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Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority  
COVID -19 AD-HOC SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA

Friday, June 11, 2021, 10:00 a.m.

3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC, 29201

Conference Room A (Large) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

*Prior to entering the meeting, please turn all electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, etc.) to a silent, vibrate or off position.*

Lill Mood (Lexington County)

Derrick Huggins (City of Columbia)

John V. Furgess, Sr. (Richland County Legislative Delegation)

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1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
  2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
  3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 14, 2021 PAGES 2-6
  4. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS PAGES 7-11
    - A. Update of Executive Orders-South Carolina (LeRoy DesChamps)
    - B. Update of The COMET Operations (Maurice Bell)
    - C. Update of Testing & Vaccination of Employees (LeRoy DesChamps)
    - D. Update of Vaccination Efforts and Impacts to Public Transit (Pamela Bynoe-Reed and LeRoy DesChamps)
  5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE (Derrick Huggins)
  6. ADJOURN

**Next Meeting:** *Friday, July 9, 2021 @ 10 a.m. at The COMET, 3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201.*

All items on this agenda are subject to action being taken by the Committee. Agenda order is subject to change.

**GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** The COMET will make all reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities to participate in this meeting. Upon request to the Public Information Specialist & Clerk of the Board, The COMET will provide agenda materials in appropriate alternative formats, or disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, to enable individuals with disabilities to participate in public meetings. Requests should be sent to The COMET by mail at 3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201, by fax at (803) 255-7113, or by e-mail to [info@catchthecomet.org](mailto:info@catchthecomet.org). For language assistance, interpreter services, please contact (803) 255-7133, 711 through the Relay Service. Para información en Español, por favor llame al (803) 255-7133.

Take The COMET to the Meeting! Route 6 and DART serve the facility. Visit [www.CatchTheCOMET.org](http://www.CatchTheCOMET.org) or call (803) 255-7100 for more details.



*The COMET COVID-19 AD HOC Sub Committee Meeting minutes are prepared and presented in summary form. Audio recordings of the meetings are on file at The COMET and are part of the approved minutes. If you would like to hear the recording from the meeting, please contact Angela Jacobs at [ajacobs@thecometsc.gov](mailto:ajacobs@thecometsc.gov).*

*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 **Friday, May 7, 2021**.*

**Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority  
COVID-19 AD HOC Sub Committee Meeting  
Friday, May 14, 2021 - 10:00 AM  
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201 - Conference Room A**

**Members Present:**

John Furgess\*  
Derrick Huggins, Committee Chair\*  
Lill Mood

**Guests Present:**

Maurice Bell, RATP Dev  
Dennis Franklin, TCS\*  
Joe McKelvey, RATP Dev\*  
Ronnie Sweeny, RATP Dev \*

**The COMET Staff Present:**

Rosalyn Andrews, Chief Financial Officer\*  
Pamela Bynoe-Reed, Director of Marketing & Community Affairs/Public Information Officer  
Leroy DesChamps, Interim Executive Director  
Tanisha Gibbons, Customer Experience & Contract Compliance Manager\*  
Angela Jacobs, Public Information Specialist/Board Clerk  
Crystal Willis, Financial Accountant\*

\*Via Phone

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**  
Chairman Huggins called the meeting to Order at 10:01 a.m.  
A quorum was present at the opening of the meeting.
  
2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
**Motion:** A motion to adopt the May 14, 2021 agenda was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Furgess.  
**Ayes:** Furgess, Huggins, Mood  
**Nays:** None.  
**Motion passed.**



**3. ADOPTION OF APRIL 23, 2021 MINUTES**

**Motion:** A motion to adopt the April 23, 2021 Minutes was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Ms. Mood.

**Ayes:** Furgess, Huggins, Mood

**Nays:** None

**Motion passed.**

**4. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Update of Executive Orders – South Carolina**

Mr. DesChamps informed the Committee that on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and May 7<sup>th</sup> the Governor issued Executive Orders extending the COVID-19 State of Emergency procedures for an additional 15 days. He said The COMET continues to follow the TSA and CDC's protocols on mask requirements related to transit and those protocols have been extended through September 13, 2021. He also reported that the City of Columbia has extended their mask requirement to June 13<sup>th</sup> but they will not be enforcing or issuing citations. Mr. DesChamps reported that the CDC feels that fully vaccinated people do not need to wear masks in certain places, but it still requires that masks be worn on public transportation and The COMET is following that guideline.

**B. Update of The COMET Operations**

Mr. Bell reported that COVID cleaning for April included the detailing of 381 buses, with 396 foggings performed, and 1221 interior/exterior cleanings. He said they are continuing to go through processes in order to improve the wash rack and have been in discussions with Mr. DesChamps and his team on some of the issues found and ongoing repairs that are being done to improve the cleaning of the buses. In addition, they are continuing to evaluate more COVID cleaning of the interior of the buses. He said Dennis Franklin, TCS Operations Manager, is continuing his efforts with ZEP, which is the vendor of the cleaning products, and he is also evaluating other transit systems and school bus companies to determine how to improve the interior cleaning as well as accomplish other COVID cleaning methods. Mr. Bell also reported that 46 vaccination trips have been completed since the last March meeting and 22 vaccination trips are scheduled within the next 14 days.

**C. Update of Testing & Vaccination of Employees**

Mr. DesChamps reported that The COMET continues to encourage and support employees that need testing. He said that testing provided by Health Force at COMET Central had decreased from 35 to 9 per day and because of the decrease in numbers they will now offer testing in addition to vaccinations with the following change in hours: Monday - Friday 8am - 12pm and 2pm to 6pm. Strongly suggests that employees be vaccinated, The COMET administrative staff is at 90% fully vaccinated. Mr. Bell reported that 45% of TCS's operators and staff have been vaccinated and they are continuing to work with those who have not been vaccinated. He reported that by May 28<sup>th</sup> TCS is scheduled to transport over 58 trips for vaccinations with 8 trips



scheduled to take place over the next 14 days. Surveys have been passed out to over 100 operators to gain feedback on their vaccination status but many do not want to complete the survey at this point, 19 have verbally confirmed that they have received the vaccination and the plan is to continue having conversations over the next few weeks to determine if more have done so. Mr. Bell said the surveys are not getting the results they were looking for since it is still voluntary for employees to get vaccinated. Mr. Furgess said he feels there may be serious publicity problems if the public is being required to wear a mask on the buses but operators are refusing to get vaccinated. He said since The COMET is making vaccinations available to the public, operators and staff should also receive the vaccination unless there is a medical or religious reason for not doing so. Chairman Huggins concurred and asked that Mr. DesChamps and Mr. Bell to come back with a report on the number of operators still needed vaccinations. Chairman Huggins also reminded the committee about possible incentives and said he would like to discuss what those options are and what other agencies in the Southeast are doing. Ms. Mood said she appreciated Mr. Furgess' concerns and reminded him that TSA & CDC supports the mask requirement on transit but the board and staff do not have the same authority with requiring employees to be vaccinated. Mr. DesChamps said they would need legal counsel's advice regarding vaccination mandates and that he would reach out to legal for advice and direction. Chairman Huggins said the following items needed action before the next board meeting: find out how other agencies are incentivizing employees for vaccinations, get legal guidance on mask mandates for employees and report back with the number of operators that have/have not been vaccinated. He also asked that Ms. Bynoe-Reed be able to articulate to the public what actions The COMET is taking, why we are taking those actions and that there is legal precedence.

#### **D. Update of Vaccination and Impacts to Public Transit**

Ms. Bynoe-Reed gave an update on the "Don't Miss Your Shot" media campaign and said coverage and footage of Chairman Huggins receiving his vaccine will be featured in the newsletter that is distributed by Thomas Media Group as well on The COMET's listserv. She reported that footage will also be used for commercials that will run during the July-August timeframe. Chairman Huggins was also featured on The COMET's social media page encouraging people to get their vaccine. She said she wanted to bring the committee's attention to the partnerships with Uber and Lyft where free rides will be offered up to \$15 each way for people who want to get their vaccinations, and this would really benefit rural areas where transportation is an issue. This campaign will begin on Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup> and a press release will go out on that same day about the partnership The COMET has with Uber, Lyft, and the United Way of the Midlands. She reported that The COMET staff was ready to assist with a vaccination clinic scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup> in Mayor Robinson's district, however Mayor Robinson informed staff that they would not be holding a vaccination clinic on that day. Ms. Bynoe-Reed said she would ensure that flyers would be available in the Lower Richland Community



