

ARC COMMITTEE MEETING FOLLOW-UP

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE

May 16, 2016 Meeting Notes

Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Tim Lee, Chair
Commissioner Buzz Ahrens
Commissioner Charlotte Nash
Mr. Sonny Deriso
Mr. Kerry Armstrong

Non-Voting Members Present:

Mr. Keith Parker
Mr. Doug Hooker
Commissioner Charles Oddo
Mr. Christopher Tomlinson
Mr. Clark Boddie

Voting Members Absent:

Interim CEO Lee May
Commissioner John Eaves
Mayor Kasim Reed
Mr. Fred Daniels
Mr. David Austin
Commissioner Tom Worthan

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

The committee did not have quorum, and 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. Marketing

Ms. Janae Futrell, Senior Principal Planner, presented on the results from the 8-week transit marketing campaign, “Do you love traffic?” The campaign wrapped up on May 6, 2016. The campaign targeted millennials, and used multiple forms of social media as outreach. The campaign itself was designed around the theory of behavior change: before you can expect someone to ride transit they need to be aware of transit, and then a person needs to prepare for the action. As a result the campaign’s marketing materials that made them aware of transit encouraged the potential rider to plan out a trip on ATLtransit.org.

The campaign itself included \$47,000 spent on ad buys, with a result of 13,965,851 impressions, which totaled an average cost per click of \$0.62. Overall the statistics from the ATLtransit.org website show that the marketing campaign really helped increase traffic and trip planning on the ATLtransit.org website. There were a total of 57,000+ visits to the website over the 8-week campaign, with an average dwell time on the website of 30 seconds. The planning page and the park and ride pages were two of the top searches on the ATLtransit.org website. 8,802 trips planned during 8 week campaign, while 4,068 trips were planned during previous 8 weeks.

The next phase of the project will be action, and hopefully result in overall increased ridership tied back to the marketing effort.

3. Bike-to-Ride

Mr. Aaron Fowler, Senior Transit Planner, presented on a new project for the Regional Transit Committee, Bike-to-Ride: Improving Active Transportation Connections to Regional Transit. Mr. Fowler began by emphasizing that successful transit service is dependent upon many factors that are not often in the control of an operator, specifically pedestrian and bicycle access to a bus stop or rail station. The Bike. Walk. Thrive! Plan that ARC developed emphasized the potential for biking to regional transit, and that 41% of the region works within a 5 minute bike ride to transit.

The goal of the project would be to maximize and improve access to regional transit within a three mile buffer of key bus and rail stations. These improvements are intended to be precision point improvements, not a proposal for miles of new bike routes. For example projects may include bicycle amenities at a transit stop, addressing terminating bicycle routes near transit, addressing the design of critical intersections that bicyclists need to cross, evaluating high bicycle crash areas near transit, as well as connecting our regional trail network to transit. Mr. Fowler mentioned that often new bicycle infrastructure can be installed on key bus route corridors, and there will be an effort to find design solutions to help both modes avoid conflict with each other.

The current proposal seeks to identify 8-10 critical regional transit stops, and for a consultant to provide preliminary design/construction on potential bicycle infrastructure improvements

around those transit stops. The intent is to take the result of this project and immediately seek implementation funds for these projects as a group, a regional set of bike/transit connectivity upgrades.

4. Atlanta Bike Challenge

Mr. Casey Sloan presented on the results from the 2015 Atlanta Bike Challenge. The program is a points based competition, with the overall goal of gaining new bicycle riders and increased bicycle commuting. 2015 was the fifth year that ARC has conducted the challenge. 2014 doubled participation, and 2015 saw a 21% increase in participation. There were 15,805 total trips logged in 2015, a 72% increase over 2014.

One of the biggest takeaways has been that the barriers for bicycle riding largely change depending on the level of experience of the bike rider. For example new riders might not own a bike or don't know safe routes, while an occasional and regular riders don't make the time to ride or are disinclined to ride in bad weather. As for demographics, the current breakdown in gender is fairly evenly split between men and women, but new riders are more predominately women while regular riders are typically men.

There were several comments and questions from the Regional Transit Committee board on how RTC could become more involved or takeover the management responsibilities for the annual Bike Ride to the Capitol.

5. Atlanta Region Transit Vision Project

Ms. Janae Futrell, Senior Principal Planner, gave an update on the transit vision RFP, and that the ARC is currently accepting proposal submissions from consultants. The pre-proposal summary will be posted on the Atlanta Regional Commission's website on or before next Thursday, May 19th, 2016. Final proposals are due from consultants by June 24, 2016. Interviews of finalists will take place in late July. ARC expected the contract to be awarded in September 2016, and the project will likely take 18-24 months to complete.

Mr. Doug Hooker, Executive Director of ARC, requested that the pre-proposal presentation be provided to the RTC group after the meeting.

Mr. Cain Williamson, Division Manager for Mobility Services at ARC, requested the background on how the scope of the project was developed.

Ms. Futrell: The scope focuses on building connectivity between transit agency data inputs and operational performance metrics. Transit operators requested that proposers provide examples of functions of the technology/software being developed.

6. CobbLinc/Cobb Community Transit – Flex Service

Ms. Vida Covington, General Manager of CobbLinc/Cobb Community Transit, gave an update on Cobb's Flex Service that was launched a year ago. The project concept originated from the South Cobb Transit Evaluation and Implementation Plan. The plan found that there were concentrations of limited service areas that have transit needs in the county.

The current flex service serves three zones in a 5-7 square mile area. Riders can request service two hours in advance, or catch the bus at some scheduled times at designated bus stops. Most trip generators for the service are the typical highly sought after destinations like shopping, business, medical and houses of worship.

Lessons learned include making the service easier to understand and use, improving the technology behind the service, strengthening outreach and marketing of the service, as well as patience in giving the service enough time to find success. Ms. Covington cautioned that they want to refrain from adding or trimming the service too prematurely, but are remaining flexible in where the service might be implemented in the future.

Mr. Keith Parker, General Manager of MARTA, mentioned that MARTA recommended six neighborhood circulators for the proposed ½ penny transit tax proposal, and that his staff will be looking to better understand the lessons learned from Cobb's flex service.

7. Updates and Meeting Wrap-up

Mr. Ebran Bingaman, HNTB, presented on this past year's collateral that HNTB created in order to better promote transit, and need for transit expansion, to the state legislature.

Mr. Chris Tomlinson, Executive Director of GRTA/SRTA, asked about what feedback he received from legislators. Mr. Bingaman recalled that legislators sought to better understand how other regions are funding transit compared to Atlanta, and one of the big takeaways was that transit agencies really need local capital investment in order to expand their systems.

Mr. Cain Williamson provided some closing updates on the RTC work: Many projects are moving into maintenance phases, and RTC is launching several new projects. Chairman Lee asked that we add transit visioning and the bike challenge to project update file provided to the committee. He also reiterated that the committee has been able to accomplish so much due to the high level of cooperation and leadership between the local governments and transit agencies.

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

- 5/12/2016 RTC Agenda
- 3/10/16 RTC Meeting Notes and Summary
- Presentations
 - Transit Marketing
 - Bike-to-Ride
 - Atlanta Bike Challenge
 - Cobb Flex Service
- Handouts
 - RTC Project Update File