



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, August 20, 2008
The Georgia Infirmary

2:00 p.m.
1900 Abercorn St.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Teresa Brenner	Savannah Council of the Blind	x
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	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
Robert Kozlowski	Kicklighter Resource Center	
Tom Lamar	Interested Citizen	x
Jane Love	Metropolitan Planning Commission	x
Patti Lyons	Senior Citizens Savannah -Chatham Inc.	
C. J. McCampbel	First Transit/Teleride	x
Laurie Monroe	Economic Opportunity Authority	
Bill Oakley	Goodwill Industries	x
Greg Schroeder	United Way of the Coastal Empire	
Clealice Timmons	Coastal Center for Development Services	

Staff Representative Terri White	Chatham County Savannah Assn for the Blind	x
<u>Voting Alternates</u> Jean Iaderosa	<u>Representing</u> Chatham Area Transit	<u>Present</u> x
<u>Others Present</u> Kim Harrison	<u>Representing</u> Consumer Advocates	<u>Present</u> x
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind	x
Barbara Setzto	for the MPO	x

Call to Order

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

I. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Barbara Setzto read the meeting agenda. It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda carried with none opposed.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of the June 18, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Barbara Setzto read the minutes from the June 18, 2008 meeting at Mr. Jarrett's request. Ms. Jean Iaderosa offered a correction to the First Transit/Teleride section, under Agency Reports. In the final paragraph the word "systematic" should be "systemic." It was then moved and seconded to approve the June 18, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes, as corrected.

ACAT Action: the motion to approve the June 18, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes, as corrected, carried with none opposed.

B. Election of ACAT chairperson and ACAT vice-chairperson for 2-year terms

Mr. Jarrett requested that the election be conducted by someone other than the current chair. It was clarified that whoever conducted the election would also be eligible to be nominated and elected. Mr. Bill Oakley agreed to conduct the election. The floor was open for nominations for ACAT Chairperson. Mr. McArthur Jarrett was nominated and indicated his willingness to serve. There being no other nominations for Chairperson, Mr. Oakley opened the floor to nominations for ACAT Vice-chairperson. Nominations included Mr. Tom Lamar, Mr. Bob Habas, Ms. Jan Elders and Ms. Teresa Brenner. Mr. Lamar, Mr. Habas and Ms. Elders withdrew their names. It was moved and seconded to close nominations.

ACAT Action: the motion to close nominations carried with none opposed. Mr. Oakley called for the vote. Mr. McArthur Jarrett and Ms. Teresa Brenner were elected to ACAT Chairperson and Vice-chairperson respectively, by acclamation.

Following the election, Mr. Oakley returned the meeting to Mr. Jarrett.

C. Endorsement of the Amendment to the CUTS/MPO Participation Plan

Ms. Jane Love reported that the MPO's current participation plan was adopted in April 2007. This plan outlines the process for carrying out public participation activities. For public participation in any amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MPO follows the GDOT and Federal Highway Administration process to facilitate interagency coordination. These two agencies have recently amended their process, and therefore MPO staff proposes to

amend the MPO Participation Plan to maintain matching processes for TIP amendments. The major changes are:

1. There will be no distinction between major amendments and minor amendments. All amendments will be treated in the same way – 15 day public comment period and response to all comments.
2. GDOT, instead of the MPO, will be responsible for notifications of all the administrative modifications.

The MPO staff also made some minor revisions at this time by updating the Measures of Effectiveness of the MPO's participation process and updating media, neighborhood and public review agency contact information.

Mr. Oakley was assured by Ms. Love that the committee's rights to comment on amendments are maintained.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to the CUTS/MPO Participation Plan.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the CUTS/MPO Participation Plan carried with none opposed.

D. Actions related to the proposed Georgia Ports Authority/Norfolk Southern Rail Project

Ms. Love summarized the written staff report. Staff recommends amending the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to include this project and then to amend the FY 2008-2011 TIP to include the project so that construction may begin this year. Today is the second step of the two-step LRTP amendment process begun at the June meeting. Ms. Love reviewed the measures that staff used to evaluate the project.

Mr. Oakley moved that this committee endorse the amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan to include the Georgia Ports/Norfolk Southern Rail Project and at the same time endorse the amendment to the same rail project in the FY2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. The motion was seconded.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan to include the Georgia Ports/Norfolk Southern Rail Project and at the same time endorse the amendment to the same rail project in the FY2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program carried with none opposed.

E. Endorsement of CUTS/MPO Project Prioritization for input into GDOT's Project Prioritization report to the Commissioner

Ms. Love presented the staff report and explained the attached charts. She focused on Table 2 which lists the projects that will be ready for construction by FY 2012. Mr. Jarrett asked why some priority projects would not be ready for construction by FY 2012. Ms. Love replied that some parts of the project development process cannot be rushed such as right-of-way acquisition, which then would affect construction readiness.

Ms. Love reviewed the following:

Table 1 - projects that are completed, or let, or authorized

Table 2 - projects that will be construction-ready by FY 2012

Table 3 - priority projects for economic development.

Table 4 - priority projects that will NOT be construction-ready by FY 2012.

Although the MPO's priorities have been consistent in the TIP for the last few years, Ms. Love explained that staff, with the help of other agencies, has spent time assessing what projects will truly be ready for construction by 2012. It is the opinion of staff that GDOT will not

look favorably on allocating funds to projects that are not construction-ready.

Staff is recommending that this committee endorse submission of this listing of priority projects to GDOT for consideration in GDOT's report to the Commissioner.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the CUTS/MPO Project Prioritization for input into GDOT's prioritization report to the Commissioner.

ACAT action: the motion to endorse the CUTS/MPO Project Prioritization for input into GDOT's prioritization report to the Commissioner carried with none opposed.

F. Approval of revisions to the Teleride Handbook

Mr. Oakley reported to the committee on a series of meetings held by the appointed sub-committee. The sub-committee members were Mr. Bob Habas, Mr. C.J. McCampbel, Ms. Jane Love, Ms. Jean Iaderosa, Mr. McArthur Jarrett and Mr. Bill Oakley. Many issues were discussed and the revised handbook offers some changes that center around the implementation of the new software. Mr. Habas had raised concerns over seatbelts in the subcommittee meetings, but at this time it was determined that the legal issues are greater than the scope of this handbook update. Therefore, no change has been made at this time on this issue in the handbook, but the concerns will continue to be addressed.

Mr. Oakley noted that the 10-day notice for reservations on page 5, under the section "What happens after I call to schedule a trip?" should be changed to 7-day notice in order to be consistent with the statement at the bottom of page 4. With this correction, he believes the revised manual is ready for print and distribution.

Ms. Jan Elders raised concern over the probability of getting a reservation with just 24-hour notice, and asked if such last-minute reservations should be offered if it is highly unlikely that seat is still available only 24 hours in advance.

Mr. McCampbel stated that the longer the advance time for reservations, the higher the number of cancellations. He acknowledged that those making reservations 24 hours in advance will probably be on a waiting list.

Mr. Oakley observed that the 24-hour notice for a reservation in off-peak hours is more likely to be confirmed than a reservation for peak hours. More notice would probably be needed for peak hour reservations.

Mr. McCampbel noted that the system is too small for the demand; therefore, not everyone gets their desired ride time.

Mr. Elders explained that it was not helpful to be on a waiting list. She suggested that the Handbook include some reference to a waiting list.

Mr. Jarrett pointed out the Handbook is a continuous work in progress and they will continue to address issues that arise in carrying out this para-transit service, but there is a need now to have something in place to try to address common issues.

Mr. Habas and Mr. McCampbel commented briefly on the seat belt issue. Mr. Habas' concern was that, for someone using a very heavy motorized wheelchair, the the strap across the chest/neck area, which is secured to the Teleride vehicle, is actually a danger. In an accident, he believes the chair, due to its mass, will move nevertheless, and the strap will severely injure or kill him. Mr. McCampbel noted that changing the seatbelt rule in the handbook would involve such things as liability and insurance. These are issues that require the involvement of many more people before it can be resolved. The discussion will carry on beyond the adoption of the other proposed

changes to the handbook. Mr. Habas agreed to proceed with finalizing those changes in the handbook, but wanted to go on the record as not being happy with the seatbelt rule, as it reads now.

Mr. Oakley offered Good Will Industries as a distribution center once the Handbook is published. Mr. Jarrett believes copies will be placed on the vans. Ms. Iaderosa confirmed that Chatham Area Transit (CAT) ticket centers will also be distribution centers. She also noted that it will be posted on the CAT website as a PDF and a Word document.

Mr. McCampbel referenced another correction – strike out “& Holidays” on page 4 under the category “What are the hours of operation?”.

Mr. Jarrett asked for any other corrections. Ms. Love agreed to make the changes discussed at this meeting and send a revised copy to Ms. Iaderosa for formatting and publication. Ms. Iaderosa confirmed the following formatting specifications: Font size at 16 Sans Serif Bold, double spaced, printed on both sides. It was agreed to incorporate the CAT logo on the cover page.

If there is a need, they will work on Braille editions and/or taped editions.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Teleride Handbook as amended.

ACAT action: the motion to approve the Teleride Handbook as amended carried with none opposed.

III. Status Reports

A. Call for projects for JARC and New Freedom funds

Ms. Love presented the staff report. At the last meeting in June an amendment to the TIP was approved to rollover funds for CAT. Staff put out a call for projects for the anticipated Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds and New Freedom funds. The four requests that were received are:

- #2 West Chatham Route (Crossroad Business Center portion) – CAT, request for JARC funds
- #6 Cross-town Route – CAT, request for JARC funds
- Savannah Belles Ferry Service – CAT, request for JARC funds
- Coastal Center for Developmental Services Accessible Taxi Program – CCDS, request for New Freedom funds

The Stakeholder Resource Group evaluated all four proposals against the criteria established in the Coordinated Plan and made the recommendation to grant the requested funding level to all four proposals.

