

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
Thursday March 10, 2011

PRESENT: Rick Sanderson, Charlotte
Dee Evans, Charlotte
Terry Lansdell, Charlotte
Scott Jernigan, Charlotte
George Schaeffer, Charlotte
WALTER HORSTMAN, MATTHEWS
MARVIS HOLLIDAY, VAN POOL
CHRISTINE BRYANT, HUNTERSVILLE
ROB CORNWELL, DAVIDSON
MARVIS HOLLIDAY, VAN POOL

STAFF: Theron Barrio, Duretta Weicken, Larry Kopf, Kirk Scott, Paulus Ford, Judy Dellert-OKeef, Larry Kopf, Patrick Hoskins, Joe Womer, Vince Brown, Gary Lee, Olaf Kinard, Shannon Dabney

MEETING TIME: 4:00-5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Approval of the January and February Meeting Summaries

Chairman Rick Sanderson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., the January and February meeting summaries were approved as written.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items:

There was no comment from the public.

III. Information Items:

A. CEO and the State of CATS

Carolyn Flowers

Carolyn Flowers CEO of CATS spoke with the committee about the state of CATS explaining the challenges of the past year have been an impact to CATS due to the economic climate and CATS has had to determine how to sustain the transit system with the impacts. Carolyn explained that the revenue projections were in a shortfall of about a half a billion dollars leaving CATS to operate a 2008 level of service on 2005 revenue levels., CATS must

determine how to sustain the level of service we have, keep the system in a state of good repair and provide riders with the same or better level quality of service in the future with a need to continue to attract riders while trying to control costs throughout the system. Carolyn assured the committee that CATS will continue to search for options to expand while optimizing resources.

Terry Lansdell asked if CATS has considered using parking decks as a source of revenue for the North Corridor line. Carolyn stated CATS will be looking more at special events and is considering wrapping parking and the event into a package so ridership is not affected. Since CATS has some underutilized parking lots, CATS has also considered using a portion of certain lots like 485 parking deck as reserved parking spaces so that if people that are regular riders are willing to pay a premium to assure parking is available when they arrive. CATS' has also considered the use of some of the mid town lots for other revenue opportunities. CATS will continue to look for revenue options.

Terry asked if funding sources for the North Corridor Red Line has been discussed or resolved in some way. Carolyn stated the state of North Carolina is in the process of hiring a consultant to develop a relationship with the Northern towns to now discuss the local options for funding the Corridor. Also CATS has hired Jeffrey Parker Consultants to develop the financial plan to submit to the Federal Transit Administration with our application for the full funding agreement for the Blue Line. Jeffrey Parker will also help with Public Private Partnerships to keep the North Corridor Red Line moving forward by developing finance plans.

Rick asked if North Carolina could get some of the 2.4 billion dollar grant money that was turned down by Florida. Carolyn stated the Secretary of Transportation and the FTA Administrator were here in Charlotte making plans to reallocate the funds. Secretary of North Carolina Department of Transportation stated the State was in negotiations with Norfolk Southern railroad for 45 million dollars of the grant funds which would possibly open additional allocation, which Charlotte is hoping to get some of those dollars for the Gate way project.

B. Service Change

Larry Kopf

Larry Kopf Chief Operations Officer gave a preview of the FY2011 June Service Change stating CATS was making time adjustments reviewing high ridership routes and reviewing public requests. Changes include an extension of the Gold Rush Red Line, Route 235 Jackson Park, extending Route 235 to New Bern Station connecting to the Rail Line and Route 51X Idlewild reduction in number of trips.

Scott Jernigan asked if the new schedule times are extended for the Red Line could the printed schedules to be designated times so people could connect with the buses. Larry state CATS is looking into that.

Walt Horstman asked if there had been an increase in ridership since the Red line had been extended to UNCC. Larry stated there has been an increase in ridership but it is expected to increase during the summer months.

Dee Evans stated there is a daycare center scheduled to go in the building on Amay and wondered if CATS was aware of that. Larry stated CATS was not aware of the daycare center but will look into it.

Terry asked if there was a lot of reverse commute on the Idlewild route. Patrick Hoskins stated there is no reverse commute on that route.

George Schaeffer asked how changes to trips are determined. Larry stated CATS looks at ridership on each of the trips with the goal to keep the trips with higher ridership then build other trips around those trips.

Scott asked if there were any changes to route 3 and 23 if any. Larry stated there would be some tweaking of time at the time points.

Scott asked if CATS has ever thought of using articulate double sized buses. Larry stated CATS had looked into the articulate buses but found there are laws that restricts the buses to 40 feet.

Christine Bryant asked where the higher ridership on the 77X comes from. Larry stated it is the combination of the demise of the Mooresville express and the higher gas prices. Rob Cornwell stated that most of the Mooresville riders ride the earlier buses.

Larry stated the final proposal for the June service change will come back to TSAC as an action item in April

C. Effect of Potential Rising Fuel Costs

Larry Kopf

Larry Kopf reviewed CATS fuel consumption by month showing the effect fuel costs when it goes over the projected budget. To compensate for budget falls, CATS must find way to conserve. CATS implemented the Idling policy to help conserve consumption, running Holiday service verses weekday service and reducing other costs such as workers compensation, freezing maintenance positions, printing and publishing, uniforms, and limiting travel and training. While budget remains tight, CATS maintains it goal to retain existing service levels by moving service to where it is mostly needed. CATS will continue to monitor the sales tax receipts and continue to look at CATS operation.

Carolyn gave an explanation of a news article about the cost per hour for rail operations saying when looking at dollars per hour it does not actually show how many riders you are serving so to get a good idea of cost one should look at cost per passenger. Carolyn assured the committee that CATS rail service cost is below average according to the national transit database.

Walter asked when the next fare increase is scheduled. Larry state the next fare increase will be a year from this coming July which will be CATS 2013 budget.

V. Service Issues

All

Scott explained his experience riding a route that circled around before it went uptown and wondered if the route would be changed. Larry stated the route is a transit dependent neighborhood so CATS won't change that route before there was a public meeting about it.

Rob explained on February 14 he received bad bus service, saying three buses did not come and one started going out of the way to start the route. Carolyn stated there had been a couple of new operator classes and also it could have been someone on the extra board. Rob suggested the operator make an announcement when a mistake has occurred and that the mistake is being corrected. Larry stated it is OK for passengers to voice the operator back to the correct route.

Marvis Holliday stated at the East/West rail station there needed to be better signage as to where people could park during the evening as cars were being towed in that area. Larry stated he would look into adding signage at the East/West station for other parking options along the light rail line.

Walt reported some of the express route buses dome lights are not working and the bus operator stated the switch was on but the lights were not working on one side and wondered if it was an electrical problem. Larry stated yes there could be a problem with the switch if the operated stated the switch was on and staff would need the bus number to check it out.

VI. Chairman's Report

Terry Lansdell

Co-Chair Terry Lansdell gave an update of the February MTC meeting stated the committee reviewed the Financial Policies, and that they voted to only have 25 cent increment fare changes going forward. The redline task force gave and update and the rules and regulations policy was submitted to the MTC for information.

VII. Operations Report

Larry Kopf

Larry Kopf CATS Chief Operations Officer reminded the committee to turn in any bus surveys they may have and Larry also reported that ridership for the CIAA was about 100,000 for the week. The ridership was up 15% from last year.

Christine Bryant asked if the CIAA would be used as lessons learned for the upcoming races and the DNC. Carolyn stated the DNC would be a whole different event with secured boundaries.

NEXT TSAC MEETING: THURSDAY APRIL 14, 2011 4:00 PM