



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 15, 2008
The Georgia Infirmary

2:00 p.m.
1900 Abercorn St.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
James Aberson	Chatham County	x
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	
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
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	Laidlaw/Teleride	x
Laurie Monroe	Economic Opportunity Authority	
Bill Oakley	Goodwill Industries	

Greg Schroeder	United Way of the Coastal Empire	
Clealice Timmons	Coastal Center for Development Services	
Terri White	Savannah Assn for the Blind	x
<u>Voting Alternates</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Jean Iaderosa	Chatham Area Transit	x
<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Tia Baker	Teleride	x
Sean Brandon	City of Savannah	x
Eric Curl	Savannah Morning News	x
Owen Dawes	Visitor	x
Jim Gilliamsen	City of Savannah	x
Kim Harrison	Consumer Advocates	x
Vergeron Milton	Visitor	x
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind	x
Barbara Settzo	for the MPO	x

Call to Order

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the October 15, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation meeting to order followed by self-introductions by those in attendance.

I. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Jane Love noted that the final agenda was different from the preliminary agenda that had been mailed with the information packet. One status report has been removed. At Mr. Jarrett's request, Ms. Barbara Settzo 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 August 20, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.**

Ms. Settzo read the minutes from the August 20, 2008 meeting at Mr. Jarrett's request. It was then moved and seconded to approve the August 20, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.

ACAT Action: the motion to approve the August 20, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.

Mr. Jarrett introduced Mr. James Aberson, the ADA Coordinator for Chatham County, as a new committee member filling the seat for Chatham County staff.

B. **Endorsement of the Amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program for additional section 5303 transit planning funds.**

Ms. Love explained that an additional \$44,168.10 from previous fiscal years needed to be carried over to FY 2009. These funds will be divided between Transit/Para-transit Planning and the Long Range Plan. She is asking for this committee to endorse this amendment that will add these funds to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program.

It was moved and second to endorse the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program for additional section 5303 transit planning funds.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program for additional section 5303 transit planning funds carried with none opposed.

C. Approval of revisions to the Teleride Handbook

Mr. Jarrett explained that further revisions were made to the handbook in response to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recommendations. The sub-committee met on October 2, 2008, addressed these recommendations with proposed text edits, and included them in the new draft handbook.

Ms. Love summarized the six changes that were included in the draft sent to the members in the information packet. Of the six changes, five could be addressed immediately and can be adopted today. Ms. Love offered the following summary of the five proposed changes:

1. A revised policy to allow reservations to be accepted anytime on the day prior to the trip, instead of requiring requests to be at least 24 hours in advance of the trip.
2. Removal of the policy allowing \$5.00 penalty for no-shows. The revised handbook would make no statement allowing punitive charges for no-shows.
3. A revised policy that simply states that individuals can be suspended if they establish a pattern or practice of missing scheduled trips. The specific threshold of three no-show trips triggering a suspension of eligibility is proposed to be removed.
4. A revised policy that simply states suspensions of eligibility may be for a reasonable period of time. The specific period of six months for the duration of suspensions is proposed to be removed.
5. A revised policy that removes the specific time-frame of 35 days for any appeals for no-show decisions and suspensions. The revised handbook proposes no specific time limit for suspensions.

The language of these five revisions is taken straight from the FTA regulations.

The sixth policy change, which is not addressed in the revisions that ACAT is considering for approval today, concerns expanded hours on the weekends for accepting reservations. Such a policy change will involve labor costs and contracts, which affects budget. Implementing this policy change requires more than a text revision and is beyond the responsibility of ACAT. The Chatham Area Transit (CAT) Board will address this operational change.

In addition to the changes identified by FTA and required by the Department of Transportation, one additional text change is proposed at this time to reduce confusion for customers. This revision reads as follows:

Deletion of the specific information that Teleride schedules all trips “no more than three days” in advance. This detail on exactly when Teleride generates the actual schedule should not be of concern to the customers, and potentially creates confusion. Reservation time-frames and trip availability are the customers’ concerns. The information that Teleride accepts reservations from seven days prior to the trip up until the day before the trip, schedules trips in advance, and confirms pick-up times no later than 10:00 PM the day before the trip would be retained in the handbook.

