



3613 LUCIUS ROAD. • COLUMBIA, SC • 29201

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## Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority SERVICE COMMITTEE AGENDA

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

12:00 p.m.

3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC, 29201

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

Lill Mood, Chair (Lexington County)

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

Lill Mood, Chair (Lexington County)

Will Brennan, (City of Columbia)      John V. Furgess, Sr. (Richland County Legislative Del.)

Allison Terracio, (Richland County)      Carolyn Gleaton (City of Columbia)

Skip Jenkins (City of Cayce)      Geraldine Robinson (Town of Eastover)

Al Koon (Town of Chapin)

### COVID-19 AD-HOC SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA PAGE(S) 1-2
3. MIDLANDS TRANSIT RIDERS' ASSOCIATION UPDATE (Charles Gossett/Walter Durst)
4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM April 13, 2022 PAGE(S) 3-6
5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS
  - A. Passenger Amenities Program Update (Todd Warren - Davis & Floyd) PAGE(S) 7-10
  - B. Transit Operations Report (Lenny Cooksey/Robert Smith) PAGE(S) 11-39
  - C. Ridership Analysis - March 2022 (Eric Harris) PAGE(S) 40-42
  - D. Reflex/Express Route discussion (Rosalyn Andrews/Dennis Franklin) PAGE(S) 43
  - E. On-Time Performance Project Update (L. Cooksey/LeRoy DesChamps) VERBAL
  - F. Lucius and River SuperStop (LeRoy DesChamps/Eric Harris) VERBAL
  - G. Improved Soda Cap Proposal (Pamela Bynoe-Reed/Eric Harris) PAGE(S) 44-54
  - H. Fare-Free Discussion (from the April Board of Directors' Meeting)
6. SPECIAL COVID-19 SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE
  - A. Update -The COMET Operations relating to COVID-19 (Lenny Cooksey/LeRoy DesChamps)
  - B. Update - Vaccination Program and Impacts to Public Transit (Bynoe-Reed)
7. ADJOURN

*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 and 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.

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*The COMET Service 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 Juliet Sowell at [jsowell@thecometsc.gov](mailto:jsowell@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 April 8, 2022.*

**Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority  
SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Wednesday, April 13, 2022 - 12:00 P.M.  
3613 Lucius Road, Columbia, SC 29201  
Conference Room A (Large) - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

**Members Present:**

Will Brennan \*  
John V. Furgess, Sr.\*  
Carolyn Gleaton\*  
Lill Mood, Chair\*

**Members Absent:**

Alison Terracio  
Al Koon  
Geraldine Robinson

**Guests Present:**

Lenny Cooksey, RATP Dev  
Dennis Franklin, RATP Dev  
Steve Sherrer, RATP Dev  
Walter Durst, Midlands Transit Riders  
Charles Gossett, Midlands Transit Riders  
Eric Harris, Planning Consultant\*  
Zane McGee, Davis & Floyd\*  
Mike Hubbell, Lonestar  
(214) 789-7799 Unknown Caller

**Advisory Members Present:**

Skip Jenkins\*\*  
\* Via Phone  
\*\* Advisory member

**The COMET Staff Present:**

Rosalyn Andrews, Director of Finance/CFO  
Jeremy Berry, IT Manager  
Jackie Bowers, Customer Experience & Contract Compliance Manager  
Pamela Bynoe-Reed, Director of Marketing & Community Affairs/Public Information Officer  
LeRoy DesChamps, Director of Administration & Operations  
Blake Gibbons, Planning & Development Intern  
Juliet Sowell, Public Information Specialist/Clerk of the Board

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

Madam Chair Mood called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. A quorum was present at the opening of the meeting.

**2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Page(s) 1-2

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Madam Chair to adopt the agenda.

**Approved:** Aye (voice vote)

**Motion passed.**

**3. MIDLANDS TRANSIT RIDERS' ASSOCIATION (Walter Durst, Charles Gossett)**

Mr. Durst reports of a rider who approached him three weeks ago about the Route 31 bus, (Denny Terrace area), which arrived late in the afternoon. Dennis Franklin commented that may have been due to a deviated pattern which can cause the bus route some confusion before it is back on schedule.

Mr. Durst also reported an incident at The COMET station where security needed to be called regarding the offensive/improper behavior of an individual. Mr. Durst questioned the procedure of notifying security between driver, dispatch, and security, and if there was a faster way for the drivers to contact assistance. Ms. Mood requested The COMET staff and Mr. Cooksey to investigate the matter and report back to the committee with their findings on emergency communication between drivers, dispatch, and security personnel.

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 9, 2022.**

Page(s) 3-6

**Motion:**

A motion was made by Mr. Furgess and seconded by Madam Chair to adopt the minutes from the March 9, 2022, meeting.

**Approved:** Aye (voice vote)

**Motion passed.**

**5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Passenger Amenities Program Update (Zane McGhee, Davis & Floyd) Page(s) 7-10**

Zane McGhee reports that two approved SCDOT permits for Stops are currently under construction. Also, In the past month they received direction from Eric Harris to begin design on a few additional Stops. Mr. Furgess requested a detailed report on the Lucious Road Super Stop for the next Committee meeting.

Mr. DesChamps added an update on the Super Stop notifying the Board of a meeting held on April 13<sup>th</sup> with Brownstone Management (project manager) and Cherokee (contractor) to address some concerns identified that would need a change order issued for: a manhole, the careful removal of 3 additional trees due to location, a water issue, etc.

**B. Transit Operations Report (Lenny Cooksey/Robert Smith) Page(s) 11-39**

Mr. Cooksey began with reporting the loss of two COMET operators and a moment of silence for those individuals, Willie Gee and Anton Lewis followed.

Mr. Cooksey reported that zero cases of quarantine have been reported. He reported that the mask mandate that was initially set to end on April 18th, may now be extended and he will continue to monitor the situation.

Customer Service complaints decreased in safety and reliability by 10%.

Cooksey recognized Ronnie Gibson and LaWanda Chisolm for Employees of the Month.

Safety Recognition Award was awarded to Cheyenne Aldamuy. Recruiting efforts remain strong within our organization.

**C. Ridership Analysis - January 2022 (Eric Harris) Page(s) 40-42**

Mr. Harris reports that ridership is up by 3% weekday service, 12% weekend, and down 6% for Sunday as we come out of the holiday season. Mr. Harris plans to review Mr. Cooksey's report for any solutions on maintaining steady numbers for the remainder of the fiscal year.

**6. SPECIAL COVID-19 SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

**A. Update - The COMET Operations relating to COVID-19 (Lenny Cooksey/LeRoy DesChamps)**

Mr. Deschamps commented on the CDC mask mandate extended for another two weeks

**B. Update - Don't Miss Your Shot vaccine campaign (Pamela Bynoe-Reed) Page 43**

Ms. Bynoe-Reed reported that COVID testing numbers have decreased considerably. Ms. Bynoe-Reed commented that she is checking for access to second booster shots. Ms. Bynoe-Reed mentioned exploring a partnership with DHEC diabetes campaign that may include diabetes screens at COMET central and stronger communication on our buses.

**7. ADJOURN**

**Motion:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Gleaton and seconded by Mr. Furgess.

**Approve:** Aye (Voice vote, 12:48pm)

**Motion passed.**

*The meeting adjourned at 12:50 P.M.*



CENTRAL MIDLANDS REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

Prepared by:

Juliet Sowell  
Clerk of the Board

Reviewed by:

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Pamela Bynoe-Reed, Director of Marketing & Community Affairs/PIO

Approved by:

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Christopher Lawson, Secretary

May 4, 2022

Derrick Huggins  
Interim Executive Director  
The COMET  
3613 Lucius Rd  
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Bus Stop Shelter and Bench Permitting - Summary of Work  
D&F Job Number: 13827.00

Dear Mr. Huggins:

**WORK COMPLETED THIS PERIOD:**

- Site Designs, Status Reports, Effort Review, and Project Management
- Coordination with SCDOT regarding outstanding permits.
- AOS completed construction of one stop: Stop #717 Clement McCrae SB
- Bi-Weekly Meeting with Eric Harris/Blake Gibbons to discuss new work requests and review pending questions needing COMET input

**WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- AOS has the following stops under construction (3): Stop #1184 Devine Bonham EB, Stop #697 Two Notch Covenant NB and Stop #1101 Fairfield Buckner SB

**UNRESOLVED ISSUES:**

- Stop 1037 Forest Trenholm WB – SCDOT is waiting for Forest Acres to provide input before issuing permit.

**PENDING ITEMS REQUIRING CLIENT ACTION:**

- Stop #1186 Assembly Flora SB (under legal review)
- Stop #1654, Approval and signature for encroachment agreement with Dixie Pipeline.

Very truly yours,

**DAVIS & FLOYD**



Todd J. Warren, PE  
Vice President

## **COMET Shelter and Bench Permitting Status May 2022**

### **Completed Sites**

#### **Shelters**

None for this period

#### **Benches**

Stop #717 Clement McRae SB

#### **Boarding and Alighting**

None for this period

### **Approved Sites**

#### **Shelters**

Stop #1654 Broad Shivers NB

Stop #1186 Assembly Flora SB

Stop #697 Two Notch Covenant NB

Stop #1101 Fairfield Buckner SB

#### **Benches**

Stop #1650 Hardscrabble Bush NB (Awaiting sidewalk completion of Hardscrabble Widening)

Stop #1184 Devine Bonham EB

#### **Boarding and Alighting**

None for this period

### **Sites Currently Under Permit Review**

#### **Shelters**

Stop #43 Pendleton Barnwell EB – City of Columbia (City requesting neighborhood feedback)

Stop #1037 Forest Trenholm WB – SCDOT

Stop #269 Gavilan Campanella - SCDOT



## **Benches**

Stop #223 Read Oak EB – City of Columbia (City requesting neighborhood feedback)

Stop #1407 Bull Richland SB – SCDOT

## **Boarding and Alighting**

None for this period

## **Sites in Design**

### **Shelters**

Stop #1094 Monticello Road and Elliot Avenue

Stop #306 Barhamville Road and Germany Street

Stop #623 Fairfield Road and Stebondale Road

Stop #788 Decker Boulevard and Wedgefield Road

Stop #1723 Killian Walmart (Working with Walmart regarding easement)

Stop #1192 Medical Park @ Prisma Health

Stop #1248 Richland Assembly WB

Stop #1147 Elmwood Park WB

Stop #422 Parklane Brighton SB

### **Benches**

Stop #1707 Longcreek Drive and Cambout Street

Stop #225 Harbison Boulevard and Parkridge Drive

Stop #99 Park Abbeville SB

Stop #1378 W Hospital Sunset NB

Stop #676 Park Elmwood NB

Stop #1772 Veterans Byron SB

Stop #848 Blossom Park WB

Stop #1134 Broad Zimalcrest SB

Stop #325 Broad Rushmore NB

Stop #331 Broad Shivers SB

Stop #653 Main Colleton SB

Stop #683 Main Prescott NB

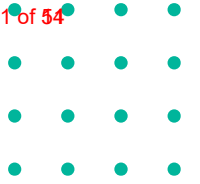
Stop #1655 Broad Beatty NB

Stop #1218 Main Miller SB

Stop #21 Harden Rosewood NB

### **Boarding and Alighting**

None for this period

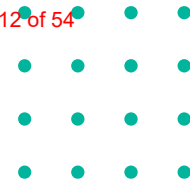


# RATP Dev USA Monthly Performance Report

APRIL  
2022



LIMITED SHARING



# Hot Topics:

1. COVID-19 – Lenny Cooksey
2. Customer Service – Alicia Peterson
3. Maintenance – Ron Sweeney
4. Operations – Joey McKelvey
5. Safety and Training – Charles Hall
6. Human Resources – Courtney Coney
7. Performance Measures - Lenny Cooksey



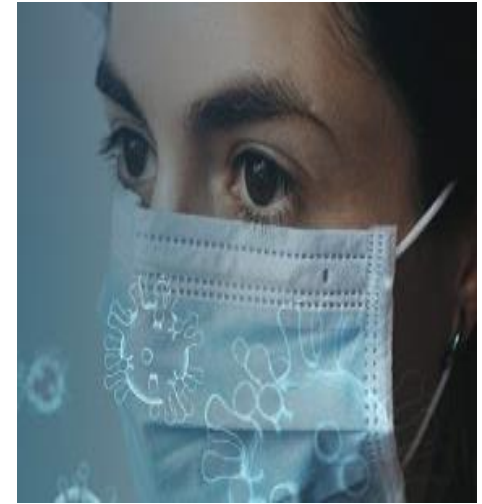


# Covid- 19

**CDC Reissues Mask Recommendation On Planes And Public Transportation Across America As Much Of The Northeast Moves Into “High Transmission” Category** 5-3-2022

*RATPDEV /TCS COVID-19 CASES/QUARANTINED*

**1**

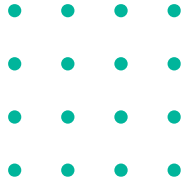


Face masks required.



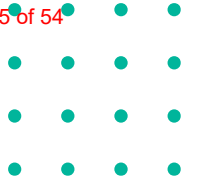
Bus Cleaning	Totals
Detailed	336
Fogging	338
Interior / Exterior	1674





# Customer Service

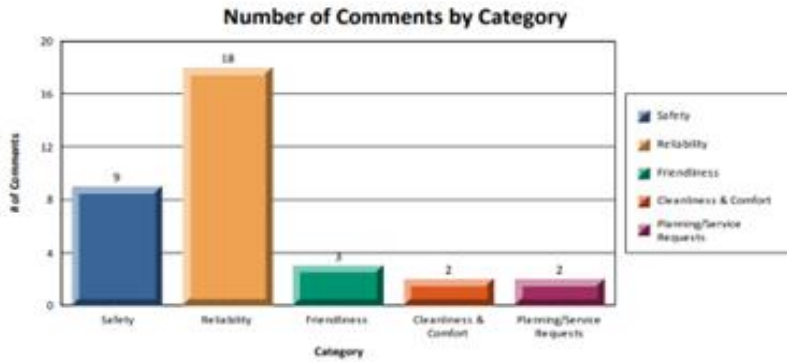




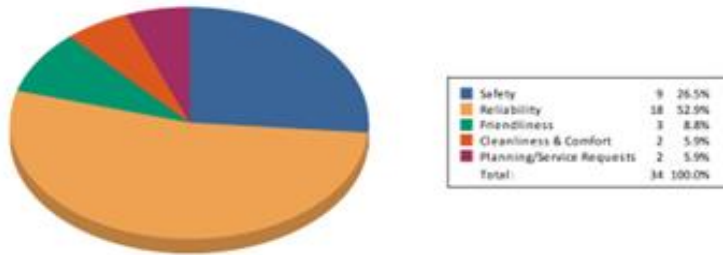
# Customer Service

## CUSTOMER COMMENTS

For the Period: 4/1/2022 to 4/30/2022



**Percentage by Category**



For the month of April 2022, RATP Dev had a total of 35 customer complaints comparing to 61 of March 2022, that is a 42.62% decrease from the previous month. The Safety category was increase to 26.5% from 6.6% and the Reliability category was decreased to 52.9% from 62.3% of the previous month.

The complaint rate 2.59 (complaints per 10,000 riders) for the month of March, is lower than our target goal of 6 complaints per 10,000 customers.

RATP Dev has been continuously addressing the customer complaint issues in different training programs, personal counseling/coaching, and other management actions.





# RECOGNITION

**MALIK SAEED**

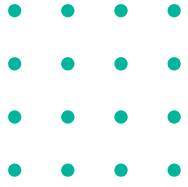


**Ayanna Whitfield**



**Employees of the Month**



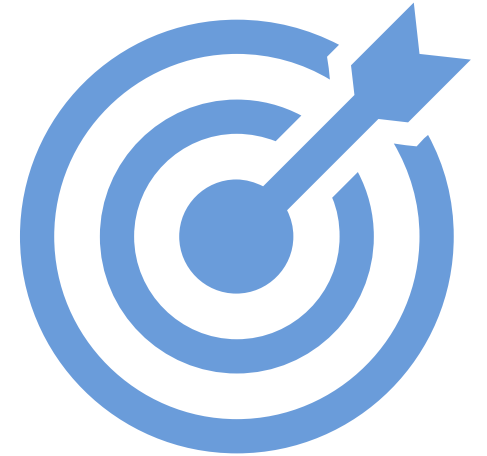


# Maintenance

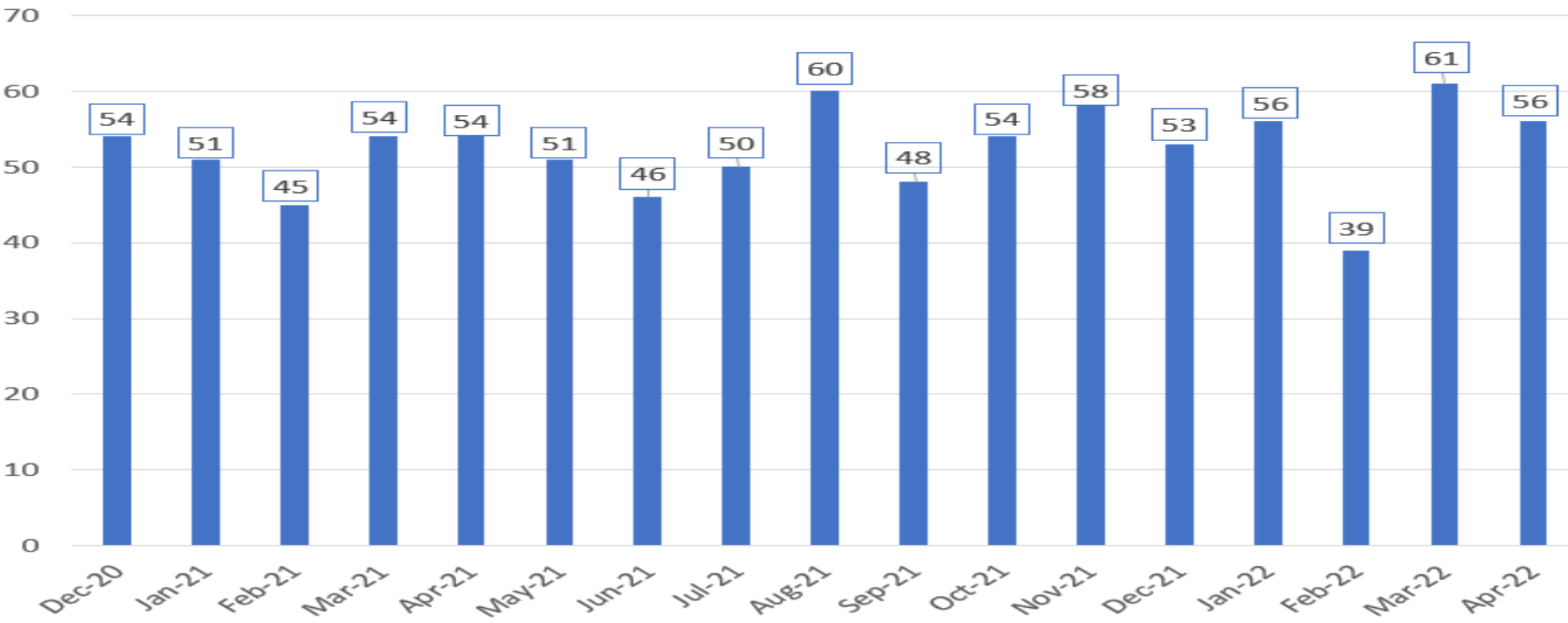


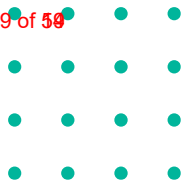


# Preventive Maintenance



**Scheduled PMIs = 56**  
**Completed PMIs = 56**  
**100% On-Time**  
 PMI'S ARE TRIGGERED BY ACCUMULATED  
 MILEAGE  
 AMOUNT VARIES BY MONTH





# PM Results



Vehicle Preventative Maintenance Interval Statistics



Total Miles Between Road Calls = **10,459**  
Target Miles Between Road Calls = 12,000



# On Time Performance (OTP)

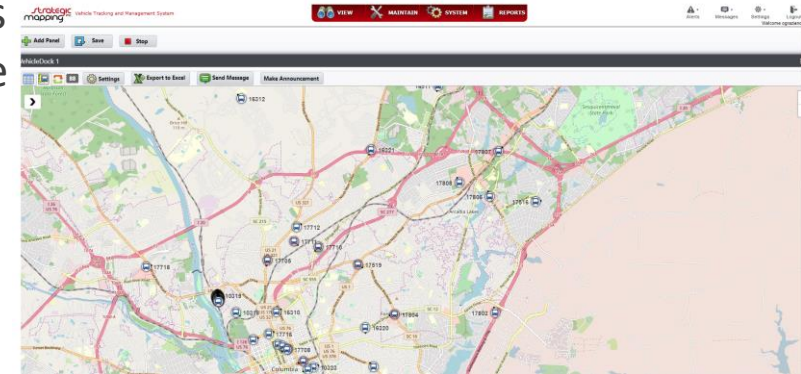




# OTP for Fixed Route / DART / Flex



On-time performance is a leading indicator of service reliability and is inscribed as an essential [service standard](#). On-time performance measures the percentage of actual arrival times that are between (0) minutes early and five (5) minutes late at designated points along transit routes. The metric is reported by the COMET's AVL system for Fixed Route ( Strategic Mapping) and DART Paratransit (Trapeze).



