



## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, February 20, 2008  
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	
Jeff Felser	City of Savannah	x
Yolonda Fontaine	Housing Authority of Savannah	
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
Rober 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	
Greg Schroeder	United Way of the Coastal Empire	

**Walt Simmons**  
**Clealice Timmons**  
**Staff Representative**

**Savannah Assn for the Blind**  
**Coastal Center for Development**  
**Services**  
**Chatham County**

<u>Member Alternates</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Jean Iaderosa	Chatham Area Transit Authority	x

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind	x
Barbara Setzto	for the MPO	x

## **Call to Order**

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the February 20, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation meeting to order followed by self-introductions of those in attendance.

Mr. Jarrett announced to the committee that Mr. Brian Leighton has resigned from his position as Vice Chairman of ACAT due to health reasons. Mr. Jarrett recommends postponing replacement of Vice Chairman until regular elections in August. As the Vice Chairman of ACAT, Mr. Leighton had represented ACAT on the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). Mr. Jarrett said that, if anyone would like to attend and represent this committee at the TCC meetings, to let him know

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

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as presented. The motion to approve the agenda carried with none opposed.

### **II. Action Items**

#### **A. Approval of the December 12, 2007 Advisory Committee of Accessible Transportation Minutes.**

It was moved and seconded to approve the December 12, 2007 Advisory Committee of Accessible Transportation Minutes.

**ACAT Action: the motion to approve the December 12, 2007 Advisory Committee of Accessible Transportation Minutes carried with none opposed.**

**B. Endorsement of the CUTS/MPO “Year of Expenditure” Update for the Financial Plan of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)**

Ms. Love reported that this update is required by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportaton Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Cost estimates of projects needed to be updated to reflect the expected cost of the project in the anticipated Year of Expenditure (YOE). Revenue estimates also have been updated. Working with MPO staff, consultants from Reynolds, Smith, and Hills reviewed the projects in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan and assigned each to one of four time bands – 2004-2007, 2008-2013, 2014-2020 and 2021-2030. For the projects authorized since the Plan adoption in 2004, they subtracted the appropriate figures from the Plan’s overall costs and revenues. They inflated the cost estimates for the projects, according to time band, by 2.5% per year. They also inflated the expected funding by 2.5% per year. The plan must be financially balanced. At the time that this report was mailed to the committees, the draft of the YOE Update showed that the LRTP was still balanced, due to the inclusion of additional funding strategies.

Since then, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have reviewed the update and sent a letter stating their concerns about some of the funding strategies and cost estimates. GDOT did not agree with the assumption that any new lanes on the interstates would be tolled. They believe traditional funding sources will be sufficient for widening

I-95. GDOT also requested more supporting information for the amount of anticipated toll revenue. GDOT questioned the cost estimate for the Chatham County portion of the Effingham Parkway. FHWA doesn't want to see Public/Private Partnerships listed as a funding strategy unless GDOT is supporting the MPO on that. The MPO, GDOT, and FHWA are discussing these issues now in an effort to resolve the concerns before the Policy Committee meeting next week. At this time MPO staff is recommending that ACAT endorse the update with the understanding that staff is addressing GDOT's and FHWA's concerns.

When asked about MPO staff's desire use tolling as a funding mechanism, Ms. Love explained that tolling is a way of using economic principles to control volume on the highways. There is congestion because the roads have such a low cost for use. Tolling is a way to match demand with supply. Tolling provides the money for the improvements. She emphasized that the tolling is proposed only for new limited-access roadways or new lanes on existing highways. Existing lanes will still be un-tolled for those who do not wish to pay. We likely must drop some projects from the Plan if we cannot use tolling as a revenue source.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the CUTS/MPO "Year of Expenditure" Update to the Financial Plan of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan subject to the resolution of GDOT's and FHWA's concerns.

**ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the CUTS/MPO "Year of Expenditure" Update to the Financial Plan of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan subject to the resolution of GDOT's and FHWA's concerns carried with none opposed.**

- C. Requested Amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to shift right-of-way phases for Grange Rd. widening project and SR 204/Abercorn**

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**Extension improvement project (King George Blvd. to Rio Rd.) from FY 2008 to FY 2009**

Ms. Love reported that GDOT has asked the MPO to shift the right-of-way acquisition stages for two projects from FY 2008 to FY 2009. This request is because the widening project on Grange Rd. is not ready for right-of-way acquisition in 2008. The second project, SR204 between King George Blvd. & Rio Rd., needs to be shifted because the final concept has not been approved. Action on this amendment at the upcoming Policy Committee meeting is contingent on the approval of the Year of Expenditure Update to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. That update must be approved to make the plan fully compliant with SAFETEA-LU, and no amendments may be made to the TIP until full compliance is achieved.

