MARTA MAC Committee Meeting

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

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ROBERT SMITH: -- minutes and get started.

BOB LOSSIE: Will we be talking about the videos we recently looked at?

ROBERT SMITH: Well, if you viewed the videos, if we have time, Bob, we will. But it was for you to look at. And if I'm correct, Denise, they are supposed to send in comments about it. Is that correct?

DENISE BROWN: Yes. If you have any comments or any suggestions just send it to me and I will send it to the contractor. If you submitted it through that link, they will have a copy of your comments also. They are going to edit everything at one time.

BOB LOSSIE: I did see a lot of different comments in.

DENISE BROWN: I saw that.

BOB LOSSIE: Overall it is just extraordinary. I'm so excited this information will be out there for everybody to look at quickly. I'm more of a visual person, and everything was articulated beautifully. I think it was the videography you could say was nice. There were things I didn't even know about. The training center where you can go and see how you work inside the environment of the trains and the buss and everything. So you know how to do everything right.

DENISE BROWN: It is a little frozen.

BOB LOSSIE: I have to turn off the phone. In fact, I'm going to see can I -- no I can't. Here we go with technology.

DENISE BROWN: Robert it is ten after.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Good morning to everybody again. My name is Robert Smith. I'm the chair of the Martha advisory committee. I'm sorry. And I would like to welcome everybody to our meeting this morning, and I will first go around and ask everyone to introduce himself or herself.

BOB LOSSIE: I guess I will start. I'm Bob Lossie, and I am representing the lower extremity wheelchair people and on the appeals committee.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Others please introduce yourself.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAA: Well, I am Roberta Abdul-Salaam. I'm vice chair of the MARTA board of directors and I also have unseen disabilities.

MILES TURPIN: Good morning everyone. Can you hear me?

DENISE BROWN: Yes.

MILES TURPIN: Just wanted to make sure. Good morning again to everyone.

ROBERT SMITH: Good morning.

MILES TURPIN: Chairman Smith and Vice-chair Abdul-Salaam. My name is Miles Turpin. I'm the director of mobility for MARTA and again, just honored and excited to participate in this event with all of the chair committee members.

ROBERT SMITH: Other members introduce yourself please.

NICHOLAS UPPAL: My name is Nicholas Uppal. I represent the lower extremity/mobility community at that rides MARTA.

ROBERT SMITH: Glad to have y'all.

JORDAN HALL: Hi. This is Jordan Hall representing the aging and disability communities, and I'm the mobility coordinator for the statewide independent living councilor.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Anybody else.

LEE ROGERS: Good morning. This is Lee Rogers and I represent the blind and low vision organization.

ROBERT SMITH: Other committee members?

KEITH CHAMBERS: Keith Chambers, director of vertical transportation here at MARTA.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay.

DENISE BROWN: Hey Courtney? I have two people for you to unmute Jeffrey Easley and Jimmy Peterson should be unmuted.

COURTNEY MIDDLEBROOKS: You want them unmuted or made a panelist.

DENISE BROWN: Made a panelist.

COURTNEY MIDDLEBROOKS: Who is it?

DENISE BROWN: Jeffrey Easley and Jimmy Peterson. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you hear me?

DENISE BROWN: Yes.

JEFFREY EASLEY: Good morning everybody. My name is Jeffrey Easley at the Bobby Dodd Institute, and I represent the intellectual and developmental disability community.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. I think that is everybody I believe.

PAULA NASH: Good morning. This is Paula Nash. I'm the executive director of diversity and inclusion.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. There she is. Anybody else?

DENISE BROWN: I'm Denise Brown. I'm the equity administrator in the office of diversity and inclusion.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Thank you Denise. We will move right on into our committee reports. If you have received the agenda, you would notice on the agenda that a lot of the committees, our 3 committees did not meet. If you read them prior to this meeting you will know that the accessibility committee did not meet as well as the -- is somebody trying to say something?

DENISE BROWN: I think that was just feedback.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. And the appeals hearing we had, it was up held. I'm getting some feedback or someone is trying to -- okay. Okay. I will go ahead. I will go ahead with that. So those committee meetings are on hold for right now, and that was the status of our appeals committee where the person decided to go -- one decided to go to the second level and the other one was up held. Okay. Okay.

DENISE BROWN: There is no question.

ROBERT SMITH: Diversity and inclusion, Ms. Paula Nash. No report. Is that right Ms. Nash.

PAULA NASH: That is correct. I just wanted to welcome everybody.

ROBERT SMITH: So we will move on to the next person. Okay.

KEITH CHAMBERS: I believe the next one is the elevator, escalator.

ROBERT SMITH: Yes. We're going to the MARTA update.

KEITH CHAMBERS: Okay. Good morning everyone. For the rehabilitation project we are ahead of schedule as we are 40 percent complete on scheduled time, and we are 52 percent complete with the elevators. By completing 57 of the 111 elevators in this project -- again, this is one of the largest projects of its kind in the world and we are ahead of schedule on these which is great. Right now we are finishing up number 1 elevator at Avondale station which would complete the two platform elevators and that will be completing in two weeks. Then they will be moving to number 3 which is at the beginning of the bridge that leads over Georgia Avenue to the transit oriented development.