Staff recommends the committee accept the revisions as stated and approve the revised handbook.

It was moved and second to approve the revised Teleride Handbook to be in compliance with the FTA recommendations.

ACAT Action: the motion to approve the revised Teleride Handbook to be in compliance with the FTA recommendations carried with none opposed.

Mr. Jarrett expressed his desire to have a discussion about the Teleride application process at some point during this meeting, specifically who it is that approves prospective customer applications.

Mr. Jarrett also questioned the effectiveness of the “complaint line” established by Teleride. He believes the line should cease operations. Ms. Love recommended further discussion of this item during the Agency Reports section of the agenda.

Mr. Jarrett confirmed with Ms. Jean Iaderosa that printing of the Teleride Handbook would now move forward. Ms. Iaderosa expects it will take 2-3 weeks for printing. It will also be sent over e-mail as a Word document and be available on the CAT website. She will forward it to Ms. Love for distribution to all on the CUTS committees.

It was asked how the FTA got involved in the handbook revisions. Ms. Iaderosa replied that Mr. Rivers received a letter from the FTA in August listing the revisions to be made in order to be in full compliance.

III. Status Reports

A. Update on Regional Meetings

Ms. Love reviewed the four regional meetings that have been held. She summarized the meetings as follows:

August 22, 2007 – various county representatives recognized the common concerns of finding new funding sources for transportation and maintaining or improving economic development, and the importance of speaking with one voice for the region.

October 24, 2007 – the group heard from the State Road and Tollway Authority regarding toll roads as a possible funding strategy for

transportation. The group also heard from the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center's implementation of the Coordinated Rural Transportation Plan.

January 30, 2008 – this was a meeting of technical staff to share information on current projects and anticipated projects, as well as a possible letter of understanding to support continued cooperation among the various counties and municipalities.

February 27, 2008 – the technical staff met again and focused on development of a regional map, a proposed work program and development of a summary of relevant state legislative topics in Georgia and South Carolina.

B. City of Savannah Accessible Taxi Ordinance

Mr. Jeff Felser, city councilman, explained to the committee that the city postponed a vote on the ordinance so that this issue could be brought before the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation for their input. Today, city officials are here to present a report on this issue and hear comments.

Mr. Sean Brandon, Director of Mobility and Parking Services presented a report on taxis and accessible taxis. Because of the large population that requires accessible transportation, the city has encouraged each of the larger taxi companies to have at least one accessible taxi in its fleet. The city currently has about 200 taxis among 50 different companies. Some are one-man operations, but some are large fleets such as Yellow Cab and Adam Cab. The initial ordinance that the city had proposed would require 1 accessible taxi for every 10 taxis in a company's fleet. Mr. Brandon said that the company owners were not pleased with that proposed ordinance since they believe compliance with the ordinance will cause them and the drivers to lose money. Some members of ACAT countered that the taxi companies need to see this as a cost of doing business in Savannah and should be reminded that a taxi license is a privilege,

not a right. Mr. Brandon reported that he is recommending a three-year phase-in of the ordinance and that the 1 to 10 ratio will be revised to 1 to 5, so that a taxi fleet should have one accessible taxi for every five taxis in the fleet. Discussion continued and included possible ways for taxi companies and taxi drivers to effect this change in a positive manner. The discussion focused on the community needs in Savannah.

This committee will be notified when the City Council will again take up this issue so that committee members can be at the Council meeting to express their concerns. Mr. Felser encouraged the members to attend because, as evidenced by the placement of the bus shelters on Bull St., when pressure is brought to bear, action does happen. It was suggested that representatives from the taxi companies and from ACAT come together to discuss the proposed ordinance prior to the City Council meeting. Mr. Jim Gilliamsen, from the City, agreed to arrange such a meeting.

