

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Introducing RAPT Dev USA



#### Corey Gagnon

General manager of RAPT Dev USA, the transit operator for The COMET

As of July 1, The COMET presented a five-year contract to RAPT Dev USA, Inc. to operate our Fixed Route and Paratransit Programs. RAPT Dev brings 46 years of success in managing and operating high-quality, safe, responsive and efficient transit systems throughout the United States.

The new contractors will be responsible for employing the drivers, performing the maintenance of the buses and other related services such as paratransit, security, landscaping, bus stop maintenance, mystery riding and IT, which are provided by small, local, minority and women-owned businesses.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Public transportation enhances personal opportunities

According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA):

- Public transportation provides personal mobility and freedom for people from every walk of life.
- Access to public transportation gives people transportation options to get to work, go to school, visit friends, or go to a doctor's office.
- A total of 87% of trips on public transit have a direct impact on the local economy.
- Of all riders, 71% are employed and 7% are students.
- More than two-thirds of riders walk to their stop or station.



### Sign up for our email newsletter

Want to stay up to date on The COMET's most recent news, information and updates? Sign up for our bi-monthly email newsletter by visiting our website at [www.catchTheCOMET.org](http://www.catchTheCOMET.org).



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## NEWS & UPDATES

### MidlandsBiz COMET Chat with CEO John Andoh

It's been a busy summer so far and we hope you all have been keeping safe. At The COMET, we've been doing our part to keep our riders safe, secure and comfortable as they travel our system on the way to essential work and resources.



On June 16, we officially reopened our transit hub, COMET Central. At that time, we debuted a massive renovation at this location and at the Columbia Place Mall SuperStop. We were fortunate to receive money from the CARES Act, which allowed us to make the necessary replacements and improvements for the benefit and safety of our riders. The improvements ranged from aesthetics, such as painting and landscaping, to more extensive building of lit shelters and benches at the SuperStop and



enhanced safety and security with increased onsite police support and heightened disinfecting/sanitation. We also implemented a mandatory mask requirement for all buses and facilities with plans to provide complementary masks until July 31.

As we look toward the fall, we are excited about our new contract partnership with the University of South Carolina. The annual contract for \$1.5 million is consistent with what UofSC spends currently to operate its system and will be designed to more efficiently serve the students of the university and unify and strengthen the transportation system in the Midlands.

Please reach out to me anytime if you have any thoughts, comments or questions about The COMET:

803.255.7087 or  
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### THE COMET IN THE COMMUNITY

On June 22, The COMET, along with Columbia SC 63, Historic Columbia, Richland Library and Midlands area municipalities launched a tribute honoring local civil rights icon, Sarah Mae Flemming, with the Town of Eastover and Richland County heralding the day as “Sarah Mae Flemming Day.”

The tribute, “Saving Sarah’s Seat” is the awareness campaign spearheaded by The COMET in recognition of the 66th anniversary of Flemming’s ride on a local bus and the landmark incident which was cited in the lawsuit that brought an end to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, made famous by civil rights activists Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. Sarah Mae Flemming’s likeness and her story will be present in a seat on every The COMET bus until August 22.