MARTA MAC MEETING

07/12/2022

10:00-11:30 A.M.

>> Okay. Denise, I think we should go ahead and get started if all of the MARTA MAC members are on.
>> Yes, all the panelist are here.
>> Okay. Well good. Okay, we'll get started. My name is Robert Smith, I'm the chair of the MARTA advisory committee, and I call the MAC committee to order. Today is July 12th, 2022, and we are going to have self‑introductions of all the of MAC members and then we will ask the MARTA members to introduce themselves, but let's get started with the MAC members that are on this call. Would you introduce yourself, please.
>> Courtney, can you record, please. Thank you.
>> Good morning. This is Brad Fain.
>> Okay.
>> This is Bob Lossie, representing people in wheelchairs.

>> Okay. Bob, thank you.
>> This is (indiscernible) living council representing the disability communities.
>> Okay. Any other committee members? Hearing none, I'm going to ask the MARTA employees to introduce themselves.
>> Good morning.

>> Good morning. Okay. Thanks, Yvette. Good morning. This is Miles.
>> Okay, Mr. Miles Turpin. Okay.
>> Good morning. This is Vedette Shepherd, director of bus transportation.
>> Okay. (Indiscernible), Ms. Shepherd.
>> Thank you.
>> Any other MARTA employees?
>> Good morning.

>> Yeah, this is Keith Chambers director of mobile transportation.
>> Okay. Mr. Chambers, and I think that was someone else trying to get in as well.
>> Yes. Good morning.

>> Go ahead.

>> My name is -- I'm sorry. Good morning. Yes. My name is Angeletta Armour, the customer service field rep at mobility at Brady.
>> Okay.

