



CITY OF MABLETON, GEORGIA
Riverside EpiCenter
135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, GA 30168
May 28, 2025 at 5:15 PM

The Honorable Michael Owens, Mayor
The Honorable Ron Davis, District 1 Councilmember
The Honorable Dami Oladapo, District 2 Councilmember
The Honorable Keisha Jeffcoat, Mayor Pro Tem/District 3 Councilmember
The Honorable Patricia Auch, District 4 Councilmember
The Honorable TJ Ferguson, District 5 Councilmember
The Honorable Debora Herndon, District 6 Councilmember

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. AGENDA ITEMS AND DISCUSSION**
 - a. Cobb Travel and Tourism Agreement**
- 4. PRE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA REVIEW**
- 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 6. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED) FOR LITIGATION (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(B)(1)(A) REAL ESTATE (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(1)) PERSONNEL (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(2)) AND MISC. EXEMPTIONS (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (B)(4)&(5))**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility, disability, or foreign language may contact the City Clerk at (404) 927-9502 or susan.hiott@mableton.gov at least three days prior to the meeting. The clerk can be located at the City of Mableton Offices, Riverside EpiCenter, 135 Riverside Pkwy, Austell, Georgia 30168 during regular office hours.



AGENDA ITEM MEMORANDUM

MEETING OF: May 28, 2025

DEPARTMENT: [DEPARTMENT]

ISSUE/AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Cobb Travel and Tourism Agreement

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY: Under Georgia law the City of Mableton is authorized to impose, levy, and collect an excise tax (also known as hotel motel tax or "HMT"). HMT collected by the City must be expended by an eligible 501 (c)(6) destination marketing organization (DMO) to promote tourism, conventions and trade shows (e.g. destination marketing services for the City). Furthermore, pursuant to various City and State legislation and regulations relating to HMT collection and disbursement a portion of this revenue collected is restricted funds that may be used by the City for tourism product development. The Cobb Travel & Tourism (CT&T) has been the DMO for Cobb County through agreements with the County and the Cobb Marietta Coliseum & Exhibit Hall Authority promoting travel and tourism County-wide, including those municipalities that pre-dated the incorporation of the City. The City desires to enter this Agreement with CT&T to serve as the DMO for the City until such time as a new DMO to be called "Meet Mableton, Inc." ("**Meet Mableton**") is designated by the IRS as an eligible 501(c)(6) DMO.

BUDGETED/FINANCIAL IMPACT – FUND:

RECOMMENDATION: Staff is recommending approval of this agreement

ATTACHMENTS:

1. CT&T Talking Points for Meet Mableton 5-12-25



Talking Points for Meet Mableton and Cobb Travel & Tourism's Partnership

20% PROVIDED TO SUPPORT CT&T'S CORE IMPACT

BACKGROUND

Cobb County's strong tourism economy is anchored by Cobb Travel & Tourism (CT&T), Cobb's attractions, venues, and hotels. Historically, tourism has been the leading industry in Cobb County, supporting Cobb with economic impact, jobs, local tax revenue and worker income.

In FY23, the industry had an economic impact of \$2.6 billion. Additionally, each Cobb County household would need to be taxed an additional \$780 per year to replace taxes generated by tourism activity.

As Cobb's official destination marketing organization (501c6), Cobb Travel & Tourism drives this business through sales, branding and partnerships producing a significant return on investment that is felt in the City of Mableton as well as every part of the county.

ACTIVITY SUPPORTING THE IMPACT

The following are examples of Cobb's Group Sales, Sports, Marketing and Programming actions and support.

SALES

CT&T sales outreach is divided into two strategic areas: Group Sales and Sports Sales through the Cobb Sports Alliance (CSA). Through CT&T sales efforts, we are increasing the position of Cobb as a destination and bringing more business to the City of Mableton and all of Cobb.