Mr. Jarrett raised the issue of guide dogs, and how some taxi drivers have refused in the past to carry riders with guide dogs.

IV. Agency Reports

A. First Transit/Teleride

Mr. McCampbel distributed September 2008 statistical reports.

Mr. McCampbel spoke about the "Complaint line." It was in place when he arrived last year. The calls go to a third party call center, which then sends CJ a printed report. He, or a member of his staff, addresses all calls. He was not aware that the line is experimental or that ACAT expected a statistical report on complaint calls. Most of the complaints revolve around lack of capacity now, not the actions and attitudes of the drivers.

He reported that according to the FTA guidelines the para-transit service must cover an area $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on each side of the fixed bus routes of a community. Presently Teleride covers all of Chatham County. Demand in the coverage area has exceeded capacity, and this means that some people within the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile area may have their trip requests turned down. The CAT Board has approved a drawback of the Teleride service area to the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile limit which will be phased in. They are mapping it out and will hold a public meeting. FTA expects a certain level of effectiveness within that $\frac{3}{4}$ mile area, so Teleride and CAT must cover the nucleus of the system effectively in order to maintain funding for the entire transit system.

In response to Mr. Jarrett's comment earlier about the Teleride application process, Mr. McCampbel reported on the status of application review for Teleride service. He would like to see a review committee formed that included someone who is an ADA expert for reviewing these applications. He understands ADA, but his main focus is in transportation. Ms. Tia Baker, from Teleride, shared some application issues with the committee. Mr. Jarrett noted that the primary concern is one of eligibility. Mr. Aberson suggested that as the Manager of Teleride, Mr. McCampbel is the one who should be familiar with the governmental/ADA regulations. Mr. Aberson offered his assistance with information and training for him and his staff. Mr. McCampbel's suggestion was to have a third party – someone other than the Teleride representative and the customer – who would be perceived as impartial and independent when making qualifying decisions.

Mr. Jarrett would support an independent committee for application review but does not support this job being passed on to some other service agency. If there is a request for a committee from this committee to do this review, he is all for it. The organizations and agencies that currently provide services for people with disabilities could be included in this.

Mr. Jarrett commented on the complaint line. If it is maintained he feels strongly that it should be addressed locally, not by an out-of-state third party. The confidentiality that was sought is not happening. Ms. Iaderosa suggested that CAT may be involved. Mr. McCampbel stated that he does use his staff to research the problem and they report to him so that he can handle it. Confidentiality is important to the Teleride customers in order to prevent any retribution. In response to a question about ACAT's authority in this matter, Ms. Love replied that ACAT exists to create an environment for discussion and to make recommendations to the Policy Committee, but neither ACAT nor the Policy Committee has direct control over the operational details of Teleride. The CAT Board has that role.

B. Chatham Area Transit

Ms. Iaderosa handed out the flyer announcing the public meeting on November 6, 2008 concerning the realignment of the Teleride service area. There is not a firm date for when this change be implemented but it is expected to occur before the end of 2008. Ms. Iaderosa mentioned that the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center is involved in providing a rural transportation system. This system would serve the public as well as disabled people, and all vehicles will be accessible. One end of the trip must be in a rural area. Many of those who will be affected by the Teleride realignment should be able to use the rural transportation system.

Mr. Jarrett asked if Mr. Rivers was able to meet with him and his group of consumers. Ms. Iaderosa will check with his schedule and remind Mr. Rivers of this request for a meeting. Mr. Jarrett would like a private meeting with Mr. Rivers before any public meeting occurs with the para-transit community. Since CAT indicated they would hold a city-wide meeting, his group postponed their planned city-wide meeting.

Ms. Iaderosa will share with Mr. Rivers the importance of meeting with Mr. Jarrett prior to November 6, 2008.

V. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

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 October 15, 2008 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner