



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

**Monday, August 24, 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	x
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	x
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	x

**Greg Schroeder**  
**Clealice Timmons**  
**Terri White**

**United Way of the Coastal Empire**  
**Coastal Center for Development**  
**Services**  
**Savannah Assn for the Blind**

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
<b>Kim Harrison</b>	<b>Savannah Council of the Blind</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Charles Odimgbe</b>	<b>Chatham Area Transit</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Tyrone Palmer</b>	<b>National Federation of the Blind</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Barbara Setzto</b>	<b>for the MPO</b>	<b>x</b>

## **Call to Order**

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the August 24, 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 June 22, 2009 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.**

Ms. Barbara Setzto read the minutes from the June 22, 2009 meeting at Mr. Jarrett's request. It was moved and seconded to approve the June 22, 2009 minutes of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Meeting Minutes.

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

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

- **Modification to project information for PI#522920 Back River Bridge Replacement**
- **Addition of CAT Ferry Boat (ARRA Ferry Boat Discretionary Award)**

Ms. Jane Love reported that the original concept plan for the Back River Bridge was to be a 4-lane bridge replacement. This bridge needs to be replaced due to its deficiency rating. Since the SC Department of Transportation does not have plans to widen US 17, GDOT decided to replace the existing bridge with a 2-lane bridge, with the possibility of building another parallel 2-lane bridge at a later date, to eventually provide four lanes. The description in Transportation Improvement Program needs to be consistent with the 2-lane concept. The concept includes bikeable shoulders which can be used by cyclists, thus accommodating the East Coast Greenway and the Coastal Georgia Greenway.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the modification to the project information for PI#522920 Back River Bridge replacement.

**ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the modification to the project information for PI#522920 Back River Bridge replacement carried with none opposed.**

Ms. Love reported that CAT has received \$1,000,000 ARRA Ferry Board Discretionary Award to purchase an additional ferry boat. This

needs to be in the Transportation Improvement Program in order to access the funds. This ferry would be larger and would replace the old catamaran-style ferry. It was confirmed that this project is fully funded, and there is no customer fare to use the ferry system.

It was moved and second to endorse the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the addition of the CAT ferry boat funded by ARRA Ferry Boat Discretionary Award.

**ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the addition of the CAT ferry boat funded by ARRA Ferry Boat Discretionary Award carried with none opposed.**

At the request of Mr. Charles Odimgbe, from CAT, the agenda was modified to discuss CAT/Teleride issues at this time. Mr. Jarrett had asked the CAT Director to attend this meeting to discuss concerns regarding the paratransit service. Mr. Jarrett is also concerned with safety issues revolving around the poor operating condition of many vehicles in the current paratransit fleet. Since he has not seen any resolution to his repeated requests, Mr. Jarrett feels compelled to seek a full federal examination of the paratransit service in Chatham County, and as a citizen, a consumer, and an advocate he intends to pursue it. He thinks outside intervention has now become the only way to achieve the needed improvements.

Mr. Odimgbe is aware of the problems and indicated that his staff is trying to resolve issues. He reported that 6 new paratransit buses have been ordered and should be available in 4 or 5 months. Mr. Odimgbe stated that the answer is the same whether federal agencies intervene or not; funding is the main issue. CAT has applied for the TIGER grant for the purchase of 18 new vehicles.

Mr. Jarrett believes that federal intervention may result in the provision of alternatives. He also believes more needs to be corrected than just having a full fleet. He cited inoperable lifts and

inadequate ventilation as two examples of safety concerns. Mr. Jarrett is concerned about CAT's continued paratransit service to the Tier 2 customers (outside core service area) and the effect it has on Tier 1 customers (within core service area). Mr. Jarrett wants the CAT Board to take the responsibility to address and correct these issues.

Mr. Odimgbe confirmed that if they get the 18 new vehicles they would have an entirely new fleet, but it will take at least a year to get these vehicles into service.

Mr. James Aberson asked about the changes in the Waters Ave. bus route. He is concerned about the plan to drop many of the stops. He asked CAT to communicate with this committee in advance when they are considering such major route changes in the future so that this committee can offer input from the disabled consumers' point of view. Mr. Odimgbe agreed.

Changes to the Abercorn route would be an increase in frequency, not a change in the location of stops.

### **III. Status Reports**

#### **A. CORE Connections 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Draft**

Ms. Love presented an update noting that progress has been made since June. There has been another round of public workshops. Work now is concentrated on the Framework Plan. The committee was sent the Executive Summary of the plan for their review, but at the meeting she distributed the full Chapter 8 of the plan, which includes proposed project lists. Ms. Love pointed out the transit projects listed. These projects come from the 2008 CAT Transportation Development Plan. Ms. Love referred to the projects listed in table 8.5 on page 7 of Chapter 8 as follows:

- Route 13 – Coffee Bluff: Shorten route & increase headway

- Route 17 – Silk Hope/Savannah Outlet Center – Expand night & weekend hours of operation
- Route 24 – SSU/Wilmington Island – Expand night & weekend hours of operation
- Route 3A & 3B – Augusta Ave/Garden City – Expand night & weekend hours of operation
- Route 6 – Crosstown – Expand services along route
- Route 14 – Abercorn – Improve punctuality & expand hours of operation

After the Framework Mobility Plan is adopted in September, staff will be developing a more detailed plan on several aspects of the entire plan, including a transit vision plan, a complete streets element to roadway projects and a bicycle/pedestrian plan. This detailed plan is called the Total Mobility Plan.

Ms. Teresa Brenner asked about improvements to Route 30 (to Georgia Regional). Ms. Love confirmed that it was not on the list for proposed improvements in the draft long range plan. Ms. Brenner requested that consideration be given to increased frequency and expanded hours of operation for this route.

Mr. Oakley would like to see expanded hours of operation for service to the islands. The current schedule does not help commuters.

Ms. Love noted that her report today is for information and to collect any comments from individuals. The comment period continues until September 10<sup>th</sup> and comments may be directed to any of the MPO staff. There will be a public hearing at the CORE Board on August 26<sup>th</sup>. The CORE Board will meet again on September 17<sup>th</sup> to vote on adopting the Framework Mobility Plan. There will be another public hearing at that meeting

#### **IV. Agency Reports**

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

Mr. C.J. McCampbel distributed his monthly report. He reported that the new vans have been ordered and should arrive in the about 4 to 5 months. He explained that even though the CAT board had approved the purchase, the request had to be submitted to Federal Transit Administration for grant approval.

The security cameras are here and ten buses are equipped at this time. Staff has used them and changes have been implemented based on information gathered from the cameras.

During these hot summer days, he is making every effort to keep the buses' air conditioning systems operating by rotating the buses so that the systems are not overloaded.

Mr. McCampbel announced that he is relocating to Colorado to take a position in transit there, and this will be his last meeting with ACAT.

He noted that short-term contracts with paratransit operators will not bring about the commitment necessary to affect the needed changes. The contract between First Transit and the County expires on December 31, 2009. Teleride's customer base is going to keep growing even if there is no further population growth in the county, because, at any time, circumstances may cause additional individuals to need this transportation assistance. Also, as the population ages, more and more current residents are going to need the services of Teleride in the near future.

Mr. Aberson referred committee members to the Federal Transportation Administration's website, and particularly to the paratransit section where there is a quote about paratransit being designed as a safety net for the public transit system and not as a comprehensive transportation system for people with disabilities.

## **B. Chatham Area Transit**

Mr. Timamu Hakim reported that October 12, 2009 is the next board change for CAT. A board change is an opportunity for the bus operator to make changes to the bus routes. At this time improvements will be made to the #14 Abercorn route. The new schedule will include 15 minute headway between buses during the peak morning hours of 6:20 – 9:20 AM and afternoon hours of 2:20 – 6:20 PM. During the off-peak hours, the headway will be 30 minutes. All buses on the route will service Rose of Sharon apartments between 8:00 AM – 8:20 PM; both outbound and inbound. There will also be additional service to Phillips Winters apartments on the outbound buses between 9:25 AM – 5:15 PM.

Mr. Hakim reported that they are working on a new route called the Community Coach which will replace what is currently known as the “Kroger Route.” He reported that the DOT shuttle and CAT shuttle are being combined into one route. This will not be effective until the Community Coach route is operating.

He reported that new shelters have been installed and reported future shelter locations. New shelters have solar powered lighting, but the total percentage of shelters with solar powered lighting is very small.

When asked about new routes, Mr. Hakim replied that CAT plans to review all routes and propose changes. They are investigating bus service to the Amtrak station. Amtrak requested this.

They are considering changes in the shelter design so that new shelters will meet with the approval of GDOT for placement at currently restricted areas.

He will notify this committee of any future route changes.



V. **Other Business**

There was no other business at this time.

VI. **Public Participation Opportunities**

There were no other public comments at this time.

VII. **Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the August 24, 2009 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be MONDAY, October 19, 2009 at the MPC Hearing Room at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love  
Transportation Planner