Since we are on that subject there are two bus routes that stop at the Cortland Decatur east TOD. Those bus routes are on the Street and the TOD has an elevator that is not owned by MARTA that accesses from the Street bus stop to the bridge that comes over to Avondale station. We are in the process of changing the bus routes permanently to stop at the north bus loop at Avondale station to remove the need for the bridge and the two elevators it is going to require to go from the south end to the concourse. We have had some issues with the TOD elevator being shut down and not knowing about it which has caused some delays. So we are going to reroute the buses so we don't have to rely on that. Obviously there are some people that live at the TOD that are going to require the bridge. For the most part the people travelling on the bus route will be able to go straight to the bus loop at the station and go straight to the concourse. I think that will be a big time saver for some people.

The other elevator that is out of service for rehab is the number 1 elevator at Peachtree center. That goes from the street to the concourse on the south side of Peachtree Center station. It takes longer to do these elevators as they are cable driven with machines in the subbasement over 120 feet below Street level. So they are very long and they are very complicated when it comes to replacing. It is not like the two-stop ones in the station that go up 15, 20 feet. This one is scheduled to be completed August 24th. And the other one will not start until after Labor Day weekend as there are some big events downtown during that weekend that we don't want to inconvenience.

And then we have installed 50 elevator shaft deodorizers in the stations. These are really making a big difference in the ride in the elevator as being a little more pleasant. The fragrance that we selected is a sparkling lime which is a pleasant odor without being too strong. We are trying this out to see how well the reactions are so maybe we can expand on other 40 elevators and cover the whole system within the stations because we know sometimes this can be a burden.

And then we are also working on things like ant slip floors, upgrading lighting over units that have not in installed and some other things that we're trying to improve the communication and the rideability of these units. So we have come a long way, and we still have work to do. But we're constantly working on trying to make these things better and more reliable. That is all I have for today.

ROBERT SMITH: Any questions from our members for Mr. Chambers? Mr. Chambers, I have one. You were speaking about the escalator at Peachtree Center. Is that the long elevator that goes all the way down?

KEITH CHAMBERS: Yes. It goes over 12 stories into the ground.

ROBERT SMITH: That is the long one. Are there barriers put up to block access to that?

KEITH CHAMBERS: Yes. There are barricades on every floor. Big Wooden barricades 7 foot tall so it blocks access to these areas. There is signage everywhere on how to work around that outage.

ROBERT SMITH: Right. Letting people know how to get down to the appropriate area that they wish to get down to.

KEITH CHAMBERS: Yes. And the north end was heavily maintained before this outage so we try to keep it running as much as possible. This one will be replaced beginning after Labor Day and will continue to around Christmas.

ROBERT SMITH: That's good. Because if the elevator is working people in wheelchairs can utilize that. Those on Walkers or any other mobility device will have to ability to get down to where they need to.

KEITH CHAMBERS: Exactly. If there is a problem Miles Turpin is on this meeting too and he has been a big help as far as supplying some mobility resources just in case it goes down. We had some issues the weekend before last and it was a big help. We are doing everything internally to make sure people can get to where they need to go.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Mr. Chambers, since there are no more questions from our members, I want to thank you.

KEITH CHAMBERS: Thank you so much. I'm glad to be here.

ROBERT SMITH: I assume there is no update for the bus. It says no report. So we will move on to the next person. Information Technology by is it Christina Jones?

DENISE BROWN: It's Catrina. I want to let everyone know too that the meeting is being recorded.

CATRINA JONES: Okay. Thank you. Good morning everyone. Can everyone hour me okay?

ROBERT SMITH: Yes. Good morning.

CATRINA JONES: Okay. Great. So this will probably be my last update to the team because we are over 90 percent complete for the project. I guess I should say good morning my name is Catrina Jones and I'm the project manager for the AVIS project. AVIS stands for audio visual information systems. What that project is, is we have updated 326 signs, electronic signs, digital signs throughout all 38 rail stations and we have replaced about 4, 549 speakers. And we installed a new software called Nucleus. If you have been to any of the stations you should have seen the new lay out and the speakers should sound louder and more clear. And right now we're done with installation. We're performing some repairs. We had some vandalism at some of the stations by the patrons damaging the signs.

Other than that, we are just fine tuning the lay out and still testing the system. We are nearing completion. We want to close the project out this month. Not sure if that will happen, but we are on a good path forward. No doubt that the project will be complete by December of this year. As you all may remember, we are funded by the state of Georgia for 30 million dollars. That project has to close out with the state by December 31 of 2021. And that's my update. Does anybody have any questions?

BOB LOSSIE: This is Bob Lossie. Not really a question. On the comment I had given yesterday I cannot say enough good things about all of the work you have done. I went to several of the meetings you invited us to for input. I'm in a wheelchair. I also have to deal with ADHD and dyslexia. Signage is always an issue. If you get stressed because it is too fast it locks everything down and makes it work. But everything I heard you were going to make adjustments on, you did. It is so much easier to deal with. And I don't know what the technology is that you do with the speakers. But again that reverberating noise gets jumbled up in your head. I can't think of any place I have ever been able to hear a PA system in public where echoes go on where it was clearer. It is just extraordinary what you have achieved.

CATRINA JONES: Wow. Thank you, Bob. I am very glad to hear that. I am so glad the system is delivering what we intended to do especially for our disabled patrons as well as our able-bodied. This project really tailored to the disabled community. It warms my heart to hear it is working and making things better for you and your peers. So thank you very much for your feedback. It is very well appreciated and received.

BOB LOSSIE: Thank you again.

ROBERT SMITH: This is Robert. Ms. Jones, we have some newer members on board. Could you explain to them what these signs -- what type of information that goes across these signs?