- Fixed Route OTP for April 2022: **46.98%**
- Fixed Route OTP had not significant change from March to April
- DART/Paratransit OTP for April 2022: **92.43%**
- DART/Paratransit OTP increased **2.43%** compared to March at **90%**

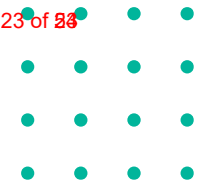
*Clever Devices has been replaced with the new AVL system, Strategic Mapping. We are currently in phase one of three-part implementation to improve depiction of the system OTP.*





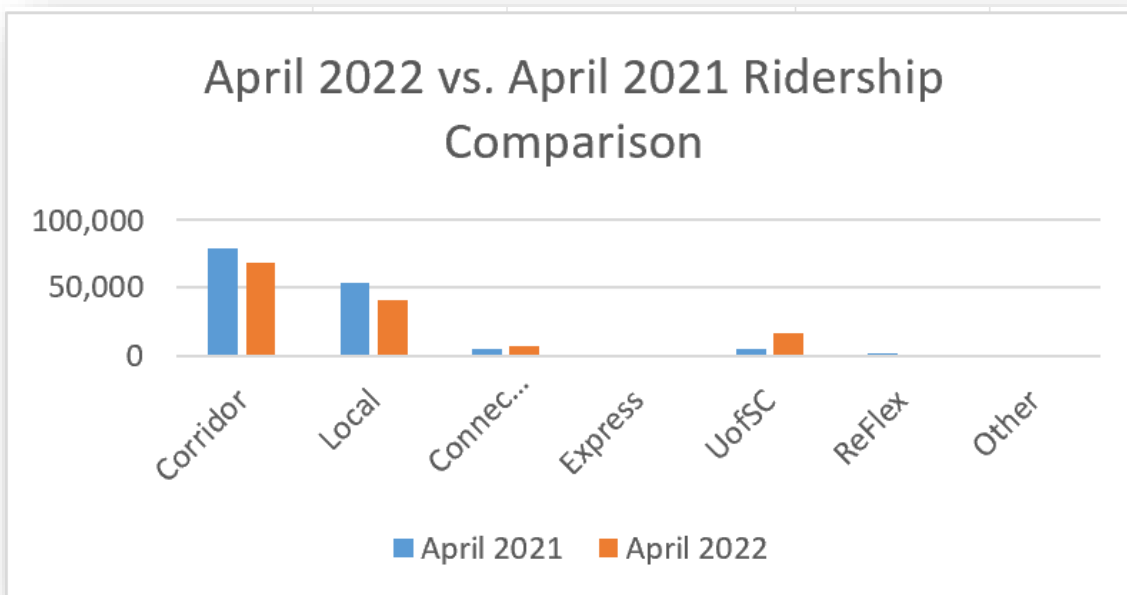
# Ridership Summary

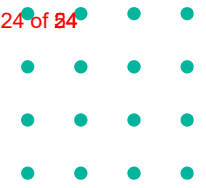




# All Aboard

- **134,878 total ridership for April 2022**
- 145,833 total ridership for April 2021
- Ridership decreased –8% compared to April 2021

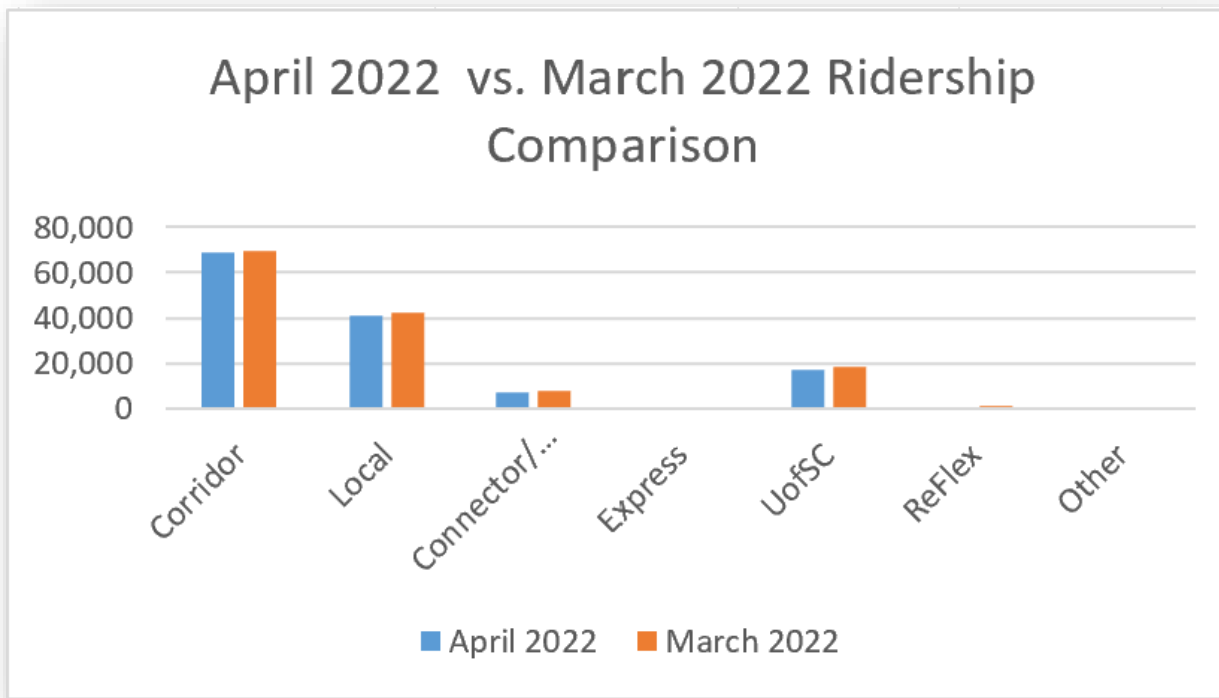




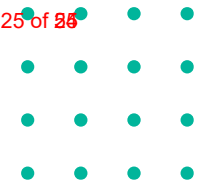
# Previous Month Comparison



- **134,878 total ridership for April 2022**
- 138,952 total ridership for March 2022
- Ridership decreased 3% compared to March 2022



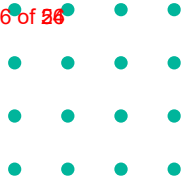




# Average Daily Ridership

Average Daily Ridership					
Month	Monthly Ridership		Average Daily Ridership		
	2021	2022	2021	2022	% Change
January	201,634	106,428	28,805	15,204	-47%
February	180,366	112,303	25,767	16,043	-38%
March	197,617	138,952	28,231	19,850	-30%
April	152,549	134,878	21,793	19,268	-12%
May	134,918	-	19,274	-	-100%
June	112,840	-	16,120	-	-100%
July	111,695	-	15,956	-	-100%
August	137,928	-	19,704	-	-100%
September	158,796	-	22,685	-	-100%
October	138,010	-	19,716	-	-100%
November	101,489	-	14,498	-	-100%
December	112,745	-	16,106	-	-
<b>Year to Date</b>	<b>1,740,587</b>	<b>492,561</b>	<b>248,655</b>	<b>70,366</b>	<b>-72%</b>



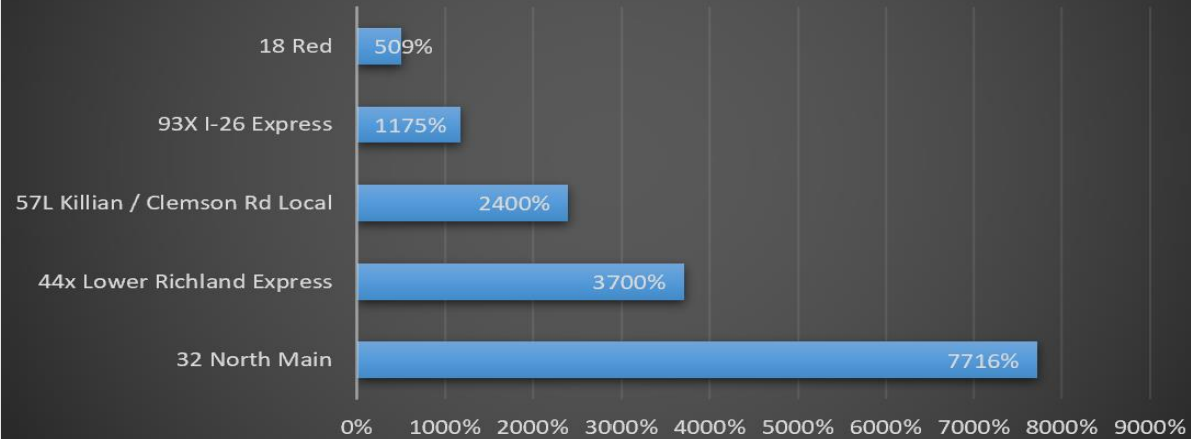


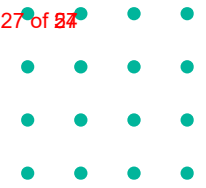
# Top 5 INCREASES VS 2021

## 5 LARGEST RIDERSHIP INCREASES VS PREVIOUS YEAR

	<u>Routes</u>	<u>April 2021 Ridership</u>	<u>April 2022 Ridership</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
1	32 North Main	25	1,954	7716%
2	44x Lower Richland Express	1	38	3700%
3	57L Killian / Clemson Rd Local	7	175	2400%
4	93X I-26 Express	4	51	1175%
5	18 Red	848	5,166	509%

## 5 Largest Ridership Increases vs Previous Year



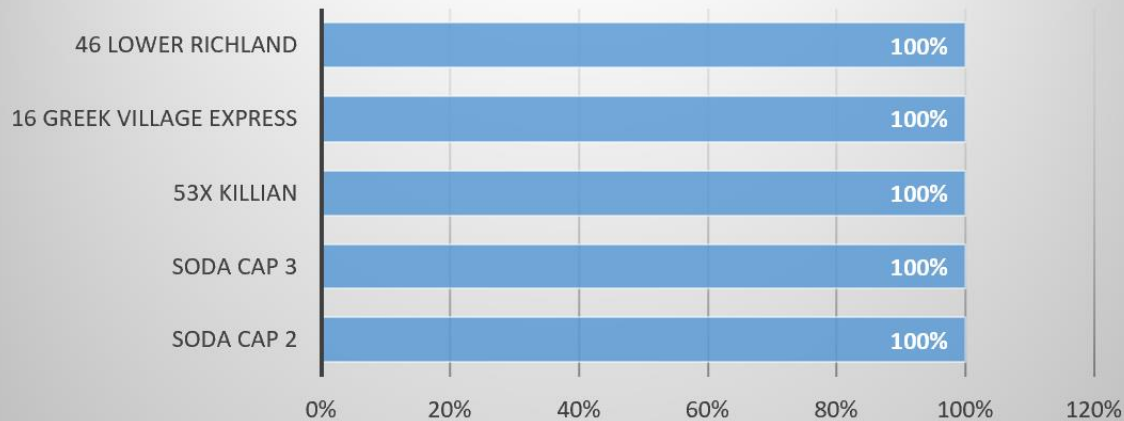


# Top 5 DECREASES VS 2021

## 5 LARGEST RIDERSHIP DeCREASES VS PREVIOUS YEAR

	<u>Routes</u>	<u>April 2021 Ridership</u>	<u>April 2022 Ridership</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
1	Soda Cap 2	3	-	-100%
2	Soda Cap 3	69	-	-100%
3	53X Killian	21	-	-100%
4	16 Greek Village Express	47	-	-100%
5	46 Lower Richland	5	-	-100%

