

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

October 1, 2015

The Board of Directors Planning & External Relations Committee met on October 1, 2015 at 10:32 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
Robert F. Dallas
Jim Durrett
Roderick E. Edmond
Noni Ellison-Southall, *Chair*
Jerry Griffin
Christopher Tomlinson

MARTA officials in attendance were: GM/CEO Keith T. Parker, AICP; Chief Operating Officer Richard A. Krisak; Chief Financial Officer Gordon L. Hutchinson; Chief Administrative Officer Edward L. Johnson; Chief Counsel Elizabeth O'Neill; Chief of Staff Rukiya S. Thomas; AGMs, Joseph Dorsey (Acting), Robin Henry, Ming Hsi, Ryland McClendon, David Springstead (Interim) and Donald Williams (Acting); Executive Director Ferdinand Risco; Sr. Directors Rhonda Briggins and Joseph Erves; Directors John Bayalis and Carol Smith; Managers Stan Binning and Robert H. Thomas; Manager of Executive Office Administration Tyrene L. Huff; Executive Manager to the Board Rebbie Ellisor-Taylor; Finance Administrative Analyst Tracy Kincaid. Others in attendance Davis Allen, Abebe Girmay, Nicholas Gowens, Kenya Hammond, Linda James, Leeshu Kennedy, Don Lawrence, Srinath Remala, Toni Thornton and Dansby Wade.

Also in attendance Jack Buckingham of MATC; Marissa Gunther of Georgia Cares; Andrea Simmons of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

Consent Agenda

- a) Approval of the September 3, 2015 Planning & External Relations Committee Meeting Minutes

On motion by Mr. Durrett seconded by Mr. Griffin, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0, with 5 member present.

Individual Agenda

Briefing – FY2015 End of Year Ridership Highlights

The Committee was briefed on the Authority's FY2015 End of Year Ridership highlights and trends.

- FY 2015 MARTA ridership was 136M passenger boardings, approximately 5.3% higher than the previous fiscal year but 0.7% below projection
- This moderate increase in ridership can be attributed to a combination of four factors:
 - Improved weather conditions compared to FY 2014, especially in January
 - 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
- Drastically lower gas prices from November through the end of the year kept the ridership increase from being larger
- By mode, FY 2015 rail ridership was 5.5% greater than for FY 2014; bus ridership rose 5.2% and Mobility ridership showed a 5.0% gain
- Against projections for FY 2015, Rail ridership was 0.5% low, Bus boardings were down by 2.8% and Mobility trips were virtually on target
- By service day type, average weekday ridership increased 4.1 % for the fiscal year, average Saturday boarding's were up 4.5% and average Sunday ridership rose 6.3%
- By fare payment method, FY 2015 time pass ridership rose 2.8% from the previous year, stored value ridership grew 6.8% and stored trip boarding's increased 9.0%

Dr. Edmond asked when did MARTA raise the price of the 30-Day pass.

Mr. Thomas said the price of the 30-day pass was increased in FY10, 11 & 12.

Dr. Edmond said he would like to see the money lost and gained by the price change.

Mr. Thomas said it may be difficult to judge because there were a number of intervening factors such as the recession and service cuts.

Mr. Tomlinson asked about cash collected on buses.

Mr. Thomas said that the cash collected has been steadily decreasing over the last four (4) years.

Mr. Durrett asked how many people total did MARTA carry.

Mr. Thomas said there were 136M boardings in FY15, and 129.1M boardings in FY14 – an increase of 6.9M

Mr. Parker said before fuel prices decreased MARTA had a significant increase in passengers – approximately one million new customers per month. In talking to transit agencies around the country, they were experiencing a dramatic decrease in ridership. However, MARTA still ended the year with an increase in ridership whereas other agencies experienced declines.

Mr. Dallas asked if Atlanta Streetcar boardings are included in MARTA ridership.

Mr. Parker said no, the City of Atlanta is its own grantee and will therefore capture streetcar ridership.

Briefing – Legislative Update

The Committee was briefed on the current state of legislation impacting the Authority at both the Federal and State levels.

