



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – SPECIAL CALL
Wednesday, April 10, 2024 – 11:00 A.M.

3613 Lucius Rd. Columbia, SC

Please silence all electronic devices during the meeting

OFFICERS

Allison Terracio, Chair (Richland County)
 John V. Furgess, Sr., Vice Chair (Richland County Legislative Delegation)
 Christopher Lawson, Secretary (Richland County)
 Dr. Robert Morris, Treasurer (Richland County Legislative Delegation)

BOARD MEMBERS

Will Brennan (City of Columbia)
 Carolyn Gleaton (City of Columbia)
 Tina Herbert (City of Columbia)
 Rep. Leon Howard (Richland County Legislative Delegation)
 Andy Smith (Forest Acres)
 William “B.J.” Unthank (Lexington County Legislative Delegation)
 Overture Walker (Richland County)

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Stephen Cain (Town of Batesburg-Leesville)
 Mike Green (City of West Columbia)
 Skip Jenkins (City of Cayce)
 Al Koon (Town of Chapin)
 Geraldine Robinson (Town of Eastover)
 Debbie Summers (Town of Springdale)

AGENDA

-
1. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA PAGE 1
 3. CHERNOFF NEWMAN - PRESENTATION (RYAN BROWN)
 4. PARKER POE AND STANTEC - PRESENTATION (RAY JONES/DAVID BEATY)
 5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS PAGES 2-6
 - A. VISION 2040 (MAURICE PEARL)
 - B. INTERMODAL UPDATE (WILL BRENNAN)
 6. EXECUTIVE SESSION
 - A. SECTION 30-4-70(a)(2) DISCUSSION OF NEGOTIATIONS INCIDENT TO PROPOSED CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS, AS COVERED BY THE ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE.
 - B. SECTION 30-4-70 (A) (5) DISCUSSION OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE PROPOSED LOCATION, EXPANSION, OR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES ENCOURAGING LOCATION OR EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIES OR OTHER BUSINESSES IN THE AREA SERVED BY THE PUBLIC BODY.
 7. ADJOURN

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

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT BOARD MEETINGS: The COMET will make all reasonable accommodation 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@catchthecometsc.gov. 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 Board of Directors Meeting! Route 6 and DART serve the facility. Visit <http://catchthecometsc.gov> or call (803) 255-7100 for more details.

Comet Peer Group (Performance Analysis)

April, 2024

Background: COMET is engaged in an initiative to secure a positive vote for the renewal of the sales tax that supports transit operations in the COMET service area. A peer comparison of comparable size transit systems operating in matching size cities and similar operating conditions provides insight into the overall performance of COMET. Performance is based on the amount of service supplies and the resulting ridership and cost effectiveness. This brief analysis provides an overall perspective of all modes operated by COMET. The data used is from the 2020 Census and 2022 National Transit Database.

Peer Group

The peer group is based on Urbanized Area (UZA) population data from the 2020 Census. Seven urbanized areas have been chosen which have similar populations (within 25%) and similar land areas. Population density (residents per square mile) also affects transit usage with higher densities typically generating higher ridership and more efficient service delivery measured in passengers per revenue hour.

The two major components of transit performance are “Service Supplied” and “Service Consumed”. Service Supplied measures the revenue miles and revenue hours of service that COMET provides to its customers. The quality and reliability of service are not included in this component. In the following tables, the yellow cells indicate COMET data. The blue cells are the average of the eight systems. COMET data in yellow in the bottom line is a percentage of the average of the eight transit systems.

Service Supplied

Revenue hours and revenue miles are the measures of how much service is supplied by COMET. COMET operates fixed route, vanpool, commuter bus, and paratransit service. For this analysis, all modes are aggregated in the data tables. Table 1 shows the amount of service supplied by COMET and its peers.

Table 1: UZA Characteristics and Service Supplied

Urbanized Area Name (UZA)	State	Urbanized Area Population	Urbanized Area Land Area (sq. miles)	Urbanized Area Population Density (ppsm)	Service Supplied Revenue Hours	Service Supplied Revenue Miles
Winston-Salem, NC	North Carolina	420,924	311	1,354	207,076	2,894,779
Little Rock, AR	Arkansas	461,864	268	1,725	203,824	3,089,359
Akron, OH	Ohio	541,879	301	1,802	361,492	4,736,864
Des Moines, IA	Iowa	542,486	225	2,414	277,612	4,589,430
Columbia, SC	South Carolina	590,407	367	1,607	234,851	3,626,955
Knoxville, TN	Tennessee	597,257	432	1,383	233,356	2,955,446
Baton Rouge, LA	Louisiana	631,326	396	1,593	244,705	3,218,768
Charleston, SC	South Carolina	684,773	339	2,020	230,727	3,152,002
Average		558,865	330	1,737	249,205	3,532,950
COMET	% of Average	105.6%	111.4%	92.5%	94.2%	102.7%

Comet Peer Group April, 2024

COMET is average in comparison to the peer group. It is within 6% of the peer group average for service supplied. It provides 94.2% of revenue hours and 102.7% of revenue miles. Additional revenue hours will move COMET toward the peer average and will also increase the revenue miles.