## 5 Largest Ridership Decreases vs Previous Year





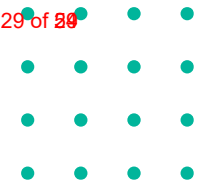
# GAMECOCK RIDERSHIP

UofSC Ridership April vs March

Route	March Total	April Total	Variance	% Change
13 North Loop	847	300	(547)	-65%
14 Express	2,008	1,815	(193)	-10%
15 Yellow	515	507	(8)	-2%
16 Greek Village	60	176	116	193%
17 Green	797	597	(200)	-25%
18 Red	5,526	5,166	(360)	-7%
19 Blue	24	24	-	0%
20 West Campus	5,726	5,795	69	1%
24 Evening 1	46	67	21	46%
25 Evening 2	202	240	38	19%
2001 Gamecock Express	-	-	-	
	15,751	14,687	(1,064)	-7%

- 14,687 passenger boardings
- Represents 7% decrease vs March (15,751)
- Difference of 1,064 passengers compared to March



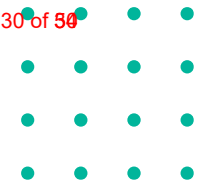



# DART Ridership



2022		2019	
April		April	
Requested Trips	5,961	Requested Trips	8,787
Passenger Transported	5,006	Passenger Transported	7,251
Total Miles	44,375	Total Miles	69,104
Revenue Miles	40,542	Revenue Miles	61,943
Total Hours	2,693.20	Total Hours	4,402.30
Revenue Hours	2,477.80	Revenue Hours	3,805.00
Cancellations		Cancellations	
No Show	140	No Show	110
Cancel at Door	154	Cancel at Door	151
Late Cancel	76	Late Cancel	53
Same Day Cancel	184	Same Day Cancel	691
Total Cancellation Rate	11.07%	Total Cancellation Rate	13.86%
OTP Goal	90%	OTP Goal	90.00%
Actual OTP	92.43%	Actual OTP	92.60%
Above/Below Goal	2.43%	Above/Below Goal	2.60%

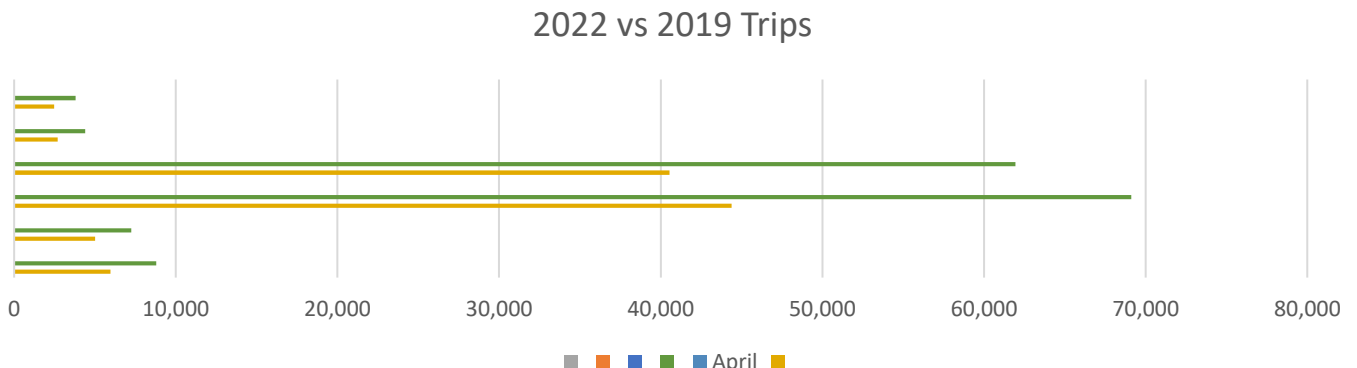




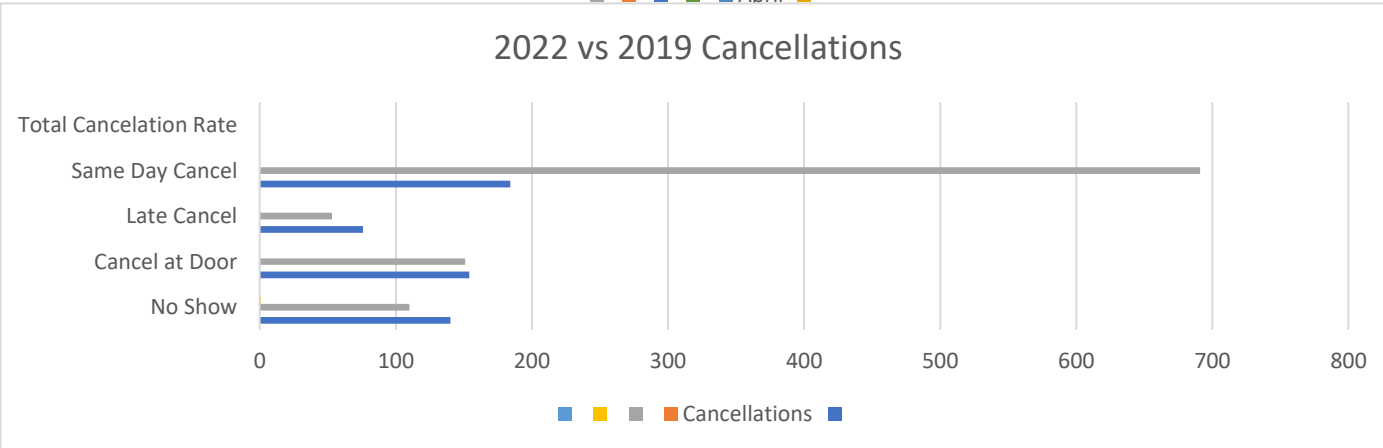
# DART Ridership

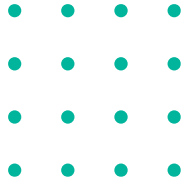


2022 vs 2019		
Requested Trips	-2,826	-32.16%
Passenger Transported	-2,245	-30.96%
Total Miles	-24,729	-35.79%
Revenue Miles	-21,401	-34.55%
Total Hours	-1,709.10	-38.82%
Revenue Hours	-1,327.20	-34.88%



Cancellations		
No Show	30	27.27%
Cancel at Door	3	1.99%
Late Cancel	23	-43.40%
Same Day Cancel	-507	73.37%
Total Cancellation Rate		-2.79%





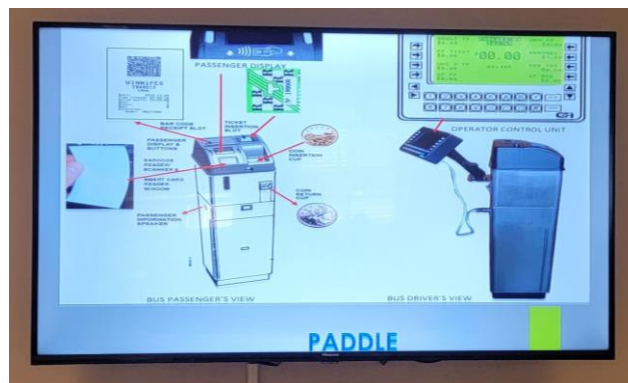
# Safety First, Safety Always



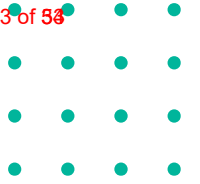


# Safety First

- Safety First Safety Always
  - Monthly Meeting Agenda:
- COVID-19 Prevention - Proper PPE Training and Resources
- Digital Dashboard for Safety announcements
- Safety Performance Overview
- Preventable Accidents 4
- Collisions per 100,000 – 3.54





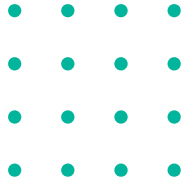


# Safety Performance

Vehicle Accidents				
	Fixed Route	Flex Route	DART	Total Accidents
Revenue Incidents	10	0	0	10
Deadhead Incidents	0	0.0	0.0	0
Per 100,000 Miles	3.54	0	0	3.54
Total Incidents	10	0	0	10

Injuries				
	Fixed Route	Flex Route	DART	3.54
Revenue Incidents	3	0.0	0.0	3
Deadhead Incidents	0	0.0	0.0	0
Per 100,000 Miles	1.06	0.0	0.0	1.06
Total Incidents	3	0	0	3



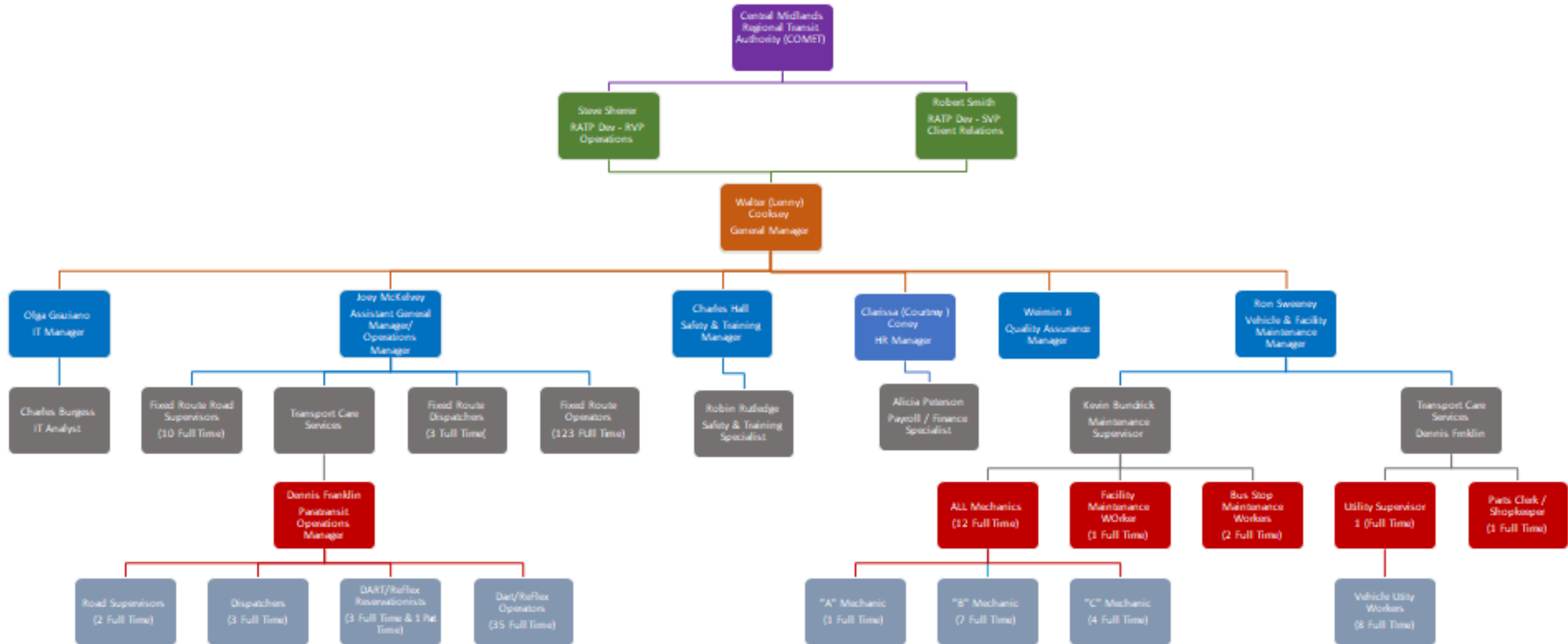


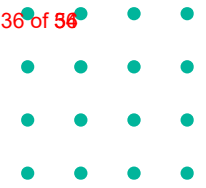
# Human Resources





# Organizational Chart

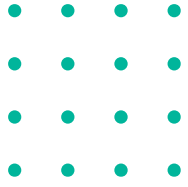




# Staffing & Recruitment

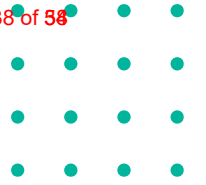
Description	Active	Training	Leave	Total
Fix Route Operators	109	5	7	121
U of SC Operator	15	1	2	18
Ops Supervisor (UofSC)	1			1
Dispatcher/supervisor (UofSC)	3			3
Fix Route Operations Supervisor	7			7
Fix Route Dispatcher	3			3
DART/ReFlex Reservationist	2.5			2.5
TCS Total Operators	22	2		24
IT Analyst	1			1
Mechanics	12	0	1	13
Lead mechanic/Maintenance Supervisor	1			1
Utility Worker	8	0		8
Shopkeeper	1			1
Totals	185.50	8	10	203.50





# Key Performance Indicator (KPI)





# Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

Performance Measure	<i>RATP Dev Contract Goal</i>	<i>RATP Dev April/Actual</i>
On-Time Performance (Fixed Route / Paratransit)	85% / 90%	46.98% / 92.43%
Miles Between Road Calls	12,000	10,459
Customer Complaints (Per 10,000 Customers)	6.0	2.59
Preventable Accidents (Per 10,000 Miles)	2	.35





Thank You

# Ridership Report

March		2021		2022			Difference from Previous Year		
Route	Description	Boardings	Boardings per vehicle hour	Boardings	Boardings Per hour or Trip (Efficiency)	Subsidy per passenger	Farebox Recovery Ratio	Boardings	Efficiency
<b>Systemwide totals</b>	<b>All Boardings Total</b>	<b>199,088</b>		<b>144,505</b>				▼ -54,583	
	<b>Fixed-Route Total</b>	193,399	13.4	138,713	10.4	\$ 5.49	13.7%	▼ -54,686	▼ -3.0
	Weekday Service	160,326	13.9	118,115	11.3	\$ 4.95	15.0%	▼ -42,211	▼ -2.6
	Saturday Service	18,781	11.8	11,788	7.7	\$ 7.67	10.2%	▼ -6,993	▼ -4.1
	Sunday Service	14,292	10.5	8,810	6.1	\$ 9.91	8.1%	▼ -5,482	▼ -4.4
	<b>Flex Route</b>	1,849	3.7	299	0.8	\$ 80.00	1.1%	▼ -1,550	▼ -2.9
	<b>DART</b>	3,915	1.9	5,493	3.4	\$ 19.92	24.8%	▲ 1,578	▲ 1.5
<b>Special Services</b>	trolley	15		0	#DIV/0!	\$ -	0.0%		
	Gamecock Express 2001	0	52.81	0	#DIV/0!	\$ -	0.0%		
	Inclement Weather Shuttle 7	866	#DIV/0!	91	#DIV/0!	\$ -	0.0%		
	COMET @ Night Uber	0	N/A		#DIV/0!	\$ -	0.0%		
	COMET @ Night Lyft	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0.0%		
	COMET To The Market Uber	0	N/A		N/A	N/A	0.0%		
	COMET To The Market Lyft	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0.0%		
	COMET Vanpool	0	N/A		N/A	N/A	0.0%		
	COMET Bikeshare Usage	0	N/A		N/A	\$ -	0.0%		
	BikeShare from COMET Stations	0	N/A	0	N/A	\$ -	0.0%		
	On Demand	0			N/A	\$ -	0.0%		
		0			-				
	0								
	0								
<b>Weather</b>		↓ Avg high 68°; Ave low 43°; Avg temp 56°. ⬆️ 18 days of rain (4.15 inches)		↓ Ave high 68°; Ave low 43°; Ave temp 56° 18 days of rain (4.03 inches)					
<b>Events and Occurances</b>		Daylight Savings Started (3/14) St. Patrick's Day (3/17) Reduced Schedule UofSC Wellness Day (3/12 & 3/30)		UofSC Spring Break Reduced Svc (7th -11th) St. Patrick's Day Parade (3/19) Heyward Tech Ctr Job Fair (3/24)					
Service weekdays		23		23					
Service Saturdays		4		4					
Service Sundays		4		4					
Average weekday boardings		7,292		5,135				▼ -2,157	
Average Saturday		4,725		2,947				▼ -1,778	
Average Sunday boardings		3,604		2,203				▼ -1,402	
KEY	<b>No Data (Not in service)</b>	Not to standard	<66% of Standard	>133% of Standard					
<b>Monday through Friday</b>									
<b>Corridor</b>				≥18	≤\$3	≥20%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>	
101 North Main		15,933	24.4	10,281	19.2	\$2.57	25.4%	▼ -5,652	▼ -5.2
201 Rosewood									
301 Farrow		8,692	13.9	6,632	23.0	\$1.99	30.5%	▼ -2,060	▲ 9.1
401 Devine		10,729	16.9	7,355	22.5	\$2.05	29.9%	▼ -3,374	▲ 5.6
501 Two Notch		17,015	26.1	10,968	13.6	\$3.99	18.0%	▼ -6,047	▼ -12.5
601 Shop									
701 Forest		14,080	20.1	10,028	30.5	\$1.29	40.4%	▼ -4,052	▲ 10.4
801 Broad River		19,773	18.1	12,445	17.9	\$2.81	23.7%	▼ -7,328	▼ -0.2
<b>Local</b>				≥12	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>	
Rt. 6 Eau Claire		4,489	15.5	2,940	10.6	\$5.33	14.1%	▼ -1,549	▼ -4.9
Rt. 11 Fairfield		5,176	12.5	3,013	7.6	\$7.86	10.0%	▼ -2,163	▼ -4.9
Rt. 12 Edgewood		5,829	16.9	3,584	10.5	\$5.41	13.9%	▼ -2,245	▼ -6.4
Rt. 21 Rosewood		2,939	9.9	2,131	7.5	\$7.94	9.9%	▼ -808	▼ -2.4
Rt. 26 West Columbia									
Rt. 28/81 Springdale/Cayce		4,813	11.1	2,633	22.5	\$2.06	29.8%	▼ -2,180	▲ 11.4
Rt. 42 Millwood Ave		5,190	14.7	3,333	11.8	\$4.71	15.6%	▼ -1,857	▼ -2.9
Rt. 45 Leesburg-Hazelwood		6,675	10.7	4,612	15.0	\$3.53	19.8%	▼ -2,063	▲ 4.3
Rt. 55 Sandhills		4,021	6.0	2,141	5.3	\$11.58	7.0%	▼ -1,880	▼ -0.7
Rt. 61 Shop		5,939	12.2	4,322	9.8	\$5.86	13.0%	▼ -1,617	▼ -2.4
Rt. 75 Decker-Parklane		6,574	9.8	3,597	11.7	\$4.77	15.5%	▼ -2,977	▲ 1.9
Rt. 84 Bush River/St. Andrews		3,413	13.4	1,361	6.1	\$10.01	8.0%	▼ -2,052	▼ -7.3