They have just begun the concept design for Grange Rd. so they do not yet know what properties they will need to acquire. In the case of the SR 204 project, the concept design has begun, but final concept has not been approved. This needs to be done before they can acquire the necessary properties. Right-of-way acquisition could take a year or more, but it varies by project and number of properties.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to shift right-of-way phases for Grange Rd. widening project and SR 204/Abercorn Extension improvement project (King George Blvd. to Rio Rd.) from FY 2008 to FY 2009.

**ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to shift right-of-way phases for Grange Rd. widening project and SR 204/Abercorn Extension improvement project (King George Blvd. to Rio Rd.) from FY 2008 to FY 2009 carried with none opposed.**

### **III. Status Reports**

#### **A. “Coastal Commuters” Program to promote alternatives to driving alone.**

Ms. Love reported that this program is an outcome of the Connecting Savannah process which addressed general mobility and congestion along DeRenne Ave. During the past year staff has met with the hospital representatives to work on ways to promote carpooling, mass transit, bicycling, and walking. The MPO will provide a ride-matching system, which she described to the committee. Potential carpoolers would be able to contact those on their match list and arrange for carpooling. This system would be available to the general public via internet.

Another part of the overall program is the emergency ride home program. The main reason given by commuters for driving their own car to work is fear personal or family emergencies. Eligible commuters (those using one of the promoted transportation methods at least twice per week) would be able to call a taxi and use a voucher to pay for the ride. Because the MPO cannot use its planning funds to pay for taxi trips, the employers are being asked to contribute to this program; therefore the benefit is only available to eligible commuters working for employers who contribute to the fund.

The MPO is also encouraging employers to provide bicycle racks, provide preferential parking for carpoolers, subsidize transit passes, or at least allow transit pass costs to be deducted from employees' income on a pre-tax basis (Commuter Choice federal tax benefit). The MPO will promote the ride-matching system on the internet. The system will work best if many people register their trips to be matched. Ms. Love expects the program to be launched in late March or early April.

## **B. Chatham Area Transit Authority Transportation Development Plan (TDP)**

Ms. Jean Iaderosa presented an overview of CAT's Transportation Development Plan. This is a 5-year planning document that makes short-term recommendations; some are easy to do and some are more long-term in nature. There was strong public and stakeholder involvement, including a focus group with Teleride riders. They also met with business groups, neighborhood groups, Tybee Island neighborhood groups, and individuals at major transit centers. Input from these groups included the following points:

- Stakeholder input:
  - Maintenance of core downtown services is important
  - Transit District boundary is a barrier to effective regional service
  - Negative public reception; CAT not seen as mode of choice
  - Growing transportation need for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift workers
- Focus Group feedback:
  - Transit is important for growing employment centers
  - If benefit is clear, employers may be willing to contribute
  - CAT service is effective, if not always convenient
  - Mixed reaction to expansion to areas such as Pooler or Tybee Island

Her report included the following key findings from the customer surveys:

- Majority of riders have ridden for 5+ years
- Most customers ride at least 5-6 days per week
- Trip purpose is most often for work or school
- Cash is the most common fare payment method
- High transfer rate

Customer Demographics are as follows:

- Race/Ethnicity
  - 77% African –American

- 17% Caucasian
- 5% Latino
- 3% other
- Hourly Wage
  - 14% earn \$5.15/hr
  - 36% earn \$7/hr
  - 23% earn \$10/hr
  - 10% earn \$12/hr
  - 6% earn \$15/hr
  - 11% earn \$20+/hr
- Age
  - 30% under age 25
  - 18% age 25-34
  - 20% age 35-44
  - 19% age 45-54
  - 10% age 55-64
  - 3% are over 65
- Trip Purpose
  - 54% are going to work
  - 23% shopping
  - 7% school
  - 4% medical
  - 12% all other destinations (church, errands, Laundromat, etc.)

The next portion of the report deals with service analysis. The consultant analyzed each route considering scheduling, destinations, bus stops, load factors, etc.

The findings from this route analysis included:

- Strong core system;
- CAT customers travel frequently;
- System serves major employment, retail, medical & other core facilities in core service area;
- Ineffective service in some outlying areas;



- Expansion to meet growth in Chatham County is limited to the boundaries of the Transit District;
- Frequent service is the most desired improvement.

Ms. Iaderosa shared some of the recommendations made for certain routes. This included increasing service on the already strong #14-Abercorn route and eliminating fixed route service to the least-traveled Landings and Coffee Bluff routes in favor of some sort of demand service. CAT is currently serving the Crossroads business area and it has been recommended to increase service on this route.

The report studied the Teleride service. Because Teleride is county-wide it surpasses ADA requirements. The fare of \$1.20 is lower than most similar services in other communities. They recommended narrowing the advance reservation window. The new software that has been approved should meet this recommendation by offering immediate confirmation of reservation.

CAT's challenge is to convince employers that transit is a good thing. If parking is available, many employees will drive, so some employers are not interested in transit options.

There are two sites under review for the Downtown Transit Center. The Greyhound site is the preferred site. Having a Downtown Transit Center will not eliminate bus service from Broughton St, but it should eliminate the problem of idling buses. Broughton St., Abercorn St., Oglethorpe Ave., and MLK Blvd. form the main downtown loop.

The plan also reviewed the fare structure. CAT cannot afford to offer free transfers, without raising the base fare. The consultant reviewed 7 fare scenarios and came up with the following preferred alternative: base fare raised to \$1.50, free transfer, increase the weekly pass from \$12.00 to \$16.00, and the monthly pass from \$48.00 to \$60.00. This is expected to cause a 3.9% decrease in ridership but nevertheless a 2.4% increase in revenue.

CAT will review the plan recommendations and start with the no-cost or cost-neutral recommendations. They are working with “Step Up!” and with employers to market transit and plan to increase locations for purchasing tokens and passes. They hope to implement service enhancements in the coming plan years.

Mr. Felser asked for the time frame for selection of the transit center. Ms. Iaderosa replied that it is up to the CAT Board. Environmental studies are underway. Once site selection is made, construction would be about 18-24 months.

Mr. Felser asked that the rider demographics be included in these minutes. He wants to use this information to continue his push for Broughton Street bus shelters.

Mr. Jarrett noted that curb cuts do not meet specifications. Mr. Habas believes that the City will correct the wrong curb cuts once they have completed the initial list of curb cuts.

Mr. Jarrett asked about CAT’s responsibility to para-transit. What role does CAT have in providing appropriate vehicles for para-transit? Ms. Iaderosa noted she was not that familiar with this issue, but that when funding is available, funds are directed towards the purchase of Teleride vehicles.

Mr. Jarrett would like some answers about shelters at the next meeting.

Ms. Iaderosa explained that this plan includes recommendations. It does not mean that CAT will implement one or any of them. However, what they can do, they will do.

## **IV. Agency Reports**

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

Mr. C.J. McCampbel reported on the status of the new scheduling software. The contract has been signed and their first meeting to begin implementation is Friday, February 22, 2008. It will be 6-8 weeks to get the system up, tested, and ready. When you call, it will confirm your reservation immediately. There will be no call-back required. This improvement will be beneficial to all the customers.

The next improvement which should take place in about three weeks is a voice message system that will record all the calls. This will allow Mr. McCampbel to review any troublesome calls and clear up any issues promptly. He noted that customers have noticed a positive change in the telephone manner of staff when they call.

Mr. McCampbel was on the scheduling software selection committee so he is familiar with the various software systems available. He will notify everyone when it is operational.

He distributed the January statistics: 7,412 reservations, 5,567 actual rides, 756 late trips (outside of 15 min). They were short of personnel in January, and multiple vehicles were in the shop at the same time. He has talked to Mr. Rivers about the newer vehicles (2006 models) that are still under warranty but are in the shop more than out. Mr. McCampbel described the mechanical difficulties he is facing. Currently he has 18 vehicles; 5 are down.

Mr. McCampbel shared some peak hour statistics. The current production rate is 1.8 destinations per hour with his goal being 2.5 destinations per hour. This is ambitious and hard to maintain. He may lower his goal after observing the realities. For one day in July he found that during peak hours of 5:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. there were 133 separate destinations throughout the entire county (actual trips, not counting cancellations). With his 12 vehicles he was pushing 2.8 per

hour during the peak hours. The other peak time is 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and the system had 141 separate destinations. With 12-13 buses he can have a pretty decent day, but really needs 15-16 vehicles on the streets at all times. The scheduling software should help, but serving all of Chatham County, which has 330 square miles of land for Teleride to cover, is a constant challenge. Para-transit in Atlanta charges \$3.50 one way. There is a cost for whatever services customers want.

Mr. Habas asked about the cameras on the buses. Mr. McCampbel replied that the system of cameras on moving vehicles with DVD's is a very elaborate system, and the county cannot afford it at this time.

## **B. Chatham Area Transit**

There was no additional report at this time. Ms. Love said that Mr. Hakim at CAT had told her he couldn't attend today and had sent her the ridership statistics to handout today. She regretted that she had forgotten to bring that. Mr. Jarrett suggested those be included in the next mailing.

## **V. Other Business**

Mr. Jarrett asked if there was another way of effectively notifying people of the topics of the ACAT meeting. He recommended having the reports read on the Georgia Radio Reading Service (GaRRS), but Mr. Tyrone Palmer noted that it already is being done.

Mr. Bob Habas asked about the role of the ACAT Vice Chairperson at the TCC meetings. Ms. Love gave an overview of the four established CUTS committees. The Vice Chair of ACAT and the Vice Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) have a vote on the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). The Chair of ACAT and the Chair of CAC have a vote on the Policy Committee. Mr. Habas said that he might be interested in representing ACAT at the TCC in the future but that he could not do it this month.

**VI. Public Participation**

There was no public participation at this time.

**VII. Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the February 20, 2008 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be April 16, 2008 at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love  
Transportation Planner