

CITIZENS TRANSIT ADVISORY GROUP (CTAG)
November 15, 2011
Meeting Summary

Present: Mary Barker, CTAG Co-Chair
Todd Steiss, Town of Huntersville
C. Morgan Edwards, CMS
Henry Antshel, City of Charlotte
George Sottilo, Town of Matthews
John Phillips, Town of Davidson
Katherine (Kate) Payerle, City of Charlotte
Rob Watson, Mecklenburg County
Rhonda Odom, Mecklenburg County

Staff: Pamela White, John Muth

Meeting time 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Mary Barker, CTAG Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 7:29 a.m.

II. Approval of October 18, 2011 meeting summary

The meeting summary was approved as written.

III. Countywide Transit Service Plan

Pamela White

The Countywide Transit Service Plan is a five-year plan developed to monitor transit trends for the purpose of maintaining a balance between the level of service and the level of demand. The plan affects only the bus services.

A set of guiding principles was used in reviewing all current bus routes to determine their operating efficiency. The guiding principles used included matching service routes with demand, aligning existing routes with the Blue Line Extension (BLE) and streamlining existing corridors and improve the cross-town connections.

The technical and steering committees developed for the research were instrumental in obtaining, analyzing and providing information used to streamline existing service. Route 8/34 will be changed creating a more efficient, streamlined service. Currently, the route is a one way trip making the travel time long. Passengers want a more direct route to uptown. Lacking consistent demand and to offer a more efficient service, specific sections of the route will be discontinued with travel alternatives. Though some passengers will experience a long walk the sections being discontinued offers faster travel time to uptown.

Route 9 service level does not match the demand level. Central Avenue route buses are at capacity and have passed waiting passengers. To eliminate the passing issue, CATS wants to

implement a “sprinter” type service that will run with the existing service. The local bus service would make all the regular stops with the sprinter service making pickups at designated bus stops. The Central Avenue sprinter buses and bus shelters will be distinguish by different coloring from the regular local service.

Route 64X and 65X require route changes due to the 2012 Independence Boulevard construction project. The BJ’s Park and Ride will not be available during the construction and CATS must find another Park and Ride location. The proposed plan is for Route 64X to travel Independence Boulevard nonstop until reaching the Monroe Road turnoff.

The Village Rider, Routes 97, 98 and 99, will have a couple of small route sections discontinued in order to streamline the service. A customer in a discontinued area can called for transportation/pickup if he or she lives $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the fixed route. For pickup service, there is a qualifying process that will be initiated at the time of the first pickup request. The pickup area will be evaluated by a supervisor for the bus mobility and all possible stops are accessible. Only passengers not living on a fixed route can reserve pickup. Huntersville Township asked that more notification of the routes’ discontinued sections be publicized.

Highway 51 route is a new route servicing Highway 51, the Arboretum, Providence Road and the I-485 Station; should be available in 2013. The route travel time from end to end would be approximately 30 minutes if two buses are used. If the route runs only one bus, the service time will be hourly. To implement enhancements to the route, CATS wants to use Park and Ride public/private partnerships to enhance the service.

The route changes will be presented at the January 2012 MTC meeting.

Discussion

Mr. Antshel asked what are the public/private park and ride partnership obstacles. Ms. White said having people understand the partnerships responsibilities. CATS have had great success with park and rides at churches. Mr. Muth said some churches designate specific parking spaces for the Park and Ride program.

Mr. Antshel asked how the route changes were being funded. Ms. White said that CATS is utilizing money saved from previous projects and grants.

IV. Re-cap of October 27 Red Line Task Force

Mary Barker

NCDOT hired a consultant group, Greenleaf Strategies, to assist in finding ways to fund the Red Line project. Greenleaf Strategies recommendation is to change the vision of the project from a commuter rail only project to a commuter/freight rail line project. The Red Line project could implement the same strategy used by Virginia, California and Texas rail lines. The commuter rail lines would operate during the day with the freight rail line operating in the evening/nighttime hours. At the December MTC meeting, Greenleaf Strategies will make a presentation regarding their recommendations for funding the Red Line and other available options to be considered.

Discussion

Mr. Steiss said the Red Line Task Force presentation was good but there are many variables and there is a need to get the support of surrounding towns in the type of project. Ms. Barker said she heard concerns about the train whistles disturbing the surrounding neighborhoods. There is concern about the creation of the rail authority and surrounding towns not having a voice in the rail operation of service.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 a. m.

NEXT CTAG MEETING: JANUARY 17, 2012 7:30 A.M.