



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 17, 2007  
The Georgia Infirmary

2:00 p.m.  
1900 Abercorn St.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
William K. Broker	Georgia Legal Service	
Wayne Dawson	Savannah-Chatham County Fair Housing Council	
Jan Elders	Savannah-Chatham Council on Disability Issues	x
Jeff Felser	City of Savannah	
Yolonda Fontaine	Housing Authority of Savannah	
William Gardner	National Federation of the Blind	
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
Robert Kozlowski	Kicklighter Resource Center	
Tom Lamar	Interested Citizen	
Brian Leighton	Savannah Council of the Blind	
Jane Love	Metropolitan Planning Commission	x
Patti Lyons	Senior Citizens Savannah -Chatham Inc.	
C. J. McCampbel	Laidlaw/Teleride	x
Laurie Monroe	Economic Opportunity Authority	
Bill Oakley	Goodwill Industries	x
Greg Schroeder	United Way of the Coastal Empire	

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<b>Walt Simmons</b>	<b>Savannah Assn for the Blind</b>
<b>Clealice Timmons</b>	<b>Coastal Center for Development Services</b>
<b>Staff Representative</b>	<b>Chatham County</b>

## **Call to Order**

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the October 17, 2007 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation meeting to order. Those present introduced themselves.

### **I. Approval of Agenda**

At the request of the Chairman, Ms. Jane Love read the agenda as prepared. Ms. Love noted that there will be no status report on the Effingham Parkway since the MPO staff is in the process of preparing comments on the study done by Effingham County's consultants. Following the reading of the agenda, it was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried with none opposed.

### **II. Action Items**

There being no quorum, action items were not voted on.

**A. Approval of August 15, 2007 Advisory Committee of Accessible Transportation Minutes.**

**B. Endorsement of the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan**

For information to those present, Ms. Love reported that this plan is a requirement of SAFETEA-LU to coordinate the area's human services transportation into a plan. The resource group has met twice, a public

meeting was held, and a public hearings are included on the agendas of ACAT, CAC, and the Policy Committee. Although no members of the public are present today, the next hearing will be tomorrow evening at the meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee. The plan describes the needs and identifies strategies to meet those needs. Ms. Love listed the goals of the plan, the criteria for strategies, and the four tiers of projects.

Mr. Jarrett asked what type of notification had been given to the public. Ms. Love reported that the draft plan and public hearings were advertised twice in the newspaper, on the MPC website and on television, among other communication methods. The public meeting in September was also advertised. Mr. Jarrett is surprised at the lack of public participation.

Mr. Jarrett asked what the role of the Citizens Advisory Committee is. Ms. Love reported that their role was similar to the role of this committee. Each municipality and the County have representatives. There are about 19 active members who review the same issues that come before this committee.

**C. Endorsement of requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008.**

For information, Ms. Love explained that this amendment would allow GDOT to fast-track the construction of a 2-lane high level bridge over Skidaway Narrows at a cost of \$18,000,000. GDOT has requested the amendment now because the original project in the TIP, for widening Diamond Cswy. which included a 4-lane bridge would not be built for several years, when the Whitfield Ave. widening would also be ready. She explained that local officials and Skidaway residents believe thousands of lives are in danger because the old, bascule bridge may possibly fail to operate properly at the same time that an emergency evacuation is necessary.

### **III. Status Reports**

#### **A. Traffic Impact Analysis Process**

Ms. Love presented a staff report. Currently the process for traffic impact analysis is not always clear to the developers and agreed-upon among the agencies involved. This new process is an attempt to make clear to all parties the requirements for traffic impact studies and the order of steps within the development review process. In future the MPO will be drafting an ordinance to be adopted by the City and County.

### **IV. Agency Reports**

#### **A. Laidlaw/Teleride**

Mr. C.J. McCampbel handed out two reports. One report was a 3-year record of reservations, performed trips, cancellations, number of wheelchairs handled, and miles covered. The report was by month with an average monthly total calculated for each category. All have categories show increases in the past three years.

The second report was a "Load/Unload" per destination report. This is a report measuring how much time is spent "not moving" for each trip. He selected a week in July and sampled a few drivers each day of the week. This "not moving" time occurs while providing door to door service and securing the passenger within the vehicle. On average, each passenger requires a combined total of about 20 minutes of loading and unloading at the pick-up point and at the destination.

Miles covered by Teleride has also increased since 2005. This has increased due to people requesting more trips and also due to growth

in the county area; people are moving further out. Teleride encompasses the whole county while the CAT fixed route system does not. This puts a strain on the resources of the Teleride system. Teleride has the same number of vehicles as they had 3 years ago. This growth in demand, with no growth in supply, affects the quality of service.

Mr. McCampbel has had many discussions with ACAT members and with CAT. The first step to improve the problem is purchasing scheduling software. Currently the scheduling is done manually on a daily basis. The customer won't have a verification of a ride until the night before the requested ride. The software will allow Teleride to confirm the customer's reservation at the time the customer calls in the request. The software will also re-schedule customers if a bus breaks down.

The bid for the software is out now. Once a contractor is selected it will be a 6-week process to set-up and test. He expects it to be operational by February.

The second improvement is a visual security system on the Teleride vehicles. It is currently operating on a test vehicle. The camera can help staff confirm that the vehicle was on the correct street and at the correct house. It monitors customer service, driver behavior, vehicle location and timing. The hard-mounted DVD player, stays on for about 18 hours and has a 2-3 week memory.

Mr. Bill Oakley, an ACAT member who also serves on the CAT Board, reported to the Committee issues addressed at the last CAT Board meeting concerning Teleride. The CAT administration requested of the Board supplementary funding for the Teleride system to purchase these two improvements and to cover increasing costs in general. Mr. McCampbel confirmed \$157,000 for the software purchase and an additional \$168,000 for the operations budget was requested. The CAT Board and the County Commission voted to extend these resources to Teleride to meet these needs.

Mr. Oakley reported that there was a lot of concern expressed by Board members about the escalating costs of Teleride. No actions were taken. The legal requirements for this type of system are less than what is actually provided. It may become difficult to continue exceeding requirements as funding becomes scarce. For instance the Board discussed curb-to-curb service versus the current door-to-door service. He recommends that ACAT members gather data to support door-to-door service or any other services ACAT believes are essential. ACAT needs to define the essentials and be prepared to fight hard to keep the essentials. The CAT Board will put everything on the table and measure it all against what the minimum legal requirements are.

Mr. McCampbel wants to schedule a workshop for County Commission members to educate them about the CAT system and the Teleride system. The Board wants to know how many people are out beyond the CAT fixed routes. Currently, the Teleride system operates beyond the limits of CAT's fixed routes.

Mr. Jarrett commented that an increase in fares is inevitable. Mr. Oakley suspects that a reduction in the scope of the system is more likely than an increase in fare. The question is: Is it more important to raise fares in order to maintain services, or to hold the fares at the current level and sacrifice some services? Mr. McCampbel has studies from 2007 and 2000 that suggest the fare is too low compared to national standards. He knows of other communities that have dropped door-to-door service in favor of curb-to-curb services in an effort to lower costs. The decision to change service in Chatham County will come from the community not from the system administrator.

Ms. Jan Elders asked if a sliding scale for fares, varying with distance, has been considered. Mr. Oakley wondered if differential fares would be legal under the Americans with Disabilities Act, since CAT doesn't go to outlying areas but Teleride does.

Mr. Oakley cautioned the committee that the CAT Board has a history of making decisions quickly. When this issue comes up, it will not take long to address it and decide. If the disabled community wants to participate in the decision process they need to act quickly.

Mr. Jarrett acknowledged what Mr. Oakley and Mr. McCampbel were saying and appreciated the reports.

Mr. Jarrett is still concerned that lack of the proper vehicles is part of the problem. Mr. McCampbel acknowledged that the vehicles require a great deal of maintenance. A proper balance of vehicles, drivers, and customers needs to be maintained in order for the system to work efficiently. Mr. McCampbel reminded everyone that Teleride is a shared ride service, not a taxi. Mr. Jarrett confirmed that consumers have some misconceptions about the nature of the service.

Mr. McCampbel reported that all scheduling software is about 85% efficient. About 15% will always need to be handled manually.

## **B. Chatham Area Transit**

No report at this time.

## **V. Other Business**

Mr. Jarrett announced that the Consumer Advocates for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Savannah is sponsoring a march and luncheon on Monday, October 22, 2007 beginning at Forsyth Park at 9:30 AM.

On Sunday, October 21, 2007 the National Federation of Blind is having their annual Musical Explosion at First African Baptist Church at 5:00 PM.

The Georgia state-wide coalition on blindness will hold their quarterly meeting in Savannah on November 17, 2007.

The next ACAT meeting will be on December 12, 2007.

**VI. Public Participation Opportunities**

No public participation at this time.

**VII. Adjournment**

There being no other business that could come before the Committee, due to the lack of a quorum, the October 17, 2007 ACAT Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love  
Transportation Planner