

## FINAL

### TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING November 25, 2024

#### TAB Members Present

Allison Bickers  
Ken Marlin  
Cherie Newton  
Mark Riggans  
Forrest Shealy  
Thomas Shibley  
Jeff Souther  
Matt Stigall

#### TAB Members Not Present

LaSandra Boykin  
James Darden  
Walter Kolis

#### Cobb County and Others Present

Drew Raessler, DOT  
Morgan Simmons, DOT  
Theo Letman, DOT  
Mark Lambert, DOT  
Robert Zuco, DOT  
Eric Mercier, DOT  
Robert Neely(?), Public

#### I. Call to Order:

**Chair Allison Bickers** called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m. with a quorum of TAB members present.

#### II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**October 28, 2024 TAB Meeting:** **Chair Bickers** requested approval of the October meeting minutes. **Mr. Shealy** made a motion and **Vice Chair Marlin** seconded to accept the October 28, 2024 meeting minutes as submitted. All TAB members present voted unanimously to approve the October 28, 2024 meeting minutes as submitted.

**TAB members** discussed and **Chair Bickers** noted the condensing and summation of the TAB meeting minutes. **Mr. Souther** asked if the TAB minutes are the same as other County board minutes. **Mr. Raessler** acknowledged receipt of TAB's comments and that DOT would compare TAB's minutes to those of other DOT boards.

**Chair Bickers** commented that the Board of Commissioner's meeting minutes could be a very good standard to use.

#### III. COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Chair Bickers** opened the floor for committee reports.

**Bylaws Committee – Mr. Shealy** had no report. There were no other committee reports.

**Chair Bickers** reported that the TAB Executive Committee met and discussed the tenor of the previous meeting, and that TAB is working to develop steps to prevent a similar occurrence and to ensure a higher level of decorum and respect shown at the meetings. **Chair Bickers** announced that **Mr. Connor Manthey** resigned from TAB because of what transpired at the previous meeting.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS

**Ms. Simmons** reported that in response to a request from TAB from the previous TAB meeting that Old Business and Action Items are being reinstated. A previous Action Items List was located and provided to TAB members.

**Mr. Souther** requested that ongoing action items be separated from action items that have target dates.

**Ms. Simmons** reviewed the previous action items with TAB members and indicated that the item for the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and Connect Cobb Update was a DOT Planning and is no longer needed.

**Chair Bickers** stated that the action item for the TAB Annual Report to the BOC is now handled by TAB's Secretary.

**Ms. Simmons** indicated that several action items are currently a part of the Operational Report. The action item for the Operations Monthly Report move to Quarterly could be changed for presenting it in January, April, August (no TAB meeting in July), and October for TAB to consider for 2025. **Ms. Simmons** stated that the action item for bus shelter review and costs and bus stop shelters cleaning/relocating/inventory is part of the Project Status Report and DOT will provide ongoing updates. The request for later end time for Routes 30 and 25 for Sunday Service and to coordinate with Douglas County for briefing/update were listed as action items but **Ms. Simmons** that these are better identified as goals and that DOT could add a Goals List if needed.

**Chair Bickers** suggested removing items regularly from the list that are no longer needed would be helpful. **Mr. Stigall** suggested moving the applicable metrics to quarterly, annually, or monthly, as needed. **Mr. Stigall** requested an action item remain for bus stops and bus shelters. **Ms. Newton** requested an action item for updates on Microtransit particularly ADA training materials.

**Ms. Simmons** stated that DOT bus stops and bus shelters updates are currently ongoing with the Project Status Report. DOT will follow up with **Ms. Newton** on the ADA training materials for the Microtransit drivers.

**Vice Chair Marlin** suggested a distinction between action items and standing items. **Chair Bickers** said the action items could be addressed month to month and the standing items can be addressed quarterly or bi-annually. **Chair Bickers** will do some investigation and will circle back with TAB members on the proper process for action and standing items.

**Ms. Simmons** stated that the majority of the standing items are already covered on the Operational Report.

**Mr. Shealy** requested if TAB could review data that has already been exported by DOT and made available for review. **Chair Bickers** reminded TAB members that any requests for data should align with TAB's mission.