CATRINA JONES: Absolutely. Yes, I can. Yeah. And I will tell you what information can go across the signs as well as what information we are displaying today because during testing and during some refinement there were some things turned off because we have a customer experience group who felt that some of the information was a bit confusing and the signs were a little too busy. We turned some things off like ads. They were internal ads. Things like wear your mask. We still have it going off the screen but we took the imaging off because we wanted to provide real time arrival information. There are signs at each station. Not every station has signs on the outside before your enter the gate, but many of them do. We have some right at the fair gates. When you walk inside the concourse level like the atrium or the lobby we have signs. Then on the platform as well where the train is arriving and then in the bus loop area where the buses are. And on those sign we are displaying train arrival information in real time. So we provide -- whatever station you are at we provide directional information. That information is display would the train arrival time and the destination.

And then we are displaying bus routes. They are scheduled departure times for MARTA and the regional partners. That's one of the things that is being fine-tuned right now. Right now we are providing the partner and then the MARTA bus name and then the route information. And then we have the scheduled departure. We are looking into changing that to more of a destination format. It will have more of the logo. So if it is MARTA you will see the MARTA logo. Then you will see the partner logo and the destination where the bus is going and then the schedule departure. That is something we are trying to fine tune right now.

Then we are displaying alerts for elevators and alerts for escalators. Right now on the escalator icon you may not see station specific escalator alerts. We are working on making those station specific. Right now you are seeing all of the escalators for every station on every sign. We are changing it to show the alerts everywhere. If you are at another station we want to you to know the elevator may be out at any given station.

We're also giving alerts. We don't have an icon. On the bottom of the screen you will see a train icon, bus, elevator, and escalator. Then you will see a triangle and a circle. In one of those icons we give you restroom alerts. It will tell you what restrooms are open or what restrooms are closed. It will give you some indication of the restroom status. In addition to the alerts, anything that is on itsmarta.com under the alerts you will see those alerts scrolling on the screens as well. They transition. So you will see real time train arrival information and then you will see an alert and then you will see the real time train arrival information again. Then you may see the bus schedule pop up. Then it will go back to the train arrival information and scroll back through the alerts. They go in order. So they are always train, then bus, then escalator. No elevator and then escalator and then the informational type alerts. MARTA has the ability to now type any alert they would like to send. If you don't see it on itsmarta.com the emergency train operation center police and everybody will have to ability to type any message they want or make a real time live announcement over the PA. So if something gets announced we are typing that message on the screen so it goes over the PA and the sign as well. That is everything that is shown over the signs that the patron can see. We have an internal feature where if the telephone is ringing in the staff room there is a chime that goes off over the PA to alert the station pageant the phone is ringing so they can address the situation that is coming across over the phone.

ROBERT SMITH: Thank you so much Ms. Jones. I just want a new --

DENISE BROWN: Mark has a question.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: Mr. Chairman, if I may? Yes, this is Roberta.

ROBERT SMITH: Was it Mark first or Ms. Roberta.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: It doesn't matter. Go ahead Mark.

MARK GASAWAY: I was just wondering about signs. I haven't used them in a long time, so I haven't seen them yet. But I was wondering if the signs -- hold on just a second -- will let us know if the bus is coming as well because we have to stand down there and wait. So I was just wondering if the sign happens to let us know?

DENISE BROWN: Cat, if you are speaking we can't hear you.

ROBERT SMITH: Yeah. It is going in and out.

DENISE BROWN: We didn't hear everything, Cat.

ROBERT SMITH: We're not hearing anything.

MARK GASAWAY: Will the sign let us know when the bus is coming so we know when to go for the bus?

CATRINA JONES: Okay. Yes, it does. It's not real time bus arrivals though. They are scheduled departures. So they are schedules that are displayed for MARTA and the regional partners. So they are scheduled departures, and yes it does show on the signs.

ROBERT SMITH: And the signs are both audio and video, so you get both.

CATRINA JONES: Yes, that's correct.

ROBERT SMITH: Ms. Salaam had a question if Mark is finished.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to say first of all to Ms. Jones I think you and your team have done a wonderful outstanding job. I'm very excited at all of the things that have been added and have been changed. I wanted to ask about the restrooms but you already answered that question. I wanted to applaud the committee itself because that is something that was asked directly requested by the members of the MAC committee to make sure we would know if a restroom was open or closed to make it easier for people to maneuver. So thank you for that.

The one question I had for you is whether or not there is an emergency on the tracks or something going on with the system will those alerts be shown on the video and over the PA system?

CATRINA JONES: Thank you Ms. Roberta for your feedback. We really appreciate the efforts, and I have an amazing project team and leadership support. So thank you. Ms. Denise Brown is very instrumental in getting feedback. I tagged her so many times in giving her lay outs and everything, and she disseminated that to all of the teams, the MAC committee, the center for visually impaired, everybody. So thank you so much for that. But to answer your question, yes. Yes, it does.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: Okay. All right. Thank you so much.

CATRINA JONES: You're very welcome.

BOB LOSSIE: This is Bob.

ROBERT SMITH: Are there any other questions? Okay Bob. Go ahead.

BOB LOSSIE: Thank you. You just unloaded a boat load of information for me with the capabilities of the sign that I didn't even really recognize. I have been raving about how wonderful these instructional videos are that are being made right now and edited. I'm wondering if we can throw that into the pile to have a video to tell MARTA riders the wealth of information they can gain from those signs?

CATRINA JONES: I will tell you this. The videos you are referring to, do they have sound?