>> Good morning. My name is Shantell Davis, and I am the office administrator for Mobility.
>> Okay. Thank you, Ms. Davis. Is that it, Denise? That's all?
>> That's everyone we have on the list as a panelist. We have others who are on there but they're muted: Jonathan Weaver. We have Kim Mitchell aboard. We have Kevi Lee, Cus Talbert and Shandra James and Roosevelt Strickland.
>> Anyone have the ability to talk?
>> They can identify to raise their hand if they want to. And I'm Denise Brown, I'm the equity administrator in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
>> Thank you, Denise. With that out of the way, we got a very short agenda today. There were no subcommittees, and we're going to have our own -- Bob Lossie and Ms. Paula Nash is not with us today, and there's no comments from her. And we'll just move right on into the report from Mr. Bob Lossie and Ms. Jordan Hall to talk to us about the S -- let me get this right -- the project that they were involved in, and we're going to let Ms. Hall go first. Ms. Hall.
>> That was -- everyone, that was the trip to Statler in Salt Lake City.
>> Hi, everyone. It was a wonderful trip. The purpose of the trip was for us to be able to see MARTA's bus design, what it will require, what MARTA will be like. The experience was so interesting. They created a virtual reality goggle system for us to be able to view what it would be like getting on and off the train accessing it. They even had other areas where we could look at the gears underneath the train. We could see what it be like to be the driver. They really went above and beyond the ADA standards. I personally have never been in a train with so much room to where I feel safe because right now the buses can -- I mean, not the bus, I'm sorry, the trains can feel extremely crowded and cramped in. It is extremely wide and the accessible areas are very clearly marked. The colors that everybody voted on were excellent. And one thing that I really like because I don't have depth perceptions so it's hard for me to distinguish between curb cuts and flat surfaces is they're very clearly not just marked, but the way that the material is, it was very easy for me to tell. They also included phone chargers for our cell phones which was a great feature to have. They were receptive to any of our feedback. They really wanted to know like our full experience on where they could improve, but, I mean, it was wonderful. The only suggestion that I really had to offer for them is maybe adding some Braille in some places. We also had different users have different ideas about the heights for the hand rails. But for me personally, the hand rail height that they showed us in the model worked extremely well, so I'm very excited. I don't think I've seen anything like what they're doing, and I've been to several other states to look at their transit systems and before, the most accessible one that I had seen was probably the metro in D.C., and this felt even more accessible than the metro, so it was very exciting. But they're very open to feedback. The company was fantastic that they're working with. You can just tell how much thought they put into accessibility. And I just thank -- I'm thankful for the opportunity to have been able to go. It was really, really great. And that's my update.
>> Okay. We'll hear next from Mr. Bob Lossie.
>> Okay. First of all, I'd like to give a profound huge thank you to MARTA for inviting me to attend this meeting and the opportunity to give my input. Statler went all out to create this physical environment as Jordan had mentioned virtual reality, but they built life‑sized models for it to actually experience the phases as you were saying. And we were just totally emersed in so many things. It was a very intense four days, full four days. And, you know, I anticipated being able to meet and speak to a lot of the Statler people. Something that was on top of that was I didn't anticipate the richness that I got spending so much time with the MARTA administrators and different department heads and learning so much more about MARTA through them. And on top of that, you know, having the interactions. Significant number of the people that worked in the factories as well as in the offices in Salt Lake City were European, and so I had great discussions with them about their transit systems, about their lifestyles and their cities and the direction that Atlanta I believe is actually going. And just have to add this, ironically, I had just listened to a Ted talk this past weekend and the subject was about how human beings have this trait that's unique to some animals that a collaboration, we work together. When we -- you know, some people are very smart in math, some people are very smart in design, some people are very smart in construction, but it's when everybody brings their best together that we have been our best, that we have created the most magnificent things in the word. And that this was an experience was. Statler, the MARTA MAC, the international. And again, a quote that I love of James Baldwin, an author, was that children will do -- "children will seldom do what we tell them to do but they will always mimic us," and we never outgrow that. And our country is so divided right now and fighting on everything I think MARTA and Statler and the current -- many of the current people in Atlanta are setting the example for others to follow where we're working together and collaborating and doing this wonderful city where we're going to have the public transportation and the walkability. And one thing I'd like to add too is that I really, really am appreciative with the trains of the new design is being a guy in a wheelchair, an old guy in a wheelchair, I feel very vulnerable, and the new trains, four of the cars -- there are eight cars through the whole train, four of the cars have no doors between them so you don't have that feeling of isolation, you kind of feel weireded out in one car with somebody, you can see people in the other two cars. You can briefly travel even in the wheelchair from car to car even when the train is moving, not that it would be recommended. And currently there is a red button on the trains have right now where that's near the place where somebody in a wheelchair would park. If you're having a problem, you push the button and you speak to the train operator. Now when you push that button that button, it turns on a TV screen, a monitor, inside the train operators cabin, and he can see you when you're talking to him. So it just brings so much comfort and safety. That's the thing that I loved the most about it all. And, you know, I could go on and on about the many things, and as Jordan was saying, they were so receptive and so open. It was just inspiring.
>> Thank you. Okay, thank you Bob and Ms. Hall. And -- by the way, Ms. Hall and Bobby is on our accessibility committee, and they were chosen to go to bring back the comments from the experience they had in Salt Lake City and want to thank them both and thank MARTA for letting them have that experience. At this time, are there any questions of Ms. Hall or Mr. Lossie?
>> I don't see any hands.
>> Okay. Okay, then we'll move on, and thank you so much Ms. Hall as well as Mr. Lossie for that report. And we'll move on now to our -- like I said, since Ms. Paula Nash who is the executive director of diversity and inclusion, she's not with us today and she's not -- there is no remarks, so we'll move on to the next item. MARTA update rail operations and elevator and escalator update by Mr. Keith Chambers. Mr. Chambers.
>> Yeah. Thank you, sir. The project only has two elevators out for rehabilitation right now. Number 18 at Lenox which is in the Sales Force tower in the parking garage, but it also has number 19 next to it for use so there's no work around for that. Peachtree Center number 3 at the platform to the concourse on the south side just started rehab, and the alternate is to use the north end. And this will be back in service by September 9th. Next Monday we'll be starting on Kensington elevator with mobility support to Indian Creek, the same route that we had for the Indian Creek elevator that was completed last week one week early. Hopefully they can complete Kensington a week early also. And I would like to extend my appreciation to the mobility group for supporting the elevator outages as we would not be able to do that without them. That would be ten weeks without access to the platforms, and I just can't thank them enough. We came a long way from the beginning of this project, we have no complaints, you know, going forward. We're about three‑quarters a way through the elevator replacement project so we're getting there. We're seeing good results with up times and everything going on with that. So and also starting next week are the installations of the cube remote monitoring devices and all of the vertical transportation equipment including elevators, escalators, and I spoke briefly about this last time. And this will cut on the elevator down time as it will automatically create a call to repair the elevator when it goes out of service for any reason. So the time between when we usually the equipment goes down and somebody actually reporting it will be eliminated. It will automatically do it. We'll have Shindler, you know, get the call, respond as they normally would. And some of these cases the time between these could be anywhere from a couple of hours to possibly a whole day. So this is really going to cut down on that, on the down time of the elevators without anybody really having to do any more than that. And that's being installed by the project team as we did a contract modification and we added this to the project because it is such a worthy remote monitoring system, so this will help out big time. And I'd like to say it's real refreshing to hear Jordan and Bob's your input on the trip. It sounds like the whole train system is really going to change for technology, safe safety, design. The reports you gave really put a picture in my head of what is to come, and I can't wait to see that. So I'm glad you guys enjoyed your trip. I'm glad that you were, you know, taken care of and shown all the ins and outs of what we're looking forward to come. So thanks for that report, and that's all I've got.
>> Okay. Any questions of Mr. Chambers? And I have one question, Mr. Chambers. I hope by the modernization of the escalators and elevators that we haven't had any more incidents of people with disabilities trying to get on the escalators with wheelchairs or walkers or any such thing as that because we tried to do our best to get the word out to the disability community that they are not to do that. And if they do need service where there's an elevator or escalator that's out, they have a way to make it known to MARTA personnel so they can come and address that situation. So I want to thank you for that.
>> I appreciate that. I appreciate you guys extending that -- the notice because it is fairly frequent, and it has happened a couple of times since our last meeting, but, like you said, I hope that kind of goes away here soon because that is a dangerous situation they put themselves in. But --
>> Yes, it is. Okay. Well, thank you, Mr. Chambers. Didn't have any questions, so we'll move on to bus operations. I think that's Ms. Shepherd is the rollout of the electric buses. Ms. Shepherd.
>> Yes. Good morning, everyone, and thanks for the warm welcome on this Tuesday.
>> Good morning.
>> With respect to the electric vehicle, there were a series of simulated dry runs on the Route 102, Block 4, running out of the Laredo bus facility. So we did that for a period of about a month, and there was a go live date of Sunday, May the 1st, and this vehicle runs only Monday through Friday, not on the weekends, and it is only on the Route 102 at this time. And that bus is pretty much placed on different blocks each day of the week. We also have the management team that talks to the operators on a regular basis and all we heard was positive input about this vehicle. So far so good. It's really on probably about two total months and, you know, so we look forward to MARTA going full force with it. So that's where we are the electric vehicle. And with respect to the Mobileye Shield is a collection avoidance pilot program that we currently are returning right now. We are in the early stages of this pilot program where MARTA has ten buses outfitted for this device, and it's on five new flyer buses and five (indiscernible) buses. So we're looking right now to at least get a jump start on at least a 90‑day training. So so far right now, the training has began with the bus transportation training department to familiarize themselves, and that began on July the 5th. Also, we do have a subscription for about 12 months but we would like to die the 90‑day training with all the operators before we go through the next steps, and so far the training is going very well. The training instructors as well as the operators are really enjoying what they see. We look forward to a reduction in collisions. I've had a chance to see the video myself of how this works, and I think this is one of the best technologies that we could ask for collision devices and just to point out to you what that looks like is that with the Mobileye Shield there is a left side display, a right side display, and a center display. And just to touch on a couple things, you have a yellow illumination for the operator to see which will detect pedestrians or cyclist moving in front of the vehicle as the vehicle is moving. So what you'll see is the yellow illumination. But if it gets serious, more serious than that, you will hear the red alert if a pedestrian or cyclist is in front of a moving vehicle with possible contact. So we look forward to this program. We are collecting questionnaires with the operators as we get deeper into the training. All ten buses that are out fitted for this Mobileye device will also have questionnaires assigned to those vehicles so that we can gather the data. And that's where we are with both of these two, and if you have any questions for me.
>> Are there any questions?
>> Bob Lossie. I do have a couple of questions, Ms. Shepherd. First of all, thank you. Wonderful statement. Thank you for explaining what the Mobileye Shield does and I can see how that's extraordinarily good for everybody. One thing I'm curious about because I'm anxious to get off the fossil fuels, in the electric buses you said there were many positive reports. What type of a report does somebody get or comment do somebody give about their electric buses?
>> The buses are very quiet. So for the operators they pretty much enjoy that. It's a new vehicle so you don't have as much of a sound‑off as you do with the traditional buses. And they just really enjoy. You know, it's a combination of how quiet it is and just that it is a new vehicle. The customers appear to be very pleasant, you know, when they get onto the vehicle because they realize this is a new vehicle as well. So just brings about a positive day for the operators and that's pretty much what you hear from them.
>> I can see where not being subjected to the rattling noise and vibration can really add a quality of life when you're having to do public transportation and being more rested once you get to your destination. Thank you.
>> You're welcome.
>> Ms. Shepherd, this is Robert. I would like an ask a question since you spoke of it being so quiet and when it roll up to a stop for blind and visually impaired individuals, will they be able to detect the bus? Will it emit some type of sound because this is something that we have been speaking about across the country for blind people to know that these buses are approaching so that it won't blind people will not have a problem in knowing well, oh, this is the bus that's approaching since it's so quiet. What have you done in that area or have some comments have you received some comments from individuals that are blind or visually impaired?
>> We have not received any comments up to date, but if I'm not mistaken -- Miles, correct me if I'm wrong -- I believe that when the bus gets ready to stop that there is a sound.
>> Yes, you're correct. Yes, you are correct.
>> Mr. Miles, could you speak up a little bit. We hear you a little bit. I don't think if anyone else is having difficulty in hearing you. Somehow you can get the volume up a little bit
>> And I think he said yes, there is a sound when the vehicle gets ready to stop.
>> And when you say stop do you mean when it pulls up to a bus stop or when it just brakes?
>> That's a good question. So I'll have to dig a little bit further in that. I'm not sure if it's -- I would think it's the braking itself, not just a stop, but I believe it is attached to the breaking system, but I will follow up with that, you know, possibly on our next meeting.
>> Just speculating a little bit. I think I noticed that the when the bus is going to stop at the bus stop that all the flashers turn on. Turns the right turn signal it's pulling over and wait a minute that can be when they're going to drop the ramp all the flashers go.
>> All the bells and whistles goes off.
>> I'm interested in knowing -- I know after this is a trial period, but are any of these buses now at operating at out of any of the stations now?
>> It is operating out of the Route 102 only, and as we continue to grow, it will probably roll out on other routes.
>> Okay, what station does it roll out of 102?
>> Give me one second. I'll look that up and tell you.
>> I think it goes to Ponce De Leon or North Avenue.
>> Yeah, that would be the North Avenue station.
>> Yep.

>> I'll tell you in just one second. That one is actually rolling out of Edgewood, Candler Park and North Avenue station.
>> Okay, both. It visits both stations?
>> Both stations, yeah.
>> Okay. 102?

>> Uh‑huh.

>> Okay. I'll make it a point that I try that bus.
>> I'm sorry. This is Denise. I wanted to ask Vedette aren't the buses announcing the route when it pulls up to the bus stop?
>> Yes. Uh‑huh.
>> Okay.
>> Okay. So, as I was saying, you know, I know this is something that the blind of this station is asking about because we asked about the same thing when it came to quiet cars that a lot of them -- although manufacture was making it, we wanted to be at the table when they was building these cars. Not that we were against them, but we use our ears to cross streets and stuff like that so we wanted to know what vehicle is coming. We know the motorized vehicles the combustive engines you can hear them, but the quiet buses, you know, they don't emit a sound so that you'll know that they are coming so that you can approach the stop. That's what we were talking about as well as crossing streets at the proper time to notice whether a bus is coming or not. So that's why I asked the question about it emitting some type of sound to knowing that it's approaching the stop --
>> Yes.
>> -- where the person is.
>> Robert, if I could ask something to clarify that. When you said a sight impaired person is crossing a street, you're not necessarily talking about a bus stop, you're talking about when you cross the street anywhere that you can hear a sound coming.
>> Combustible engines you can hear, but the electric vehicles you can't unless they emit some type of sound, so that's why I was inquiring about the buses. So normally a person would be at a stop and you would know -- you could hear the other buses coming be that the gas buses or the diesel buses, you can hear them quite well when they are approaching, but I plan to check it out myself. Are there any other questions for Ms. Shepherd?