for residents interested in taking advantage of the rideshare program. She reported that in an effort to be evergreen with information, new brochures will go to print mid-week at the latest, and media coverage was received from WLTX on opening day of vaccinations at COMET Central which included interviews and received numerous media hits. Chairman Huggins asked that Ms. Bynoe-Reed reach out to all rural areas of the counties to see determine what possibilities Health Force may have with reaching the public in those areas, with the use Uber or Lyft when possible. Mr. Furgess commended Ms. Bynoe-Reed on that effort and commended Health Force employees who were very helpful and courteous during his vaccination. Chairman concurred and asked that Ms. Bynoe-Reed send a letter to Ms. Aiken commending her staff not only on administering the vaccine but for making people feel welcome and comfortable. Ms. Bynoe-Reed reported that during the first week of vaccinations at COMET Central 186 vaccines were administered and 12 COVID tests done.

#### 5. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Chairman Huggins said he felt the COVID-19 Ad Hoc committee is now at the point of sharing information, sharing successes, and making sure the public knows all of the things The COMET has made available to make sure the vaccine is not only administered but making sure that people have access. Because the committee is in the information-sharing stage, he felt the frequency of the meetings could be reduced to once a month. Ms. Mood and Mr. Furgess concurred and said that with an ad hoc committee, members are available and responsive in the event a question, situation or policy needs attention in between meetings. Mr. Furgess asked that Mr. Bell's report at the next board meeting include the number of vaccinated RAPT Dev employees instead of percentages, Chairman concurred and advised staff to review what other transit agencies are doing to incentivize their employees and asked Ms. Bynoe-Reed to reach out to local vendors about swag donations. Mr. Furgess asked if the COVID testing and vaccination information would be advertised in the Panorama which is a free paper and Ms. Bynoe-Reed said she will take out a small ad newspapers and post signage at COMET Central. The next COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee meeting will be held on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### 6. ADJOURN

**Motion:** A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Mood and seconded by Mr. Furgess.

**Ayes:** Furgess, Mood

**Nays:** None

**Absent:** Huggins

**Motion passed.**

*The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.*



CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

Prepared by:

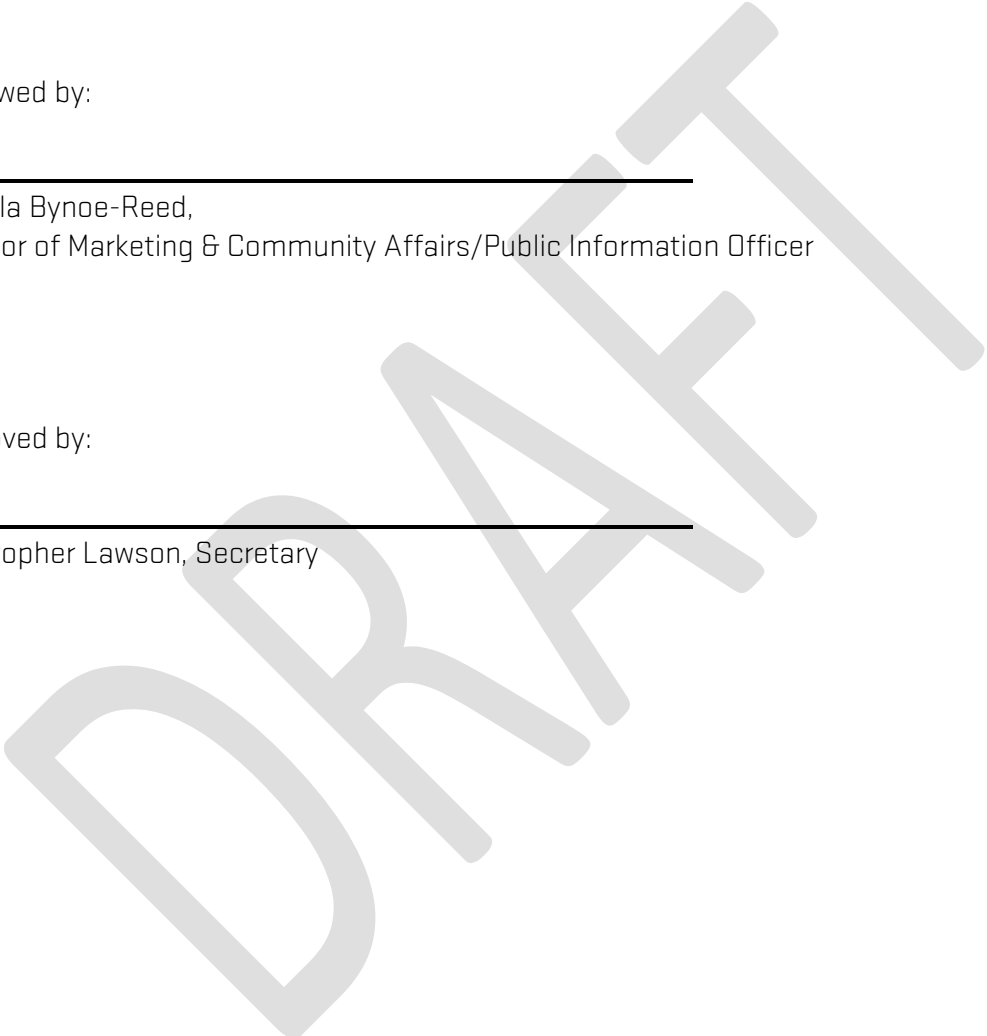
\_\_\_\_\_  
Angela Jacobs, Public Information Specialist/Clerk of the Board

Reviewed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pamela Bynoe-Reed,  
Director of Marketing & Community Affairs/Public Information Officer

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Lawson, Secretary





Friday, June 4, 2021

#### Agenda Item # 4

To: Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee  
 From: LeRoy DesChamps, Interim Executive Director  
 Subject: COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee Staff Report

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Requested Action: Staff recommends that the COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee review the discussion and action items for consideration.

Background and Summary: A summary of today's COVID-19 items is shown below to update the COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee regarding The COMET's Operations.

#### A. Update of Executive Order

Since the COVID-19 Committee last met, the Governor has issued another executive order extending the State of Emergency for another 15 days as of May 22, 2021 as 2021-25 which is available here: [2021-05-22 FILED Executive Order No. 2021-25 - State of Emergency.pdf \(sc.gov\) 2021-](#)

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has [extended the face mask requirement](#) for all transportation networks, including public transportation, through September 13, 2021. TSA's initial face mask requirement went into effect on February 1, 2021 and expired on May 11, 2021.

While this announcement extended the date of enforcement, all other aspects of the requirement remain unchanged, including exemptions and civil penalties.

Learn more about FTA's guidance to the transit industry on the Federal mask requirement for public transit at the [FTA Transit Mask Up webpage](#).

#### Links:

[TSA extends face mask requirement at airports and throughout the transportation network \(press release\)](#)  
[CDC Travel Information](#)  
[TSA Face Mask Requirements Memorandum](#)  
[FTA Transit Mask Up Webpage](#)

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#### Board Members:

## **B. Update of The COMET Operations – including Food Delivery, Vehicle Cleaning & COVID-19 Policy**

The COMET and RATP Dev staff will update the COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee regarding food delivery, vehicle cleaning activities including compliance with the COVID-19 Policy.

## **C. Update of Testing**

The COMET has been doing COVID-19 testing at COMET Central in a secure kiosk performed outdoors since December 2020 as a free service to The COMET riders Wednesday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 12 noon and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The kiosk was discontinued by DHEC as of Monday, May 10, 2021. For those needing testing, the vaccine vendor, Health Force, LLC has been providing them upon request.

The COMET staff will provide a verbal update regarding COVID-19 testing among the employees.

## **D. Update of Vaccination and Impacts to Public Transit**

South Carolina is currently offering vaccinations to anyone over the age of 12 by appointments and some locations are accepting walk-ins. Pfizer and Moderna are now available in South Carolina. Johnson & Johnson/Janssen is reinstated for public health usage per review by CDC after being temporarily suspended.

### **People with increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease**

- People aged 12-54 with one or more of the following high-risk medical conditions:
  - Cancer (current, not a history of cancer), chronic kidney disease (any stage), chronic lung disease, diabetes (Type 1 and Type 2), Down syndrome, heart disease (congestive heart disease, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy, pulmonary hypertension), HIV/AIDS, solid organ transplant, obesity (BMI >30), pregnancy, sickle cell disease.
- People who have a developmental or other severe high-risk disability that makes developing severe life-threatening illness or death from COVID-19 infection more likely.

### **B. Frontline workers with increased occupational risk**

- Frontline workers with increased occupational risk are people who:
  - Must be in-person at their place of work, and
  - Perform a job that puts them at increased risk of exposure due to their frequent, close (less than 6 feet) and ongoing (more than 15 minutes) contact with others in the work environment
  - Examples of frontline workers include but are not limited to school staff and daycare workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, law enforcement officers, etc.

### **C. Individuals at increased risk in settings where people are living and working in close contact**

- Residents and workers in group home settings for the mentally or physically disabled or those with behavioral or substance abuse conditions
- Workers and residents in homeless shelters
- Workers and residents in community training homes
- State and local correctional facility staff with direct inmate contact

#### **Board Members:**



- o Correctional and immigration detention facility inmates
- o Migrant farmworkers living in shared housing or reliant on shared transportation.

E. Update on Research of Incentives to Employees receiving vaccination. (Discussion)

Fiscal Impacts: TBD.

Legal Counsel Review: None.

Recommended Motion: TBD.

Attachments: NA

For information regarding this staff report, please contact LeRoy DesChamps at (803) 255-7085 or email [ldeschamps@TheCOMETSC.gov](mailto:ldeschamps@TheCOMETSC.gov).

Approved for Submission,



LeRoy DesChamps, Interim Executive Director

**Board Members:**

Friday, June 4, 2021

**Agenda Item # 4D**

To: Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee  
From: Pamela Bynoe-Reed, Director of Marketing & Community Affairs/Public Information Officer  
Subject: COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee Staff Report

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Requested Action: Staff recommends that the COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee review the discussion and action items for consideration.

Background and Summary: A summary of today's COVID-19 items is shown below to update the COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee regarding The COMET's Marketing of its COVID-19 initiatives.

**A. Update of Don't Miss Your Shot Campaign**

- On May 17, 2021, we solidified a partnership with **Uber and Lyft in cooperation from United Way of the Midlands** regarding implementation of their vaccine transportation services in Richland and Lexington Counties. All trips are capped at \$15 per ride at four and are available Monday-Friday from 7 a.m.-7 p.m.
  - **Uber.** The Webber Elementary School vaccine clinic on **May 15, did not occur as planned per Mayor Robinson.** The code is: <http://t.uber.com/dontmissyourshot>
  - **Lyft** has coordinated with United Way to ensure that they have a process in place for the funding. The codes are: Enter COMETVAX1 (for first shot) Enter COMETVAX2 (for second shot) on the Lyft app.
  - Both programs are funded through \$50k each from both Uber and Lyft, with a match from The COMET coming from either ARA (American Rescue Act) funding or Service Enhancements. The program is expected to go until September 2021 until renewed or depletion of the funding allocation. A press release was distributed on May 17 and updates were provided to DHEC's Healthcare Coalition to inform about this new avenue of transportation through The COMET
- Health Force LLC is providing both Moderna and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccines at COMET Central. The hours of operation are weekdays from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. The vendor is reporting that more than 350 (379) people have been vaccinated so far and more than 75 (77) have been tested.
- DHEC has now listed COMET Central as a designated vaccination site in their system.
- In lieu of The COMET organizing vaccine clinics, we propose that we target major locations (Columbia Place Mall, COMET Central, Rural pop-ups) to concentrate marketing more on how to receive access by the many ways The COMET can transport. We will also refresh the campaign media buys(print, radio and TV) and distribution

**Board Members:**

network partnerships with the upcoming budget year beginning July 1.

## B. Signage and Collateral Support

- The Marketing team has completed the brochure to an evergreen iteration and the website was also updated to reflect new locations and changes in how to access. New brochures will be distributed to Richland County Councilwoman Cheryl English for distribution in Lower Richland per her request. We will also seek out other avenues for distribution in the community as well as the buses and COMET Central. Updated social media posts are in the calendar to remind people of the initiative.
- Kudos to Blake Gibbons, intern, for working with the Transit app to show vaccine locations on the transportation map.
- We have a Don't Miss Your Shot banner to accompany the Health Force banner at the gate.

Fiscal Impacts: TBD.

Legal Counsel Review: None.

Recommended Motion: TBD.

Attachments: NA

For information regarding this staff report, please contact Pamela Bynoe-Reed (803) 255-7139 or email [pbynoe-reed@TheCOMETSC.gov](mailto:pbynoe-reed@TheCOMETSC.gov).

Approved for Submission,



Pamela Bynoe-Reed, Director of Marketing and Community Affairs/Public Information Officer

**Board Members:**