BOB LOSSIE: Yes.

CATRINA JONES: Okay. Right now the system does not have the capability of playing videos with sound.

BOB LOSSIE: If I can interrupt. What I mean is these four videos that are being done are going to be on the MARTA website. Somebody can go do that video to learn about that aspect of MARTA.

CATRINA JONES: Oh, okay. I'm sorry. I thought you were -- you know, I don't know. I will look into that. I will definitely look into it. I don't have an answer for that today, but I can certainly look into it.

BOB LOSSIE: Does anybody have an opinion if that would be beneficial.

PAULA NASH: We will have to look at where we are in the production to see if that kind of stuff can be added into it at this point, but we will definitely look into the possibility of doing that because I think it would be helpful.

BOB LOSSIE: Sorry to add that to your pile. I was pretty amazed at everything that it is. I wasn't overwhelmed with the sign watching it. I did not get the capabilities that it really has. All of the capabilities.

CATRINA JONES: Yeah. We have the ability to show a video but not sound.

BOB LOSSIE: No. No. Again, I don't want the sign to show the video. I want the MARTA website to have a video to explain to patrons how it can benefit them to make a better right.

CATRINA JONES: Uh-huh. Yeah. Absolutely. And I will wait for Ms. Paula to let me know about that.

BOB LOSSIE: Okay.

CATRINA JONES: Because I wasn't a part of those videos. So I don't know how they were generated or who was behind -- they are excellent though. I definitely will have to get with her on that.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Okay. Are there any other questions for Ms. Jones from the committee members? Hearing none, Ms. Jones, thank you so much for your presentation.

CATRINA JONES: You're welcome. Thank you.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. We will move on to the customer service. Customer linked ADA. Customer linked increase I think. Yes. It is by Ms. LaHoya Blount. Are you there?

LAHOYA BLOUNT: My name is LaHoya Blount. I will provide the ADA linked customer complaints for the month of March 2021.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay.

LAHOYA BLOUNT: Authority wide we received 331 complaints. 90 of the 331 complaints were ADA linked at 27.2 percent. ADA valid complaints were 46 at 51.1 percent.

Breakdown by department. For mobility we received 77 complaints. Bus operations received 8. For paratransit policy we received 3. For mobility maintenance we received 2. [Inaudible]. For late pick up 30 plus minutes we received 10. For no show we received 7. For tone of voice we received 6. For late drop off we received 5. For excessive time on van we received 2.

Top non-mobility complaints. For incorrect reservations info we received 4. We received 1 for won't let board. We received 1 pass up. We received 1 cancel, change, pick up no notice. And we received 1 tone of voice.

Accommodations authority wide we received 41. 20 of those were mobility at 48.8 percent. That concludes the ADA linked customer complaints for March 2021.

ROBERT SMITH: Ms. LaHoya are you open for questions?

LAHOYA BLOUNT: Yes, sir.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Any committee members have questions about what you just heard?

BOB LOSSIE: You mentioned the top and there were 9 complaints. I can't remember what your terminology was but it was when your first started them.

LAHOYA BLOUNT: For the 90 complaints.

BOB LOSSIE: What was that?

LAHOYA BLOUNT: It was breakdown by department.

LAHOYA BLOUNT: Golly. It was a term I wasn't familiar with. It was the complaints by the patrons and it was the very first one you listed I believe.

LAHOYA BLOUNT: When I said authority wide or ADA linked complaints? ADA linked complaints were 90.

BOB LOSSIE: I can't recall what that was. I was wondering what kind of issue that was to have had that title. Sorry.

DENISE BROWN: Bob, we can go over the report if you want to after the meeting. That way I can ask your question or have LaHoya answer your question.

BOB LOSSIE: Thank you.

DENISE BROWN: You're welcome. If any attendees have any questions you can put it in the Q&A and we can get those answered too if you are an attendee.

ROBERT SMITH: This is Robert. Ms. LaHoya, you said as you were breaking these down into departments and mobility service bus as well as rail. All of these complaints that came in rose to the level of 88. That's what I'm hearing you say?

LAHOYA BLOUNT: We had mobility, bus operations, paratransit policy, and mobility linked that received complaints that added up to the 90 ADA linked complaints.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Just wanted members to know what categories. We were speaking about bus, rail, or mobility?

LAHOYA BLOUNT: We were speaking about all ADA complaints that came in authority wide.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Any questions from committee members to Ms. Blount? Hearing none, thank you Ms. Blount.

LAHOYA BLOUNT: Thank you.

ROBERT SMITH: We will move on. Okay. We are going to mobility. Mr. Miles Turpin.

MILES TURPIN: Good morning. Can everybody hear me?

ROBERT SMITH: Good morning.

DENISE BROWN: Yes.

MILES TURPIN: Good deal. Good morning Chairman Smith and vice chair Roberta Abdul-Salaam and committee members. I have a presentation to do as well. Let me give you a report of the mobility operations and our activities to date. To the new members the difference here with mobility and regular MARTA services is we are contracted out, and we recently went through a transition phase from one contractor to actually three different phases of a contractor for mobility services. And those contractors are First Transit, Transdev -- twice with Transdev -- and ATS as our DB for First Transit and GTS. Those are the actual partnerships, partners, team members, contractors that are actually providing mobility service. To give you where we are at as far as our numbers wise for the previous month. Mobility provided 34,346 trips while transporting 40, 257 passengers. That equated to 30,53.3 revenue hours which is quite good, and you will see later in my presentation. Understanding that, we're kind of on the bubble of a pandemic situation with COVID-19 as we all know the depth of the virus that is in play. So those numbers in themselves are pretty good numbers.