>> Mr. Chairman, can you hear me now?
>> Yes, sir. Go ahead, Mr. Turpin.

>> Yeah. Just to follow up...
>> Miles, your volume went down again.
>> About three words were loud and then you chopped off.
>> Yeah.
>> How about now? Now?
>> Still very back far in a canyon.

>> How about now?

>> Worse.
>> Go ahead. I'll try to work on this.
>> Well, I heard go ahead.
>> What were you going to say Miles that it's attached to the braking system that some sort of sound?
>> Yes, correct. There's an emitter, a tone that is attached. Remember it works in conjunction with what Vedette had explained as well with the mobilized system so when we get a whole fleet or as we continue to get the electric buses, the operator would (indiscernible) brakes and pick up a customer, that's where then you'll hear that emitting or emitter, the tone. And also to your question, Mr. Lossie, when -- if a bus is approaching a crosswalk and say you're crossing before, as the electric bus approaches to stop, you know, there's a front vehicle and the mobilized system detects that the pedestrian walking across, regardless if it's, you know, a person that's visually impaired or wheelchair, it doesn't, you know, detect it, it just detect an object in front of them and it will emit a sound as well. So they put that both on there to what Chairman Smith stated and Ms. Shepherd because the vehicle is so quiet and when you, you know, you actually will be walking or looking and you wouldn't even realize a large vehicle just pops up out of nowhere. A safety component that is industry standard, and Vedette and I, we're working to make sure we're going to get all the safety bells and whistles with that. And that's important too. We're doing the big bus first, right, and within the next I want to say two maybe three years, we're actually looking at the -- for cutaways for the mobility buses as well. This is why this is a very important time for us.
>> Okay. Are there any other questions for Ms. Shepherd?
>> One just really fast comment, when you say the bus is on the Route 102, there are -- there may be eight buses doing that loop all at the same time so you can't count on catching the 102 every time, it's just the one electric bus is part of the (indiscernible) the loop; is that correct?

>> That is correct. So you may have Monday -- so there's five blocks out there so Monday maybe just run on the Route 102, Block 1. So it's on different blocks every day.
>> Okay. Didn't know that. Okay.
>> Yeah.
>> Any questions from any other MAC members or the audience?
>> I see Robert. I see Jonathan Weaver. I don't know if he has a question. Courtney, can you unmute Jonathan Weaver?
>> No, I just added the Route 102 North Avenue (indiscernible) if you're looking under MARTA app.
>> Okay. Thank you.
>> Okay. Is that it?
>> I see no other hands.
>> Okay. Okay. Thank you, Ms. Shepherd.
>> thank you.
>> Okay. Next we'll have is it Ms. LaHoya Blount.
>> LaHoya.
>> LaHoya. I'm sorry. LaHoya Blount. Ms. Blount.
>> Good morning MARTA accessibility.

>> Good morning.

>> Good morning. My name is Angeletta Armour, and I'll be providing --

>> Okay, Ms. Armour.

