

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

**January 11, 2017**

The Board of Directors Planning & External Relations Committee met on January 11, 2017 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**

Jim Durrett  
William F. Floyd  
Jerry Griffin, *Chair*  
Freda B. Hardage  
Alicia M. Ivey  
J. Al Pond  
W. Thomas Worthy

MARTA officials in attendance were: General Manager/CEO Keith T. Parker, AICP; Chief Administrative Officer LaShanda Dawkins (Acting); Chief Financial Officer Gordon L. Hutchinson; Chief Operating Officer Richard A. Krisak; Chief Counsel Elizabeth O'Neill; Chief of Staff Rukiya S. Thomas; AGMs Davis Allen (Acting), Wanda Dunham, Ming Hsi, Benjamin Limmer and Ryland McClendon; Executive Director Ferdinand Risco; Sr. Director Joseph Erves; Directors Johnathan Hunt, Carol Smith and Patricia Sullivan; Manager Alisa Jackson; Executive Manager to the Board Rebbie Ellisor-Taylor; Manager, Executive Office Administration Tyrene L. Huff; Finance Administrative Analyst Tracy Kincaid. Others in attendance Abebe Girmay, Lekha Mukherjee, Debra Oliver, LaTonya Pope, Negesha Stone-Boyd, and Rhonda White.

Also in attendance was Jim Schmid of HNTB.

**Consent Agenda**

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- a) Approval of the December 8, 2016 Planning & External Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

On motion by Mr. Durrett seconded by Mrs. Hardage, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved by a vote of 6 to 0, with 6 members present.

## **Individual Agenda**

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### **Briefing – Update on Regional Transit Committee 2014-2016 Work Program**

Mr. Limmer provided the Committee an update on the 2014-2016 Work Program of the Regional Transit Committee of the Atlanta Regional Commission.

#### *Regional Transit Committee (RTC)*

- RTC is a policy committee of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) that focuses on issues of regional transit planning, funding and governance
- RTC Voting Members
  - ARC Chair
  - Mayor, City of Atlanta
  - Cobb County Commission Chair
  - Cherokee County Commission Chair
  - DeKalb County Chief Executive Officer
  - Douglas County Commission Chair
  - Fulton County Commission Chair
  - Georgia Regional Transportation Authority Board Chair
  - Gwinnett County Commission Chair
  - MARTA Board Representative
  - Paulding County Commission Chair

#### *RTC Dues Structure*

- Total 3-year budget of \$3,000,000
- Member contributions of \$600,000 allow ARC to leverage \$2,400,000 in federal funds for the 3-year work program
- MARTA contributes \$150,000 annually (\$450,000 over 3 years) in in-kind service

#### *2014 - 2016 Work Program*

- Regional Transit Planning
- Regional Transit Coordination

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- Regional Transit Data & Analysis
- Regional Fare Policy & Collection Coordination
- Regional Transit Marketing Analysis & Strategy Development

*RTC Accomplishments*

- Human Services Transportation Plan Update
- Regional Transit Vision
- Regional Trip Planner
- Unified Bus Stop Signage
- Bike to Ride
- Regional Fare Collection
- Regional Marketing Strategy

*Next Steps*

- Develop a new 3-year program (2017-2020)
- Request MARTA commitment of in-kind support
- Summer 2017
- Incoming RTC Chair orientation
- 2017 RTC supported initiatives:
- Support to legislative transit study committees
- Support transit planning and implementation from new funding sources
- Support transit in new managed lanes

Mrs. Hardage asked who is the MARTA Board Representative for the RTC.

Mr. Limmer said Chairman Ashe.

Mr. Parker said that he and Chairman Ashe attend the meetings together at times. In addition, other board members have attended on behalf of the Chairman; i.e., Mr. Daniels and Mr. Durrett.

Mr. Floyd asked does MARTA pay for membership.

Mr. Parker said MARTA pays with in-kind services.

Mr. Griffin asked if the accomplishments have been agreed upon or already completed.

Mr. Limmer said some have been completed while others will continue through 2017 to 2019.

Mr. Floyd asked who is the RTC Chair for 2017.

Mr. Limmer said the Chair has not been confirmed.

Mr. Griffin asked staff to provide that information to the Board when it is available.

### **Briefing – Regional Fare Product Focus Groups**

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Ms. Smith briefed the Committee on the results of the Regional Fare Product Focus Groups.