Our productivity rate was 1.12 trips per revenue hour. That is right in the median range of what we need to be. Maintenance wise, mobility maintenance was 608,138 with 16 mechanical road failures. Again, performing at a pretty good level. Hour mobility MDBS for the month of June were 38,009. For reservations for call center calls received were 12,477. Calls answered were 16,984. Calls abandoned were 391. And again, on that particular point with the call abandonment rate as vice chair Abdul-Salaam and Chairman Smith know mobility has been under consent decree situation since 2003 where our call abandonment rate was recommended to be at 120 minutes. We have consistently through now that rate has been less than.50 percent of the time. So real proud of that effort. It is an outstanding job that we continue to do for our consumers and our customers.

With our eligibility performance there were 244 assessments. Again, recognizing these are over the phone, online assessments because of COVID. Eligible was 243 with 1 denial. Lastly, our mobility performance. Our mobility operations performed 3 safety campaigned so far moving forward into your fiscal year of 2021. Overall performance is standard and we are maintaining.

One thing I need to bring to everyone's attention and give some explanation is our on time performance. Our on time performance for the team and contractor we know our goal is 90 percent OTP. As of today our on time performance is 86.21 percent and we have failed that goal. Let me give you a direct explanation on what that looks like and why.

First and for most and not to use it as an excuse, we had a transition from a contractor that has been with MARTA for a little over 5 years and is now being displaced with a centralized dispatching function and still two main ONM operators, DTS, and First Transit. So during the transition overall be it seamless in some phases, we had some challenges in others particularly on the MARTA side with our MBTs or tablets that give operators directional resource, GPS, Google maps, all that so we can get our customers to their destination. This was an unforeseen event that happened like the day of our transition, and we responded as we needed to with the help of our IT department once we were aware of the situation. That contributed mainly at the time to our OTP decrease. And since then we have been fluctuating. We are now in a post transition phase. So there are 3 phases. There is the transition phase, post transition phase, and then a reimplementation phrase. We are on the tail end of our post transition phase. And I'm happy to report that we have turned a corner on our MDT issues and challenges. We have a correct version that is stabilized now. That version is working with our IT and our implementation process through our dispatch center and the operators. So to give you an idea, when we were going through these challenges, the MBTs would just stop working. They would fail. At that point our operators would be lost in route. When the MBTs failed it wasn't a 5 or 10 minute failure. They failed for hours or longer. That is behind us now. We have done some processes and some stop gap measures in place with our air lock system and some notifications processes that we put in place so that we can track our servers better. So I believe that we're out of the woods on that issue moving forward and we should see our on time performance steadily increase getting back to the normal way that we understand our operations should be managed. As a matter of fact today and yesterday we had our OTP finish at 92 percent. This morning our current OTP is 90.3 percent.

With that, and just closing out this first level we are about to begin our reimplementation phrase with our new contractors. That is an elongated process. I wanted to share with everyone and the participants with permission of Vice-chair Abdul-Salaam and Chairman Smith a presentation of the first phase of what the mobility team plans to employ, again, to make this service innovative, proactive in all measures to serve the Atlanta area and make the service operations better for everyone. Does anyone have any questions just on our numbers?

ROBERT SMITH: This is Robert. I like to thank Mr. Miles Turpin for his honesty. In other words putting the cards on the table. As he said during that transition you did have some -- he and I had a long time. I was pleased with what they said was causing a problem. A lot of times people won't admit that, but he did. Now that is behind us, let's keep it there. Let's keep moving forward. I appreciate it Mr. Turpin. These individuals I spoke to you about haven't had any more trouble because they were wearing my ear out. I told them that this may just be temporary, and so it was. So I want to congratulate your leadership and your team for a job well done. Like I say, let's keep it back there.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: Mr. Chairman if I may?

ROBERT SMITH: Yes.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: Thank you so much for your honesty in reporting and thank you for your insight. I wanted to ask if you are still having difficulty filling the drivers' positions or are you up to 100 percent?

MILES TURPIN: Chairman Smith and Vice-chair Abdul-Salaam. Thank you for your leadership and integrity and thank you again. As you mentioned, we are going to move forward and do the best that we can. With regard to the staffing component, all of our contractors right now are close to 100 percent staffing plan and levels. We are not there yet. Understanding there is a key component they all have challenges and dealing with, right? We are not only competing with other transit agencies within the Atlanta region. We are also competing with FedEx and Amazon and other transportation business providers. With that, when I say challenge it is a distribution, pay range, pay scale challenge we all face. So what we have asked the team and also MARTA our operation with deputy general manager Colleen Greenwood is that our contractors look at their staffing plan and their package and their wage scale. As we know there is a union environment involved with First Transit. But that particular contract will be addressed at the end of the year. We have asked and requested they have action plans put together to make sure they are giving all their employees a livable wage. That is important because they have families to take care of and making sure they can take care of their loved ones means they will come to work not because they have to but because they want to. So we understand the challenges in running a business. We also know that our contractors in order to give the level of service that is expected by our committee and folks in this area, our operators not only do we want them to be the number one in the nation safety wise. That comes at a price in business. We make no bones about it. If we see an issue with the benefits portion, the wages, are not in alignment of what we believe will serve the MARTA community how we feel fit, we express that concern.

I'm happy to say that all of the contractors to the T have responded well and are looking at ways to help their employees live a better portion of life and more importantly provide for their families at a rate of pay that is comparable to the region.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: I wanted to say for benefit of the committee members with my work with AFTA and the national transit view it is a problem across the board in terms of obtains and retaining qualified drivers. There is such a competitive market right now. I really do think once we are able to fill the vacancies in the driver's position that will help us with our on time performance. I think it is a matter of it's coming. It's on the way. I think you are doing a great job in trying to make that happen.

MILES TURPIN: I appreciate that. Thank you so much. Like I said this is where the committee as well as those on this board understand your over sight team when we went through this transition, we were on pace to do something that has never been done in the transit industry. It is okay to transition from one provider to another an even swap. We transformed three different operations and business components in a very short period of time. As you can imagine we didn't meet our OTP goal. We didn't point fingers. We didn't say we didn't know what the challenges were. We internalized that and held ourselves accountable for that failure in that. Our failure was a failure to provide service to customers. We had a very good long conversation about it. My continue since I have been here and will continue to be transparent in our services to you. It is not enough that we come and go to work and just come out to go along to get along. We want to be the best. And we want to make sure that when these types of situations occur we analyze it, we attack it aggressively, and we move forward. So that's in the process now. There are some other operational things we are currently working in alignment with the MBT issue. But we are looking and that is behind us. The other things are very minor. We will really quickly get back to where we need to be. No regrets. No excuses given. We learn from our failures. I look at it as a fascinating moment. We record that and make sure we tend to monitor our service as need be.

With that, with the permission of Vice-chair Abdul-Salaam and Chairman Smith I would like to give you my presentation.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

DENISE BROWN: Miles, this is Denise. I'm so sorry. If we share your screen your ASL interpreter will be cut off. Are you able to do it verbally?

MILES TURPIN: I can. I can I guess. I can.

DENISE BROWN: Unfortunately we can only have one person on screen. If we turn you on, then Mark is not going to be able to hear anything.

MILES TURPIN: Okay. No worries.

ROBERT SMITH: Miles, if you can be as descriptive for those who are like myself who can't see. If you can be as descriptive as you can about your presentation, I will appreciate it.

MILES TURPIN: Yes, sir. I will. Chairman Smith and vice chair Abdul-Salaam I want to thank committee members for this presentation. There are some components we want to use to move mobility operations and transform it into the future.

There are 3 operations and 3 aspect we are currently working on. There is actually a fourth but that is down the road. The main core function of mobility the nucleus if you will is what we call our trapeze logic transformation. That drop logic is what we look at as redefining our core service commitment to our constituents and to the people that we serve. It is vital. It is paramount in the mobility operation for us all. And so we had a great team. This initiative just to give you some background took over a year really way before I was here and some change with one of our great team leaders who did the heavy lifting, Delton Quarrels, for reservations and of course manager Roosevelt Stripling who took the time and meticulous effort to drill down to where we are today and to be able to actually implement the trapeze drop logic that we are currently doing.

So the precursor to that goes back to the consent decree of where we are with our reservations and our call abandonment. To give our new committee members some back history the consent decree items were a number of them. The key component of that was our reservations calls. Calls presented; calls answered in correlation to our call abandonment rate. Back in 2003 we were not meeting the FTA goal or standard. As you know we are currently meeting that. The chart I was starting with to show you were our mobility core reservations data. And in this bar graph we have 3 data points I put together. The first bar graph which is in blue. The second is in yellow. The line in green shows our abandonment rate. From this beginning of May through the end of June the chart shows how our call reservations presented in blue has increased steadily since May after even our pandemic situation and then calls answered which was the bar in gold or yellow was less than 1 to 2 percent lower than our bars in blue.

The key point with this is the abandonment rate. We have such a high number with called presented and answered you would think with that number of calls the abandonment rate lies with it. What the chart shows is our actual abandonment rate did not increase which is outstanding. The highest point for the abandonment rate was 3.9 percent. The lowest point was actually 0 percent during the weekend. From 0 percent to 3.9 percent. Our average so far has been 2.09 percent. That again is our standing to where we are.

Second chart in the presentation really got to the point and really showed, again, a blue column, an orange column, and you can barely see the abandonment rate column. This chart is important because starting around February because of COVID-19 our ridership and calls had dropped significantly pre-COVID. As of February 21 of this year with folks getting vaccinations our reservation calls and ridership is pretty much trending upward at about a 2.5 percent trend month over month. To give you an example for January of 2021 we were at calls presented were 14,215. February was 15,002. March was 17,060. April was 17,637 and such and so forth steadily increasing. Actual calls answered mirrored those actual numbers of calls presented. So the 14,825 for January. 15,977 for February. 16,667 and 17,239 for calls answered. Again, the impressive piece of this was our abandonment rate never decreases not one inch. So with that, as our core foundations for service our mobility team led my Ms. Kaleisha Davis, Delton Quarrels, and Roosevelt we decided because of the transition and the turn over to your contractors now it was a great time to relook at our trapeze drop logic adjustment. So to give everyone a brief history for drop logic inaccuracy and travel speed stagnation. I told you this was the nucleus of the operation. Travel times for vans have remained unchanged for five years prior to these. The mobility reservations drop logic has remained incorrect and uncharged for five years plus. We are all professionals here. We are not going to point back to why this happened. The previous provider used drop logic to their benefit without MARTA knowing about it. We identified this as a significant problem and we quickly decided to make a decisive action. So mobility customers where it is important for us to see if we want to -- everyone really wants to be picked up and dropped off as quickly as possible. Schedulers and dispatchers need the ability to build operator routes more efficiently and the ability to make needed adjustments to calculate travel times in trapeze is crucial for maintaining a high on time performance percentage and additionally the OBT. When I say OBT it stands on on-board time. It is calculated the time a passenger can ride on the bus to meet their destination.

Our goal is to make sure the customer experience on our vehicles is one that is good, it is good natured, it makes sense, and we understand that everyone has things to do in their daily lives and the quicker time we are efficient with our consumers on board our vehicles to get to their destinations the better off we are. The passengers OBT time is equal to the time it would take to reach their destination on the fixed route bus or train plus 30 minutes. That is the FTA standard and that is what we are regulated by and what we intend to meet. Like I said in the beginning of this presentation once we identified where it was not addressed five years ago. We thought it was imperative to our commitment to address it and move forward.

So what the drop logic will do is, it is what determines the passenger's scheduled OBT. It will give shorter trips and less OBT and allows you to schedule more trips on a route that will improve scheduling efficiency. We give longer trips more accurate on board time. It allows schedulers to properly place trips to maintain on time performance and cuts down on unscheduled trips. I want everyone to understand it cuts down on unscheduled trips. So remember the less unscheduled trips we have in the queue, the more trip we have scheduled, it means more people get to where they need to be on a consistent basis day in and day out. And more importantly with those trips scheduled your on board time will be more efficient and everyone will spend less time on a vehicle than they currently on. Mobility does not currently book trips over two hours. Even if the on board time shows over two hours of direct travel time, staff has a negative effect on OTP. This by itself does. We must adjust that practice to a 2 hour and 30 minute maximum time depending on pick up and destination. Obviously MARTA traffic will fall into that as well.

And then that falls into the last piece here that is our passenger requested appointment times are governed by trapeze drop logic. Drop logic is governed my distance, time of day, and the maximum on board times in trapeze. Drop logic coupled with on board time directly affects the overall on time performance for MARTA mobility. If drop logic gives too little time the passengers may arrive too late for their appointment. That was our focus primarily for everything that I have mentioned to you.

So I have been given from our deputy general manager Colleen Greenwood and at the time Santiago Rosario who is our deputy chief. This is a win-win situation for the folks that we are serve, and we are presently implementing this. This will take anywhere from 3 to 4 months to get the destinations time correct, to get the travel times correct. But the end product will be a better experience for our mobility customers on our vehicles, less time on our vehicles, and more importantly the reduction of unscheduled trips. Like previously stated, this is the nucleus of what we do. It is imperative that we get it done. As I said, we take and hold ourselves accountable. This should have been addressed 5 years ago, but it is addressed now. This is one key component of two others that we are working on to make this service the best that it can be moving forward. So that's the end of my presentation if anyone has any questions.

ROBERT SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Turpin. You must have been reading my mind because you answered all of the questions I had in it. I was going to ask you what did you and your team do to bring about the long overdue improvements to reach this range of success? You've completely answered all of it. So I'm very well pleased with that. I was going to ask without giving away any of your secrets for success because people want to keep them under wraps and you should in order to bring about success. But you have expressed it quite clearly the things that were needed to improve things and they were very clear.

Are there any other members who have questions of Mr. Turpin? We are kind of limited to one question maybe because we are running -- how are we doing on time Denise?

DENISE BROWN: We have about 10 more minutes on the meeting. Also, I want to let everybody know that we will send out the presentation after the meeting for anyone that is on the call. Toni Thornton also wants to give some information about the Covington Road Project at the end.

ROBERT SMITH: Oh, she does? At this time?

DENISE BROWN: Whenever we are done with any questions for Mr. Turpin.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Like I said, I think Mr. Turpin was quite clear. Just to make sure we are clear and give anyone who wants to ask a question about the presentation just given.

BOB LOSSIE: This is Bob. It is not really about the presentation. That was great. I was just wondering about the frustrations you have to deal with. I have always given great credit to the drivers on fixed route bus and mobility bus. Once they pull away from the garage they are alone on their own island with all of the responsibility. And after they have gone through the classes and the training and then they go into the real world especially with even having to tell people about having to wear masks and having confrontations with that, do you have to deal with a lot of turn over where people get into the real situation and go oh, I wasn't bargaining for this and then they leave after your investment?

MILES TURPIN: Thanks for that question Bob. To be honest with you, the turnover is not as high as you would think. We have some strong training parameters. Our contractors have done a great job in recruiting those specific operators to what the job entails, right? So we go through an expensive recruiting effort to make sure they meet background checks and things of that nature. More importantly, remember this is something that I don't have a large staff running around here in Atlanta to serve. We have a very small staff in comparison to the area that we serve. We take what we do very seriously. We are invested. Many of us have disability members in our families. So everything that a customer that we service goes through, everyone on my team lives with that. So I can tell you we work long hours. We understand the commitment that is needed, and we will leave no stone unturned until MARTA mobility is one of the top mobility operations in the nation. That is our goal. We have operators, mechanics, reservationists, dispatchers. Those are the folk we look for to be on board and we feel are needed to support what we are trying to do. That is our commitment and that is our determination. We will not rest until we get there. So thank you for your question.

