

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
Thursday May 9, 2013.

PRESENT:

Rick Sanderson, Charlotte
Rob Cornwell, Davidson
Anthony Wesley, Charlotte
Walter Horstman, Matthews
Jean Veatch, Cornelius
Scott Jernigan Mecklenburg Co.
Michael Warner Charlotte
D. Evans Charlotte
Marvis Holliday Charlotte
George Schaeffer Charlotte

STAFF:

Duretta Weicken, Paulus Ford, Theron Barrino, Larry Kopf, Pamela White, Judy Dellert-OKeef, John Fitzgibbon, Darryl Frierson, Pete Wallace, Debra Franklin, Jeff McClellan, Lisa Flowers

Meeting Time 4:00-5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Approval of the April Meeting Summary

Chairman Rick Sanderson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., The April meeting summary was approved with a revision to Jean Veatch and Rob Cornwell town locations corrected.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items:

There was no one from the public that gave comment.

III. Action Item:

A. Gold Rush

Pamela White, Manager of Service Development explained that the reason the Gold Rush was coming back to TSAC was because of funding changes in the arrangements. Pamela continued saying CATS hosted an open house public meeting to discuss proposed changes to the Gold Rush Center City Circular

services. The proposal for the Red Line is to reduce the service area, providing service between Johnson C. Smith University and Central Piedmont Community College. The shortened route is expected to improve the frequency of this route to every 12 minutes. The proposal for the Orange Line, which runs along North Tryon Street, is to discontinue this service. "CATS" is proposing these changes because of reductions in federal grant funding and private contributions that have supported the Gold Rush services.

Marvis Holliday asked an example of Private Contributions is. Pamela stated it is corporations however CATS has an agreement with Center City Partners and they take in all private contributions.

Walter Horstman asked if CATS had thought about charging a fare to ride the Gold Rush. Pamela stated it had been considered to charge a fare on the Gold Rush but CATS felt the cost of equipment for fares and consistency of ridership would not cover the expenses.

Scott Jernigan asked if there were possibilities of advertising on the Gold Rush to help with costs. Larry stated it was brought up and is an option but CATS is not far enough along to present that option to MTC.

Marvis asked why advertising on the Gold Rush was not considered when advertising came up on the bus and rail line. Larry state the Gold Rush was considered as having its own unique Brand and originally the Sprinters were not included in the advertising as well.

Jean Veatch stated the Gold Rush connects to the heritage of Charlotte as well.

The Transit Services Advisory Committee voted to recommend to MTC CATS Gold Rush proposal of CATS entering into a contribution with the private sources of a minimum of \$207,000 but if more contribution are obtained, they pass those funds onto CATS and that CATS will strive to keep their contribution at \$380,000 but if private contributions reduce that CATS may reduce service if the opportunity arises; the committee recommends the proposal to MTC.

IV. Information Item

A. Para Transit Plan

Larry Kopf CATS Chief Operations Planning Officer and Manager of Bus Operations introduced the Para Transit Plan draft to the committee. Larry explained that CATS is trying to simplify the system by going to an ADA and a non-

ADA service area. With the implications and possible complications of the plan CATS will take the proposal out to the public for comment then bring it back to TSAC for discussion.

Walter asked what the base territory is for STS. Larry stated the blue and dark blue on the service map points out the regular/base STS Service area in two tiers, ADA and Non-ADA. Larry explained anyone within a certain area using the STS Service under five miles or less will see a fare increase and anyone riding over five miles the fare will remain the same or may be higher.

George Schaeffer asked if people North of Charlotte takes a long trip, the economics of the flat \$6.40 rate are. Larry stated CATS does not feel that an increase in that type ride would hurt the system.

D Evans stated she felt this plan was a bit discriminatory towards the people that need rides because they are a fixed income group. Larry stated CATS will have to do an analysis to make sure it is not discriminatory and take the plan to the public and get comments as the intent is to simplify what CATS is doing and CATS is open to suggestions. D stated most of the confusion is about they cannot get a ride outside the STS2 area. D suggested CATS tell people upfront when they qualify for STS that they are less likely to get a ride outside the STS2 area. Larry stated that is why CATS is taking the draft plan to the public for comment to take consideration to what comes up. With the new plan STS allows service from 7am to 6pm Monday through Friday for more service hours, allowing more rides for the STS2 area.

Scott asked how the monthly pass is affected by the new plan. Pete Wallace stated monthly passes are not valid on the STS-2 service.

George Schaeffer asked what is meant by a denial. Larry stated an ADA denial is either that there is no capacity to get them on the bus or the time frame for pick up is missed or cannot be achieved.

B. Transit Funding Working Group

Rick Sanderson TSAC Chairman and a member of the Transit Funding Working Group gave an update on the funding working group. Rick started with the history stating MTC and Mayor Foxx formed the group to identify and build awareness of funding challenges facing the 2030 Transit Plan. The group's purpose is to develop a set of funding and financing recommendations and tools for the MTC to use to advance the 2030 Transit Plan. There are 30 members from local business, elected and community leaders that have had five meetings over a 65 day period.

Rick continued explaining the funding gap, funding options and a three scenario recommendation for review by MTC.

Jean Veatch asked who prepared the white paper from the groups scenarios. Rick stated CATS staff has prepared the paper in accordance with what the group talked about.

Scott asked if Bonds are ever used for the funding of construction projects and can we get legislature to look at funding. Rick stated that Bonds are used for roadway projects and have never been used for transit projects. Right now legislature is not impressed with requests at this time however the group just wants legislature to give the group authority to put out a referendum to let the citizens make the decision whether they want to tax or not tax themselves for the projects.

C. Ridership

Larry Kopf reported that April ridership was up a little with 2.7% adding there were two more weekdays with the month but year to date ridership was down 1.3% Larry stated CATS believes part of the reason is from the fare increase and that gas prices were down. Larry asked the committee to discuss their thoughts about why ridership was down.

George Schaeffer asked if the change in subsidy dropped off ridership with the large employers. Larry stated there has not been any change in subsidy to large businesses.

Rob Cornwell asked if Duke Power were still giving employees discounted tickets. Larry stated CATS gives Duke a 20% discount on tickets and then Duke gives the tickets to their employees. Jean stated Duke gives the employee a choice of either riding CATS or have a certain amount of dollars credited to their parking.

Jean stated the parking fees are going up so people may start thinking about riding bus again.

George stated perhaps people's perceptions of gas prices have evolved and people are getting use to paying higher prices.

Rob stated he believes with the economy going well people are now driving more.

Walter stated even with the economy doing better people are now telecommuting especially on Fridays so ridership is lower on that day.

Larry stated CATS did experience a drop in ridership during the DNC as well. But on the rail system when there are special events it does make a real difference in ridership.

Jean asked if when surveying are other territories being analyzed as to why ridership has slowed down as some routes are showing. Larry stated he was not sure why some routes are down in ridership.

V. Service Issues

Scott stated bus Rt.3/23 makes a turn from 5th street onto Davidson Street and just at the turn on Davidson there is a bus stop but the bus has not been stopping there. Also buses on 7th street the Central Ave. bus stops further out where people wanting to catch the bus were told to wave the bus down to get picked up but the buses are not stopping. Darryl Frierson stated he would check this out.

Anthony Wesley stated crowds just hanging out at the CTC train stop in the pm hours and sometimes during the day are preventing riders from getting through to catch the train. Larry stated he would alert Security to help with the situation.

Walter stated bus #592 has a window near the second or third seat on the left side that lets in air because it does not close tightly.

Anthony asked why the passes given to TSAC are not recognized by the bus drivers. Larry asked that the bus driver's names and specific buses be noted so CATS can inform those drivers about the passes.

Jean commended CATS bus operators for their driving skills and awareness as cars trying to cut in front of the bus when making a turn.

VI. Chairman's Report

Rick stated he was unable to attend the last MTC meeting so Larry would give the MTC update also Rick asked the committee if they wanted to have a July meeting this year. Committee members voted to not have a July meeting.

VII. Manager of Operation Report

Larry reported that at the last MTC meeting CATS presented the Gold Rush presentation, also CATS presented the budget which was approved and Mayor Foxx proposed the Street Car be part of the 2030 plan. Larry continued with the

Operations Managers report saying that CATS will once again have a shuttle to the annual Speed Street event with an \$8 round trip ticket. Also Safety and Security will have the Trade Street side of the CTC closed. Jean Veatch suggested sending schedule of changes to service to businesses during Speed Street so they can put the info on their portals for employees using CATS.

NEXT TSAC MEETING: THURSDAY JUNE 13, 2013