Mr. Jarrett expressed concern and doubt if this call for projects was really shared with all the service agencies that may have an interest in these funds. He questioned how inclusive this process was and asked how eligibility was determined and who was contacted. Ms. Love responded that staff sent out the call for projects notice to the CUTS participation list of agencies which was recently expanded, posted it on the MPC website, and advertised in the newspaper. Ms. Iaderosa noted that the Coordinated Plan included stakeholders that were key agencies and organizations. Ms. Iaderosa recommended that MPO staff member, Ms. Wykoda Wang, be asked to summarize the efforts made at the time so that Mr. Jarrett could see that the appeal was very broad. Mr. Jarrett would like to know the criteria and the application process.

Ms. Jan Elders asked if Teleride could have applied for some of these funds. Mr. McCampbel commented that any request would have to go through the county or through CAT and not through him.

IV. Agency Reports

A. First Transit/Teleride

Mr. McCampbel passed out a statistical report for the month of July. These are the same figures he turns over to CAT each month. He noted that in July 2008 the number of rides decreased from July last year but the number of “on-time” or “early” arrivals improved since last year. The number of late trips has been dramatically reduced since July 2007. These two stats basically show a shift from quantity to quality. He has turned down ride requests in order to keep the number of late trips lower. If he accepted all requests then the number of late trips would increase. The 19 buses are aging; 9 are from 1998 and have been refurbished. The system is too small for the demand. Things are not going to improve much more until the mechanical condition improves and the system is increased.

The new software determines the routes and the pick-ups after considering all the factors – location, destination, load/unload time required. Mr. Jarrett believes the software will not be completely effective until the level of transportation equipment matches the software capabilities. Mr. McCampbel confirmed that the Teleride system is good, strong and functional. The problem is that the system is stretched because the county outgrew it three or four years ago. He needs reserve equipment as well as primary equipment. Even if everything is new, he stills needs reserve equipment.

Mr. McCampbel reported that the number of applications for service from people with intensive medical issues is increasing. Those with serious physical or mental conditions need to bring a companion rider with them. The Teleride service is not responsible for the individual once they arrive at the destination. He is seeing a mis-perception by the customers that the Teleride driver should act as a caretaker. Teleride is a public para-transit service not a private service. When he recommended that one customer needed to bring a caretaker-

rider, he was told that the customer doesn't really need all that; they only put that on the Teleride application in order to qualify.

The question was raised about whether the Teleride application is so strict that it encourages people to lie on the application in order to qualify. Mr. Jarrett suggested that the application perhaps is not strict enough, based on his own observations of able-bodied riders. A companion-rider should be mentioned at the time of the reservation. It was noted that a doctor's recommendation used to be a requirement.

B. Chatham Area Transit

Ms. Iaderosa & Ms. Love reported that CAT had sent a statistical report to MPO staff, but that Ms. Love did not have copies to distribute today. Ms. Love will e-mail it to all. Ms. Iaderosa reported that ridership has increased about 5% from July 2007 to July 2008. It is believed this increase is due to the economy and to businesses that have purchased passes for employees as an employee benefit.

Selectio of the transit center site is looking hopeful. The present Greyhound bus station would be razed and rebuilt as the new transit center which CAT would share with Greyhound. While a final decision has not yet been reached, the parties are heading in this direction.

She reported that some minor route changes will become effective on October 13, 2008. One change will be more frequent service on the Abercorn (#14) line – service every 15 minutes instead of every 20 minutes.

Mr. Jarrett asked about the status of the Travel Training program. Ms. Iaderosa responded that those who had provided the training are no longer with CAT. Mr. Habas requested that it be removed from the CAT website as a customer service.

The "Dump the Pump" campaign in April, May and June was deemed successful at re-educating the public about alternative transportation

methods. She believes there will be more such “dump the pump” days in the future.

When asked when the new bus schedule will be available, Ms. laderosa replied that individual schedules are available but the new “ride guide” will not be ready until October 13, 2008. There are schedule changes to five routes that still need board approval prior to the October 13, 2008 effective date.

Ms. laderosa offered to meet with any citizens groups to discuss CAT services.

V. Other Business

Mr. Jarrett raised a question about the consumer complaint line for Teleride. Has it been working? He noted that we have not had any report on calls in many months like we used to have. He would like statistics and/or a report at future meetings on the number and type of complaint calls that are coming to Teleride.

VI. Public Participation Opportunities

There was no public participation at this time.

VII. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the August 20, 2008 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be October 15, 2008 at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner