

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### The COMET announces the election of new officers to its Board of Directors

The COMET recently announced the election of new officers to its Board of Directors. The new officers were elected at the August 2020 meeting.



**Col. (R) Roger Leaks**  
Board Chair



**Derrick Huggins**  
Vice Chair



**Andy Smith**  
Board Treasurer



**Allison Terracio**  
Board Secretary



**Lill Mood**  
BSN, MPH, Service  
Committee Chair

## PROMOTIONS & DISCOUNTS



### Free transit services + unlimited 45-minute Blue Bike SC rides

The COMET will continue running fare-free services to ease the financial burden of those who may have lost wages due to the pandemic. Additionally, all riders get unlimited, free 45-minute bike rides on Blue Bike SC — just ask your driver for a code to ride. Find a Blue Bike SC station at [www.bluebikesc.com](http://www.bluebikesc.com).



### 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).



[CATCHTHECOMET.ORG](http://CATCHTHECOMET.ORG)  
803-255-7100



Newsletter 27  
**September 2020**

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## NEWS & UPDATES



### MidlandsBiz COMET Chat with CEO John Andoh

On Sept. 1, we launched UofSC Transit powered by The COMET in partnership with the University of South Carolina. UofSC students and faculty are able to ride UofSC Transit powered by The COMET (formerly the Carolina Shuttle) free of charge. The general public will also be able to ride UofSC Transit powered by The COMET at the same fare as it costs to access The COMET services.



This month, we are launching two major initiatives designed to gather input from business leaders and the community we serve in order to ensure that our system meets the needs and exceeds the expectations of those who live and work in the Midlands.

### Reimagine The COMET



Reimagine The COMET rolled out at the beginning of this month with a website launch and radio spots encouraging the public to let their voices be heard regarding improvements to the system including where and how often buses run. Let your voice be heard at [reimaginecomet.org](https://reimaginecomet.org).

## THE COMET IN THE COMMUNITY

The COMET is launching two new mobility programs developed through a partnership with Able SC. Eligibility for both programs is available for people who are 65 and older and those with disabilities living outside The COMET service area but in the Columbia Urbanized Area. The funding for the mobility programs is made possible through a Federal Transit Administration grant.

### The COMET Pick-Up Program (PUP)



With PUP, a taxi or rideshare service will be available 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The program provides a 50% discount up to \$50 per month. Once applicants have completed the required training, turned in their application, and DART eligibility, Half Fare Program participation, or age of 65 or older has been confirmed, they will receive a Taxi Voucher Card for use with any participating rideshare or taxi of their choice. All trips must begin or end in the Columbia Urbanized Area to receive voucher funds.

### The COMET Academy

The COMET Academy is a leadership development program for those interested in understanding how public transit works. Its purpose is to develop and equip allies of public transit by arming them with information to be strong advocates on transit's behalf and to possibly take active leadership roles as potential members of The COMET Board of Directors or to serve in other capacities.

### The Volunteer Transportation Reimbursement Program (V-TRIP)



For V-TRIP, a program participant will be given funds to pay his or volunteer driver in the form of a reimbursement for mileage according to the federal mileage reimbursement rate. Volunteer drivers can be a friend or a neighbor. All trips must begin or end in the Columbia Urbanized Area. Reimbursement is available up to 100 miles per month, per program participant to pay the volunteer driver.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Individuals, families, communities and businesses benefit from public transportation. According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA):

- In 2019, Americans took 9.9 billion trips on public transportation.
- People board public transportation 34 million times each weekday.
- Since 1995, public transportation ridership has increased by 28% — a growth rate higher than the 23% increase in U.S. population.
- Public transportation is a \$74 billion industry employing 436,000+ people.