

**Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority
245 Peachtree Center Avenue, NE, Suite 2200
Atlanta, Georgia 30303**

**Work Session
Minutes**

January 24, 2019

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Charlie Sutlive, Chair
Steve Dickerson
Russell McMurry
Howard A. Mosby
Charlotte Nash
Teddy Russell
Michael Thurmond (left at 11:11 am)
Mark Toro
Todd Ver Steeg
Chuck Warbington
Felicia Franklin Warner
Tom Weyandt

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Charlie Sutlive, Chair, called the work session to order at 8:17 am. Mr. Chris Tomlinson gave a brief overview on what the ATL is about, what it does, and how the ATL will execute these goals including the regional transit planning and funding governance.

Mr. Tomlinson informed the Board that the ATL is required to develop a Regional Transit Plan (the plan). The Board must determine what projects are required to be in the plan. He suggested that the plan should be where people look to be informed of all the transit projects in the region. The plan must also work in sync with the federal process, so the plan should include any transit project that must be in the TIP; any project that is part of a public referendum of any county wanting to use the TSPLOST allowed by HB 930; any projects that need to be funded with state or federal funds; and regionally significant projects, even if the funding source for such project is all local.

There was a discussion among the members about what projects HB 930 requires to be grandfathered into the Regional Transit Plan. Mr. Tomlinson informed the Board that any project that is currently a part of the TIP is grandfathered into the plan, because these projects have the funding source identified and already went through a planning process. Mr. Ehrhart inquired whether an ongoing project already in the TIP would need to go through the ATL's review if funding runs out. Mr. Tomlinson explained that projects are included in the TIP in phases and that whatever phase was approved would be grandfathered into the plan. Prior to HB 930, these projects would have also had to be submitted again for inclusion in the TIP for subsequent phases, such as construction or when funds are obtained or changed.

Mr. Tomlinson advised that any projects to be funded in whole or in part with FTA funds and for which an entity already has an executed grant agreement with FTA are also grandfathered into the plan. Regionally significant projects that are the subject of a valid contract that legally obligates the funding necessary for the completion of the project are grandfathered as well. Funding certainty was also important for the 6-year TIP because it only includes fiscally constrained projects.

Mr. Tomlinson informed the board that while HB 930 does not require that the projects included in the contract between Gwinnett and MARTA be subject to ATL approval, he recommends they should be added to the plan if the referendum passes, so that the plan is a complete repository of regional transit projects. He also recommends that the MORE MARTA project list identified to receive \$2.7B in local funding be included in the plan since voters already voted although he believes the ATL should prioritize those projects. This suggestion gives assurances to the voters but still brings these projects into the ATL's process. These projects are already lined up to be considered for inclusion in the next TIP amendment in the next several months and would have had to go through a review process anyway. Mr. Weyandt stated that project priorities have already been established through public engagement but agrees that those projects would have still gone through the TIP evaluation process.

Mr. Weyandt advised that he does not see ATL substituting its judgment for the local's judgment related to prioritization. Mr. Ehrhart clarified that these projects may compete against each other for federal funds and that is the prioritization that the ATL is tasked to do.

Mr. Warbington asked whether the local jurisdiction needs to first get a project on the plan before seeking federal funding. Mr. Tomlinson confirmed that the project would first need to be in the plan. He informed the Board that HB 930 provides that a project solely funded with local money would not have to go through an ATL review, but a regionally significant project must still be in the plan, which has always been a federal requirement. As to state and federal funding, the ATL and its prioritization will have an impact since the feds want the region to establish its own prioritization.

Ms. Nash informed the Board that the planning process mandated by HB 930 is not a new process in terms of prioritization and funding issues. The ATL will look at planning from a broader perspective than before and with a more long-term perspective, looking at the possibility for more counties having an interest in transit because of the possibility of more funding sources due to HB 930. The good news is that we are likely to see a more robust project list across the jurisdiction, but there will be more competition for federal funds. Details on how this will work will ultimately work its way out. There is new wording in HB 930 and a new body involved, but the process will be very similar to what has already occurred. This has a wonderful long-term impact.

Mr. McMurray confirmed that projects need endorsement from ATL as to discretionary funds because the real competition is at the federal level. The ATL will be the entity to emphasize to the federal government what is most important to the state. Otherwise, if the federal government does not have a clear message about what is important to the state, the money will go elsewhere.