>> Yes. My name is Angeletta Armour, and I'll be providing you with the ADA link customer complaints for the month of May 2022. Okay. We'll start with the authority‑wide complaints at 500. Of those 500 complaints, we have 226 ADA link complaints which is 45.2%. Of the 226%, we have 160 ADA verified complaints which is 70.8%. Next we have a breakdown by department. Starting with mobility at 213; mobility reservations at 3; bus operations at -- mobility reservations at 5, I'm sorry. Correction. Bus operations at 3; mobility maintenance at 2; customer service, lost and found and bus maintenance all received 1. Next we have top complaint categories. Late pick up, 89; late drop off, 52; no‑show, 14; discourteous, 10; and tone of voice at 10. Next we have top non‑mobility complaints. Tone of voice, 3; incorrect reservation, 2; change or cancel pick up notice, 2; and discourteous at 1. And last but not least we have accommodations. Authority‑wide we received 61. Of those 61 we have 33 for mobility which is 54.1%. So kudos to the mobility department for having over half of those accommodations for the authority for the month of May. This concludes my report. Are there any questions at this time?
>> Bob Lossie. I have a question. Looking at the March, April and May, it seems that the numbers have gone up significantly for May and the problem is that because ridership is going up or there's a lot more attention in the city, or do you have any reasoning?
>> Right. So ridership have increased significantly in addition to staff shortage, so they're working to increase the staffing throughout the contractors areas. So we are working on, you know, increasing the staff but there is a significant amount of increase in ridership.
>> And of these complaints, these are the ones that has risen to the level of ADA complaints?
>> Yes.
>> And do you see -- I know Ms. Blount knows more about this, maybe you do too, do you -- even what Mr. Lossie has said about the increase in ridership and the shortage of operators because that is known now it's a shortage, and they are working on that currently to get that done, and I know we'll hear from Mr. Turpin in a minute about that, but MARTA is noticing these things and trying to fix these situations or correct them sort of speak by trying to get more employees so that they can -- they will be able to accommodate large number -- the increase of individuals utilizing the service. Since we see the complaints, a lot of the complaints are rising now so.
>> Yeah. I'll answer that for you, Chairman Smith, and (indiscernible). So in a nutshell, yes, you are correct. For the bus operations as a whole with fixed route and mobility, we're like in the middle of the storm, if you may, with the operator shortage. Myself, Ms. Shepherd, even rail side working and our deputy chiefs, we have some measures or things in play that we actually have been addressing the operator shortage. The significant difference also between -- (indiscernible) was able to curtail their service. They have the capabilities of doing that, right, so let's say (indiscernible) currently they're on a Saturday schedule, right. They're not a full weekday schedule; however, they're going to be making some adjustments here for our August markup. For the mobility side, we weren't able to do that, right, through COVID, and currently now, we never curtailed or dialed back service simply because of the ridership. And if you remember, Mr. Chairman, over a year ago when I got here I forecasted out myself and my team that we were going to be -- just on a ridership base purpose side of it, we were going to come out of this COVID kind of thing with a heavily stacking increase of ridership, and that has come to fruition. So with that, we put some things in play, myself, working with mobility leadership and D.C. Humphrey and D.C. Wright. We're looking at supplemental service to support mobility better, right. So we're on average we're having difficulties supporting anywhere between 200 to 300 trips a day, and we know that going into the summer, and we're looking at some things currently right now with our contractors and our providers to add additional support so that we can mitigate, right, the increase. And let me just tell you where we're at is right now we're at 12K a week ridership. And to give you a comparison, during the two years with COVID, we were averaging anywhere between 8K to 9K ridership in a week. Now we're at 12K legitimately and we're looking probably by the end of September to reach 14K. So obviously, this is a very high priority item for us, so we can implement some supplemental ideas or items to help mitigate we see the increase of ridership right now. That's what we're going through right now intensively, and I'm hoping we're going to have some type of solution hopefully by the end of August, probably mid‑August, actually. That means that obviously one of those solutions we'll be adding on another operator with our prior configuration. That goes with the DV on it with First Transit. That's in play, and then we're going to also be adding some possible supplemental service with TNZ's, right, meaning Uber, Lyft, that kind of thing. So hopefully that answered your question.
>> Yes, sir. And will this be coming soon, the supplementary service that you spoke about?
>> Yes. Remember once we get, you know, because there's a funding source attached with it. Along with my mobility budget and then once we get the go ahead obviously I have to -- I'll have to present to the Board to get Board approval. And I've already got (indiscernible) with that and what we need, so once we're given the green light, we'll do that quickly. And then hopefully with Board approval -- and remember there's some risk management factors involved in it as well because we still have to look at the liability piece. And not to go too deep in the weeds, we also have to meet an FTA requirement that's involved, you know, Title 6, also (indiscernible) 49 components, but my staff -- Ms. Kalesha Davis, Mr. Weaver and Eric Knowles -- we've already done the research on that, and so we're good to go, it's just a matter of from the C‑Suite analysis getting approval on that end, and I think we should be ready to go.
>> Okay. Because I think they had employees that once before you came and said that they will be dealing with the ambulatory patrons, and especially during peak periods in the morning and the evening which was to help improve the on‑time performance of MARTA mobility. So I'm hoping that the Board do see the benefit in having this supplementary service to minimize the number of complaints that comes in because of vehicles because there are a lot of people who will need the bigger vehicles for the lift, but the ambulatory ones who need to get to their appointments or anywhere else they need to go would be welcome by a MARTA mobility to help cut down the complaints. We have you on the -- already up. Ms. Turpin. You could go ahead and do the MARTA mobility update, and I want to thank the young lady. I forgot her name again.
>> Angeletta.
>> Pardon?
>> Angeletta.
>> Angeletta.
>> Yes, Angeletta
>> Okay, Angeletta. We want to thank you for your report. We didn't have any other comments, I don't think, questions to you. So we want to thank you for that. And now MARTA mobility update.
>> Can I ask just one more question about this?
>> On which to Ms. Angeletta? Mr. Turpin. He's fin to do the MARTA mobility update.
>> Well, about the problem MARTA's doing, one other quick question, I understand about the harder to find people to work and I understand about COVID, people getting back into the routines again, but is it true that another factor is the rise of the price of gas that more people are using MARTA in general using public transportation and yet another factor that you're having to deal with?
>> Yeah. So I think that's a great question, Mr. Lossie. There's a component with that on the fixed route side of the desk operation. As we all know the price of gas and inflation has greatly affected nationwide pretty much, right, and so there's been a uptick in transit ridership for the (indiscernible) side and even our side, not so much mobility because remember a lot of our subscription service and they understand the routine. The other component my back office that Ms. Shepherd and I deal with is remember along with the shortage piece of it, there is a union component that we have to deal with as well, right. So there's some work rules, things of that nature, seat time, drive time, right, that we have to adhere to that falls in alignment with FTA and GDOT regulations as opposed to other states like, you know, when I worked in Las Vegas, for example, there is no spread time for an operator to be out driving. There's a 10 to 12‑hour seat time, but that's easily extended just because of what the state laws regulate, right, but Georgia is not like that. So in a nutshell yes, you are correct, that's part of it, but also with the recruiting piece is where we've gotten to is things that that we weren't -- it's not necessarily the fault of MARTA or fixed route mobility, we didn't forecast out that we would have been in this COVID piece for two years, right, and remember folks were getting the supplemental checks as well as from the government, so that kind of hit our workforces pretty hard. So now we're gradually coming out of it along with the ridership is just exponentially taken off and it's really hit the mobility side a little more heavier than fixed route. But just understand we're getting it. Once we get it, that's a tell‑tale sign fixed route will be getting it the same way too. So but the good thing is that we got good leadership, but that is proven Yvette and her team are outstanding group of folks as well as my team as well and just over years of service understanding what's needed of our Atlanta citizens. We're on top of it, we're just trying to get ahead of the curb. Like I said previously, we just need to get some back office things done with C‑Suite and the Board that, you know, they need to approve and then we'll move forward.
