



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, December 6, 2006
Georgia Infirmary

2:00 p.m.
1900 Abercorn Street

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Karen Blackard	Kicklighter Resource Center	
William K. Broker	Georgia Legal Service	
Wayne Dawson	Savannah-Chatham County Fair Housing Council	
Jeff Felser	City of Savannah	X
Yolonda Fontaine	Housing Authority of Savannah	X
Brian Frank	Laidlaw/Teleride	X
William Gardner	National Federation of the Blind	X
Bob Habas	Living Independence for Everyone Inc. (LIFE)	X
Timamu Hakim	Chatham Area Transit Authority	
Zoe Hardenbrook	GDOT District 5	
Carol Hunt	NAACP-Savannah Branch	
Hunter Hurst	Georgia Infirmary Day Center For Rehabilitation	
McArthur Jarrett	Interested Citizen	X
Tom Lamar	Interested Citizen	
Brian Leighton	Savannah Council of the Blind	X
Jack Lewis	Savannah-Chatham Council on Disability Issues	
Jane Love	Metropolitan Planning Commission	X
Patti Lyons	Senior Citizens Savannah -Chatham Inc.	
Laurie Monroe	Economic Opportunity Authority	
Bill Oakley	Goodwill Industries	
Greg Schroeder	United Way of the Coastal Empire	

Walt Simmons	Savannah Assn for the Blind	
Clealice Timmons	Coastal Center for Development Services	
Staff Representative	Chatham County	
<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind	x
Barbara Setzto	MPO	x

Call to Order

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the December 6, 2006 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation meeting to order. First order of business was for self-introductions from those in attendance.

I. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Jane Love read the agenda as prepared. Following the reading of the agenda, it was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as prepared. The motion carried with none opposed.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of October 18, 2006 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2006 ACAT meeting as presented.

ACAT Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2006 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar

Ms. Jane Love referred committee members to the hand-out of the proposed meeting calendar. She noted that the ACAT meetings were scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday in the month except for December 12th which is the 2nd Wednesday. This change is to accommodate the holiday season. Ms. Love proceeded to read the actual dates as February 21, April 18, June 20, August 15, October 17, and December 12. She asked if anyone had a conflict with the December 12th date as that was the last day of Hanukkah. The meeting time will be 2:00 PM and the place will be the Georgia Infirmary.

There being no further discussion it was moved and seconded to endorse the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar as presented.

ACAT Action: The motion to endorse the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar carried with none opposed.

Following the vote, Mr. Jarrett asked if meeting dates could be changed if conflicts arose, specifically conflicts with other city or county meetings. Ms. Love replied that it was possible, though difficult. Meetings are not changed very often.

C. Endorsement of the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function

Ms. Love presented the staff report on this amendment. The UPWP is an annual document with amendments proposed as changes to projects in the fiscal year occur, such as grants or other GDOT requests. This amendment covers an MPO request for \$25,000 grant to work on transportation coordination, specifically carpooling involving hospital employees. These funds need to be shown in the UPWP, and this amendment is offered at this time to show the

additional \$25,000, plus the local match of \$6250, in the FY 2007 UPWP budget table. At this time ACAT is being asked to endorse the inclusion of the grant money into the existing UPWP.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function carried with none opposed.

III. Status Reports

A. Environmental streamlining for transportation projects

Ms. Love presented the staff report. For background information Ms. Love explained that at the August 23, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting, Chairman Pete Liakakis expressed disappointment with the delays on projects, specifically the Ogeechee Rd widening project. He asked Mr. Tom Thomson, as Executive Director, to look into this to see what could speed up the environmental process. Mr. Thomson asked the MPO staff to research this. MPO staff has provided information on the history of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and recommendations for the MPO. These were:

1. The MPO should inform the Department of the local transportation priorities with the hope that these priority projects can go through the project development process first.
2. The MPO should secure funding for priority projects.

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3. The MPO should review and provide input on needs and purposes of transportation projects in early project development process. Currently the MPO is not involved in this early phase of the process, but now they will be.
 4. The MPO should coordinate with the Department of Transportation to get invited in and keep abreast of the whole project development process. In the process, the MPO can provide input about the effects of the projects on the community, recommend avoidance and minimization strategies, coordinate activities to reduce conflicts, and assist in conducting community outreach and local agency coordination.
 5. The MPO should assist the Georgia Department of Transportation in advertising the public information meetings, spreading the project information, and other public involvement activities in the environmental process.

This report is provided for your information. It will be presented to the Policy Committee next week at their scheduled meeting.

Mr. Hakim asked if transit projects were considered in this report as well as highway projects. Ms. Love said that NEPA covers all types of transportation projects and asked if he felt transit projects were also being delayed for environmental reasons. This report is the result of concern of some Policy Committee members about environmental processes that delay roadway building projects.

B. Context Sensitive Design Draft Manual

Ms. Love reported that the purpose of this manual is to outline appropriate road design based on the functional classification of the road and on the nature of the area through which the road passes. The manual recommends specific dimensions needed to create

roadways that balance the needs of motorists and non-motorists, as well as those of nearby residents and businesses.

Mr. Brian Leighton requested an electronic version of this manual in a Word document format. Ms. Love cannot post documents on the website in Word format, and also the consultant has provided the manual only in PDF. Another option was to put the manual on a disk for interested individuals. Ms. Love will send the PDF to any committee member requesting an electronic version of the draft manual.

Ms. Love said that staff is requesting feedback at this point, and that a revised manual will be presented for endorsement at a future meeting.