Mr. Tomlinson then discussed regional policies. He asked the Board for clarification related to the ATL's primary mission. He stated that he believes the ATL's primary mission is focused on regional transit planning and funding governance, not operations, not project management of individual projects, and not construction of projects. This means that existing operators, such as MARTA and Xpress are still responsible to staff their own operations and for the successful management, construction and operation of their respective projects. The ATL is about the planning and prioritization of projects. This

is not a substitute for the individual operators' expertise as to compliance with federal requirements that, as direct recipients they must meet, and they have the capacity and are closer to the projects. The audit required by HB 930 is likewise not a substitute for the operators doing what they do best. Likewise, operators' employees will not be putting ATL logos on their uniform. Their employees have angst and he would like to reduce that angst.

CURRENT REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANNING PROCESS

Mike Alexander, John Orr and Lori Sand with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) gave the Board a brief presentation on the current regional transit planning process. In order to receive federal and state funds for projects, the State of Georgia and the Atlanta region must follow the process of having a long-range plan that is referred to as the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), as well as have a budgetary program that is referred to as the Transportation Improvement Program. Mr. Alexander further discussed the historical perspectives of transit planning in the Atlanta region from the 1950s to 2010s.

Mr. Alexander discussed the 2025 RTP, which was prepared in 2000, which established directions for transit that are still the foundation for planning today. This plan includes early performance targets, local bus expansion recommendations, express lane expansion recommendations, express bus corridor recommendations and transit rail expansion recommendations. In 2002, the RTP was updated to reflect GRTA and ARC's vision for Xpress bus services. In 2004, the Mobility 2030 Plan was prepared to emphasize the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in several corridors, this was the first major BRT plan which was developed closely with GRTA and reflects the Regional Transit Action Plan. Envision6 RTP was completed in 2007 where commuter rail was dropped and became more "mode neutral" for corridor expansions. In 2007, the managed lane concept was introduced in partnership with GDOT. In 2011, the PLAN 2040 was completed which dropped many projects from the financially constrained RTP.

Mr. Weyandt asked what the distinction was between constrained and aspirational projects. Mr. Orr explained that we are all collectively required to make the financial forecast of how much the State, federal and local money we'll have in a plan. The federal government says that we cannot put projects in the plan if we can't show the money to support it. If we don't have the money but think that it's a good project, it will be an aspirational project.

GWINNETT TRANSIT PLAN PRESENTATION

Mr. Alan Chapman discussed Gwinnett's plan, the complex nature of Gwinnett County, and the various needs and objectives of its residents.

Mr. Weyandt and Ms. Warner complimented the planning document in that it included all varieties of transit.

ATL & CITY/COUNTY TRANSIT PLANS

Ms. Lori Sand gave the Board an overview of the other cities and counties who have transportation plans underway including Fulton, Gwinnett, Clayton, and DeKalb. In addition, the City of Smyrna, Forsyth, Newton and Spalding are interested in doing transit studies. Mr. Tomlinson added that the City of Atlanta has updated their transit plan, Aerotropolis CID is working on a plan, ARC is updating the Concept 3 plan, and GDOT is working on a statewide intermodal transit plan.

ATL 2019 STATUTORY DELIVERABLES & OUTCOMES DISCUSSION

Mr. Tomlinson gave the Board an overview on the 2019 statutory deliverables. He presented a Board action schedule for the calendar year as well as some additional action items for the Board to consider.

ATL REGIONAL TRANSIT POLICY WORK PROGRAM

Ms. Shayna Pollock with ARC/ATL discussed the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS), which is the fundamental building block when talking about transit data and transit data coordination. GTFS data can be used by third party providers like Google Maps, Transit app, MARTA trip planner or TRIMET for operator trip planning and performance tracking.

Mr. Tomlinson pointed out that staff is excited about GTFS and staff believes this is a good area for the agency to work on because this is a building block. This is not meant to substitute work already performed by MARTA and other agencies and not meant to require them to use it either. It would be important to get this building block correct as a region.

Ms. Pollock discussed the Transit Asset Management which prioritizes funding based on the condition and maintenance of transit assets. Ms. Pollock recommended exploring the feasibility of a data sharing policy to ensure data consistency between operators. Ms. Pollock further discussed the last fact sheet on Regional Fare System & Policies focusing on fare structures and future ticketing (mobile ticketing). Mr. Tomlinson pointed out that this is the type of thing the ATL must do in coordination with partners like MARTA. This is a good example of the things the ATL can do to make what we already have work better. This also includes being able to look at issues of fairness and equity.