>> Okay. Mr. Turpin, you have the floor now.
>> All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you board members, great to be here again. Just a couple of items to note, I do want to say with Vertical Transportation and with Keith Chambers leadership, he is a very humble leader and a very exceptional peer, but what he didn't say about the Vertical Transportation and the elevator process is that he is extremely ahead of schedule. Something of this magnitude usually takes about 10 to 12 years, and he's a few years ahead of schedule, so that just exemplifies what he has done. Our partnership to making him successful, and it's just been an outstanding job because he believes in the importance of supporting and stabilizing the ADA community in the Atlanta area. So just a great job on his end and a proven leader all the way around.
>> Thank you.
>> For the mobility -- you got it, buddy. No worries. On the mobility side just some quick numbers. Mobility provided 40,568 trips while transporting 50,386 passengers, and 34,466 total revenue new hours. That 50,386 for June was basically almost a 7 -- almost close to 8% uptick and gradually increasing. As I stated, obviously, we are now I would say out of the mobility side. We are out of COVID. We are back to pre‑Covid numbers with our average weekly ridership at 12,000 passengers a week. And that is also rising as well where our staff and team have anticipated that by the end of September going into October, and we'll get a real gauge in October month, but we should be somewhere hitting between 14,000 passengers. And that pre‑Covid was where mobility was back in 2019 before what we went through for the last two years. So yeah, that's where we stand right now. Our team is optional just to give you some things we have watched: Where's My Transit manager app, Where's My Bus. Again, Ms. Kalesha Davis was responsible for that project. Did an outstanding job. We had a 45 day customer testing pilot, and that app has been fully launched in June, June 2nd of 2022. And along with that, information was distributed to the operators to run a customers -- and Maryland packages out the eligibility and certification process. Also with that, we have the online portal, right. So the online portal, we were doing some recalibrations with that so the mobility customers can book their trips online. (Indiscernible) is also working with that as well. That has been launched, but we're making it a lot easier to complete that process. We were working with our IT department to figure out some bugs and things that it wasn't really perfect, but I'm happy to report we figured out what the issue was, and it was basically a time issue, meaning eastern, you know, standard time, UTC time, things of that nature, which was forcing folks -- after 2 p.m. they couldn't book their trips, but we identified the problem, and we're working on that right now to get that going. Additionally, MARTA Reach. As you guys know, we did the MARTA Reach pilot. It is ongoing. I want to say with that project again, Mr. Knowles, who is the PM on that did an outstanding job. MARTA Reach has delivered 1,467 trips just of last month. Accounts served was 104 with only approximately 400 trip cancellations. The good thing with MARTA Reach is that the customer base in all the zones has steadily been improving week to week and to remind everyone we have the North Fulton CDI zone, the West End or west Atlanta zone, and then the Belvedere Decatur area is a zone, and then south Clayton, Fort Gillem area. We expanded those zones because the public is needing -- has asked for the expansion, and we got to a nice spot, a nice area where we're serving all the folks in that zone. I believe at a great expertise moment. The actual wait time is the goal is 15 minutes but our wait times in all the zones is about anywhere from 7 to 9 minute which is extraordinarily exemplary to the providers that are committing to do this and picking up folks in an expeditious fashion.
>> If you don't mind, I hate to interrupt you, but are these trips originating from the bus loop at the rail stations, or are many of the trips originating from a person's home wherever the virtual bus stop is? Where do you see most of these at far as reach because anybody could use it, do you see most of the trips originating from the stations?
>> Yes. Great question, Mr. Chairman. So the majority of the trips I want to say probably about a little over 6% of the trips are originating from a place of residence or a business, and in their travel, they are -- remember we're looking at the first mile, last mile piece, and so the customers are going to what it's designed to do a transit center station or they're going to a transfer point for fixed route. And why this is critical is remember the (indiscernible) team is currently in the route redesign project so it furthers MARTA's -- no pun intended -- the reach outside of the zone, so we bring folks in to the major transit mode of operation. So that has been really evident. And then the second piece of that is folks who are traveling within the zone, they're going to their house, appointments, doctor's appointments, you know, shopping, things of that nature, and I think the customers realize also that -- remember we have a transfer window so MARTA Reaches 250, and once you're at the end of your travel, and if you fall within that three‑hour window, potentially your trip on MARTA Reach would be 2.50 round trip depending on where you’re going within the zone. So I think that's what we've been seeing. The good thing I'm happy with as well is that you're making connections to a busy bus line and that bus line to whatever train station and continue on with their travel. All right. So also on the maintenance side, again, mobility maintenance miles were 2 something and 90 thousand or 264. Sorry, 690,264 with only 107 mechanical road calls, and then for MARTA Reach it was 22,118 with 7 mechanical road calls. So again, the maintenance departments have been integral in this process. And then reservations call center, again, exemplifying where we are. Just for the month of June, we received 20,722 calls. The reservations and the eligibility piece of that has been very extremely busy. Calls answered were 19,087 with abandoned called of 1,150. And let me answer this is that abandoned calls rep, what mobility team also did a great job in implementing with our IBR tree system. We implemented a new callback system where you call in and there's a time, you know, five minutes, six minutes, whatever, the callback system will call you back and so folks can say yeah, hey, I got other things, you know, call me back if there's a significant wait time. What we were finding was the system was using that as an abandoned call rate. The customers were using that option which it should not have been when actuality customers were saying yeah, they left a name and the system would call them back. So we're working through that process as well, so I believe that our call abandonment rate were way lower than that number. And as you know, Mr. Chairman, this is important as it relates to the outstanding decree.
>> And then if I may. This is Jordan. One thing that I wanted to note Mr. Turpin is just when I have been scheduling my trips recently, the example that I can give is I need to reach my destination by 6:30 p.m. and so they schedule my pickup for 4:15 p.m., and it's very hard to adhere to that schedule, and that seems to be happening much more frequently is they're scheduling them earlier and earlier away from the time that I need to be at my destination which makes it more difficult because then I'll arrive to my destination early, but if I have an appointment, I will have to leave earlier than expected as well because the leave time is increasing as well. Does that make sense when I say leave time?
>> Yes, it does. Absolutely, Ms. Hall. And thank you for that. And it goes back to the point on your -- on that particular scenario and others like that is remember the goal for mobility and mobility reservations is we have a AOTP war with our OTP which I'll talk about here shortly, but because we're directly being hit with the operator shortage, there are a number of more pickups on a vehicle, right. So in the past, there might have been, you know, you by yourself, a tandem, two folks or three, we're seeing an increase in ridership although short availability of operators, so we're having challenges of meeting the demand, right, meeting the capacity, and so they have to extrapolate and try to pick you up early because there are other trips assigned to that route. You might have four or five. I saw the other day there was a full van where the operator was dropping off customers, and so that's, I guess, the nucleus where we are right now, and we're trying to address that. I know training wise, First Transit, for example, they had just started yesterday, they had 25 operators in training, and the week before that, they had 20. Currently, our other provider, GTS, has about 30 operators in training. We're getting there, right. We're pedaling as fast as we can, sort of speak, but remember too, we don't want to expeditiously get folks out there driving without giving them the necessary tools through the training process, and that process can last anywhere from three to six weeks, right, just to get a fully‑trained operator out there. But we understand it, and we're going to get better at it, I promise you that.
>> Thank you so much for listening.
>> Yes. You're welcome.
>> And then lastly, eligibility, we performed 460 assessments. Again, we streamlined (indiscernible) of those. As you can imagine on their end, they're very, very busy as well. Mr. Roosevelt Strickland and his team trying to place those who are applying that process has an uptick as well. Where we really got hurt this summer is we are struggling mightily to maintain our OTP. Our on‑time performance was roughly 79% in an area where we have never experienced that, right, during this time. So our trends are moving up. We're back in the 80% which is good but, you know, that's not acceptable for us, we need to hit the 90% or better mold which we were hitting all the end of last year. So our commitment, we're looking at everything that needs to be done, and we're going to make sure we get the services to provide for the folks that support our operation in the Atlanta area. Mr. Chairman, and again, be looking for some changes here as we get the board to get the supplemental service going. Just got to jump through a couple more hurdles and then working with my deputy chief and CO, I think we're almost there to do that. Because the (indiscernible) why this is important is if you remember (indiscernible) I talked about where I submitted procurement for new vehicles. And with the help of Jonathan Weaver as well, that's in play, and we're going to be starting procuring new mobility vehicles hopefully by the start of next year. We want to get ahead of that curve. That's a very high priority item because as everyone knows with the chip shortage, the vehicle part that's currently expanding, that's related too also with the war going on over there with Ukraine and Russia. To get an actual vehicle (indiscernible) anywhere between 15 and 18 months. So our mid‑life plan is in play, and so those two angles kind of coexist with supplemental plan for service to help support our ongoing service with our current mobility fleet operation and then getting new vehicles as well. So that's all I have, and if there's any questions.
>> Yes, sir. I have two that come to mind. How much does the longer trips that people are taking nowadays from their homes like from Lithonia to Alpharetta, that's a pretty long trip, how much is that impacting the service? And my second question is I hope the vehicles that you're procuring are electric. Some will be electric vehicles?
>> Yeah. So to answer your first question -- again, you're right on point, Chairman Smith -- that is probably -- that is the supplemental issue, the very extended long trips. So once we get the supplemental mitigation piece, I can't push -- the goal is to push 200 or so trips that are what 30, 40 miles in length out and give them to a PNC then we can focus our mobility vehicles on pretty much in the belt, inner belt of 285, right. But you're right, you're spot‑on. The long trips from Lithonia all the way to Alpharetta and even Roswell, those are the ones that hurt our operation the most just because the supply do not meet the demand. And so that's what we're working on, and if I can get this package through then we'll have the ability to at least supplement and give to the TNC 200 to 300 trips daily which would help us out immensely. Then your second question is -- I'm sorry. Repeat that again for me.
>> About the electric vehicles, the new vehicles you're expecting to have next year, beginning of next year, I was hoping some of them are electric vehicles.
>> Yeah. So what we're doing right now is with our procurement, we will be able to phase in different types of vehicles. A 20% ratio of our fleet which is about -- and so our staff --
>> We didn't hear your answer. I think you faded out.
>> The -- can you hear me now?
>> Yes, we can hear you now.
>> Okay. So we're looking at a 20% addition to our fleet, and with that, we really want to do some intensive research because in the transit industry what we don't want is a prototype. My 30‑year history just with the manufactures, when you get a prototype, you're like the testing environment, right, and you're going to have a lot of challenges, a lot of break‑downs, things of that nature, so our maintenance folks are really looking at the electric vehicle piece, and hopefully we can get a test model as well. And remember the cost of that is also a challenging piece because the first wave comes out, they're very costly, and we get it. But once we figure out the type of model, the (indiscernible), you will see a different vehicle than what mobility cutaways look like now. And that's our goal. We want to streamline it because we want it to work for the customer and the operator, right, because they're going to be out there all day. And so then when you add on all of the safety mechanisms that need to be applied to it, we really need to do some heavy research and balance that out. But I'm hoping to maybe at the end of next year to get, you know, test two, three folks, you know, just the infrastructure piece of it to look to see what that looks like. But that is the plan, and then we'll have a mixed fleet, right, of that. And that's the goal so we can actually test what looks good, you know, three, five years from now. And then once we drill down, say this electric vehicle thing works, then it's the charging stations, right. We need to have the infrastructure and have the charging stations placed in a strategic pattern within the city of Atlanta, and I think we'll be okay.
>> Yes. Okay. Are there any other questions of Mr. Turpin?
>> I don't see any hands up.
>> You don't see any hands up?
>> I do not see any hands up.
>> Okay. Thank you, Mr. Turpin. And the reason why I ask these questions is those of us who are directly affected by all of this maybe we can have a voice in addressing these issues to the MARTA board and let them know that this is needed for us as well as our electric -- elected officials because they're running for office. So maybe by raising our voices we can get some of those transit dollars to come here to address the needs so that we -- I know people say well, okay, MARTA mobility it's just tooting its own horn, but when it's the actually people who are being directly affected is tooting the horn, I think we can toot it a little louder if we get to those individuals where they can help us get the funding that is needed. So I plan to do my best to address these issues to those who are in power and could loosen those transit dollars from Washington, D.C. We have two senators and others, and maybe we could do some of the lifting, and we all do the heavy lifting. It gets easier for us all. So Denise.
>> I don't see any other hands, Robert.
>> Okay. That was just my comment.
>> Okay.
>> Thank you so much Mr. Turpin for that, and if nothing else to come before the committee, I adjourn --
>> Mr. Robert. Can I ask one question really quick? And everyone, please forgive me because I know you said when you announce your name, but specifically the individual on the call that works at the Brady mobility headquarters, if you're still on the call this is great because I am currently a member of AARP's Georgia Walk College, and one of the activities of the caller is to perform a walking audit just to evaluate the walkability of the street, so I am actually doing a walk audit from my apartment to the Brady mobility headquarters and that is because it is only about a 10 to 15 minute roll from my apartment to the headquarters, but it's basically just to evaluate and see the barriers and the walkability of the sidewalk. So I would love for any member of the MAC committee to participate, but I would especially love for any MARTA staff who's close by or is already working at the Brady facility and they would be willing to come with me on the walk audit. I really think it would be a great example, and I think it could improve a lot of areas as well. We would definitely provide everything that we find to MARTA, and I think it could just overall increase awareness of how infrastructure could be improved to increase ridership for MARTA as well. So I'm going to put my email in the chat, and Ms. Denise has my email as well. I've not set a date for a walk audit yet just because I wanted to know who would be willing and interested in participating before I set the date. So if you would please reach out to me and let me know if you would be willing to participate, that would be greatly appreciated.
>> And Jordan, you can contact your city council person. That would be wonderful because sometimes they are in charge of sidewalks and the walkability from your residence. I assume that's what you're talking about from your residence to MARTA. MARTA headquarters at Brady; is that the area you're talking about?
>> That is right.
>> Please call your city council person that represents you in that area. I'm believing that that would be very important to them as well because they are able enough to do the repairs, needed repairs or replacement of any side walk issues that comes up.
>> Yes, sir.
>> So do reach out to them as well.
>> I already have. Yes, sir. But I just think if we have representation of more of us with disabilities and the staff as well that would even give us a further auditor for the (indiscernible).
>> And if I could add Ms. Hall, and thank you Jordan. And obviously, the mobility staff would be honored to participate. My admin out of the building, Ms. Shantel Davis, she's on the call. She'll get your information from the chat. Her name again is Ms. Shantel Davis. Just so you know, the MARTA team here, we have a group that's actually been walking the Brady and the Midtown area for the last several months. So to your point of the walkability, I can tell you directly that you are right. There are some needed sidewalk construction and challenges that we see when we're walking -- we're walking anywhere between two to three miles during our lunch break just for that fact just to see what that looks like. So thank you, and obviously, we're here to support. We'll participate as well.
>> I'm going to jump in there too and put in my -- this is Vedette Shephard. I'm putting my email address in here as well so, you know, when the emails began to go out, we can participate in that as well.
>> Okay. Thank you Ms. Shepherd. Thank you, Mr. Turpin, and thank you Jordan. Are there -- is there anything else to come before this committee? Hearing none, I adjourn the committee until our next meeting -- when is that?
>> September 13th.
>> September the 13th. So I want to thank you all for participating and I'll see good morning, good evening.
>> Thank you, everyone, for participating.
>> Thank you. Thank you, everybody.
>> Thank you so much.
>> Thank you.
(End of meeting at 11:31 a.m.)