporter of ATLTransit.org) about additional funding for this/related projects, and the Senator seems amenable to some funding support on the state level. Chairman Lee and Commissioner Charlotte Nash discussed the importance of checking into this in 2017.

### **3. Atlanta Bike Share**

Mr. Dan Murphy of CycleHop opened with asking if the committee understood the concept of bike share systems in general. They verified that they do. He then went into the details of the local bike share. CycleHop operates 13 bike share programs across the US and Canada. They currently have 100 bikes across 10 stations in Atlanta as part of a Bike Share Demonstration. They are working with Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) to get stations near recreational hubs like the CNN Center, Falcons Stadium, and Centennial Park. There have been 2,505 trips since July 16, the opening date.

CycleHop anticipates expanding from Downtown to Midtown and the Westside/West Midtown neighborhood later this fall. They anticipate delivering 500 bikes across 70 stations by December 2016. Mr. Murphy mentioned some “virtual stations” at Georgia Tech where bikes can be picked up without a station. By 2017, he anticipates expanding to 140 stations. He shared some data on the locations of where people cycle based on the GPS tracking devices on the bikes.

Commissioner Charles Oddo asked how they get people to bring the bikes back to the stations. Mr. Murphy responded that if a user brings the bike back to the station, they gain \$1 on their account. However, if they leave it elsewhere (which they are allowed), they will lose \$2 on their account. If this incentive system ends up not balancing bikes well enough, staff can be leveraged to pick up and redistribute the bikes. As for security issues, each bike has its own GPS tracking device. Access to the account is through a smart phone app. Pay as you go pricing is 13 cents/minute or \$8 per hour. Per day, \$25 day is the maximum charge. Mr. Christopher Tomlinson mentioned being interested in getting more detailed maps and materials. He said he would also consider promoting the service. Chairman Lee suggested that Mr. Murphy reach out to Tracy with Town Center CID about their bike share program.

#### 4. MARTA Sales Tax Referendum

Mr. Ben Limmer introduced himself as the Assistant General Manager (AGM) of planning at MARTA. A referendum will take place in the City of Atlanta on November 8. Senate bill 369 authorized the city to vote on sales tax within the city limits only to support MARTA projects. The receipts are projected at gaining \$2.5 billion (in 2016 \$ amounts) over the life of the tax. Some of the potential high capacity improvements include City of Atlanta light rail transit (LRT), 1-20 west heavy rail transit, Northside Drive bus rapid transit (BRT), Clifton LRT, 1-20 east BRT, station enhancements, and other capacity improvements. The potential bus service improvements include five arterial rapid transit routes, two transit centers, more frequent local service, additional support for local service, and community circulator service. Mr. Limmer's presentation closed with survey results, estimated costs, and next steps.

#### 5. Human Services Transportation (HST) Plan Update

Ms. Janae Futrell, Senior Principal Planner, provided the committee with an overview of the 2016 draft HST Plan. She reminded the committee that the HST Plan is generally updated every 3 years. The current plan is from 2013, and this draft in 2016 may extend out to an adoption in the first quarter of 2017. She noted that there have been three other staff members working on this plan with her. They are Maria Sotnikova, Shelley Price, and Renee Ray. This plan is called *Managing Mobility in the Atlanta Region: A plan to integrate disability and low income needs into the regional transportation system*. She noted that the plan is around 100 pages, but it can be understood quickly by looking at the images in the plan including maps and data graphics. There is also a 9-page executive summary available. This plan makes overlapping HST populations clearer by focusing on disability and income primarily. For instance, an older adult who is 70 may not have any disability or income challenges, and therefore could be thought of as not part of the HST population. However, older age, limited English proficiency, and veteran status all increase the likelihood that a person will have a lower income, a disability, or both.

Some data figures were referenced such as 12 percent of people in the Atlanta region report having a disability. In addition, 23 percent of the Atlanta region's households have a low income, while 40 percent of the Atlanta region's households have a low to moderate income. Individuals who report having a disability are more likely to have a lower income than those who do not report having a disability in the Atlanta region. Individuals aged 65+ are more likely to have a lower income and disability. The foreign born population, which represents the highest percentage of individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), is more likely to have a lower income. Having a veteran status increases the likelihood that an individual will have a disability and be without a home (but does not necessarily indicate a higher likelihood of having a lower income). Disability means that a user is often not able to drive their own car, whereas low income means a user is often not able to afford a car. Therefore, they rely on other non-single occupancy vehicle (SOV) modes such as transit, vanpool/carpool, telework, etc.

The public outreach sessions were foundational to the plan as they revealed a "funnel" that reduces options during decision making process for HST populations.

This means that someone who does not have a disability or low income has all the options available to them. On the other hand, someone who has a disability or low income will have their options whittled out based on where the options go in the region and if they offer what is needed for disability and low income issues. ARC has created a process for those on the local level to use this conceptual framework, data packages from ARC, and a list of tactics and results to decide how to improve the HST situation locally. This could influence the local Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), and there will be training provided through ARC's Community Planning Academy (CPA) to train local-level staff. With this support, the professional does not need to have pre-existing knowledge of HST. They can follow the process as outlined.

Mr. Shaun Green with Beltline asked if the target audience is more the non-SOV operators or the people using the service. Ms. Futrell responded that this approach is really for the local level to have public outreach sessions with their residents to understand the local needs. They can then leverage the other elements of the framework to improve the situation.

## **6. Updates and Meeting Wrap-up**

Chairman Lee noted that the lead consultant selected for the Atlanta Region Transit Vision project was in the audience. ThingTech as the prime consultant and Trillium, Transport Foundry, and GridWorks as sub-consultants were selected as the consultant team. Mr. Tim Quinn, CEO of ThingTech, responded that they are looking forward to working on the project.

Chairman Lee let the committee know there have been some RTC staff changes recently at ARC. Aaron Fowler has moved onto a new position as Director of Transportation with Kennesaw State University. Janae Futrell will start a new position in a few weeks with the City of Atlanta as the Program Director for their new "smart city" program. He noted that professionals often need to go to other places to take on new opportunities, and this is the case here. Chairman Lee also noted that Mr. Cain Williamson is working to secure their replacements. This week, Mr. Williamson is at an American Public Transit Association (APTA) conference in California as a part of his APTA Leadership Program training.

Chairman Lee closed the meeting by reminding the committee of the next meeting on November 10.

### **Handouts supplied in advance on the ARC website: ([www.atlantaregional.com/rtc](http://www.atlantaregional.com/rtc))**

- 9/15/16 RTC Agenda
- 5/12/16 RTC Meeting Notes and Summary
- Presentations
  - "Do you love traffic" Marketing Campaign Final Report
  - Atlanta Bike Share
  - MARTA Sales Tax Referendum
  - Human Services Transportation (HST) Plan Update
- RTC Project Update File