Mr. Jonathan Ravenelle discussed the two proposed working groups for the ATL, the transit executives working group and the transit operators working group.

ADJOURN FOR LUNCH

The Chair called for a motion to adjourn for lunch. Mr. Ehrhart moved, and Mr. Dickerson seconded the motion. The work session adjourned for lunch at 12:28pm.

The work session reconvened at 1:07pm.

BOARD DISCUSSION REQUESTS

Mr. Dickerson presented his view of technology and using an app that the ATL should pursue. The intention is that the technology committee can explore and pursue a subcommittee even with Georgia Tech. Mr. Tomlinson pointed out that GTFS could be funneled through here and that we can work with GDOT as well. Mr. McMurry informed the Board about the State Transportation Innovation Council at GDOT.

ATL BUDGET & BUDGETING PROCESS

Ms. Monique Simmons gave the Board a high-level budget overview. The Governor has proposed the AFY2019 and FY2020 budget. In late March, early April when Session is ending, the Governor will sign off on the amended appropriations bill. The approval of the ATL's FY2020 budget will be during the May Board meeting. Ms. Simmons stated that staff will be working with the Administrative Committee to discuss the recommendations before the May Board meeting. The AFY2020 budget request as well as the FY2021 budget is already being done in advance to meet the OPB deadline of September 1st.

Mr. Ver Steeg raised a question as to why the budget has increase \$1M from the initial document that was sent to the Board a few days ago. Ms. Simmons explained that federal funds may be available which accounts for the difference. The budget numbers tend to change along the process depending on the source of money if an agency receives more than just State appropriation. Mr. Weyandt asked what the source of the federal funds is. Ms. Simmons explained that the source of federal funds is from GRTA as part of a subgrant agreement for planning purposes for the ATL.

Mr. McMurry wanted to clarify the ATL funded positions as far as the new added positions from the amended budget and shared services with SRTA. Ms. Simmons explained that the ATL has 9 positions, two of which are vacant, and the change in the budget will add 3 more positions. Mr. McMurry also wanted to clarify that the rent is an ongoing annual cost, whereas the build-out of the 23rd floor is a one-time cost, Ms. Simmons confirmed this and explained that the rent was also prorated. Mr. McMurry asked whether branding contract is in addition to or part of the original contract. Ms. Simmons explained that the original budget for branding was \$750,000, however, we are currently obligated for \$590,000. Mr. Tomlinson further explained that the \$590,000 is obligated and that it is much more than just the creation of the logo. The amount included the creation of the website, regional brand implementation plan, and style guides for collateral materials. There is an optional task which can be used throughout the region for education on what the new brand means, or it can be used to have focus groups for customers to get further feedback on the new regional transit brand. Ms. Simmons also pointed out that the branding budget is funded with 80% federal dollars, and that staff will work with the Administrative committee to break out and allocate the funds going forward.

BYLAWS & COMMITTEES DISCUSSION

Mr. Tomlinson presented to the Board the current recommended amendments to the bylaws including the Executive Director, on behalf of the ATL Board, to have the ability to enter into a contract or other instruments valued up to \$300,000 without approval of the Board; for contracts or other instruments valued between \$300,000 to \$1M, it will take the signature of the Executive Director as well as the Board Chair; and for contracts or other instruments valued over \$1M would require Board approval first.

A discussion among the members took place.

ADJOURNMENT

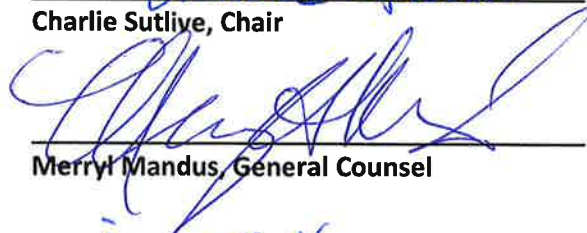
Chair Sutlive called for a motion to adjourn the work session. Ms. Warner moved, and Mr. Dickerson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

APPROVED:



Charlie Sutlive, Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Merryl Mandus, General Counsel

ATTEST:



Jamie Harris, Board Secretary

DATE MINUTES APPROVED:

March 7, 2019