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Per SC Code of Laws, Title 30, Chapter 4, Section 30-4-80 - All public bodies shall notify persons or organizations, local news media, or such other news media as may request notification of the times, dates, places, and agenda of all public meetings, whether scheduled, rescheduled, or called, and the efforts made to comply with this requirement must be noted in the minutes of the meetings. **The COMET complied with the notification of this meeting on April 5, 2019 at 3:30 p.m.**

**Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Intermodal Committee Workshop
Wednesday, April 10, 2019 -3:00 P.M.
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201 – Conference Room A**

Members Present:

Derrick Huggins, Chair* (arrived at 3:09 p.m.)
Lill Mood
Jacqueline Boulware*

Guests Present:

Julius Williams, Transit Rider
John Fellows, City of Columbia
Reginald Simmons, CMCOG

Absent Committee Members:

Joyce Dickerson

**Indicates participation by phone.*

COMET Staff Present

John Andoh, Executive Director/CEO
Paige Jernigan, Interim Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Andoh called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m. in Mr. Huggins absence.

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was present at the opening of the meeting.



2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Boulware and seconded by Ms. Mood to adopt the agenda.

Approve: Boulware, Huggins (via phone), Mood

Absent: Dickerson

Motion passed.

3. MINUTES

Motion:

A motion was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Huggins (via phone) to approve the minutes from March 13, 2019.

Approve: Boulware, Huggins, Mood

Absent: Dickerson

Motion passed.

4. OLD BUSINESS (John Andoh)

1. Establishment of Work Plan for FY 2019 – 2020

Mr. Andoh stated that at the last meeting the Intermodal Committee decided to develop a working plan for the upcoming year as their focus. The committee has stressed that the plan should be practical and easy to implement within a one (1) to two (2) year time frame. He added that these plans that will be put into place should adhere to state laws and statutory boundaries, which include Richland, Lexington, Newberry and Kershaw counties.

Priority projects listed on Page 6:

- Regional Transit / Intermodal Facility
- Commuter Rail
- Intercity Rail
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Streetcar
- Park and Ride Lots



- Water Transportation
- Streetscape Projects
- Express Bus

- Bikeshare, Carsharing and Micro-Mobility

Mr. Andoh explained each priority project in detail and encouraged discussion from the committee members.

Ms. Mood asked for clarification on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and its use of a separate lane. Mr. Andoh confirmed. He then compared the (BRT) to the Two (2) Notch route as a precursor to light rail if demand picks up.

Mr. Huggins arrived at 3:09 p.m.

Ms. Mood opened the discussion by listing priorities from least to greatest. She remarked that her lowest priority would be water transportation. She added that the rivers are not navigable because of the water levels rising and falling. Mr. Fellows mentioned that this is the reason canals were built. Mr. Fellows explained that Lake Murray could be a potential water transport route. He did say that the community would protest due to the extra volume of traffic. Ms. Boulware agreed and remarked the liability of water transport would be of concern.

Mr. Andoh mentioned that he would like to focus on short range priorities such as the replacement of Laurel Street. He stated that he thought the Amtrak station would be a possibility of housing a small intermodal facility but that this would not replace the Laurel Street location. We would have some COMET routes, USC, bikeshare, etc., traveling to that location. Conversation carried on discussing the purchase of the land next to the Amtrak station which is currently owned by a bank. Mr. Andoh suggest grant funding through the FTA.

Mr. Fellows spoke about parking and the fact that the Convention Center is discussing expansion. He does think that entrance on both sides of any intermodal facility is important. Ms. Mood agreed and added that the Amtrak or the MegaBus location have limited parking, so this is something to take into consideration.

Ms. Mood expressed that Intercity Rail, Commuter Rail and the Intermodal facility should be high on the priority and she would love to see this located at the Amtrak station. Mr. Huggins asked about the parking lot behind the Transit Center currently. Mr. Andoh



stated that it is city owned with a small portion being privately owned. He does not think the city

desires to have a transit type service at that location, Laurel Street at all. He is hearing this from City Center Partnership, Council Members, City staff, etc.

Mr. Fellows mentioned that some members of the community see the Transit Center negatively as opposed to seeing it as what it could become. He added that he has seen so many scenarios at other locations, example, a YMCA that have proved successful. He stated that perception is important, and we somehow need to improve the vision and awareness of the Intermodal site.

