

CITIZENS TRANSIT ADVISORY GROUP (CTAG)
Meeting Summary
May 18, 2010
DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Present: Tom Cox, CTAG Co-Chair
Gerald Fox, CTAG Co-Chair
Mary Barker, Town of Cornelius
Craig Lewis, Town of Davidson
Henry Antshel, City of Charlotte
Robert Bischoff, Mecklenburg County
Jonathan P. Goldberg, City of Charlotte
George Sottilo, Town of Matthews
Todd Steiss, Town of Huntersville

Staff: Wanda Braswell, John Trunk, Larry Kopf, Danny Rogers, Tina Votaw, John Muth, Dee Pereira

Meeting time 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Gerald Fox, CTAG Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

II. Approval of April 20, 2010 meeting summary

The meeting summary was approved as written.

III. Action Items

NONE

IV. Information Items

A. Sustainability Policy

Tina Votaw

The City's Sustainability Policy was adopted in 2009. The policy was created to provide guidelines for incorporating sustainable features during the design and construction of future City facilities and renovation projects of 5,000 square feet or more. The Policy is checklist based, using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles and concepts and incorporates the Council's six environmental focus priorities. The policy does not mandate every building be LEED certified. A cost analysis will be completed as part of the staff review process. An oversight team will review and monitor the projects' annual submissions to insure the adherence of the policy.

CATS will look for opportunities to incorporate sustainable features into the future Red Line stations, the Park and Ride lots, and the Blue Line Extension. Solar panels are being considered for the roof of the South Tryon building to generate power. The North Davidson renovation was

scored via LEED. It scored approximately 37 points of the possible 40 points. This project is not seeking LEED certification but there was interest in seeing how it fared within the LEED rating system. The future STS facility is a new construction allowing for a number of sustainable and cost effective features. Lighting is a big cost, i.e. Park and Rides and the I-485 parking deck. The installation of LED fixtures is being considered to reduce cost. Even in the janitorial services, CATS is encouraging the vendors to use “green” products.

Discussion

Mr. Cox commented that the airport was opening bids next week for solar project and said economically, CATS should piggyback. Mr. Muth said that CATS is utilizing the advisement from the same consultants on the reliability of using solar panels. Mr. Cox asked what would be done with the power generated at the South Tryon building. Ms. Votaw said that this was being studied as to whether the energy would be used on site or if there would be enough generated to sell back. Ms. Barker asked about using recycle concrete and gravel at the Park and Rides. Ms. Votaw said that recycled concrete was used as the sub-base at the park and rides, but that gravel is not ADA compliant as a finish material. From a customers’ perspective, asphalt is the more attractive parking lot covering. Mr. Antshel asked if a policy was in place that reviews the economic benefits for going with LEED and if there were consultants involved in the process. Ms. Votaw said that a part of our policy is to complete a cost analysis that includes looking at the initial cost of the material as well as its operational savings over the building’s life cycle. Ms. Votaw stated that staff would complete the analysis with the assistance of consultants who would be involved in the design of a particular building or facility moving forward. Mr. Fox asked if any standards are established concerning the cost ratio, i.e. analysis determine that \$100,000 cost but only save \$2,000 annually. Ms. Votaw said the cost analysis will be performed on a case by case basis.

B. Blue Line Extension (BLE) Update

Danny Rogers

The Blue Line Extension has completed 30 percent of design along with all surveys, geo-technical work and the environmental analysis and have received the donation of the right of way along the UNCC campus. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the planning document required on all major federal funded projects. It explains the purpose and need of the project, identifying the entire project’s effects; positive and negative. The EIS is scheduled for submission to the FTA in June 2010. In September 2010, MTC will have a public hearing to incorporate public and FTA comment into document.

The combination of the South Corridor’s ridership figures and the BLE ridership projections revealed the need to have three-car trains for more capacity. To accommodate the three-car trains, the South Corridor’s platforms will need to increase to 276 feet and have additional sub-stations to increase power. Staff has requested FTA to allow CATS to add the South Corridor upgrade to the BLE and should receive their decision in June 2010. If FTA approves, staff will then ask the MTC at the June meeting for their approval. With FTA’s and MTC’s approval, the South Corridor platform designs would have to be brought up to a 65 percent level and have a reevaluation of the EIS. If the final design for both corridors receives approval, the preliminary engineering contract will need amending to include the South Corridor retrofit. CATS will need to seek City Council approval for the STV contract amendment.

Discussion

Mr. Bischoff asked if it was correct that the cost estimate for the BLE is over a billion dollars and if it includes the retrofit of the South Corridor. Mr. Rogers said that the cost estimate was the 15 percent cost estimate under the original schedule with a completion date of 2016 and inflated to just over a billion. It does not include the South Corridor. Mr. Antshel asked if there are other documents besides the EIS that need to be reviewed by agencies. If so, are there state or local agencies in the review process. Mr. Rogers said that the EIS is the federal document required for the project and that after the document is submitted for FTA's review, it is then submitted to the state and local agencies for review. Mr. Antshel asked if public meetings have been conducted. Mr. Rogers said that there have been numerous meetings, letters and contact with the public along the route with information concerning the rail and testing. Mr. Steiss asked about developers' interest in the project. Ms. Rogers said that because of the economy CATS is not seeing much growth right now. Mr. Steiss asked if it is thought that once the EIS is approved will developers be more open to purchase land for development. Mr. Muth said most developers purchased early. Mr. Fox asked about Siemens contract and the life of contract. Mr. Muth said that four additional vehicles were purchased through the Siemens contract but that contract has expired. Mr. Bischoff commented that the South Corridor signaling system had problems and asked if a different signal system is being considered. Mr. Rogers said that LTK, Inc., an engineering firm, was asked to look at the system and the plans. The South Corridor signaling system will probably not be replaced but the problems and issues observed are being addressed in the BLE to reduce reoccurrences.

Mr. Fox asked Mr. Cox to report on the MTC meeting. Mr. Cox said that the members were mainly interested in the smart phone technology. Mr. Muth said that MTC approved the full 25 cent fare increase effective July 1 and approved reducing County DSS fund to \$500,000 this year and phasing it out the following year while assisting them in locating federal programs to help subsidize the program.

V. Chief Executive Officer's Report

John Muth

A. Ridership

The month of April ridership for all services was up three percent compared to April 2009 but down approximately eight percent from last year. Ridership for NRA convention and the Ultra Swim was approximately 57,000 riders for a three day period.

B. May 24, 2010 Washington, DC

Ms. Flowers, Mr. Muth, Mayor Woods, Mayor Swain and Carroll Gray met with the FTA and FRA to discuss the North Corridor.

Discussion

Mr. Antshel asked if the train wraps for the Bobcats proved to be successful. Mr. Muth said yes. There were no issues with putting on or taking the wraps off. The trains were rented for \$6,000 for one week because the Bobcats did not advance, the wraps were removed.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

NEXT CTAG MEETING: TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 2010, 7:30 A.M.

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