

**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**PLANNING & EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY**

**September 1, 2016**

The Board of Directors Planning & External Relations Committee met on September 1, 2016 at 10:35 a.m. in the Board Room on the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor of the MARTA Headquarters Building, 2424 Piedmont Road, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Board Members Present**

Robert F. Dallas  
Jim Durrett, *Chair*  
Jerry Griffin  
Freda B. Hardage

MARTA officials in attendance were: General Manager/CEO Keith T. Parker, AICP; Chief Operating Officer Richard A. Krisak; Chief Financial Officer Gordon L. Hutchinson; Chief of Staff Rukiya S. Thomas; Chief Administrative Officer LaShanda Dawkins (Acting); Chief Counsel Elizabeth O'Neill; AGMs Elayne Berry, Wanda Dunham, Robin Henry, Ming Hsi and Benjamin Limmer; Executive Director Ferdinand Risco; Sr. Director Donald Williams; Directors Onyinye Akujuo, Jennifer Jinadu-Wright and Carol Smith; Managers Ed Bishop, Donna DeJesus and Roosevelt Stripling; Executive Manager to the Board Rebbie Ellisor-Taylor; Manager, Executive Office Administration Tyrene L. Huff; Finance Administrative Analyst Tracy Kincaid. Others in attendance Olusina Akingbade, Rhonda Allen, Frederick Askew, Anne Marie Boyd, Jolando Crane, Abebe Girmay, Kenya Hammond, Tamara Hunté, Leeshu Kennedy, Glen Waters.

Also in attendance were Jack Buckingham of MATC; Brittany Lavender of Cobb County Department of Transportation.

**Consent Agenda**

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- a) Approval of the August 4, 2016 Planning & External Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

On motion by Mrs. Hardage seconded by Mr. Griffin, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved by a vote of 3 to 0, with 3 members present.

## **Individual Agenda**

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### **Briefing – Customer Service Observance Overview**

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Mr. Stripling briefed the Committee on MARTA's 2016 Customer Service Month Observance.

#### *2016 Customer Service Month Observance Overview*

- Established in 1992 via Congressional proclamation - Customer Service Week is celebrated annually during the first full week in October
- Recognizes the importance of customer service and honors front line employees for the service that they provide
- The National 2016 Customer Service Observance Week is October 3-7, 2016
- Since 2013, MARTA's observance has been during the entire month of October
- 2016 observance kicks-off a renewed initiative to promote customer service within the Authority and celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the 1996 Olympic Games

#### *2016 Customer Service Month Observance Plan*

- Letter from GM/CEO Kicking Off 1996 Observance – August
- Olympic Themed Competitive Events – September
- 2016 Customer Service Month Observance – October
  - 'Thank You' Breaks
- Top Customer Service Award Reception – October
- Family Fun Day & Fall Festival – October 15, 2016

#### *Commemoration – Official Spectator Transportation System of the 1996 Olympic Games*

- Commemorate the extraordinary service that MARTA employees provided as the official Spectator Transportation System for the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games
- During August and September, MARTA employees and retirees began participating in Olympic themed competition events to mark the 20th Anniversary of the 1996 Summer Games:
  - 3-on-3 Basketball

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- Ping Pong
- Weight Lifting
- Departmental Feud
- 20th Anniversary recognition will culminate on Saturday, October 15th with an Olympic themed Annual Family Fun Day & Fall Festival event

*Top Customer Service Provider Award*

- Benefit to Employees:
  - Boost morale, provide a source of motivation and encourage teamwork among employees and workgroups
- Benefit to the Authority:
  - Improve employee customer service acumen by showcasing and rewarding examples of desired customer service behavior
- Benefit to the Customer
  - Internal and External services are being delivered by employees who are customer-focused on providing positive customer experiences

*Family Fun Day & Fall Festival*

- An Olympic themed celebration of food, fun and fellowship for MARTA Board Members and employees, families and MARTA Retirees
  - Car Show
  - Championship Play-offs
  - Kids Inflatables
  - Cook-out
- Culmination of the 20th Anniversary celebration of MARTA's contribution to the success of the 1996 Olympic Games - Closing Ceremony & Awards

Mr. Durrett commended staff for planning a great Customer Service Observance month.

Mrs. Hardage said she is looking forward to all the activities.

**Briefing – Customer Service Center FY16 Report**

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Mr. Bishop briefed the Committee on the FY16 Customer Service activities reported by the Customer Service Center.