Service Consumed

Service Consumed measures the usage of the system. It is an indication of market penetration of the total transportation market. Ridership is the total number of passengers using the services. The ratios of passengers per capita and cost per passenger reflect the effectiveness of the services provided.

Table 2: Service Consumed

Urbanized Area Name (UZA)	State	Urbanized Area Population	2022 Ridership	Peak Vehicles Fixed Route	Passenger Miles Traveled	Ridership per Capita	Passengers per Revenue Hour	Passengers per Revenue Mile
Winston-Salem, NC	North Carolina	420,924	1,580,823	30	5,740,308	3.8	7.63	0.55
Little Rock, AR	Arkansas	461,864	1,750,545	36	9,117,190	3.8	8.59	0.57
Akron, OH	Ohio	541,879	3,658,170	97	14,991,025	6.8	10.12	0.77
Des Moines, IA	Iowa	542,486	2,588,686	81	13,514,952	4.8	9.32	0.56
Columbia, SC	South Carolina	590,407	1,665,517	52	8,871,736	2.8	7.09	0.46
Knoxville, TN	Tennessee	597,257	2,062,007	51	6,385,919	3.5	8.84	0.70
Baton Rouge, LA	Louisiana	631,326	1,367,438	44	6,811,271	2.2	5.59	0.42
Charleston, SC	South Carolina	684,773	2,212,089	51	11,394,692	3.2	9.59	0.70
Average		558,865	2,110,659	55	9,603,387	3.8	8.47	0.60
COMET	% of Average	105.6%	78.9%	94.1%	92.4%	74.7%	83.7%	76.9%

While the service supplied in Table 1 is like the peer group, the ridership of the current service (2022) is below the peer group average. Ridership per capita is a measure of system effectiveness and it is more that 25% below the peer group. Passengers per revenue mile and passengers per revenue hour are similarly below the peer group average. This usually indicates some inefficiency in service with fixed routes performing at a low performance level; circuitry of routing with long travel times; and frequencies that are not attractive to current and potential passengers.

Comet Peer Group April, 2024

Cost Efficiency

Cost efficiency measures the service usage as a function of the cost of service. Cost constraints affect efficiency and ridership as shown in Table 2 also affect efficiency.

TABLE 3: Cost Efficiency

Urbanized Area Name (UZA)	State	Urbanized Area Population	Operating Expense All Modes	Ridership per capita	Cost per Passenger	Cost per Revenue Mile	Cost per Revenue Hour
Winston-Salem, NC	North Carolina	420,924	\$19,466,120	3.8	\$12.31	\$6.72	\$94.00
Little Rock, AR	Arkansas	461,864	\$20,110,725	3.8	\$11.49	\$6.51	\$98.67
Akron, OH	Ohio	541,879	\$52,595,099	6.8	\$14.38	\$11.10	\$145.49
Des Moines, IA	Iowa	542,486	\$32,100,126	4.8	\$12.40	\$6.99	\$115.63
Columbia, SC	South Carolina	590,407	\$28,741,413	2.8	\$17.26	\$7.92	\$122.38
Knoxville, TN	Tennessee	597,257	\$22,160,526	3.5	\$10.75	\$7.50	\$94.96
Baton Rouge, LA	Louisiana	631,326	\$35,945,389	2.2	\$26.29	\$11.17	\$146.89
Charleston, SC	South Carolina	684,773	\$22,952,085	3.2	\$10.38	\$7.28	\$99.48
Average		558,865	\$29,258,935	3.8	\$13.86	\$8.28	\$117.41
COMET	% of Average	105.6%	98.2%	74.7%	124.5%	95.7%	104.2%

The ridership characteristics in Table 2 are below average and the cost per passenger is very high, 24.5% above the average. However, the cost per passenger and cost per revenue hour are very good and within 5% of the peer average. This indicates that cost structure is appropriate for the size of the system, but the low ridership affects the cost per passenger. Increasing ridership will improve the cost per passenger ratio.

Summary

COMET performs similar to its peers. It is a very average system in terms of the service supplied and the cost structure. Ridership is below the peer group and that affects the data in Table 2 that is based on ridership. Similarly, the cost per passenger in Table 3 is high and this is also a function of low ridership compared to the peers. Increasing ridership within the current revenue miles will improve ridership-based ratios. Similarly, strategic investment in improved service delivery or improved services will likely improve the ridership-based ratios.

COMET Cost Projection

3/28/2024

\$45,687,000 Base

6% Annual increase

YEAR	Expense Increase existing service (000 omitted)					6%	\$122.38 Cost/Rev Hr	Microtransit New Service Rev - Hrs	New Service Cost	Out of Town Routes	
	3%	4%	5%	Variable-1	6%					New Service Rev - Hrs	New Service Cost
2023	\$45,687	\$45,687	\$45,687		\$45,687		\$129.72				
2024	\$47,058	\$47,514	\$47,971	5%	\$47,971	6%	\$137.51				
2025	\$48,469	\$49,415	\$50,370	5%	\$50,370	6%	\$145.76	12,600	\$1,837		
2026	\$49,923	\$51,392	\$52,888	5%	\$52,888	6%	\$154.50	12,600	\$1,947	3,600	\$556
2027	\$51,421	\$53,447	\$55,533	5%	\$55,533	6%	\$163.77	12,600	\$2,064	3,600	\$590
2028	\$52,964	\$55,585	\$58,309	5%	\$58,309	6%	\$173.60	12,600	\$2,187	3,600	\$625
2029	\$54,553	\$57,809	\$61,225	3%	\$60,059	6%	\$184.01	12,600	\$2,319	3,600	\$662
2030	\$56,189	\$60,121	\$64,286	3%	\$61,861	6%	\$195.06	12,600	\$2,458	3,600	\$702
2031	\$57,875	\$62,526	\$67,501	3%	\$63,716	6%	\$206.76	12,600	\$2,605	3,600	\$744
2032	\$59,611	\$65,027	\$70,876	3%	\$65,628	6%	\$219.16	12,600	\$2,761	3,600	\$789
2033	\$61,400	\$67,628	\$74,419	3%	\$67,597	6%	\$232.31	12,600	\$2,927	3,600	\$836
2034	\$63,241	\$70,333	\$78,140	3%	\$69,625	6%	\$246.25	12,600	\$3,103	3,600	\$887
2035	\$65,139	\$73,146	\$82,047	3%	\$71,713	6%	\$261.03	12,600	\$3,289	3,600	\$940
2036	\$67,093	\$76,072	\$86,150	3%	\$73,865	6%	\$276.69	12,600	\$3,486	3,600	\$996
2037	\$69,106	\$79,115	\$90,457	3%	\$76,081	6%	\$293.29	12,600	\$3,695	3,600	\$1,056
2038	\$71,179	\$82,280	\$94,980	3%	\$78,363	6%	\$310.89	12,600	\$3,917	3,600	\$1,119
2039	\$73,314	\$85,571	\$99,729	3%	\$80,714	6%	\$329.54	12,600	\$4,152	3,600	\$1,186
Total	\$994,222	\$1,082,668	\$1,180,569		\$1,079,979		\$1,288,962		\$42,747		\$11,689

2023 not included in totals

4% yearly increase

1800 rev hrs per driver

pick year for 3rd add and rev-hrs

Frequency - Existing Routes						
New Service Rev - Hrs	New Service Cost		Total New Service	Total New and Existing	Intermodal Lease	Total
				\$45,687		
				\$48,428	\$6,000	\$54,428
			\$1,837	\$53,170	\$6,000	\$59,170
			\$2,503	\$56,917	\$6,000	\$62,917
			\$2,653	\$60,332	\$6,000	\$66,332
	\$0		\$2,812	\$63,952	\$6,000	\$69,952
21,600	\$3,975		\$6,956	\$71,764	\$6,000	\$77,764
21,600	\$4,213		\$7,373	\$76,069	\$6,000	\$82,069
21,600	\$4,466		\$7,815	\$80,634	\$6,000	\$86,634
21,600	\$4,734		\$8,284	\$85,472	\$6,000	\$91,472
21,600	\$5,018		\$8,781	\$90,600	\$6,000	\$96,600
21,600	\$5,319		\$9,308	\$96,036	\$6,000	\$102,036
21,600	\$5,638		\$9,867	\$101,798	\$6,000	\$107,798
21,600	\$5,976		\$10,459	\$107,906	\$6,000	\$113,906
21,600	\$6,335		\$11,086	\$114,380	\$6,000	\$120,380
21,600	\$6,715		\$11,752	\$121,243	\$6,000	\$127,243
21,600	\$7,118		\$12,457	\$128,518	\$6,000	\$134,518
	\$59,508		\$113,944	\$1,357,219	\$96,000	\$1,453,219

pick year
for 2nd add
and rev-hrs