March		2021		2022				Difference from Previous Year	
Route	Description	Boardings	Boardings per vehicle hour	Boardings	Boardings Per hour or Trip (Efficiency)	Subsidy per passenger	Farebox Recovery Ratio	Boardings	Efficiency
Rt. 88	Beltline Crosstown	809	6.6	273	1.3	\$49.56	1.7%	-536	-5.3
Rt. 96L	West Columbia/Cayce	1,259	5.0	1,031	4.9	\$12.66	6.5%	-228	-0.1
<b>UofSC</b>					≥12	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt13	North Loop	216	0.9	847	3.6	\$0.00	0.0%	631	2.7
Rt14	Express	836	3.6	2,008	8.7	\$0.00	0.0%	1,172	5.1
Rt15	Yellow	386	1.6	515	2.2	\$0.00	0.0%	129	0.5
Rt16	Greek Village Express	123	1.3	60	0.6	\$0.00	0.0%	-63	-0.6
Rt17	Green	529	2.3	797	3.5	\$0.00	0.0%	268	1.2
Rt18	Red	1,107	4.8	5,526	24.0	\$0.00	0.0%	4,419	19.2
Rt19	Blue	1,035	4.5	2,799	12.3	\$0.00	0.0%	1,764	7.7
Rt20	West Campus	2,498	5.8	5,667	13.2	\$0.00	0.0%	3,169	7.4
Rt24	Evening 1	54	0.4	46	0.3	\$0.00	0.0%	-8	-0.1
Rt25	Evening 2	388	2.7	202	1.4	\$0.00	0.0%	-186	-1.3
<b>Connector/Shuttle</b>					≥8	≤\$8	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 1	Soda Cap 1	920	5.4	329	1.9	\$33.09	2.6%	-591	-3.5
Rt. 2	Soda Cap 2	-	0.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Rt. 3	Soda Cap 3	-	0.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Rt. 4	Orbit 4	28	0.2	1,353	#DIV/0!	-\$0.87	#DIV/0!	1,325	#DIV/0!
Rt. 22	Harden	346	2.6	332	2.5	\$25.12	3.4%	-14	-0.1
Rt. 32	North Main - Hard Scrabble	2,606	8.7	1,738	5.8	\$10.53	7.7%	-868	-2.9
Rt. 57L	Killian-Clemson Local	88	0.6	233	1.6	\$39.60	2.2%	145	1.0
Rt. 63	Bluff	-	#DIV/0!						
Rt. 74 (frm. 17)	Harrison-Trenholm	11	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	-11	#DIV/0!
Rt. 76	Fort Jackson	239	0.8	91	#DIV/0!	-\$0.87	#DIV/0!	-148	#DIV/0!
Rt. 77	Polo Road	695	2.4	688	2.4	\$26.50	3.2%	-7	0.0
Rt. 83L	St. Andrews Local	3,355	10.0	1,802	5.4	\$11.39	7.1%	-1,553	-4.6
<b>Rural</b>					≥5	≤\$12	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 46	Lower Richland Reflex	-	0.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Rt. 47	Eastover Reflex	1,035	7.4	200	1.4	\$45.23	1.9%	-835	-6.0
Rt. 97	Batesburg-Leesburg	2	0.0	15	#DIV/0!	-\$0.87	#DIV/0!	13	#DIV/0!
<b>Express</b>					≥10/trip	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 44X	Lower Richland Express	37	0.4	73	#DIV/0!	-\$0.87	#DIV/0!	36	#DIV/0!
Rt. 52X	Blythewood Express		0.0						
Rt. 53X	Killian Express	2	0.0	0	0.0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	-2	0.0
Rt. 82X	Harbison Express								
Rt. 92X	12th Street Ext. Express	570	8.4	248	2.7	\$17.26	4.8%	-322	-5.7
Rt. 93X	I-26 Express	5	0.0	81	0.9	-\$0.87	#DIV/0!	76	0.9
<b>Demand Response/Flex</b>					≥3	≤\$30	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 31	Denny Terrace Reflex	631	4.0	60	0.4	\$88.74	0.0%	-571	-3.7
Rt. 62	Hopkins Reflex	-	0.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
DART	ADA Paratransit	3,627	2.5	5,403	3.7	\$15.04	4.4%	1,776	1.2
<b>Saturday</b>									
<b>Corridor</b>					≥18	≤\$3	≥20%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
101	North Main	2,024	21.1	1,298	13.3	\$4.08	17.6%	-726	-7.8
201	Rosewood		0.0						
301	Farrow	1,001	18.6	610	11.5	\$4.84	15.3%	-391	-7.1
401	Devine	1,147	19.4	834	14.1	\$3.82	18.6%	-313	-5.3
501	Two Notch	1,783	24.3	1,081	7.4	\$8.10	9.7%	-702	-16.9
601	Shop Road		0.0						
701	Forest	2,202	36.8	1,234	20.6	\$2.32	27.4%	-968	-16.2
801	Broad River	2,403	20.3	1,705	13.5	\$4.02	17.9%	-698	-6.8
<b>Local</b>					≥12	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 6	Eau Claire	634	12.6	268	5.3	\$11.49	7.1%	-366	-7.3
Rt. 11	Fairfield	824	11.4	398	5.5	\$11.14	7.3%	-426	-5.9
Rt. 12	Edgewood	660	11.0	440	7.0	\$8.53	9.3%	-220	-4.0
Rt. 21	Rosewood	300	5.8	338	6.5	\$9.23	8.6%	38	0.7
Rt. 26	West Columbia		-						
Rt. 28/81	Springdale/Cayce	383	12.0	174	6.4	\$9.36	8.5%	-209	-5.6
Rt. 42	Millwood Ave	662	12.9	388	7.6	\$7.85	10.0%	-274	-5.3
Rt. 45	Leesburg-Hazelwood	829	14.8	590	10.5	\$5.38	14.0%	-239	-4.3
Rt. 55	Sandhills	682	9.0	309	4.2	\$14.82	5.6%	-373	-4.8
Rt. 61	Shop	541	6.7	474	5.9	\$10.28	7.8%	-67	-0.8
Rt. 75	Decker-Parklane	1,035	17.3	597	10.7	\$5.31	14.1%	-438	-6.6
Rt. 84	Bush River/St. Andrews	381	10.7	219	4.8	\$12.95	6.3%	-162	-5.9
Rt. 88	Beltline Crosstown	-	-	0	0.0	#DIV/0!	0.0%	0	0.0
Rt. 96L	West Columbia/Cayce	59	2.5	64	2.7	\$23.44	3.6%	5	0.2
<b>UofSC</b>					≥12	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt20	West Campus Weekend	90	2.5	36	0.7	\$0.00	0.0%	-54	-1.8
TT 2001	Gamecock Express 2001			0					
<b>Connector/Shuttle</b>					≥8	≤\$8	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>

March		2021		2022				Difference from Previous Year	
Route	Description	Boardings	Boardings per vehicle hour	Boardings	Boardings Per hour or Trip (Efficiency)	Subsidy per passenger	Farebox Recovery Ratio	Boardings	Efficiency
Rt. 1	Soda Cap 1	421	14.1	53	1.8	\$36.33	2.3%	-368	-12.3
Rt. 2	Soda Cap 2	269	9.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	-269	#DIV/0!
Rt. 3	Soda Cap 3	-	0.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Rt. 4	Orbit 4	1	0.1	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	-1	#DIV/0!
Rt. 22	Harden	55	0.7	0	0.0	#DIV/0!	0.0%	-55	-0.7
Rt. 32	North Main - Hard Scrabble	292	1.6	180	3.3	\$19.15	4.4%	-112	1.7
Rt. 57L	Killian-Clemson Local	52	0.4	23	0.7	\$93.74	0.9%	-29	0.3
Rt. 76	Fort Jackson	66	4.8	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	-66	#DIV/0!
Rt. 77	Polo Road	136	0.6	113	2.2	\$29.42	2.9%	-23	1.6
Rt. 83L	St. Andrews Local	419	2.0	270	4.4	\$14.21	5.8%	-149	2.4
<b>Express</b>					≥10/trip	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 82X	Harbison Express	-							
Rt. 92X	12th Street Ext. Express	65	5	42	3.4	\$18.59	4.5%	37	-1.9
<b>Demand Response/Flex</b>					≥3	≤\$30	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 31	Denny Terrace Reflex	66	2.8	6	0.2	\$285.25	0.00%	-60	-2.6
DART	ADA Paratransit	188	1.0	55	0.5	\$112.75	5.3%	-133	-0.5
<b>Rural</b>					≥5	≤\$12	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 47	Eastover	48	2.1	12	0.7	\$95.29	0.9%	-36	-1.4
<b>Sunday</b>									
<b>Corridor</b>					≥18	≤\$3	≥20%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
101	North Main	1,628	17.0	1,037	10.6	\$5.33	14.1%	-591	-6.4
201	Rosewood		0.0						
301	Farrow	694	13.8	410	8.1	\$7.22	10.8%	-284	-5.6
401	Devine	956	13.0	542	9.1	\$6.34	12.1%	-414	-3.9
501	Two Notch	1,100	15.0	857	5.8	\$10.44	7.7%	-243	-9.2
601	Shop Road								
701	Forest	1,396	23.3	1,068	17.9	\$2.82	23.7%	-328	-5.5
801	Broad River	2,257	19.0	1,304	10.3	\$5.52	13.7%	-953	-8.7
<b>Local</b>					≥12	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 6	Eau Claire	435	8.7	261	5.2	\$11.83	6.9%	-174	-3.5
Rt. 11	Fairfield	530	7.3	307	4.2	\$14.71	5.6%	-223	-3.1
Rt. 12	Edgewood	691	11.5	387	6.5	\$9.30	8.6%	-304	-5.0
Rt. 21	Rosewood	403	7.8	226	4.4	\$14.24	5.8%	-177	-3.4
Rt. 42	Millwood Ave	520	10.1	308	6.0	\$10.12	8.0%	-212	-4.1
Rt. 45	Leesburg-Hazelwood	811	14.5	358	6.4	\$9.44	8.5%	-453	-8.1
Rt. 55	Sandhills	398	5.2	215	2.9	\$21.68	3.9%	-183	-2.3
Rt. 61	Shop	395	4.9	362	4.5	\$13.73	6.0%	-33	-0.4
Rt. 75	Decker-Parklane	700	11.7	497	7.8	\$7.58	10.3%	-263	-3.9
Rt. 84	Bush River/St. Andrews	323	9.8	133	3.9	\$15.85	5.2%	-190	-5.9
Rt. 88	Beltline Crosstown	-	0.0	0	0.0	#DIV/0!	0.0%	0	0.0
<b>UofSC</b>					≥12	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 20	West Campus Weekend	91	2.5	23	0.4	\$0.00	0.0%	-68	-2.1
<b>Connector/Shuttle</b>					≥8	≤\$8	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 1	Soda Cap 1	116	3.2	7	0.2	\$293.40	0.3%	-109	-3.0
Rt. 2	Soda Cap 2	-	0.0	12	#DIV/0!	-\$0.87	#DIV/0!	12	#DIV/0!
Rt. 3	Soda Cap 3	-	0.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Rt. 4	Orbit 4	-	0.0	0	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Rt. 22	Harden		0.0	0	0.0	#DIV/0!	0.0%	0	0.0
Rt. 32	North Main - Hard Scrabble	258	7.4	165	3.0	\$20.97	4.0%	-93	-4.4
Rt. 76	Fort Jackson	2	0.0	2	#DIV/0!	-\$0.87	#DIV/0!	0	#DIV/0!
Rt. 77	Polo Road	63	1.8	53	1.0	\$63.72	1.4%	-10	-0.8
Rt. 83L	St. Andrews Local	355	6.1	199	3.4	\$18.34	4.5%	-156	-2.7
<b>Express</b>					≥10/trip	≤\$5	≥15%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 82X	Harbison Express								
Rt. 92X	12th Street Ext. Express	103	8.1	48	3.9	\$16.16	5.1%	-55	-4.2
<b>Demand Response/Flex</b>					≥3	≤\$30	≥10%	<b>Boardings</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>
Rt. 31	Denny Terrace Reflex	67	2.8	3	0.1	\$454.86	0.00%	-64	-2.7
DART	ADA Paratransit	60	0.6	35	1.5	\$22.55	41.2%	-25	0.9

## Transport Care Services LLC

121 Executive Center Drive  
Suite # 113  
Columbia, SC 29210  
Ph# (803) 661-9662  
[www.transportcareservices.com](http://www.transportcareservices.com)



Date: May 4, 2022

RE: Reflex/Dart Overview

### Overview:

RT 97 only runs three loops on Thursdays only. Loop times are:

1. Loop 1 7:30 am – 8:45 am. There is a 50-minute deadhead to the start and end point.
2. Loop 2 10:58 am – 1:45 pm. There is a 50-minute deadhead to the start and end point.
3. Loop 3 4:58 pm to 8:45 pm. There is a 60-minute deadhead to the start and end point due to heavy traffic at the time.

