



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION
MEETING SUMMARY**

Wednesday, June 22, 2009

1:00 p.m.

MPC Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room

112 E. State St.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
James Aberson	Chatham County	x
Teresa Brenner	Savannah Council of the Blind	
William K. Broker	Georgia Legal Service	
Wayne Dawson	Savannah-Chatham County Fair Housing Council	x
Jan Elders	Savannah-Chatham Council on Disability Issues	
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	Laidlaw/Teleride	x
Bill Oakley	Goodwill Industries	x
Greg Schroeder	United Way of the Coastal Empire	

Clealice Timmons	Coastal Center for Development Services	
Terri White	Savannah Assn for the Blind	x
Leslie Wilson	Economic Opportunity Authority	
<u>Voting Alternates</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Kim Harrison	Savannah Council of the Blind	x
Jean Iaderosa	Chatham Area Transit	x
<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Russell Jenrette	Chatham Area Transit	x
Jim King	Savannah Assn for the Blind	x
Charles Odimgbe	Chatham Area Transit	x
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind	x
Earl S. Perry	Chatham Area Transit	x
Barbara Setzso	for the MPO	x

Prior to reaching a quorum, Mr. Charles Odimgbe and his staff from Chatham Area Transit were invited to present a demonstration and explanation of the new fare boxes. A brochure about the new farebox and new procedures was distributed. The new boxes take only US currency. They do not give change but give a change card. The new fares begin on June 28th. Those who use tokens will need to exchange them for new ride cards before July 5th. After July 5th you may still use tokens, but you will need to add money. Tokens have been replaced with a 10-ride and 20-ride card which can be purchased at McAlpin Square, Oglethorpe Mall, and Walmart on US 17 in addition to the CAT office. More vending machines at more locations are expected. You may also purchase a 7-day pass or a 31-day pass. The 20-ride card will show a balance as rides are used. The 7-day and 31-day passes are date stamped and can be used for unlimited rides during that 7-day or 31-day period, but there is a 15-min "dead zone" which prevents the card from being used on the same bus for more than one ride during a 15 minute period. A new pass must be validated the first time you use it. This activates the

card for future rides. Change cards do not expire and show a current change balance on the card.

Mr. James Aberson asked if the cards were in Braille or were equipped with some other tactile identifier to assist the sight-impaired population. Currently, they do not except for one cut-off corner, but CAT officials will look into that issue. The vending machines will have Braille and audio features.

Ms. Terri White asked how many cards were necessary for a parent and child traveling together. If the parent has a 10-ride or 20-ride card it can be used for both parent and child. If the parent has a 7-day or 31-day pass, that pass cannot be used for both parent and child traveling together.

Call to Order

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the June 22, 2009 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation meeting to order followed by self-introductions by those in attendance.

I. Approval of Agenda

It was moved and seconded to accept the agenda as presented.

ACAT Action: the motion to accept the agenda as presented carried with none opposed.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of the April 22, 2009 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.

Ms. Barbara Settzo read the minutes from the April 22, 2009 meeting at Mr. Jarrett's request. It was moved and seconded to approve the

April 22, 2009 minutes of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.

ACAT Action: the motion to approve the April 22, 2009 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of the FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program

Ms. Jane Love reported that this item had been endorsed at the last ACAT meeting but had not been approved by the CORE Board in April because comments from federal agencies did not arrive in time to be addressed in the document. Those comments have since arrived and have been addressed. There were also some minor funding adjustments, based on information received since April, which are now reflected in the budget tables. Staff is seeking endorsement of the document with these new inclusions.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.

C. Endorsement of the following amendments to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan:

- **New rail tie-in to the Georgia Ports Authority Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility**
- **Amendments to PI 522870, PI 0002922, PI 0008840 and PI 0009314 (projects related to SR204)**
- **Addition of Interstate 3 to the illustrative projects listing**

Ms. Love explained each requested amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. The first one refers to a rail tie-in to be funded with the Port's federal earmark and the Port's own funds. The project is mostly on Port property, with some portions on property currently owned by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) or Georgia Power. Staff sees no negative impact from this project and it should improve efficiency of freight movement.

The second amendment is about changing the project description for four improvement projects related to SR 204. GDOT would like to proceed with an interchange project at King George Blvd and SR 204, but in order to do that the project description must be changed in the Long Range Transportation Plan from a widening project to an interchange project. This permits the short-range interchange project to move forward. The other project numbers refer to a corridor study and a project for grade improvements.

The third amendment is being requested so that the Federal Highway Administration can access funds for the study of a possible Interstate highway. There is no money funded for construction; just funding for the study. Ms. Love reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee recommended that the Long Range Transportation Plan amendment be a corridor project that may be either highway or rail.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the three amendments to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the three amendments to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan carried with none opposed.

D. Amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program

- **Addition of CAT Transit Center project**
- **Addition of new rail tie-in to the GPA Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility**

Ms. Love reported that CAT has applied for both the stimulus discretionary grant and an earmark for the Transit Center construction. Neither funding source is certain, but they would like this project in the TIP in case inclusion in the TIP is a requirement for receiving funding.

The second amendment refers to the same rail tie-in that this committee approved for inclusion into the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the two amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Plan.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the two amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Plan carried with none opposed.

E. Endorsement of MPO priorities for development of the FY 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Love noted that this committee endorsed this item at their April meeting, but the Policy Committee did not act on it in April. Normally the MPO adopts a new TIP annually in or before June, to coordinate with the state DOT, even though each TIP is good for four years. This year GDOT will request new TIPs from the MPOs later in the year, since the current focus is on authorizing the ARRA projects. In the meantime, MPO staff decided to continue accepting comments on priorities for the new TIP. If this committee has no further comments to add, Ms. Love recommended re-affirming their endorsement from April.

On behalf of the committee, the chairman re-affirmed the committee's endorsement from April.

III. Status Reports

A. Development of the CORE Connections 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Ms. Love presented an update. There was a stakeholder meeting on June 1st and a public meeting on June 2nd to collect public comments on goals for the CORE Connections 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. The next step will be to come up with the objectives and to continue working with GDOT on the travel demand model. This model projects vehicle congestion. The next public and stakeholder meetings will be on July 21st and July 22nd where they will be focusing on priorities for funding.

IV. Agency Reports

A. First Transit/Teleride

Mr. CJ McCampbel distributed reports of monthly statistics for May 2009. He reported that the policy for a 7-day reservation window went into effect on May 24. In May they had to turn down 11 requests for rides outside the core area. There were not a lot of complaints on the complaint line, but he shared a few with the committee. Mr. McCampbel reported that they are still serving the Tier 2 area on a stand-by basis.

Mr. McCampbel shared the results of a meeting that included County Commission Chairman Liakakis, the regional VP for First Transit, the CAT Director Mr. Odimgbe, and Mr. McCampbel. The County Commissioners are very concerned with maintaining service outside of the core area. This meeting was an opportunity to explain where Teleride is at this time and how paratransit operates. They also talked about the 1998 contract which has run its course. They discussed the changes that have occurred since 1998 and how the service that everyone wants cannot be achieved because of these changes –changes such as the increased demand, the increase in

population, condition of the fleet, and lack of a long range contract with the service provider. They also discussed what it would take to get the needed vehicles and the importance of sticking to the Federal Transit Administration's guidelines of servicing the core area first.

Mr. McCampbel reported that there is a special TIGER grant which can be used to purchase hybrid buses. CAT has put in for 15 hybrid paratransit vehicles. This request is in process.

The camera security system for the buses was approved. The order will be placed soon with installation in a couple of months. Camera systems are mobile so they can be refitted on new buses.

The new fare increase from \$1.20 to \$1.80 will go into effect on June 28, 2009.

The policy handbook is being distributed. They are available from drivers, at senior centers, and at the CAT office. Mr. Jarrett requested the handbook be more widely distributed. Website and senior centers is not enough. He wants them placed on the vans.

Mr. Jarrett objected to a fare increase going into effect when service is still unsatisfactory. He doesn't believe the paratransit fare increase has to go into effect at the same time as the CAT fare increase.

In response to a concern about the heavy demand placed on the vans because they are serving those outside the core area, Mr. McCampbel reported that all but two of the vans are past their useful life. He confirmed that the core area is serviced first and that all efforts are directed at the core area.

Ms. Jean Iaderosa added that the New Freedom funding was approved for accessible taxis and for the Georgia Coastal Regional Development Center's project to provide a paratransit service outside the core area. CAT is now working with them to get this service operating.

Mr. McCampbel confirmed that both the point of origin and the point of destination must be within the core area to qualify for service.

Email blasts, signs in the vans, and publications such as newspapers were suggested as methods of notifying people of the new handbook. It was noted that the consumer also has the responsibility to ask for the handbook.

Mr. Oakley suggested that measureable criteria need to be established if we want to hold Teleride service to a higher standard. There needs to be a clear definition of “acceptable service”. He also noted that the fare increase should help in freeing up some financial resources.

When Mr. McCampbel confirmed that the fare increase would be effective on June 28th, Mr. Jarrett repeated his statement that a fair increase now, when service is so unacceptable, is unfair to the consumer.

B. Chatham Area Transit

Ms. Jean Iaderosa reported that fare boxes are being installed in all buses now and fare increase will be effective on June 28th. The farebox brochure will be put on the CAT website in a Word document format.

CAT had a “fare free” day on June 18 to promote alternative means of transport.

CAT is setting up a system for consumers to pay for fare media with credit or debit cards. This feature should be available in the near future.

Ms. Iaderosa reported that new hybrid buses are arriving in late 2009 or early 2010. Also, the county is in negotiations with Veolia to firm up the contract with the transportation firm.

V. **Other Business**

There was no other business at this time.

VI. **Public Participation Opportunities**

Mr. Tyrone Palmer asked if they will be able to hear and/or recognize the new hybrid buses as they approach a stop or travel along the route. Ms. Iaderosa will look into that and report. She confirmed that they do beep when the door opens. Mr. Jarrett asked if the current buses have external audio or only interior audio. Ms. Iaderosa was under the impression that the voice announcement was external and internal, but Mr. Jarrett believes if that is so then it is not loud enough. Ms. Iaderosa will look into this issue and report.

VII. **Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the June 22, 2009 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned. **The next meeting will be MONDAY, August 24, 2009 at the MPC Hearing Room at 1:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner