



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, February 18, 2009  
The Georgia Infirmmary

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 Infirmmary Day Center For Rehabilitation	
McArthur Jarrett	Interested Citizen	x
Robert Kozlowski	Kicklighter Resource Center	
Tom Lamar	Interested Citizen	
Jane Love	Metropolitan Planning Commission	x
Patti Lyons	Senior Citizens Savannah -Chatham Inc.	
C. J. McCampbel	Laidlaw/Teleride	x

<b>Laurie Monroe</b>	<b>Economic Opportunity Authority</b>	
<b>Bill Oakley</b>	<b>Goodwill Industries</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Greg Schroeder</b>	<b>United Way of the Coastal Empire</b>	
<b>Clealice Timmons</b>	<b>Coastal Center for Development Services</b>	
<b>Terri White</b>	<b>Savannah Assn for the Blind</b>	<b>x</b>
<b><u>Voting Alternates</u></b>	<b><u>Representing</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>
<b>Jean Iaderosa</b>	<b>Chatham Area Transit</b>	<b>x</b>
<b><u>Others Present</u></b>	<b><u>Representing</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>
<b>Michael Adams</b>	<b>MPO</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Kasim Ortiz</b>	<b>SSU Student</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Kim Harrison</b>	<b>Consumer Advocates</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Tyrone Palmer</b>	<b>National Federation of the Blind</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Joe Murray Rivers</b>	<b>Chatham Area Transit</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Barbara Settzo</b>	<b>for the MPO</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Kail Trappi</b>	<b>Teleride</b>	<b>x</b>

**Call to Order**

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the February 18, 2009 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 was sent out in advance. Endorsement of the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program was moved from Action Items to Status Reports. Also, Ms. Jean Iaderosa requested that the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update be removed from the Status Report section since it is also correctly listed as an Action Item.

It was moved and seconded to accept the revised agenda.

**ACAT Action: the motion to accept the revised agenda carried with none opposed.**

## **II. Action Items**

### **A. Approval of the October 15, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.**

Ms. Barbara Settzo read the minutes from the October 15, 2008 meeting at Mr. Jarrett's request. It was moved and seconded to approve the October 15, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes as read.

**ACAT Action: the motion to approve the October 15, 2008 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes as read carried with none opposed.**

### **B. Endorsement of the Amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program**

Ms. Love explained that the Unified Planning Work Program is the staff work program for the current fiscal year of 2009. This program was approved in May 2008 and amended in October 2008. At this time she requested the committee's endorsement to move the unobligated funds from the FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program to the FY 2009 Program. The amount to be moved is \$90,674.14 making the revised total for the FY 2009 Program \$655,751.43.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program.

**ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.**

### **C. Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update**

Ms. Iaderosa began the presentation with background information about the Paratransit Plan. The original plan was developed in 1992 and was endorsed by all four CUTS committees and the CAT Board. In 2008 the FTA informed CAT that there were certain aspects of the Teleride Handbook that were not in compliance with ADA guidelines. At that time FTA also required a full update of the 1992 plan. Many changes have occurred since the original plan was written including the service area, number of vehicles in the fleet, and improvements to vehicles. Improvements include wheelchair lifts on all buses, and LCD display and voice notification system which announces major intersections and transit points. CAT also has a website which is JAWS compatible. Bus shelters have been made accessible with rear access and curb cuts.

Also in this update is a discussion of the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center's (RDC's) rural transportation system, how CAT will work with the new system, and comments about accessible taxis. Automatic vehicle locating system, new fare boxes, new vending machines, and additional security cameras are all included in the update.

Ms. Iaderosa requested endorsement of the Update by this committee. Mr. Jarrett recommended that it not be endorsed by the committee until the committee members have the opportunity to fully review the document.

Mr. CJ McCampbel, from Teleride, continued the presentation. The updated plan includes updates on hours and service, the number of vehicles in service and any capital improvements since 1992.

Mr. Joe Murray Rivers, Interim CAT Director apologized to the group for not getting the information to the group. Ms. Love commented that the draft Paratransit Plan was provided to the committee in the

mailing last week, as a Word document over email, and as a PDF on the MPC website. She said it is understandable if members feel they needed more time than that, but she wanted to clarify that today is not the first time the document has been presented. When asked, it was confirmed that four committee members and the MPO staff had reviewed the document. Neither the Chair nor the Vice Chair had sufficient time to review the document.

Mr. Oakley asked about the urgency of this update. Mr. Rivers noted that the FTA is expecting this update by February 26<sup>th</sup>, but Mr. Rivers has some flexibility to make quick changes. They don't have a contract with Teleride nor is the RDC's rural transportation system in place yet. They are also working out technical problems with the overlay of the route match to determine the new  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile route pull back.

Mr. Oakley asked if this plan was a contractual agreement with FTA or a concept statement which CAT intends to comply with. Mr. Rivers believes that this Update will make CAT accountable to FTA, but updates to the update can be submitted annually until FTA is fully satisfied.

Mr. Oakley summarized his understanding of the issue by stating that the content of the plan is consistent with the revised handbook as proposed by this committee. He would support the plan as is currently presented.

Mr. James Aberson raised an issue with the third paragraph in the Executive Summary. This paragraph suggests that the FTA instructed CAT to pull back the Teleride service area to  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of fixed routes. Mr. Aberson believes that decision was the CAT Board's decision; a decision made in an effort to improve customer service in the core area in order to be in full compliance with FTA guidelines. Mr. Rivers confirmed that FTA is only concerned with the quality of service within the core area, and that is where the service must be in compliance. He is working to provide service to as many as possible.

Mr. Oakley suggested alternate wording for the sentence in question as follows: “The FTA’s letter already required that CAT complete an update to its Paratransit Plan and that Teleride *conform to ADA standards in customer service in the covered area.*”

Mr. Jarrett doesn’t believe this committee was allowed to participate in the development of the Update but only asked to endorse a finished product. At this point they can only offer revisions.

Mr. Jarrett asked Ms. Love to provide a copy of the Bylaws to each committee member. He would like a clear understanding of the purpose of this committee. He declined having the bylaws read at this meeting.

Mr. Aberson suggested that Mr. Jarrett review the Paratransit Plan Update prior to the Policy Committee, and then speak to the issue at that meeting. Mr. Jarrett does not feel it would be right for him to vote on the Update at the Policy Committee meeting if he is not ready to vote on it at this meeting.

Mr. Rivers will be submitting this Update after it is approved by the Policy Committee. He apologized for the untimely distribution of this Update.

Mr. Oakley recommended proceeding with approval of the Update since elements in this document have been thoroughly reviewed by the CAT Board and the County Commission as well as staff.

Ms. Iaderosa commented that annual updates were required from 1992 through 1996. In 1996 updates were no longer required which is why this revision in 2008 is being requested. Annual updates may or may not be requested when this revised plan is submitted.

Mr. Jarrett stated that he would meet with Mr. Rivers to review the document, hopefully before it is submitted to the FTA, and then bring it before the entire the committee.

Ms. Terri White does not want to delay action on this issue. She suggested revising only the Executive Summary by incorporating Mr. Oakley's suggestion.

Ms. White moved to endorse the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update with the change of language in the Executive Summary as recommended by this committee. Mr. Jeff Felser seconded the motion.

**ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update with the change of language in the Executive Summary as recommended by this committee carried with none opposed.**

### **III. Discussion Item**

#### **A. Proposal to modify ACAT Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Jarrett explained that Mr. Wayne Dawson, an ACAT committee member, is unable to attend these meeting due to other meetings he must attend at this same time. Mr. Dawson is a member of the CAT Board and is an integral member of the disability community. Mr. Jarrett believes that his presence at ACAT meetings is important, therefore he is proposing to change the ACAT meeting date in an effort to accommodate Mr. Dawson's schedule.

Ms. Love explained that as per the Bylaws, a new day and time may be recommended today and voted on at the April meeting. Any change approved would take effect in June. The April meeting would take place as per the current schedule.

**ACAT Action:** After discussion, it was decided to propose the third Monday (generally) every other month beginning in June 2009 as the new ACAT meeting date. A vote on this change will take place at the April meeting on Wednesday, April 22, 2009.

#### **IV. Status Reports**

##### **A. Amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program**

Ms. Love reported additional information has been received since the information packets were mailed out. Staff is still monitoring the emerging particulars of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and guidance on eligibility. Therefore, staff does not have specific recommendation, at this time, on which projects should be amended to the TIP. The intent is to develop a specific recommendation for amendments which will be presented to the Policy Committee next week. She invited committee members to comment today or to contact her individually after the meeting.

In order for any project to be funded it must be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This includes funding from the economic recovery act. What is being funded by regular federal funding is already in the TIP.

Ms. Love drew attention to the list of transit projects, noting that the list is not in priority order. Transit capital projects are eligible for stimulus funding. Projects included are:

- 15 new hybrid buses
- additional funding for transit station
- 5 hybrid paratransit vans
- replacement of fare boxes on all buses
- replacement of radio communication system
- video security cameras on buses & maintenance facilities



- replace bus wash facilities
- build a tire maintenance building
- build a fuel building
- repair & reconfigure paving
- administration & maintenance building repairs & modifications
- 5 hybrid shuttle buses

Mr. Rivers indicated that the transit station project may not qualify for stimulus funding. Mr. Rivers is not sure how CAT's portion of stimulus money will be finalized.

In response to a question, Ms. Love commented that the Policy Committee decides what to include in the TIP. Some funding is totally at the discretion of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO, also known as Policy Committee). The State also has some control over some of the funding and thus the MPO must coordinate with the Georgia DOT. The TIP amendment includes projects with several different funding sources.

Ms. Love pointed out that two of the City of Savannah projects that may be of special interest to ACAT members are:

- upgrading 194 intersections to pedestrian countdown signals;
- upgrading 28 intersections to audible pushbuttons.

Some other municipalities and the county have included various sidewalk and bikeway projects in their list of projects.

## **B. MPO 2009 Calendar of Activities**

Ms. Love reviewed the staff's upcoming activities for this year. Several events that happen only every few years or rarely are coinciding in this calendar year: quadrennial MPO federal certification review in March; 5-year update of the Long Range Transportation

Plan by late September; and hosting of the national conference for the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations in October.

### **C. CUTS/MPO Federal Certification Review**

Ms. Love explained that this review is conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) every four years to ensure that the MPO is conducting the transportation planning process in compliance with federal guidelines.

### **D. Long Range Transportation Plan Kick-off**

Ms. Love reported that this plan is updated every five years. Phase I, the basic update, is expected to be completed by September 2009. Phase II will include more of the desired elements, such as context-sensitive design application, after the federal deadline has been met with the basic plan.

## **V. Agency Reports**

### **A. First Transit/Teleride**

Mr. CJ McCampbel distributed two reports – the statistics for January, and comparative statistics, by category, for 2004 – 2008.

He prepared a summary of complaints received through the Complaint Line from October 2008 through to the present.

Mr. Oakley is interested in knowing of any recurring problems that have not yet been solved and if there is anything systemic that needs to be addressed. He would also like to know the volume of complaints.

Mr. Jarrett asked Mr. McCampbel to report at the next meeting with a general report, withholding any names, of the number and nature of the complaints.

Mr. Oakley commented that the number of performed trips in 2007-2008 decreased, but the number of miles driven increased. This implies that the average miles/trip is increasing. He asked if it was not the intention that the scheduling software would combine trips and reduce the average miles/trip thereby making the system more efficient. It appears that costs are escalating and the cost of the trip is escalating. Can the trip software be modified to restore more efficient performance in regard to miles/trip?

Mr. McCampbel responded that he had added two vehicles which probably contributed to the increase in miles. Combining trips also has potential to decrease number of trips. He is making an effort to get people to their destination in a more timely fashion. Miles may have increased but timeliness and quality has improved. It is all still a work in progress.

Mr. McCampbel offered a report on the review of the software overlay of fixed routes to the pending  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile limit for Teleride service. Some corrections need to be made before this can be completed. These are expected soon.

## **B. Chatham Area Transit**

Mr. Rivers reported to the committee. He is reviewing grants for bus purchases, hoping to acquire new hybrid buses for Teleride. The fixed route system expects delivery of new buses by end of 2009 or first of 2010. He plans to order more. They are reviewing the fare structure. Public hearings will be conducted on the fare structure, and he will ask this committee for input.

He told the committee that Teleride drivers are now unionized. The Teleride fare may increase at some point.

The streetcar is currently a pilot project and owned by the City of Savannah. No federal money is involved in it. When they are ready to expand the streetcar project they will bring it under Chatham Area Transit.

## **VI. Other Business**

Mr. Jarrett advised the committee that he will present a written statement to the Policy Committee as a citizen and consumer on behalf of the citizens and consumers.

## **VII. Public Participation Opportunities**

Mr. Tyrone Palmer asked about the status of the Teleride Handbook. Ms. Iaderosa replied that the Handbook is completed but completion of the route overlay for the scheduling software will determine when the revised policies go into effect. It was confirmed that if a caller makes a reservation the day before, it will be honored.

Ms. Teresa Brenner asked for a clearer statement about guaranteed rides. Ms. Iaderosa read the paragraph in question. Ms. Brenner believes the Handbook's answer is ambiguous and further believes that according to ADA requirements a ride *must* be provided. Mr. Rivers commented that if it isn't happening they will find a way to make it work. Mr. McCampbel stressed the importance of planning for future growth in the system so they are ready when it occurs.

Mr. Jarrett would like a second meeting for consumers and asked that all consumers be included, not just those within the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile limit. He does not believe the Handbook should be distributed until it is reviewed again. He believes there are things in that book that the subcommittee did not agree on when they met at Goodwill Industries to revise the Handbook. He feels certain that FTA will have issues with it, as currently written. If this Handbook is distributed in its

present condition, he will oppose it since it is not in the interest of the consumer.

Mr. Aberson commented that the issue of who is eligible to ride paratransit and the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile pullback has been discussed since October 2008. He recommends moving forward and implementing the pull back.

Mr. Rivers noted that he works for the CAT Board and must follow their instructions.

Mr. Aberson is speaking for the disabled population. If you push the issue and implement the route change, and people are unhappy, then they, as individual citizens and consumers will push the issue, and change will happen. A date has been set and he believes all parties should hold to that date.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the February 18, 2009 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be April 22, 2009 at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love  
Transportation Planner