Since July 1, 2020 there have been a total of 28 riders on this route. 13 of those riders were from Able South Carolina completing travel training. Each loop is 57 miles and there is a 68-mile deadhead to and from the start and end point back to Lucius Road.

Currently the approximate cost the COMET \$516.13 per day to run the 97. This is a pilot and since there is no ridership, the recommendation is to eliminate the operation of this route.

Respectfully,

*Dennis Franklin*

Operations Manager



## Overview:

### The Soda Cap Connector, presented by The COMET

The Soda Cap Connector is a key service of The COMET that allows easy access between major Downtown Columbia destinations and districts on three main routes and one Orbit “loop” route at an affordable cost.

Recently, The COMET has been in discussion about ways to retool the Soda Cap Connector to expand ridership and better fulfill its purpose in the Midlands. As an existing affordable and convenient option for downtown travel, The COMET has an opportunity to reposition the Soda Cap Connector as the top transportation method for tourists in the Columbia, SC region.

Through thoughtful partnerships with hospitality leaders in the Midlands, revamped collateral and marketing materials and a strategic communications plan, The COMET can shift the Soda Cap’s existing framework into a service that better engages audiences and fulfills its purpose.

## Goals

The following goals align with outreach recommendations listed in this plan.

- Reposition the Soda Cap Connector as the top transportation method for tourists in the Columbia, SC region and create top of mind awareness for the service
  - Key words: Safe, Convenient, Fun, Affordable, Coolest way to Travel
- Increase ridership among key audiences, including tourists and locals desiring access to the hospitality districts in the Columbia, SC region.
- Engage partners in the Columbia, SC region to include hotels, restaurants, tourism entities and others as The COMET sees fit for partnership purposes, such as the colleges and universities along the route.
- Make riding Soda Cap easy to understand and easy to access.

## Objectives

The following objectives align with outreach recommendations listed in this plan.

- Engage with at least 50% of the hotels in the downtown area in some form of a partnership to promote and support the Soda Cap Connector in the first 12 months.
- Form cross-promotional and support partnerships with
  - Experience Columbia South Carolina
  - South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association
  - WeGOJA Foundation and Historic Columbia District



- Main Street District, Five Points Association, River District and the Vista
- Form support partnerships with Allen University and Benedict College.
- Engage in support of major events occurring along the Soda Cap route and within the districts.
- Develop and roll out new route maps and collateral materials as needed.

## Key Target Audiences

This plan is based on the audiences listed below.

1. **Target Audience (Primary): Tourists visiting Columbia, S.C. (This includes college students and their parents):** The Soda Cap Connector has the potential to become the go-to method of transportation for tourists visiting downtown Columbia. These are individuals who are visiting for business or leisure and staying near the city's downtown districts, like Main Street, The Vista, Five Points or River District. This would also include freshman college students and their visiting parents. These guests are likely staying overnight in a hotel and checking out Columbia's restaurants and bars or are interested in various attractions, outdoor recreation or arts and culture. They may not have a car, or know how to get around the city center and need convenient travel to and from all of their destinations.
2. **Target Audience (Secondary): Champions – Local leaders in business, government, media:** This audience includes community leaders, neighborhood leaders, elected officials, business leaders and the media. These individuals hold power and have influence within their communities. It is important The COMET has their support of the Soda Cap Connector and supply them with information that can be shared with their networks and constituents. This category may also include employees of SC State Government, needing a convenient way to access downtown amenities without moving their cars.

**Existing Audience (Secondary): Locals living in Columbia, S.C.:** This audience includes all individuals living in or around Columbia, S.C. who use the Soda Cap Connector for travel between districts. These are typically choice riders who want to skip the hassle of parking downtown. They may use the Soda Cap specifically when they know parking will be difficult or when driving isn't their preferred option – like on Fireflies game days or to go to an event or concert in The Vista. This may include existing college students who are transit-dependent or who want a convenient, safe and affordable way to access the restaurant and entertainment districts along Soda Cap's route. This category may also include employees of SC State Government, needing a convenient way to access downtown amenities without moving their cars.



## Strategy

A primary challenge for the Soda Cap has been engaging local riders to use it for the purpose of hopping from district to district and exploring the city, which is how it has historically been marketed.

The people who *do* need to be aware of these connections are the families visiting their children at local colleges and universities, the out-of-towners coming in for an event, festival, exhibit or play, the business professionals visiting with a conference who want a taste for the city and all it has to offer and others who are new to the region. The Soda Cap's framework of easy access, affordability, fun and convenience makes it an alluring option for individuals who don't know how to get around Columbia, don't have a car or don't want to deal with the hassle of parking.

Likewise, the locals who love a "staycation" or a progressive date night hopping between downtown districts, need to know about ways to explore locally while still feeling like a tourist in their city. Positioning the Soda Cap as a tourism bus alleviates any fears that this service is "competing" with the regular bus system, because for locals, it becomes a "date night", "Saturday family outing" bus, or lunch trip for State employees – not the day-to-day transport they may choose The COMET's regular fleet for.

By positioning the Soda Cap as the go-to transportation option for tourism in downtown Columbia, The COMET has the potential to expand ridership among an untapped audience of tourists, receive new grant funding opportunities and further increase connectivity to some of the top destinations in the Midlands. This also gives The COMET the opportunity to establish close relationships with key tourism and hospitality entities in South Carolina, like Experience Columbia SC and the South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association, who can become primary partners and help grow awareness of the Soda Cap among target audiences.

## Service Recommendations

To amplify the Soda Cap Connector's position as the go-to tourism transportation option in downtown Columbia, the following service changes are recommended:

- **Update the fleet with Soda Cap wrapped cutaway type vehicles and trolleys** to replace the 35-foot buses. The two trolleys would remain in the fleet. This can maintain the "trolley style" Soda Cap branding in a more cost-effective way than purchasing multiple new trolleys. This would also reduce the "empty bus" issue that the large buses create with fewer passengers. (Addressing barrier to success of "large, empty buses" downtown)
- **Rework Route 2** (Five Points) to include more stops along the Historic Columbia District. Consider Route 2 traveling down Hampton Street instead of down Taylor Street.
- Consider combining Routes 1 and 2 into **one continuous route** (Addressing barrier to success of "confusing routes").
- Once service plans are reworked, separate the route maps into Route 1/2, Route 3 (Fireflies/Segra Park on the marquee) and Orbit so riders have a clear understanding of each route, whether online or on a physical collateral piece or both.



- Create **route maps that are destination focused** vs. only line drawings. The present route maps only have 3-4 destinations listed. Highlights hotel, restaurant, school and attractions partners so people know where they are going along the Soda Cap route and can plan trips accordingly. (Addressing barrier of “we don’t know where it goes or how to ride it”).
- Work with Moovit or Transit to create unique **QR codes** for Soda Cap Service. These would be located at each Soda Cap Bus Stop. The codes would be accessible from ANY phone, not just smart phones. The information would include:
  - Present location, Next stop (include district) and direction (EB, WB, etc.)
  - Easy to read map
- Work with Olga and operations to have an **announcement on the SCC buses that announces next stops**. (for example: Next stop, The Vista. Visit Blue Marlin, the Koger Center, and other attractions). We would make advertising mentions on the intercom part of a premium package to partner with us.

## Outreach Proposals

The following brand strategy and communications outreach is recommended to increase visibility of the Soda Cap Connector and encourage ridership among key audiences in downtown Columbia.

### Partnerships

With a shift to focus on tourism, The COMET has the opportunity to partner with hospitality entities spanning downtown Columbia to engage with key audience members. Key partnerships to develop may include the following:

**Experience Columbia SC Partnership:** This entity should be the primary focus for an ongoing partnership in year one. ECSC, if properly engaged, can weave Soda Cap information, messaging and opportunities into the communications and channels they use to talk to visitors to the region.

- Cross-promotional proposals
  - Exclusive space or an advertorial in the Columbia Official Visitor’s Guide.
  - Free rack space for brochures at the Columbia SC Visitor’s Center.
  - Presence or promotional item distribution at applicable tradeshows.
  - Potential to use the new Soda Cap map as the official “Experience Columbia” map
  - Formal promotion to Take a Spin on The Soda Cap Connector, the best way to Experience Columbia SC (potentially positioning as official way to get around)
- ECSC agrees to include Soda Cap advertising in all publications and online channels.
- The Soda Cap agrees to use Experience Columbia SC branding (“Block C”) in select collateral, online, etc. when applicable to promote ECSC.

**South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association Partnership:** This entity should be another key focus for an ongoing partnership in year one. If engaged properly, SCRLA can share Soda Cap information and messaging with their network of hospitality entities and may be able to help engage these entities in partnership deals.



- Cross-promotional agreements
  - SCRLA and Soda Cap share each other's branding and messaging in physical collateral or online when applicable.
  - SCRLA can send out a select number of e-blasts with Soda Cap information to their membership email lists.
- Soda Cap presence at select SCRLA events (like Hospitality Day at the State House) and conferences.
- The Soda Cap as the primary mode of transportation during SCRLA's Restaurant Week South Carolina. This can be discussed and creative activations or sponsorship during this event can be determined.

**Hotel Partnerships:** Engage with all hotels in the districts served by the Soda Cap and offer trade advertising opportunities or exclusive partnerships with a handful of hotels that make the Soda Cap the hotel's primary transportation service. These partnerships may also stem from the primary partnership with SCRLA.

Hotels within the Soda Cap service area include the following:

- The Vista:
  - Hyatt Place
  - New Cambria Hotel
  - Springhill Suites by Marriott Columbia
  - Holiday Inn Express & Suites Columbia Downtown
  - Aloft Columbia Downtown
  - Hampton Inn Columbia-Downtown Historic District
  - Hilton Columbia Center
- Main Street:
  - Sheraton
  - Hotel Trundle
  - Marriott
  - Kasa Columbia Main Street
  - Holiday Inn Columbia Downtown
- Five Points:
  - New hotel coming to Wells Fargo
  - Graduate Columbia, SC
  - Courtyard by Marriott - Downtown USC

Hotel partnerships could include the following:

- **Soda Cap collateral distribution:** The COMET can negotiate deals with hotel partners to share Soda Cap collateral in the hotel lobby or include a brochure in guests' rooms.
- **Soda Cap kiosk:** The COMET can produce a branded "kiosk" that sits atop the hotel lobby desk with information about the service and discount tickets for guests. This could work as part of the consignment program (detailed below) or in exchange for trade advertising.





