

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

April 14, 2015

The Board of Directors Planning & External Relations Committee met on April 14, 2015 at 10:34 a.m. in the Board Room on the 6th Floor of the MARTA Headquarters Building, 2424 Piedmont Road, Atlanta, Georgia.

Board Members Present

Roberta Abdul-Salaam
Harold Buckley, Sr.
Robert F. Dallas
Jim Durrett
Jerry Griffin
Freda B. Hardage
Christopher Tomlinson*

MARTA officials in attendance were: General Manager/CEO Edward L. Johnson (Acting); Chief Operating Officer Richard A. Krisak; Chief Financial Officer Gordon L. Hutchinson; Chief Counsel Elizabeth O'Neill; Chief of Staff Rukiya S. Eaddy; AGMs, Wanda Dunham, Robin Henry, Ming Hsi, Reginald Mason, Ryland McClendon, Terry Thompson and Donald Williams (Acting); Executive Director Ferdinand Risco; Directors Lyle Harris and Carol Smith; Managers Alisa Jackson and Richard Wallace; Manager, Executive Office Administration Tyrene L. Huff; Executive Manager to the Board Rebbie Ellisor-Taylor; Finance Administrative Analyst Tracy Kincaid. Others in attendance Davis Allen, Olusina Akingbade, Frederick Askew, Nicholas Gowens, Saba Long, Srinath Remala and Ryan VanSickle.

Also in attendance Charles Pursley, Jr.; Simon Berrebi and Bakari Height of Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech); John Crocker of JTC Analytics; Chuck Deeb of T.Y. Lin International; Alison Tallman of ART in ATL; Makeda Guillory.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the March 5, 2015 Planning & External Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

*Mr. Tomlinson is Executive Director of Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and is therefore a non-voting member of the MARTA Board of Directors

On motion by Mr. Durrett seconded by Mr. Griffin, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved by a vote of 3 to 0, with 4 members present.

Mr. Dallas abstained.

Individual Agenda

FY 2015 Mid-Year Ridership

Ms. Smith briefed the Committee on recent trends in MARTA ridership.

Highlights

- For the first half of FY 2015 MARTA ridership was about 71.29M passenger boardings, about 7.4% higher than the previous fiscal year and about 3.5% above the projection
- This moderate increase in ridership can be attributed to a combination of four factors:
 - Improved weather conditions compared to the same period of FY 2014
 - An increased number of large special events during the first quarter of FY 2015
 - The improved Rail service (shorter weekday headways) instituted during May 2014
 - The Bus "closed door policy" at Rail stations instituted during May 2014, leading to better data capture
- The average fare for the first half of FY 2015 was \$1.0265 (dollars of revenue from boardings divided by number of boardings) which was about a half-cent lower than expected; thus, passenger revenue directly associated with trip-making has shown virtually the same growth as ridership
- By mode, FY 2015 Rail ridership has been 7.7% greater than for the first half of FY 2014, Bus ridership has been up by 7.1%, and Mobility ridership has shown a 2.7% rise
- Against projections for the period, Rail ridership has been 4.2% higher, and Bus boardings have been up by 2.8%, but Mobility trips have been 2.7% lower than expected

- By service day type, average weekday ridership increased 7.0% for the July–December period between FY 2014 and FY 2015; average Saturday boardings have increased 9.8% and average Sunday ridership has increased 11.7%
- By fare payment method, FY 2015 time pass ridership has risen by about 3.8%, while stored value (and Bus cash) ridership has grown about 8.4%, and stored trip boardings have increased 11.2%
- During this period, stored time pass boardings continued their decline in share of ridership, from 45.2% in the first half of FY 2014 to 43.8% in the first half of FY 2015

Root Causes of Ridership Change

- Large Special Events (Net Increase = about 550,000 Boardings):
 - July = +320,000 (Jehovah's Witness gatherings and Beyonce/Jay-Z concert)
 - August = +180,000 (Jehovah's Witness gathering and 2 Chick-Fil-A games)
 - September = +50,000 (Garth Brooks and Outkast concerts, high Falcons ridership)
 - October – December = little change (despite One Direction concert)
- Weather and Holidays (Net Increase = about 200,000 Boardings)
 - July = +160,000
 - August = +45,000
 - September = +10,000
 - October = -95,000
 - November = -130,000
 - December = +200,000
- Improved Rail Service and Bus “Closed Door Policy”
 - Net Increase = +4,185,000 (6-month total, July-December)
 - Value at \$1.03 per passenger boarding

Bus Stop Program Update

Mr. VanSickle briefed the Committee on the activities and major projects of MARTA's Bus Stop Improvement Program.