*Customer Service Center*

- The goal of the Customer Service Center is to take steps to improve the customer's experience by:
- Receiving, processing, responding, and tracking customer concerns, suggestions, and commendations
- Responding to immediate problems
- Working with various offices to resolve reoccurring issues

*Customer Service Center Process*

- Customer contacts Customer Service Center (Phone, E-mail, Letter, Walk-in)
- Customer's concern is then entered into complaint resolution software, Helpdesk Expert Assistance Tool (HEAT), and a unique tracking number is assigned to report
- Report is then forwarded to a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for investigation and corrective action
- Information is provided to the Customer Service Center and customer is notified of resolution

*Customer Service Center Summary of Activities FY16*

- 131,185 - Calls Received (515 - Average per Day)
- 18,042 - E-mails Received (71 - Average per Day)
- 13,231- Breeze Cards Registered (52 - Average per Day)
- 22,084 - Reports Documented (87 - Average per Day)

*Customer Service Center Reports by Type*

- Complaints – 45.3%
- Breeze – 39%

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- Requests – 9.9%
- Commendations – 4.9%
- Suggestions – 0.9%

*Authority-Wide Top Complaints*

- Mobility late pickup
- No show (Bus, Mobility, Scheduling)
- Bus Late
- Pass up (Bus)
- Discourteous
- Bus early
- Rail delay

*Breeze Top Categories*

- Balance transfer request – 1,884
- Product load failure (web ticketing) – 1725
- TVM malfunctioning –1672
- Additional fare deducted – 1319
- Product conversion request – 1070
- Loading fare on bus – 841

*Commendations – Top Departments*

- Bus Operations – 405
- Mobility – 402
- Customer Services – 92
- Mobility Reservations – 50
- Rail Operations – 50
- Station Services – 39

Mr. Dallas asked if MARTA provides communications training for operators.

Mr. Krisak said Rail operators have a training manual that includes various scripts. He added that some of the muffled sounds are a result of the equipment. The new railcars will help fix that issue.

### **Briefing – FY16 Ridership Update**

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Mr. Akingbade briefed the Committee on trends in MARTA ridership.

- Total MARTA ridership for FY 2016 was about 133.4M passenger boardings, which was about 2.6M trips (1.9%) lower than FY 2015 and about 4.9M trips (3.5%) less than the projection for the year
- The ridership decline was more pronounced on the Bus system (down 3.3%) than on the Rail system (down 0.8%), while Mobility ridership grew by 5.6%
- Changes in large special events had a negative effect on August ridership, while changes in weather conditions induced a sizable jump in February passengers
- The decline was about the same in the first half of the fiscal year (down 1.9%) as in the second half (down 2.0%) but only was expected in the first half because of predicted increases in gas prices later in the year
- The continued low gas prices in effect during the entire year had a negative effect on MARTA ridership, causing a possible decline of nearly 4.3M passengers
- Ridership dropped in spite of the fact that the full roll-out of Clayton County service contributed some 3.0M Bus and Rail boardings to MARTA's totals
- Clayton-based ridership was about 7% higher than in FY 2009 (the last full year of C-Tran)
- Many riders switched from adding stored trips to their card to adding stored value, but this had little effect on ridership
- Stored time period usage continued its dramatic decline, with 7-Day passes (down 6.6%) and especially University passes (down 19.2%) showing the biggest drops

Mrs. Jinadu-Wright said MARTA has initiated several pilots and incentives to push ridership. One pilot underway involves reducing the cost of the University Pass. MARTA is conducting the pilot with Georgia Tech. Students can purchase passes at \$40, rather than \$68. MARTA will observe whether or not purchase volume increases while cost is reduced. MARTA will also test a discount structure with its Partnership Pass in January. In addition, MARTA is considering other promotions, such as hospitality/hotel guest

passes, Groupon promotions, and weekend passes. MARTA will also continue the Ridership Incentives implemented last fiscal year.

Mr. Griffin asked about Georgia State University.

Mrs. Jinadu-Wright said they were not interested in the pilot.

Mr. Durrett said University of Georgia used to include public transportation in student fees. Perhaps that is something MARTA can look into doing with the universities.

Mrs. Hardage said university transportation fees are typically for campus shuttles.

Mr. Parker said it is something that staff can look into. He added that 2015 was the biggest car buying year and July was the largest gas buying month per capita. Ridership suffered as a result nationwide. He said that MARTA has to continue to find creative ways to bolster ridership. The Board will be hearing more from staff on that.

### **Briefing – MARTA FY 2017 Service Standards**

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Mrs. Crane briefed the Committee on the MARTA FY 2017 Service Standards.

#### *Service Standards*

- Service Standards are adopted no later than 120 days after end of fiscal year to:
- Support MARTA's mission
- Meets mobility needs
- Assess the efficiency and cost effectiveness of services
- Ensure compliance with federal and state requirements

#### *Primary areas for monitoring the quality of service delivery*

- Bus Service Delivery Standards
- Rail Service Delivery Standards
- Transit Amenities
- Other Service Considerations

*Services Monitored*

- Bus and rail headways
  - Time interval between two vehicles
- Bus and rail load factors
  - Indicator of the extent of probable overcrowding
- Productivity standards
  - Minimum productivity a route must maintain
- Bus stop spacing and transit amenities
  - Based on land use characteristics and population densities
  - Amenities include benches that require 15 boardings/day and shelters that require 40 boardings/day
- Transit access
  - Distance a person must travel to gain access to transit service

*Highlights for FY 2017*

- Update MARTA service area population information
- Update MARTA route miles, fleet, and average weekday boardings for FY16
- Off-Peak span of service hours split into two categories
- Evening: 7:00-9:00pm
- Late night: after 9:00pm
- Addition of 30 foot vehicle and associated maximum load factor
- Bus On-Time Performance raised from 78% to 78.5%
- Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) information updated to reflect status in FY16
- Mobility on-time performance raised from 85% to 90% target
- Inclusion of Clayton County under MARTA Mobility eligibility requirements
- Addition of Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) information

*Next Steps*

- Incorporate comments and finalize document
- Request full Board adoption in October

Mr. Griffin said trash receptacles are not reflected in Service Standards. He said that is a huge concern, especially in Clayton County.

Mr. Limmer said MARTA is working with Clayton County and the other jurisdictions on a master agreement for trash receptacles.

Mr. Griffin asked if the master agreement will be incorporated into the Service Standards.

Mr. Limmer said most likely it will be a separate document.

**Briefing – Update to the MARTA and Cobb County Service Coordination Agreement**

Mr. Williams briefed the Committee on the update to the MARTA and Cobb County Service Coordination Agreement.

*Background*

- CobbLinc operates two routes within MARTA's service area:
  - CobbLinc 10: Marietta to Arts Center Station
  - CobbLinc 30: South Cobb to H.E. Holmes Station
- MARTA operates two routes within CobbLinc's service area:
  - MARTA 12: Midtown Station to Cumberland Mall
  - MARTA 201: H.E. Holmes Station to Six Flags (seasonal service)

*CobbLinc's Service Plan Update*

- Modify CobbLinc 10 to improve performance
- Defer stops on Cobb Parkway, south of Akers Mill Road to MARTA Route 12 (service currently duplicated)
- Allows CobbLinc 10 to utilize HOV ramps at Akers Mill Road and Northside Drive

*CobbLine 10 Modifications*

- Operate via Northside Drive and 17<sup>th</sup> Street
- Requests permission to share stops at three locations:
- Northside Drive / Bellemeade Avenue
- 17<sup>th</sup> Street / Village Street
- 17<sup>th</sup> Street / Market Street
- Stops would allow Cobb riders to avoid backtracking

*MARTA Considerations*

- Route 12
  - MARTA potentially gains approximately 380 riders from Cobb Parkway
  - Current capacity can support the net gain in riders from Cobb Parkway
- Route 37
  - MARTA potentially loses approximately 40 riders from Northside Drive and 17<sup>th</sup> Street
  - This loss would be negligible to overall performance

*Requested Action*

- Modify Interlocal Agreement to include permission to accommodate three new CobbLinc stop pairings within MARTA's service area

**Resolution Authorizing an Amendment to the Service Coordination Agreement between Cobb County, Georgia and Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority**

Mr. Williams presented this resolution for Board of Directors' approval authorizing the General Manager/CEO or his delegate to amend the February 7, 2009 Service Coordination Agreement between Cobb County, Georgia and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.

On February 7, 2009 MARTA and Cobb County executed an agreement for Cobb County Route 10 and the MARTA Route 12 service coordination; whereby MARTA provided service from the Cobb County-Fulton County line to the Cumberland Transfer Center located in Cobb County and CCT provided open door service from the Cobb County-Fulton County line and Interstate 75 (I-75) at Mount Paran Road in the City of Atlanta

- Cobb County desires to modify the Service Coordination Agreement to reflect the following changes to Route 10:
  - Elimination of stops along Cobb Parkway/Northside Parkway between Akers Mill Road and I-75 on-ramp
  - Addition of three (3) stop pairs along Northside Drive (new stop locations) and 17th Street (existing MARTA stop locations)
- MARTA conducted an analysis of the proposed modifications and found no significant negative impact to MARTA service/bus routes

On motion by Mr. Dallas seconded by Mr. Griffin, the resolution was unanimously approved by a vote of 4 to 0, with 4 members present.

#### **Other Matters**

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Mrs. Jinadu-Wright announced the following events:

- Public Hearings for December Service Modifications
  - September 19 – Fulton County
  - September 21 – DeKalb County
  - September 22 – Clayton County
- MARTA Fresh Market Seasonal Launch & Fall Festival  
September 23 – Five Points Station

#### **Adjournment**

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The Planning & External Relations Committee meeting adjourned at 11:31 a.m.