#### *Recent History of Regional Travel*

- MARTA was first transit agency 100% smart card
- Breeze has 4 pockets for individual types of fare
- CCT, GCT and GRTA use Breeze and own fare media with no transfer to MARTA
- Reciprocal agreement allows free transfers between MARTA and regional providers:
  - Patrons must use a Breeze Card to receive a free transfer
  - MARTA must begin or end the journey
  - Breeze Card must have stored cash value or the specific operator's fare product to begin a regional trip
- Ease of trip planning, travel time, and cost can vary greatly
  - Patrons with cars or convenient access to Xpress routes enjoy comfortable trip into Atlanta for \$3.00 to \$5.00
  - Travel times similar to driving
  - Non-Xpress trip on CCT or GCT local routes with transfer to MARTA can take from 2 to 4 hours - \$5.00 or more
  - Regional local trips may require walks over 2 miles

*Background and Methodology*

- Conduct focus groups with regional bus riders
  - Explore interest in regional fare product for customers using multiple regional systems
- Study objectives
  - Determine rider behavior while using multiple systems
  - Verify challenges of current fare structure
  - Establish perceived benefits and drawbacks of a regional fare product
  - Determine riders' ideal regional fare product
- Conducted four focus groups among patrons
  - Group 1: Patrons of GRTA and other provider(s)
  - Group 2: Patrons of GCT and other provider(s)
  - Group 3: LEP speakers, mix of transit providers
  - Group 4: Patrons of CCT and other provider(s)
- Groups were held on October 18-19, 2016
- Almost all participants used MARTA in addition to the agencies listed above
- Management from agencies fully participated in process

*Multiple System Usage: Results*

- Express or regional local bus service and MARTA rail for weekday work commutes
- LEP Hispanic patrons more likely to use for nonwork trips
- Fare payment – 'it's complicated'
- Many load cash value on Breeze or use Breeze and regional fare media
- Most LEP Hispanic patrons load cash on their Breeze cards

*Regional Fare Product: Questions Posed*

- General definition of a regional fare product provided
- Initial reactions were positive and prompted questions
- When asked to design their ideal regional fare product, interest was strong

*Branding Suggestions*

- Respondents began their discussion about the regional fare product by suggesting names
- Suggestions included:
  - PTP (Public Transportation Pass)
  - One Fare
  - U Pass (Universal Pass)
  - Georgia Transit Pass
  - Regis
  - AI (All Inclusive) Pass
  - Zippy Pass
  - One Pass or Metro One Pass
  - Multi Pass
  - EZ Access Pass
  - Metro Card
  - Multi Use

*Pricing Considerations*

- Focus groups had trouble agreeing on attractive, realistic prices for regional fare
- Agreed that price should not be higher than what they currently pay
- Suggestions included:
  - \$5 per round trip for local routes and rail
  - \$7 to \$9 for round trip on Xpress with local bus or rail
  - \$80 to \$100 for a monthly pass
- Other important price considerations
- All Xpress fares should be the same
- Purchase of round trip should provide 1-day unlimited use

*The Ideal Regional Fare Product*

- A tiered system
- Within each tier, seamless travel on all Atlanta metro transit
- Create method to purchase fare immediately on-line
- Deep discounts on Uber and Lyft for regional travelers
- Include all of the trip and time passes
- Offer a rewards program

*Key Takeaways*

- Paying fare is complicated
- Fare product with seamless travel through region needed
- Regional products access to all
- Standard fare
- First/last mile solutions needed
- Additional research required to test pricing options

Mr. Durrett said the Atlanta Streetcar is missing from this. He added that at some point he would like staff to explore that relationship.

Ms. Smith said most streetcar riders are visitors and use is different from peak times of streetcar use in other cities.

Mr. Griffin asked how were participants chosen.

Ms. Smith said MARTA's research team went out to bus stops and asked customers if they would like to participate. The customers were then fully vetted to ensure that they were qualified to participate.

Mr. Griffin asked who will review the results and make determinations.

Ms. Smith said RTC will – the request came from the Committee.

Mr. Parker said the good news is that the Breeze card provides about 90% of what is needed. MARTA has worked through the most complicated part. He added that it may

become more of an issue when expansion happens; however, there is no need for customers to pay three different entities.

Mr. Pond asked what is the timeline.

Mr. Parker said within two years riders will see real uniformity.

Mr. Durrett asked how many people participated in the focus groups.

Ms. Smith said 40 people participated – 10 per group. The next round will include quantitative assessments, and staff will provide those statistics to the Board.

### **Other Matters**

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Mrs. McClendon announced the following events:

- January 13<sup>th</sup> – 4:00 - 6:30 p.m.  
DeKalb CEO Thurmond Swearing-In Ceremony – Maloof Auditorium
- January 17<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.  
Clayton County Technical Advisory Committee – MARTA
- MARTA Listening Sessions – Atlanta Half Penny
  - January 18<sup>th</sup>
    - 11:00 a.m. – MARTA HQ
    - 7:00 p.m. – MARTA HQ
  - January 19<sup>th</sup>
    - 11:00 a.m. – City of Atlanta Old Council Chambers
    - 7:00 p.m. – City of Atlanta Old Council Chambers
- January 19<sup>th</sup> – 11:30 a.m.  
Fulton County State of the County Address – GWCC, Bldg. C
- Public Hearings for April Service Modifications
  - Community Exchange 6-7pm; Public Hearing 7pm
    - Mon., January 23rd – Fulton County Assembly Hall
    - Tues., January 24th – Clayton County Commission Chambers

- Thurs., January 26th – Maloof Auditorium (DeKalb County)

**Adjournment**

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The Planning & External Relations Committee meeting adjourned at 11:14 a.m.