

DRAFT

TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING June 24, 2024

TAB Members Present

Allison Bickers
Forrest Shealy
Thomas Shibley
Jeff Souther

TAB Members Not Present

LaSandra Boykin
James Darden
Walter Kolis
Connor Manthey
Ken Marlin
Mark Riggans
Cherie Newton
Matt Stigall

Cobb County and Others Present

Drew Raessler, DOT
Morgan Simmons, DOT
Theo Letman, DOT
Marcia Lankford, DOT
Sean O'Leary, DOT
Eric Mercier, DOT
Robert Zuco, DOT

I. Call to Order:

Due to the lack of a quorum of members present, there was no official meeting. At 6:36 p.m., **Chair Allison Bickers** yielded to DOT to present the Department Update and for discussion with TAB members.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None.

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

None.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. DOT Department Update

Program and Project Status – **Ms. Simmons** reviewed the outline of the meeting agenda to include DOT Staff Updates, Program and Project Status, Operational Review, Outreach and Communication, and Upcoming Agenda Items. **Ms. Simmons** announced two new staff members, **Tony Jackson** as Fleet Administrator and **Mark Lambert** as Business Manager. **Ms. Simmons** provided a brief status overview of progress, movement, and delays of Division projects to include AVL upgrade • farebox equipment replacement • paratransit scheduling software • bus shelter upgrade • KSU student agreement • Microtransit Pilot Project • security guards/security cameras • ambassadors • transfer centers. **Ms. Simmons** noted that **Mr. Stigall** and **Mr. Shibley** represented TAB at the public workshop for the Marietta Transfer Center Site Selection Study.

Mr. O’Leary provided an overview of the Via Mobility Paratransit scheduling software which will be owned and hosted by Cobb County. The new software is replacing the current Trapeze scheduling software, which is owned and hosted by Transdev, the CobbLinc contractor. There will be no change in the transit service with the new scheduling software. **Mr. O’Leary** explained the function of the new Paratransit scheduling software and there will be apps available. The Paratransit scheduling software will be implemented in the Fall.

Secretary Souther asked if the new scheduling software is voice activated. **Mr. O’Leary** stated that he will find out and provide an answer to TAB at a later date.

Ms. Simmons added that modules for more features can be turned on with the scheduling software in the future, if needed.

MSPLOST Status – Ms. Simmons reported on the status of the MSPLOST outreach events. It was requested that TAB provide feedback from the community and to provide names of community groups and organizations where DOT can present the MSPLOST educational materials. **Mr. Raessler** emphasized that the material being provided for MSPLOST is for educational purposes only and answer questions and not to convince individuals how to vote.

Mr. Shibley asked if there is a way for the public to be provided an explanation of what the government grant matches are and how they work.

Mr. Raessler indicated that the educational team committee at DOT can provide financial information. The sales tax numbers are approximately \$11 billion, 30% of which is paid by the County. There is a portion of the funding that will come from the general fund, a portion will come from grants, a portion will come from the County, and the remainder will come from other sources.

Ms. Simmons stated that a visual of how the funding is matched for other larger transit projects across the nation could be provided.

Operational - Ms. Simmons provided update on safety and security measures by the County and CobbLinc.

Chair Bickers shared information about the Gwinnett County bus that was hijacked in Atlanta and taken to Tucker.

Mr. Souther communicated that it is good that Transit is having discussions around safety for the bus drivers.

Ms. Simmons presented an overview of the status of monthly ridership for local and rapid service, commuter services, and demand response services, providing the revenue per rider and revenue per route. **Ms. Simmons** stated that the goal is to evaluate the monthly ridership trends over a period of time. The report update analyzed each route for 2019 (pre-COVID).

Mr. Shealy requested the report to show monthly ridership of trips per hour.

Mr. Raessler said an average per route can be provided.

Chair Bickers suggested that the Ridership Operations Committee be given the ridership report template to review and sign off on it and that all TAB members would provide feedback. **Chair Bickers** requested that TAB provide a clear picture of what data TAB wants.

Mr. Souther asked how to measure success from the data provided.

Chair Bickers asked how the Cobb system compares to other systems.

Ms. Simmons cautioned that other systems should not be compared to the Cobb system but rather compare the Cobb routes pre-COVID to Cobb routes currently since other transit systems are also transitional.

Ms. Simmons addressed the request from **Chair Bickers** to define farebox recovery and explained that farebox recovery is the percentage of actual farebox collection received over the entire operating system. **Ms. Simmons, Chair Bickers, and Mr. Shealy** discussed if a business model should be used. **Mr. Shealy** stated that the **Ms. Simmons** had provided good data.

Mr. Souther requested definitions of what the data represents and requested that DOT ensure that formulas are correct as system and/or software changes. **Mr. Souther** also requested a measurement of success.

Chair Bickers requested a system route map.

Ms. Simmons stated that a glossary, a system route map, and recommendation for the measure of success will be provided.

Mr. Shealy asked for clarification of the fare rates including fare discounts.

Mr. Shibley inquired as to how collection of fares would be handled after the installation of the new fareboxes and for the reports to represent the fares that were collected to include donated tickets.

Ms. Simmons explained that fare tickets are supplemented by other programs such as Must Ministries who contribute tickets for Routes 40 and 45.

Mr. Souther asked why there can't be one bus with free fare since only ½% is collected.

Ms. Simmons stated that there must be a full stream of funding to support a free bus. **Ms. Simmons** reported that the On-Time Performance (OTP) data does show a barometer of 80%.

Ms. Simmons provided a summary of the Operational Review of the Department Update from the TAB April meeting to include staff recommendations for monthly ridership per route and/or service type, average vehicle load per route, farebox recovery ratio, OTP per route as well as added recommendations by County Transit staff for complaints per 100 passengers, preventable accidents, and non-preventable accidents.

Outreach and Communication – **Ms. Simmons** reported on the Travel Training event on 5/9/24 at the Marietta School District Transition Services Fair with over 100 families in attendance and reported on the Public Outreach event at the Senior Services Expo on 4/24/24 with 1,300 attendees.

Mr. Shealy requested description and operation of the Microtransit service.

Ms. Simmons explained that the Microtransit service will be a pilot program with the goal to be an on-demand turnkey service, that will have a comparable rate structure as what is currently provided and will utilize personal vehicles. More details of the Microtransit service are forthcoming in a future agenda item.

Upcoming Agenda Items – **Ms. Simmons** reported that the Microtransit RFP and Equity Analysis and the KSU Student Fare Agreement are upcoming agenda items.

REVISIT OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Bylaws Committee – **Mr. Shealy** reported that a quorum would require 50% of physical presence of TAB members and allowed 2 absentees per year with a doctor's note and can participate virtually.

Mr. Souther inquired about proxy voting in the absence of a TAB member.

TAB members discussed excused absences.

B. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, **Chair Bickers** adjourned the TAB meeting at 7:45 p.m. The next TAB meeting is August 26, 2024.

Approved