The CT&T sales team helps groups find the right location for their event. To book all events, we work with county, city and community venues. For example, **Riverside EpiCenter** is a key strategic partner that the CT&T group and sports sales teams work with to place appropriate business.

Sports is Cobb's largest sales driver, and the Cobb Sports Alliance continues to build traditional and non-traditional sports activities throughout the county. In fact, the Cobb Sports Alliance has brought tournament play from more than 54 different sports including able-bodied (46) and adaptive (8) over the past five years. Of the 54 sports, 19 were new sports.

CT&T's unique role that no one else fills is the coordination and support services that set Cobb apart as we compete for these events with locations across the country.

Relationships developed between clients and the CT&T sales team allow CT&T to upsell additional county assets to complement and enhance the experience of the groups attending the primary venue. Six Flags Over Georgia and the Mable House Barnes Amphitheatre are examples of complimentary assets used by the CT&T sales team to enhance experiences.

Additionally, CT&T's group and sports sales efforts do not just benefit one venue. Rather, many businesses are touched, supported, and have a bottom-line return. While most will not realize that it was CT&T's efforts that brought business to their restaurant, attraction, performance, store or gas station, this activity has a significant impact on businesses large and small.

MARKETING

Cobb Travel & Tourism continues to be the main channel of communication for the visitor, providing a variety of ways to engage in conversations and learn information about Cobb's tourism assets. CT&T uses the strength of local and regional print, radio, web, and press coverage to build a steady awareness and to brand Cobb County as Atlanta's sweet spot.

Through CT&T's website, travelcobb.org, visitors can find a full range of information about assets in the City of Mableton and Cobb County. In addition, CT&T services the visitor by offering sweet deals, promotion packages, a calendar of events, an interactive map, and the ability to book hotel stays.

Cobb Travel & Tourism's marketing reach has grown exponentially over the past few years. The website travelcobb.org has seen a 43% increase in traffic visitations since FY21 with visitors coming from all 50 states.

Cobb Travel & Tourism uses various social media channels and tools to complement specific promotions, increase travel, develop destination awareness and expand the reach of our marketing message. As a result, our social media platforms continue to grow every year.

The CT&T e-newsletter allows Cobb Travel & Tourism to connect directly to the visitors monthly with up-to-date tourism-related news, events, and special deals throughout Cobb County.

CT&T's magazine-style guide, *Grit & Garnish*, takes an in-depth look at the top things to see and do in the area. It features attractions, venues, restaurants, arts, culture, and CT&T's partners throughout the county. It is distributed in local hotels and state welcome centers.

CT&T is a trusted source for qualified journalists, bloggers, and influencers looking for content and information about Cobb. Media referrals from CT&T result in wide exposure to a pre-qualified and relevant audience. For example, in April, CT&T hosted *Kidding Around Greenville*, an online outlet reaching families in South Carolina and the Greenville area (Unique Monthly Visits (UMV): 72,066) who visited and is writing about Six Flags Over Georgia and multiple other locations throughout Cobb.

PROGRAMMING

Cobb Travel & Tourism's programs support distinct parts of Cobb's tourism assets.

- **Cobbunity:** An award-winning initiative, Cobbunity celebrates the diversity of Cobb's visitors and residents, as well as the variety of accessible experiences throughout the destination. Merging the words "Cobb" and "community," Cobbunity speaks to arts, music, sports, and conventions, which come together to form tourism and hospitality in Cobb.

To promote the initiative, CT&T created Cobbunity.org, a dedicated landing page to showcase the diversity present in Cobb's tourism and hospitality offerings, from inclusive events to accessible attractions and places suitable for sensory-friendly exploration.

CT&T also launched the Cobbunity Changemaker Award to recognize individuals who exemplify the diverse Cobb community. The inaugural winner of this award was Maxine Wilson with the Mableton Improvement Coalition for her work with the Taste of Mableton festival.

