

# DRAFT

## TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING February 26, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

### TAB Members Present

Allison Bickers  
James Darden  
Walter Kolis  
Ken Marlin  
Cherie Newton  
John Noe  
Forrest Shealy  
Thomas Shibley  
Jeff Souther (virtual)  
Matt Stigall

### TAB Members Not Present

LaSandra Boykin  
Dr. Jaha Howard  
Connor Manthey  
Mark Riggans

### Cobb County and Others Present

Drew Raessler, DOT  
Morgan Simmons, DOT  
Theo Letman, DOT  
Sean O’Leary, DOT  
Marcia Lankford, DOT  
Jeff Jones, Public  
Autumn Walls, Public

### **I. Call to Order:**

**Chair Allison Bickers** called the TAB meeting to order at 6:35 p.m., with a quorum of members present.

### **II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**January 22, 2024 Joint TAB/AAC Meeting Minutes:** **Chair Bickers** asked TAB members if there were any questions or corrections for the January 22, 2024 meeting minutes. **Mr. Shealy** expressed that a misinterpretation of his comment regarding CobbLinc ridership data be corrected to read “**Mr. Shealy** reiterated that he has requested 2019 data.” **Mr. Stigall** made a motion and **Mr. Darden** seconded and TAB members present voted to approve the January 22, 2024 Joint TAB/AAC Meeting Minutes, as corrected.

### **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Chair Bickers** reported that no TAB committees had met and there were no reports.

### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Mr. Jeff Jones**, a regular bus rider of CobbLinc, thanked DOT for opening the men’s restroom facility at the Marietta Transfer Center the next day after he reported it. **Mr. Jones** reported that there is no toilet tissue in the men’s restroom at the Marietta Transfer Center and that one of the toilet tissue dispensers is not working. **Mr. Jones** suggested for DOT’s consideration that the bus name/number be displayed on the banner to alert riders if they are on the wrong bus. On January 29, 2024, **Mr. Jones** called Customer Service to report that the bus driver did not stop to pick up a passenger who was trying to board the bus even though he and another passenger alerted the bus driver. **Mr. Jones** asked for a call back and has not received a return call. **Mr. Jones** wanted to know if the concerns he had made at the TAB January meeting were labeled as substantiated or unsubstantiated. **Mr. Jones** suggested DOT to consider use of Ambassadors to offer assistance to direct riders and answer questions as opposed to using security guards. **Mr. Jones** expressed that the Title VI notices are unreasonable and not meaningful on the buses.

**V. OLD BUSINESS****A. DOT Department Update**

**Operations Data and Ridership Reports Update** – **Mr. Letman** reported that there are two current systems in place for compiling the data that is antiquated and that new fareboxes are forthcoming. **Mr. Letman** reported that use of the automated passenger counters (APCs) is industry standard rather than using fareboxes. **Mr. Letman** reported and explained the difference between the APC data and the farebox data.

**Mr. Shealy** and **Mr. Stigall** expressed concerns about the accuracy of the ridership data.

**Mr. Raessler** stated that the farebox and APC data in 2021 and 2022 are fairly aligned. **Mr. Raessler** reported that DOT had internal discussions as well as discussions with the farebox manufacturer and decided to go ahead and procure fareboxes and not wait on MARTA to procure fareboxes. DOT is working with the CobbLinc contractor and their bus drivers to work through the farebox challenges to provide reliable ridership data. An agenda item is forthcoming to present to the Board for procurement of fareboxes.

**Vice Chair Marlin** requested DOT to provide the comparison of CobbLinc ridership numbers vs. the ridership numbers of the industry.

**Mr. Shibley** asked if the APC is recalculating the entering and exiting as one or two.

**Mr. Letman** explained that the APC is counting passengers getting on and off the bus and tracking how long they are riding.

**Ms. Newton** and **Mr. Darden** expressed concern that the fareboxes that DOT is purchasing will soon be obsolete.

**Mr. Letman** is leading the procurement effort for the next generation of fareboxes. **Mr. Raessler** stated that the Cobb ridership numbers are comparable to the of Gwinnett County numbers. The current fareboxes should have been replaced in 2017. **Mr. Raessler** indicated that DOT is going to be transparent with the TAB ridership information provided to TAB.

**Chair Bickers** summarized the discussion of the fareboxes that a change to the fareboxes is forthcoming and that the contractor is being held accountable. **Vice Chair Marlin** requested DOT to provide information stating what factors that influenced the data as reported.

**Chair Bickers** requested DOT to provide a statement about the Asset Management electronically within the next couple of weeks for TAB to rework into a recommendation to the Board.

**Mr. Raessler** stated that DOT's goal is to implement an online dashboard.

**Mr. Darden** expressed concern that there has been no update provided on the bus stops since the pandemic.

**Upcoming Agenda Items** – **Mr. Letman** reported that the Microtransit Pilot Project Public Hearing pursuant to Title VI is moving forward. There will be public meetings for the public to make comments. The RFP for Security Patrol and Security Cameras are upcoming agenda items to go to the Board.

**Mr. Stigall** agreed with the public comment that there should be more of an ambassador role than security to be a guide to riders, etc.

**Mr. Darden** asked if the message board system is still in place.

**Mr. Letman** stated that DOT has requested the Contractor to have supervisors present to provide support to riders and answer questions. It was explained that the CAD/AVL system will provide better estimated time of arrival (ETA), showing bus information.

**Mr. Shealy** asked if the Microtransit Project is voucher based, cash based, or curb-to-curb.

**Mr. Raessler** stated that the Microtransit will be curb-to-curb and turnkey and will cover all the Flex Zones, Austell Road, the East-West Connector and all into one system. **Mr. Raessler** explained the potential funding source for the Microtransit Pilot Project.

**Mr. Letman** and **Mr. Raessler** addressed the inquiry that the vehicles for Microtransit will be Transit vehicles and ADA compliant, not personally owned vehicles. The fast fare fareboxes procurement, CNG bus replacement, and the bus stop/bus shelter agenda items are forthcoming. DOT is working with a consultant and received an updated timeline to upgrade the bus stops and bus shelters by this Fall.

**Vice Chair Marlin** inquired if advertising would offset the cost of the bus shelter upgrades.

**Mr. Letman** indicated that a separate RFP for a contract agreement is forthcoming for bus stop/bus shelter advertising.

**B. NEW BUSINESS**

**Chair Bickers** opened the floor for new business discussion.

**Mr. Shealy** inquired about the timeline of the project list from ATL to go to the Board and the timeline for the series of events to occur prior to the vote on the MSPLOST Referendum.

**Mr. Raessler** reviewed the dates and chain of events to take place before the Referendum vote in November 2024: (1) April 4, 2024, ATL to amend the ARTP consistent with Cobb County’s proposed project list; (2) April 5, 2024, Cobb meets with the cities; (3) April 9, 2024 (as late as May 2024), the Board will authorize a Resolution to give notice to ATL with intent to hold the Referendum; (4) May 20, 2024, notice will be served to ATL; June 6, 2024, ATL will notify County of approval or denial of the County projects submitted for the Referendum; the next available Board meeting for approval of the Referendum.

**C. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Bickers** reminded TAB members that the next TAB meeting is on April 22, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., and encouraged TAB Committees to meet in the interim. With no further discussion, **Mr. Kolis** made a motion and **Mr. Shealy** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

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Approved