BOB LOSSIE: Great. Thank you.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Are there any other members with a question? If not, then we will move on to Ms. Toni Thornton who is going to --

MILES TURPIN: I'm sorry to interrupt Chairman. One last statement. This is real time. I want everyone to know we will be putting something out. If you don't know City of Atlanta is going through a street transformation beautification project in the south downtown area in Atlanta on Peachtree Center Road between Baker and Ellis in the hotel restaurant section down there by the juke joint if you know the area. They have narrowed the road to a single lane both ways. They have used exorbitant nice planter box situation. The challenge is this is almost a 4 block radius. We have done our survey site. At this time and we will put something out as well Denise just so you know. We made the determination because of the safety concerns and the safety of folks MARTA mobility cannot pick up in that 4 block radius between Baker and Ellis on Peachtree Street. It is an unfortunate situation. We will be meeting with the City of Atlanta tomorrow. I wanted to get that out there to everything as a precursor for right now. We will work to see if there are some other areas we can pick up in that area. Particularly in that section because of safety concern we cannot pick up our consumers.

ROBERT SMITH: Yeah. That is between Ellis and Baker.

MILES TURPIN: Yes, sir.

ROBERT SMITH: On Peachtree Street?

MILES TURPIN: Yes, sir.

ROBERT SMITH: Thank you. Okay. Ms. Toni Thornton, are you ready?

TONI THORNTON: Yes. Are you able to hear me okay?

ROBERT SMITH: Yes, we are.

TONI THORNTON: All right. Well, I just want to thank you Chairman Smith for allowing me an opportunity to share this information and Denise Brown. I wanted to share with the committee members we are going to be hosting a community pop-up meeting for the Hamilton Corridor Transit Project. This is something we are looking at in light of the governor lifting the public health state of emergency on July 1st. So this is a combination of our virtual outreach as well as some in-person outreach for this very important project. We will still be utilizing COVID protocols for the meeting. So just wanted to share that, but for those of you that may not be aware of the Hamilton Corridor Project, MARTA is in collaboration with the City of Atlanta in investing in high capacity transit on the Hamilton Corridor. And this is to improve connectivity, accessibility, and mobility in southwest Atlanta. It will be linking the Greenbrier Mall area to Oakland City MARTA station. And this area is served by one of our busiest routes which is there 83 the Hamilton Road. The purpose of this meeting is we just want community members and those that may be impacted to join us to learn more about the project impacts and to share thoughts about the preferred transit mode. The two modes they are looking at are BRT which is bus rapid transit and light rail transit, LRT. So these meetings are going to be set up like open house type format. We are looking at the end of this month. We are going to provide this flier to Denise to send out to all of the committee members. We are looking at the end of July. It will be an all-day open house from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. There will be maps out. There will be an opportunity to take a survey to learn more about the project and let us know what your preference is in terms of the modes I just mentioned, BRT and LRT. There will be technical staff there to answer any questions anyone may have. In addition to this pop up meeting there is still opportunity through the virtual meeting room if the preference is to go online and learn more about this project. Just wanted to make sure you are aware that this is coming up and additional information will be sent out through Denise, and I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to mention this upcoming meeting.

ROBERT SMITH: Thank you Ms. Thornton. Is there a specific place for the meetings for the people out here in this area where these meetings will be held? Is there a location?

TONI THORNTON: The meeting will be held at Fort McPherson. And all three of the meetings. We are looking at three meetings to give everyone an opportunity. Two during the week and on a Saturday. Yes it will be Fort McPherson.

ROBERT SMITH: What part of Fort McPherson because we know Tyler Perry owns some and a lot of it?

TONI THORNTON: LRA. I don't know specifically what that is, but it is LRA. The specific address and all of the details will be included in the flier information that we will provide Denise to send out to all of the community members.

ROBERT SMITH: Thank you Mrs. Thornton because I plan to be there.

TONI THORNTON: Thank you so much. And thank you for allowing me the time to share this information.

ROBERT SMITH: Thank you.

DENISE BROWN: Robert? I just wanted to let everyone know that in our meeting today we did have the state assistant ADA coordinator and some others that were on the meeting today.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Good. Good. Good.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: What is their name Denise?

DENISE BROWN: Cheryl Ann Frazier. I know that's the one I communicated with. Courtney, can you unmute Cheryl Ann Frazier. Ms. Frazier, you are unmuted now.

ROBERT SMITH: Welcome Ms. Frazier. How are you?

DENISE BROWN: I think -- let me see where is she is.

CHERYL ANN FRAZIER: Hello. This is Cheryl Ann Frazier. Good morning. I am the assistant with the ADA state coordinators office. Thank you so much for allowing me to attend information and get information to share with our office.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. Thank you for being here. Is there anyone else Denise we need to acknowledge?

DENISE BROWN: Ms. Frazier, can you acknowledge the other people?

CHERYL ANN FRAZIER: I'm sorry. I didn't hear you.

DENISE BROWN: They just wanted to acknowledge the other people that attended the meeting today.

CHERYL ANN FRAZIER: Yes. Earlier Stacey Piece was on the line. Stacey serves at the ADA coordinator. We had Barbara Tucker on the line who service ADA administrator services for our office.

ROBERT SMITH: We thank you all of you so much for attending the meeting. We hope it was informative for you as well.

DENISE BROWN: Thanks, Cheryl.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay. With that said and all of the information for the members that we received today from MARTA and our MAC committee; we can consider this meeting adjourned.

DENISE BROWN: Thank you everyone.

ROBERT SMITH: Okay.

ROBERTA ABDUL-SALAAM: Have a great day everybody.

[Meeting adjourned].