**DOT staff** and **TAB members** discussed the distinction between action items and standing items and that an item could begin as an action item and become a standing item or could fall off the list once addressed. A scenario of an item requested by TAB was provided to test if TAB and DOT understood the difference between an action item and a standing item.

**Mr. Souther** made a motion and **Mr. Shealy** seconded to accept DOT staff's recommendation to remove items from the Action Items List that have been addressed as read by **Ms. Simmons**. **Chair Bickers** asked for a vote and **Mr. Stigall** abstained. All remaining TAB members present voted to remove action items that have been addressed from the action items list.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **VII. DOT DEPARTMENT UPDATE**

Program and Project Status

**Ms. Simmons** provided highlights of programs and projects, reporting on the **AVL Upgrade** with the continues to be underway with two systems operating at the same time and the new CAD/AVL system will be fully integrated and operating as a standalone system in early 2025; **Bus Shelter Upgrade Project** an informal kickoff and continuing project phasing (incorporating potential local and regional system modifications); the **KSU Student Pilot Program Agreement** implementation will begin in January; the **Microtransit Pilot Program** with full implementation of the service on 10/29/24 with more than 500 trips (49 trips daily) and where all individuals that contacted CobbLinc to book service by app or phone, 97% of service requested was met; the **Security Guards RFP** process is underway and the **Security Camera Upgrade RFP** is underway as well. Both the Security Guards and Security Camera projects are targeted to go to the Board in January 2025 for approval. **Ms. Simmons** stated that not a lot of activity to report on the site selection for the Marietta, Cumberland, and South Cobb Transfer Centers. **Mr. Raessler** addressed **Chair Bicker's** question about the timing of the Transfer Centers, stating that Cumberland has gone through the Executive Session with the Board and submitted to the Federal Transit Administration for approval and is first to be scheduled in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2025. Federal regulation requires an environmental clearance. Some funding for Cumberland has already been awarded through the ARC. The Marietta and South Cobb Transfer Centers has recently gone through the Executive Session with the Board and expected to be scheduled in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2025.

**Mr. Stigall** asked if I-285 top end has been factored into the site selection.

**Mr. Raessler** stated that C. M. Smith is running the Cumberland Transfer Center project and looking at the 285 express lanes, the location of the 75 express lanes, future BRT, Cumberland suite, the Circulator, all the routes that come into and out of the system, as well as all the attractions between Cumberland Mall, the Energy Center, the Galleria, and the Battery.

**Ms. Simmons** reported that the MSPLOST was not approved during the November election. There will be ongoing education and to promote greater awareness to the public of the CobbLinc service which will help to build ridership.

**Chair Bickers** expressed the importance of discussing what is coming down the pipeline from MARTA and the ATL relating to buses in 2025.

**Ms. Simmons** stated that MARTA is doing a full revamp of their system. MARTA currently have 100 routes and will be reduced to 86. Cobb is in conversation with MARTA and ATL.

**Mr. Shealy** expressed that there was a huge gain from MSPLOST being brought to the forefront of the public's attention. **Mr. Shealy** encouraged TAB and DOT to think of a radical shift to integrate Cobb County transit system into a regional transit system.

### Operational Review

**Ms. Simmons** provided an overview of the Operational Review reporting on the monthly ridership of the Local and Rapid Services, the Circulator Services, Commuter Services, Demand-Response Services, Average Vehicle Load.

**Mr. Shealy** observed from the ridership report that the hottest route appears to be Route 25, compared to Rapid 10 and other routes but could not be seen from the numbers reported.

**Ms. Simmons** explained that the Average Vehicle Load was calculated to be how full the bus is on an average day.

**Mr. Stigall** pointed out that the numbers for August and October are exactly the same that he says is unlikely to occur.

**TAB Members** and **DOT Staff** discussed that the numbers provided by DOT in the Average Vehicle Load and whether those numbers provide the information that TAB wants. **Chair Bickers** and **Vice Chair Marlin** expressed that the Average Vehicle Load chart was acceptable information. **Mr.**

**Shealy** expressed dissatisfaction with the Average Vehicle Load chart stating that it is bad methodology and would discuss further offline.