- **“Soda Cap Cafe”:** Exclusive partnerships can be developed with select hotel partners who are open to setting up a “Soda Cap Cafe” space near the hotel lobby as a dedicated area to relax while waiting for the bus to arrive. The space could include complimentary beverages, Soda Cap/hotel SWAG, Soda Cap coloring books, fun photo opportunities, etc. with comfortable seating and an iPad or TV tracking the Soda Cap routes. Include reminders to be present AT THE STOP prior to the bus arrival.

*A consignment program* could allow The COMET to give great benefits to hospitality entities in downtown Columbia, who in turn could provide their guests a discount and encourage them to ride the Soda Cap.

A consignment program may include the following:

- Offer hospitality partners – like hotels – a discounted package of Soda Cap passes to sell to their guests.
- The COMET can also offer passes for hotels to sell to guests in exchange for advertising in a Soda Cap collateral piece, listed as a partner on the website, etc.

**Attraction-Based Partnerships:** The Soda Cap routes run along the city’s top downtown destinations and have an opportunity to partner with tourism entities along each route. Example entities to engage include the following:

- Segra Park
- Allen University
- Benedict College
- SC State Government/SC State House
- South Carolina State Museum
- EdVenture Children’s Museum
- The WeGOJA Foundation, for Green Book historical destinations
- Experience Columbia SC Visitors’ Bureau
- River Runner Outdoor Center
- Historic Columbia
- Columbia Fireflies at Segra Park
- Columbia Museum of Art
- Colonial Life Arena
- The Koger Center for the Arts
- UofSC campus highlights along the SCC route
- Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center
- Key entry points along the Columbia Riverwalk

A partnership could include the following collaterals:

- **Soda Cap kiosk:** The COMET can produce a branded “kiosk” that sits atop the front desk area of the business with information about the service and discount tickets for guests. This could work as part of the consignment program (detailed below) or in exchange for trade advertising.



- **Exclusive placements at events:** The Soda Cap can become the primary transportation partner for select businesses or events where public transportation may be needed. As the exclusive partner, The COMET can negotiate promotional placements such as the following:
  - A retractable banner near the entrance/exit
  - Branded graphics/ads shown on TV screens, jumbotrons, etc.
  - Flyers in restrooms with QR codes to a Soda Cap route tracker
  - Etc.
- **Soda Cap promo packages:** Select businesses can partner with The COMET to offer a Soda Cap promo package. This could include discount tickets for the business/event, a package of Soda Cap passes, SWAG from Soda Cap and the business' brand, etc. This could be offered at an affordable price and primarily targeted at tourists or groups. Different packages could be created for different audiences – i.e. a family package, a package for those traveling for business, etc.

**District-Based Partnerships:** The COMET can work with The Congaree Vista Guild, The Five Points Association, City Center Partnership, the City of West Columbia and the City of Cayce as a marketing partner.

A partnership could include the following:

- **Web sponsorship or trade:** Soda cap listing and link on partner website for “How to get around”. Conversely, the Districts are listed on the Soda Cap page of The COMET website with links to their sites.
- **Soda Cap promo packages:** Districts can partner with The COMET to offer pre-made SWAG bags to include Soda Cap collateral and SWAG, district branded SWAG, select discounts or coupons to restaurants, shops and attractions in the area, etc. These can be handed out at events, offered in select amounts at district hotels, or at other times when the district's marketing team has a presence to engage with tourists.
- **Hospitality Event Partnerships:** As part of a district partnership, The COMET and district leaders can develop a food and beverage focused package for tourists with transportation from place to place on the Soda Cap. This could include a progressive dinner down Columbia's Main Street, or a “cocktail hop” in The Vista, etc. Select dates/times and participating restaurants would need to be chosen in advance for a partnership opportunity like this.

## Sponsorships

**Exclusive Transportation Partner for Events:** The COMET will become the exclusive transportation partner for signature events happening within districts on the Soda Cap route, such as St. Pat's in Five Points, Juneteeth Festival, Artista Vista, the Famously Hot SC Pride Festival, etc. This would include the following examples:

- Inclusion in event marketing
- A designated pick-up spot/wait area outside of the event footprint and/or tripper service, if available. Terms for tripper service must meet stringent guidelines.



- Soda Cap Lounge at the event highlighting amenities and instruction on how to ride (In-Kind Value: \$2500)
- Parade Entry (Soda Cap Trolley)

**Event Sponsorships: Soda Cap Connector, presented by** The COMET will continue to sponsor key events in Columbia, SC that draw in a large number of tourists or match the Soda Cap's target audience make-up. The Soda Cap Lounge has been a success in 2021-2022 and should continue to be the primary on-site activation offered by The COMET at sponsored events.

List of Current and Proposed Event Sponsorships:

- St. Pat's in Five Points (March 19, 2022)
- Columbia Food and Wine (April 3, 2022)
- Events hosted by Historic Columbia, like Modjeska Monteith Simkins House tour (Soda Cap proposes sponsorship fourth Sunday from 11am-1pm) and Storytime in the Garden at Hampton-Preston gardens (1615 Blanding Street)
- Artista Vista (late April)
- Harambee Festival at Benedict College (late April)
- Hospitality Day at the State House (April)
- Columbia Black Expo (May 20-21, 2022)
- Juneteenth Parade (June 18, 2022)
- Allen University Freshman Student Orientation: Soda Cap Expedition/Tour of Columbia (August 11-13, 2022)\*\*\*
  - This is a pilot program with Allen University's incoming freshman. The exact event launch date is TBD. For many, public transportation is unfamiliar and potentially "uncool". Introducing the Freshman to the "Cool way to travel" on the Soda Cap, which is a smaller system than COMET's fixed route, allows them access to restaurant and entertainment amenities in the Vista, Main Street, River District and 5 points all currently unavailable to them if they don't have a car. The expedition will be open to parents and incoming students and will be offered as a travel training. Along the route, we will partner with restaurants and hotels for sample servings (amuses bouches) of food and/or coupons for a proposed 10% discount. Soda Cap is fun, cool, safe, convenient and a perfect introduction to the fixed route system. For sustainability, Soda Cap ambassadors will be established after meeting with the Student Government Association of Allen University. The ambassadors will operate as cheerleaders for the service. We plan to expand this proposal to Benedict College.
- Main Street Latin Festival (Late August)
- Le Diner en Blanc (late summer date to be announced)\*\*\*
  - This is a pop-up event where attendees wear all white and meet at a surprise location for dinner and dancing. Began in Paris and celebrated globally, public transportation is an integral part of every Diner en Blanc event. Tripper service.
- Jubilee Festival of Black History & Culture at Manns-Simon Cottage (Sept 17, 2022)
- Midlands Restaurant Week kickoff: Progressive Dinner on the Soda Cap (Oct 5, 2022)\*\*\*
  - Presently working with the SCRLA to identify restaurant partners in each district where the Soda Cap will transport attendees to various restaurants along its route for a featured portion of a 5-course meal. This works as a "travel training" on the



Soda Cap experience while highlighting specific restaurant partners and their sponsored meal course.

- SC Famously Hot Pride Parade/Festival (Late October)
- WeGOJA Foundation's GreenBook Tour of African American historical sites (ongoing) \*\*\*
  - Soda Cap will be the official transportation partner of Green Book in the Midlands and will be featured on the WeGOJA website. Conversely, the new Soda Cap map will feature Green Book locations along the route.
- Soda City Market featuring the Soda Cap Lounge experience
  - TBD throughout the year.

## Collateral

New and refreshed collateral is recommended to align with the recommendations listed in this plan. Collateral includes the following:

- Updated Soda Cap route map which is destination focused with points of interest and rack cards as appropriate
- A Soda Cap desk kiosk for hotels, restaurants and other hospitality partners
- Updated Soda Cap Coloring book with Spanish-language subtitles (consider offering to partners for hotel and restaurant guests).
- Updated Window clings for partners and clings for new partners
- The "Just steps from a stop!" stickers on sidewalk will need to be replaced as they are aging and some stops have lost their sticker.

Future collaterals to be considered:

- Soda Cap A-frames for partners "The Soda Cap Guide To...": As a tourism-focused service, The COMET can get creative with ways to market the Soda Cap to key audiences through an itinerary style guide. This guide can serve as real estate for partnership ad opportunities and help interest partners in creative and authentic partnerships that truly engage individuals. This may include:
  - "The Soda Cap Guide to Family-Friendly Activities"
  - "The Soda Cap Guide to Date Night"
  - "The Soda Cap Guide to Arts & Culture"
  - "The Soda Cap Guide to Outdoor Activities"
  - Etc.

## PARTNER PACK

A partner pack will help The COMET pitch Soda Cap partnerships to hospitality entities and serve as the foundation to set up partnerships.

This could include the following:

- Information on partnership levels.
- A one-sheeter with quick Soda Cap stats and facts.
- Various Soda Cap collateral. This may include Soda Cap route map(s), Soda Cap rack card/trifold and Soda Cap coloring book.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Points of Interest along Soda Cap Routes**

(Just a starting point. Not all-inclusive)

#### **SCC #1 route**

The State Museum

Edventure Children's Museum

Convention Center (1 block south) Colonial Life Arena (3 blocks south) Vista Restaurants, Shops,

Bars Memorial Park (2 blocks north)

Columbia Museum of Art

The South Carolina State House

Main Street

West Columbia/Cayce River District

Columbia Riverwalk

#### **SCC #2 Route**

Robert Mills House/Hampton-Preston Mansion

Maxcy Gregg Park

The South Carolina State House

Main Street

University of South Carolina (2 blocks south) USC Barnwell Street Parking Lot

Richland County Administration Center

Five Points Restaurants, Shops, Bars

#### **SCC #3 Route (Fireflies)**

Segra Park

( WE WILL List stops along the route)

**GREEN BOOK DESTINATIONS ALONG OR NEAR A SODA CAP ROUTE**

Woodrow Wilson Family Home	1705 Hampton St.
Allen University Historic District	1530 Harden St.
Benedict College	1600 Harden St.
Randolph Cemetery	Western terminus of Elmwood Avenue
1963 USC Desegregation Commemorative Garden Administration Building)	1501 Pendleton St. (near Osborne
Richard T. Greener Memorial Library at the University of South Carolina)	1322 Green St. (in front of the Thomas Cooper
Mann Simons Site	1403 Richland St.
Zion Baptist Church	801 Washington St.
Bethel AME Church	1528 Sumter St.
Modjeska Simkins House	2025 Marion St.

**HOTELS TO TARGET**

- Hotel Trundle
- Sheraton
- Hyatt
- Marriott
- Aloft
- Wyndham Garden
- Hilton
- Hampton Inn
- Clarion
- Holiday Inn