Mr. Simmons arrived at 3:27 p.m.

Mr. Huggins mentioned he likes the Busby combination the City of Columbia has developed. He thinks something like this would be great in visualizing the intermodal facility. Mr. Fellows described in further detail the Busby location. Mr. Fellows spoke about the city and a recent survey about a comprehensive plan and asked the community about what they would like to see in a facility. He mentioned that most of the community requested or desired a multi-functional facility.

Mr. Huggins requested to open the floor and discuss what Columbia is ready for. Mr. Andoh stated a transportation central location and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) would work. For example: N. Main, Two Notch and Broad River due to high ridership. Mr. Fellows asked what the lowest threshold was for BRT on average. Mr. Andoh stated at least 5000 riders per day and explained the closest we have currently is route 801 which has about 3000 riders per day.

Mr. Fellows discussed that Charleston will be the first to use BRT. Mr. Andoh agreed and added that BRT will be operational by the year 2023. He and Mr. Andoh agreed that change can be hard. Mr. Huggins expressed that the rollout process is easy, what is hard is changing mindset. Mr. Huggins asked if a rail system could come before the BRT. Mr. Andoh stated that a rail system would simply benefit the areas outside of our jurisdiction only.

Ms. Mood mentioned that we need some big advocates, like North Carolina having two (2) governors supporting their system and the importance of viability. Mr. Andoh added that The COMET is only viable until 2029 and legislative support is crucial for funding sustainability. He touched on the Bay Area Regional Transit (BART) system in California concerning viability as an example.



Mr. Andoh stressed the importance of working closely with agencies, legislature and funding sources that will help us remain fiscally sustainable. Discussion regarding intercity rail and viability continued.

Mr. Simmons stated that we need to begin at a grassroots level to be sure everyone benefits, like the New York subway. He also added that we must change the mindset, possible

versus feasible. Mr. Andoh added we must conform to the Regional Transportation Plan and the Comprehensive Plan as we must have their support. Regarding mindset, Ms. Mood mentioned a few areas where we could begin, transplants and the aging population.

Mr. Fellows spoke of the Comprehensive Plan of the City survey and the two (2) resounding issues facing Columbia: 1) We do not finish what we started. 2) We do not stay on track in our prioritization. He added that Columbia does not forget when something goes bad. We need to celebrate our successes better. He urged that the bus corridors should be high on the priority list.

Mr. Huggins said we should start tackling the small jobs that are doable and increase ridership. College students and retirement communities would be a great place to start. He mentioned that we should be aware of who the riders are supporting.

Mr. Andoh summarized three (3) categories of priorities:

- A. Facility Enhancement: Park and Ride – Intermodal Regional Transit Center/Improve Corridors
- B. Service Enhancement: Express-BRT Light & Enhanced Buses/Streetscape
- C. Service Enhancement: Bike Share & Micro Mobility/Car Share

CD change occurred.

Ms. Mood mentioned parking lots covered by solar panels, school parking lots, etc. Mr. Huggins mentioned the express route and the USC relationships with the airports. Discussion continued regarding Columbia Airport versus Charlotte Airport pros and cons.

Mr. Andoh stated that he will create a fact sheet that will help refine the list and develop a plan. Each plan will be specific to each region and their specific needs. Mr. Huggins reminded the committee the importance of inviting influential people such as the Mayor, county staff, county manager, Mr. Doug Frate, SCDOT, etc. Ms. Mood agreed and



suggested creating a supportive strategy session with “champions.” Mr. Fellows added that it is important to include transit in marketing in other areas of advertisement to employers.

In closing Mr. Simmons said start campaigning now for funding and community support. Mr. Andoh added that Mr. Frate and others have been contacted and will be attending meetings in the future. Mr. Huggins stated that as they attend, we will cater the agenda to touch on a topic of importance to that individual. Mr. Andoh asked if COG, SCDOT and

other agencies would benefit the committee by attending and giving a presentation. Mr. Huggins agreed if it is within the time allotted for the meeting.

5. NEW BUSINESS

None.

6. LEGAL/CONTRACTUAL/PERSONNEL (may require executive session)

None.

7. ADJOURN

Mr. Huggins adjourned the meeting without motion.

Meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this _____, 2019, Agenda Item _____

Prepared by:

Paige Jernigan, Interim Administrative & Customer Service Specialist

Approved by:



Andy Smith, Secretary