Federal

- Current MAP-21 legislation expires on October 29th
- The House authorized a continuing resolution last night to fund the Federal government through December 11th, following the Senate's suit from earlier in the week
- 2016 Senate THUD Appropriations continue to languish as budget talks continue against the new 12/11 deadline

- As of early September the DOT projected the Highway Trust Fund will remain solvent through July 31, 2016, protecting MARTA's formula grants and most other federal funding until then
- Speaker of the House John Boehner (R/OH-08) announced last week that he will resign his seat at the end of October
- Senate passed the DRIVE Act prior to August Recess
 - 6-year bill, only funded for three years with no "pay fors" for second half
 - Over the 6 year lifespan of the bill, transit would see a modest increase in funding (75 / 25)
 - TIGER funding renewed, but only on a one-time basis
 - TIFIA expanded to include TOO, but overall funding reduced from \$1B to \$300M/year
 - New Starts reward projects with private-sector investment
- House has not taken up its own bill; voiced displeasure with Senate version
 - 3-year bill being discussed, mark-up pushed to October
 - DOT funding estimate; other complications to getting bill this year

2015 Federal Advocacy

- MARTA has engaged every office of the Georgia Congressional Delegation on these issues as well as:
 - THUD appropriations outreach
 - Long-term funding options
 - Transportation Security Grant Program
- Government Relations engaged the following offices during the August Recess:
 - Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA)
 - Senator David Purdue (R-GA)
 - Rep. Buddy Carter (R/GA-01)
 - Rep. Tom Price (R/GA-06)
 - Rep. Rob Woodall (R/GA-07)
 - Rep. Austin Scott (R/GA-08)
 - Rep. Jody Hice (R/GA-10)

- Staffers from all remaining delegate offices

State

- Government Relations is working toward finalizing MARTA's 2016 Legislative Agenda and will present to the Planning & External Relations Committee in November for resolution
- Prospective 2016 Agenda
- Transit Funding
 - HB 106 and HB 170 open the option for county-based T-SPLOST referendums
 - Half-penny option for any T-SPLOST passed in member jurisdictions to provide dedicated funding
 - For expansion purposes only
 - Additional revenue would match the life of the MARTA penny
 - Referendum can be held November 2016
- TOD/Concessions
- Motor Fuel Tax Exemption for Transit (\$2M/year)
- Standardized Judicial Procedures for Customer Wayside Intrusion
- Other: clean-up language, etc.

Briefing – Human Trafficking

The Committee was briefed on MARTA's Human Trafficking Internal Awareness Campaign.

Federal Directive

- President Obama directed several federal agencies to lead national efforts to eliminate human trafficking
- 55,000 employees and 20,000 contractors received human trafficking awareness training
- Urged all transportation agencies to get involved

Georgia's Solution

- **HB 141**
 - **Requires certain employers post signs in conspicuous places**
 - **Signs inform victims how to obtain help and services**
 - **Fines range from \$500 to \$5000**

MARTA's Action Plan

- **Employee Education Process**
 - (1) Georgia Bureau of Investigations will educate front line management**
 - (2) Front line management will educate front line employees**
 - (3) All employees: Awareness material through the MARTAstop, Authority-wide email, employee information brochures, employee pocket guides, and human trafficking awareness flyers**
 - (4) Human trafficking awareness video will be posted on MARTAnet for employees**
 - (5) Human trafficking signs, as required by Georgia Law, will be posted inside rail stations**
 - (6) Human trafficking signs will be posted inside employee bathrooms in phases**

Benefits to MARTA

- **Complies with law**
- **Enhances relationship with stakeholders**
- **Promotes corporate responsibility**
- **Manages potential legal risks and threat to reputation**
- **Moreover, it is the right thing to do**

Mr. Griffin commended MARTA staff for the campaign. He noted that most people are not aware of this issue.

Other Matters

Mrs. McClendon announced the following events:

- COMTO Summit & Scholarship Luncheon – October 2
- APTA Annual Meeting – October 4-7
- MARTA Family Fun Day – October 10
- MARTA Hispanic Heritage Celebration – October 16
- MARTA Disability Employment Awareness – October 23
- WTS Luncheon – October 29
- ARC State of the Region Breakfast – October 30

Mrs. McClendon provided a status update to the Committee on MARTA's Ridership Initiative.

- The Ridership Rewards program had a bit of a slow start; the MARTA Marketing is putting out more messages to the public to encourage riders to check the trip balance and redeem their rewards
- Free Ride Day was successful – Rail ridership increased 21%; Bus ridership increased 42%
- Staff will complete an assessment of the programs to determine the feasibility of moving forward

Adjournment

The Planning & External Relations Committee meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.