Current Activities

- Bus stop management is a function of Planning's Special Projects & Analysis branch
- Coordinates bus stop management activities
- Determines stop locations and changes
- Conducts field surveys
 - Customer complaints
 - Operator comments
 - Maintenance checks
 - Service modifications
- Collects data and manages bus stop database in Trapeze

Short-Term Improvements

- Bus Stop Manager (Trapeze module)
 - Goal: Modernize bus stop data management, improve accountability
 - Digitize work orders, field surveys, significantly upgrades bus stop database
 - Will be used to collect data for Bus Stop Inventory project
- Plan Reviews
 - Goal: Coordinates with local governments on road/sidewalk projects during design
 - Adjust stop locations, layout ADA requirements, request provisions for stop improvements
 - Successful efforts on Buford Hwy, Old National Hwy, Ponce de Leon, Atlanta Streetcar

Major Projects: Bus Stop Placement Guidelines

- Goal: Create and document guidelines for MARTA bus stop placement and transit-friendly design
- Addresses a variety of issues related to stop placement
 - Spacing
 - Operating and traffic conditions
 - Accessibility/ADA
 - Pedestrian and bicycle interaction
 - Amenity placement
- Will be used to guide work in plan reviews and for the Bus Stop Assessment Project

Major Projects: Bus Stop Assessment

- Goal: Optimize bus stop locations for spacing, access, and safety
- System-wide assessment using GIS and field surveys
- Stops will be added, removed, consolidated and relocated
- Spacing improvements are expected to improve running times and possibly schedule adherence
- Recent peer efforts at many agencies - WMATA, DART, COTA, Metro St. Louis
- Coordinated effort between MARTA and local partners

Major Projects: Bus Stop Inventory

- Goal: Collect new, more detailed dataset for every bus stop in the system
- Enhance detail on ADA conditions
- Establish photo archive for all stops
- Collect new GPS coordinates
- Will improve quality of bus stop data for all users:
 - Planning
 - IT

- Mobility
- Marketing
- Customer Care Center

Major Projects: Bus Stop Signage Replacement

- Goal: Install new, enhanced signage at all bus stops
- Uses ARC's Unified Bus Stop Design
 - Design paid for by ARC
 - MARTA was technical advisor
 - Signs designed for future MARTA retrofit
 - Regionally-endorsed
- Provides service information, stop number on every stop
 - More customer-friendly
 - Aligns MARTA with common practice among our peers
 - Leverages technology - Trapeze IVR, mobile web, apps

Proposed Timeline

- Projects have been sequenced to support each other
- Projects will be conducted concurrently, "rolling" after each other on a route-by route basis
- Bus Stop Placement Guidelines will be completed in Summer 2015 and Bus Stop Assessment will start shortly after
 - Bus Stop Placement Guidelines: 2015
 - Bus Stop Assessment: 2015-2017
 - Bus Stop Inventory: 2016-2018
 - Bus Stop Sign Replacement: 2016-2018 →

MARTA Army

Mr. Harris briefed the Committee on the Authority's efforts to build partnerships and grassroots collaboration with the public at-large through an initiative called "MARTA Army".

"We Need a MARTA Army"

- The initiative was conceived at the 2014 Transportation Camp South (TCS) at Georgia Tech
- The Marta Army effectively is a community based coalition formed to support the transit system with effective advocacy by educating the public, influencing those who make decisions and to help move transit forward

Telling MARTA's Story

- MARTA has a great story to tell but is limited in numbers and lacks the resources
- Force Multiplier: ... refers to a factor that dramatically increases, hence "multiplies" the effectiveness of a system – MARTA wanted to engage the public at-large to help MARTA do some of things it could not do single-handedly or as quickly

Crowdsourcing Works

- Corporations such as Lay's, Anheuser-Busch and Coca-Cola have successfully used crowdsourcing to engage their respective customers
- MARTA wanted to test crowdsourcing with an under the radar experiment, as a result the Authority joined an ioby (In Our Backyard) competition called "Trick out my Trip" – entrants were given two weeks to design a more pleasurable transit trip/experience
 - MARTA set a fundraising goal of \$4k to work the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition and cyclist enthusiasts to create a way to get more cyclists riding MARTA
 - MARTA met its goal and received a matching donation from Mail Chimp, a local internet company, resulting in a total of \$8k which will be used to build bicycle repair racks around eight MARTA stations – twice as many than originally planned

MARTA Army Feedback

- MARTA Ambassadors program
- Wi-Fi and cell coverage in stations, trains buses
- Encourage MARTA selfies
- Lease stalls for shops in stations

- Embrace innovation; don't be risk-averse
- Pop-up farmers markets at MARTA stations
- Focus on improving experience rather than a campaign to regulate behavior
- The physical station infrastructure is unattractive and sterile; make it more inviting and attractive

What's next for the MARTA Army?

- In conversations with Atlanta-based Uruut to possibly crowdfund customer amenity projects
- Identifying free crowdsourcing sites to galvanize, organize MARTA Army
- Start small and scale up the MARTA Army to focus on S-E-A-T as a way to build ridership revenue

Other Matters

Mrs. McClendon thanked Board Members for supporting "Stand Up 4 Transportation" Day – the event was a great success. A highlight video is posted on www.itsmarta.com.

Mrs. McClendon announced the following upcoming Public Hearings:

- Proposed Bus Service Modifications for August 8, 2015: April 14 & 16
- Proposed Fiscal Year 2016 Operating & Capital Budgets: May 11, 12 & 14

Adjournment

The Planning & External Relations Committee meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kellee N. McDaniel
Senior Executive Administrator to the Board