- **Cobb Arts VIBE:** A program of CT&T, Cobb Arts VIBE forms a collective vision for Cobb's arts community and has shown that Cobb's arts are thriving. In addition, Cobb Arts VIBE has facilitated invaluable connections between organizations from all areas of the arts in Cobb and acted as a critical resource for education, engagement, and awareness. To note, the South Cobb Arts Alliance, whose home is at the Mable House Arts Center, was a founding participant for Cobb Arts VIBE and continues to be a very active partner.
- **Cobb Foodie Week:** The largest restaurant week in metro Atlanta, Cobb Foodie Week promotes and supports the county's diverse dining scene with unprecedented savings. During the month of September, customers cash in on discounts and giveaways at restaurants around Cobb, featuring everything from fine dining to finger-licking pub fare. In 2024, more than 50 restaurants across the county offered sweet 'meal deals' for foodies to enjoy, and we partnered with influencers from around Metro Atlanta to expand our reach and drive business back to Cobb's restaurants. Glenn's Café and Mooyah Burger, City of Mableton restaurants, have participated in Foodie Week.
- **Cobb Hospitality Forecast:** Annually, Cobb Travel & Tourism presents the Cobb Hospitality Forecast event, bringing together more than 150 hospitality partners, business representatives, and industry experts to share insights and identify trends for the upcoming year. Key economic experts and hospitality industry leaders share their perspectives and projections for Cobb County to help our partners plan and prepare.
- **Bubbles & Brews:** Cobb Travel & Tourism taps into the local craft beverage scene with Bubbles & Brews – a month-long celebration of Cobb's local breweries, distilleries, meaderies, and wineries. These craft beverage makers create jobs in our community and are a unique tourism asset. As a result, craft beverage facilities have become sought after destinations for visitors to Cobb.
- **Film Cobb:** CT&T is Cobb's official camera-ready connection for the State film office and location scouts. We work with the county and cities to locate and permit filming sites throughout Cobb. The movie industry continues to expand in Cobb taking advantage of state economic incentives. Our expertise in coordination of industry/project needs with local community assets and locations is a significant attraction for movie production teams.
- **Cobb Greenway:** Over the years, Cobb Travel & Tourism continues to work closely in partnership with key community stakeholders – our county, cities and community improvement districts – to tell the story of Cobb's trail system. All of our cities, county and CID's have trail systems in their neighborhoods and the common goal is to work toward connecting each of those developed systems into a cohesive network. The purpose of the Cobb Greenway is to build awareness of Cobb's trail systems to get residents and visitors moving and to create excitement around the unique experiences of our trails.

DATA & ANALYTICS

Data helps drive business. For example, knowing Cobb's visitor profile and key data analytics help all areas of CT&T be more successful in efforts to reach key audiences and drive business throughout the county. CT&T continues to invest in new technology that benefits cities, the county and hospitality organizations and further defines their tourism stories.

STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

CT&T cannot accomplish all that we do alone. By taking advantage of strategic connections and collaborations, CT&T, the tourism and hospitality industry, the City of Mableton and Cobb community are stronger.

With strategic partners CT&T can deploy resources to address unique local opportunities. For example, CT&T is a powerful communication partner for any event or situation.

\$100,000 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

By partnering with CT&T to administer MEET MABLETON, the City of Mableton will be able to quickly, efficiently and effectively standup the City of Mableton's tourism efforts. Additionally, CT&T will be able to directly infuse MEET MABLETON with the expertise and experience of the 19 members of the CT&T team and the organization's full capabilities in tourism and tourism promotion. With 181 collective years of experience, CT&T brings a wealth of knowledge and insight that cannot be duplicated.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Areas of support include, but are not limited to:

- Administrative (MEET MABLETON Board support, including meeting notices, minutes, follow-up and coordination.)
- Accounting and Finance
- Attorney
- Marketing Guidance (advertising, public relations, communications)
- Sales Strategies for Group and Sports Business and Activation
- Data and Analytics (Tourism Economics, STR Report, Placer.ai)
- Film Cobb
- Strategic Partnerships