**Mr. Raessler** suggested a more efficient exercise to collect data formats used by different agencies throughout the country and TAB to choose a format that is acceptable.

**Ms. Simmons** explained the Revenue Per Route and Revenue Per Passenger data and that increases in revenue collection showed upward trend from August to October. **Ms. Simmons** requested TAB members to report to DOT of any drivers not collecting fares. **Mr. Raessler** stated that Transdev has been encouraged to provide more supervisor presence and involvement. Transdev has acquired a vendor to monitor the fare collection.

**Chair Bickers** stated that fare collection is also a problem with MARTA and is a national issue which developed during COVID.

**Mr. Raessler** and **Ms. Simmons** assured TAB members that actions are in place with the vendor to ensure revenue is being collected if there is no technical issue.

**Ms. Simmons** reported that the transit system standard for OTP is 80% and that the numbers for August through October are not at 80% and that there is corrective action when the standard is not attained.

**Ms. Simmons** reported on Accidents and Complaints for August through October for Fixed Route, Paratransit, and Commuter Services showing accidents and complaints for each category. There were four compliments for the months of August through October.

**Ms. Simmons** provided a recap and presented the identified metrics that are currently used requesting TAB's feedback. **Ms. Simmons** provided the next steps in the reporting process.

**Mr. Shealy** requested access to ridership data.

**Ms. Simmons** expressed concern of the expectation of the data reporting with a limited staff.

**Chair Bickers** expressed that TAB must have a clear understanding of the problems being solved before data is requested and that TAB must adjust the expectation as an advisory board relative to the strained DOT staff. **Mr. Shealy** asked how the data can be made available to ensure there is transparency and to see ridership data back to 2019 because 2022 is not a good year. **Mr. Stigall** suggested that TAB use the Action Item List process to list problems and when the problem has been resolved to remove it from the Action Item List. **Vice Chair Marlin** stated that requests be made for events within six months that are out of control and not for events that are in control. **Chair Bickers** stated that the Operational Report presented by DOT provides the clarity of information needed and tweak in six months. If there is specific question from a Commissioner, TAB should provide a formal question to DOT to address directly with data. **Chair Bickers** opened the floor for a motion. **Mr. Stigall** made a motion and **Mr. Souther** seconded to accept the Operational Review format as given and proceed with frequency from monthly to regular sessions as amended during the discussion. **Mr. Shealy** stated that he thinks the motion is inappropriate. **Vice Chair Marlin** recognized Mr. Shealy for discussion of the motion. **Mr. Shealy** stated that TAB does not have the authority task DOT to generate a report and that the motion is out of order. **Vice Chair Marlin** asked **Mr. Stigall** to amend the motion. **Mr. Stigall** amended previous motion to be as requested from DOT. **Mr. Souther** seconded the amended motion to accept the Operational Review form as given and proceed with frequency from monthly to regular sessions as amended during the discussion as requested from DOT. **Chair Bickers** asked for a vote and **Mr. Shealy** abstained. All remaining TAB members voted to accept the Operational Report as requested from DOT as amended. **Chair Bickers** announced that the Operational Report as requested from DOT as amended was accepted.

Outreach and Communication

**Ms. Simmons** provided a report on a Travel Training event at South Cobb High School on November 21, 2024, and the Stuff-A-Bus Christmas Community Outreach event from December 10-12, 2024.

**Mr. Riggans** added that he chairs the Stuff-A-Bus Christmas event and that currently there are over 1,000 children registered.

Upcoming Agenda Items

**Ms. Simmons** reported that the Transit Advertising Contract, which is revenue generating, and that Security Guard and Security Cameras are future agenda items to go to the Board for approval in January 2025.

**A. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Bickers** announced that the next Joint TAB/AAC meeting is on January 27, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. and to expect an Outlook invitation for 2025 meeting dates and times. With no further discussion, **Mr. Riggans** made a motion and **Vice Chair Marlin** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

January 27, 2025

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Approved