IV. Agency Reports

A. Laidlaw/Teleride

Mr. Brian Frank distributed trip reports for October and November.

Mr. Frank reported on the public hearing that CAT held on November 21, 2006 for Teleride customers. Thirty-five people attended. They offered many comments, both positive and negative, indicating there was room for improvement. Scheduling appears to be the prime issue, particularly weekend scheduling, how trips are scheduled, and the level of friendliness from dispatchers and staff.

A customer service line will be installed next week (week of Dec 11). He is also creating an e-mail address for customer service. They are presently evaluating new software designed to help with scheduling. Software is expensive (\$100,000+), so research is important and currently on-going.

Public hearings of this nature are going to be monthly beginning in January. Mr. Frank believes these “listening” meetings are very important. Teleride users will be notified of the new customer service telephone number and e-mail address.

Mr. Jarrett asked for more Teleride statistics – quarterly as well as the monthly numbers. Mr. Frank agreed to provide both quarterly and monthly statistical reports at future meetings.

Mr. Jarrett believes that quarterly customer meetings would be sufficient and that monthly meetings are not necessary.

Mr. Frank will be manning the new customer service phone line and e-mail when he is in the office. When he is out, his assistant will pick them up, or it will go to voice mail. Regular staffers or dispatch personnel will not be handling this line or e-mail account. Mr. Jarrett offered the suggestion of volunteers helping if the volume becomes too high. Mr. Frank anticipates his response time to a customer call will vary from immediate to one day, depending on how fast he can resolve the caller’s concern.

Mr. Frank explained that notification of this new customer service contact information will be through a mailing to everyone who uses or has used the service as of a certain date, possibly as of July 1, 2006. Mr. Leighton suggested that a notice be given to the Georgia Area Radio Reading Service so that it can be broadcast over the radio.

Mr. Frank believes that when new software is in place, it will alleviate many of the technical issues of scheduling and will possibly increase capacity by improving time efficiency.

Mr. Jarrett has a Teleride Policy Manual revised in 2004. He said that, during the last revision process, ACAT’s Teleride Manual subcommittee had recommended updates every 4 years. He said it is

due to be revised next year. He would like Mr. Frank and all to start looking at it now for any changes that need to be made. He would like the manual to be reviewed from a regulatory perspective. This manual is not the responsibility of ACAT, but this committee can be instrumental in getting it revised. He would like to work together (with CAT and Teleride and ACAT) to make these changes in a cohesive way. While he doesn't feel it necessary for ACAT members to be a part of any CAT meetings, he would expect that this committee would be kept advised of any changes that CAT proposes.

Mr. Leighton would like to see this manual on the website. Mr. Frank believes that once a customer is certified, the customer is given a manual.

Committee members expressed appreciation to Mr. Frank for the installation of the customer line, more timely service, and less complaints.

Mr. Tyrone Palmer stressed the importance of having all the vehicles in working order. Keeping the vehicles in good repair helps to complete successful trips and allow the customers to meet their appointments. He recommends that CAT get the thoughts of staff and drivers as well as customers in order to evaluate Teleride service and Laidlaw performance. He would like to see Laidlaw put more money into this paratransit program to keep the vehicles in top working order.

Mr. Palmer commended Ann Bush for doing a good job.

Mr. Jarrett and Mr. Palmer both reiterated the suggestion of quarterly public hearings instead of monthly. Mr. Frank said that they wanted to hold a meeting in January because the weather on that day in November had kept many away. If there is not a large turnout in

January they will probably have a meeting in February. If ridership interest is there, they will have monthly meetings.

Mr. Frank closed by saying that he is just beginning to develop a quarterly newsletter for Teleride users.

B. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Hakim reported that CAT has put out a call for proposals to install bus shelters. If they don't get enough proposals by tomorrow, which is the closing date, they will extend the deadline. In the past each shelter was handled by two contractors – one put in the slab and another put up the shelter. This time they are asking for contractors to bid on both steps as one job so that one contractor is responsible for everything. Mr. Hakim handed out a listing of the location of the next 25 shelters.

He also passed out a 5-year new sidewalk installation plan that he had obtained from the City of Savannah. He was hoping that the sidewalk on the eastside of Abercorn from Mercy Blvd to Largo Dr. could be accelerated. It is presently scheduled for 2010. Mr. Jeff Felser offered to co-sign a letter requesting the acceleration of this particular project, if Mr. Hakim feels it will help.

Mr. Leighton offered the comment that drivers on CAT's night routes do not call out the stops and are rude to passengers. Mr. Hakim mentioned that the new buses have automated announcements for bus stops, and on older buses the drivers are supposed to announce the stops. Mr. Leighton said that in the daytime he sees no problem, but at night the poor service by drivers is frequent. Mr. Hakim asked him to report it to CAT, including the time of the incident and the route number.

Mr. Felser asked about getting a shelter on Broughton St. at Bull St. Mr. Hakim reported there were issues to be resolved about that location. City engineers believe that the strength of the concrete is not sufficient to support a shelter. Also, the owner of the corner property has expressed concern about the bus stop itself, believing it impacts negatively on his property. They are still discussing the stop and a shelter for that corner.

V. Other Business

Mr. Jarrett mentioned that Mr. Jack Lewis has a proposal to make regarding Laidlaw/Teleride. Since Mr. Lewis could not attend today, Mr. Jarrett will recommend to him that he send his recommendation in writing to Mr. Frank and to the MPO staff to include in the packet of materials. Ms. Love confirmed that it could be included in the related materials for the next meeting.

VI. Public Participation Opportunities

There were no comments at this meeting from other citizens.

VII. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the December 6, 2006 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner