

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
Thursday April 10, 2014

PRESENT:

Rick Sanderson, Charlotte
D. Evans Charlotte
Christine Bryant, Huntersville
George Schaeffer, Charlotte
Scott Jernigan, Charlotte
Mike Warner, Charlotte
Anthony Wesley, Charlotte
Walter Horstman, Matthews
Jean Veatch, Cornelius
Rob Cornwell

STAFF: Theron Barrino, Larry Kopf, Pamela White, Paulus Ford, Austin Faulk, Dee Pereira, Olaf Kinard, Lavernia Boyd, Tom Reynolds, Debra Franklin

Meeting Time 4:00-5:30 PM

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

Chairman Rick Sanderson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., The March meeting summary was approved as written.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items:

There was no one from the public to give comment.

III. Information Item:

A. Public Hearing comments

Larry Kopf presented the committee with a list of comments about the Bus system from the last MTC Public Meeting stating one of the comments was about the farebox malfunctions and the loss of revenue from that. Larry explained with the older farebox

system that CATS has, from time to time the farebox does malfunction and if all the malfunctions were in service and if CATS were losing the maximum fare on every trip, the loss would be around \$250,000 a year. But in all actuality not all those malfunctions are in service and are not the maximum fares so that brings the loss down. There was also question about changing service to meet special events at the Music Factory. CATS explored the possibility of running the bus around the Music Factory neighborhood and found that the bus had the possibility of getting stuck in traffic and it would create a much longer ride that most people do not want. There were some questions about On Time Performance (OTP) stating that people reported negative comments about the OTP. Larry explained that CATS works very hard to keep routes on time, however this year there has been a lot of construction on roadways such as the Streetcar project which affects the Transit Center and there have been some weather issues. Larry also explained that Customer Service issues are tract and CATS has a process to address the issues with a goal to reduce the rude and discourteous behavior of drivers.

Anthony Wesley stated the fareboxes seem to be getting worse. Larry stated the fareboxes are getting older ever year and it is a challenge to keep the older system working, in a few months there is a request for proposals for a new farebox system that is a 8.5 million plus dollars capital charge to change the system. CATS is doing everything we can to keep the system working until we can change the system.

IV. Action Items

A. Fare Increase

Dee Pereira, CATS Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Director of Public Transit, reminded TSAC members that the MTC Fare and Financial Policies recommend a fare increase every two years to ensure that fare revenues keep pace with inflation and reflect a fair-share contribution by the riders to the cost of operating the system. Transit expenses will exceed income by \$2.8 million next year if fares are not increased. Dee continued saying the key cost drivers include fuel, utilities, personal services and risk insurance, these costs are largely not under CATS' control. If there is no fare increase in FY2015, there will need to be a reduction of 26,354 service hours to balance the budget.

Rick asked about the cost increase to STS and how that amount affects the budget. Larry stated the amount of the annual fund associated to STS is around \$73,000 a year to the overall budget. Larry reminded the committee that STS is a door to door service and it costs over \$38 per passenger to provide that service and on a fixed route bus it is \$3.45 per passenger. So when you look at riders providing a fair share, staff recommendation is a fare increase to STS.

Anthony Wesley stated he felt transfers were where a lot of revenue is lost due to the amount of time riders have to use the transfer. Olaf stated it isn't the amount of time it is the fact that the transfer is free. And CATS is not able to change the transfer policy without first going through the public hearing process due to Title IV as CATS could get fined by the FTA. But CATS is looking into doing the transfer issue differently.

Rick opened the floor to the committee for comments, questions, or discussions.

D. Evans reminded the committee that STS provides services mostly to the disabled who did not get much of an increase from the government and they struggle to decide whether to go to a Doctor appointment or to go get groceries.

Jean Veatch commented that express ridership is opting out more and more as prices increase. Larry stated statistics show ridership downfalls every increase.

Jean made the motion to approve the staff proposed fare increase as written. Anthony seconds the motion. The vote was 8 in favor and 1 opposed.

B. Service Change

Pamela White CATS Manager of Service Planning presented the committee with the proposed June 30 service change. The proposal includes changes to route 6 Kings Drive, because of construction on Trade Street, route 11 north Tryon because of the NCDOT bridge closure, route 25 Clanton road will change to meet customer requests and a discontinuance of service due to low productivity, to meet on time performance. Route 45X change is to provide safer routing from uptown and to improve on time performance. Route 55 Westinghouse will be extended to meet the needs of employees and shoppers at the new Mall on Steele creek with Grant money CATS has received. Route 82X has a proposed park and ride changed and the Sprinter service will have a traffic pattern change for the airport entrance and road realignment that occurs in February 2015.

Walter Horstman asked how long the bridge would be closed on north Tryon. Brian Horton stated the bridge will be closed 6 to 9 months and when it's reopened they will shift north bound traffic onto the bridge as well and south bound traffic.

Rob Cornwell asked if there were benefits for businesses hosting park & rides. Pamela stated no it's just goodwill of the businesses.

Scott Jernigan made a motion to approve the proposed June 30 service change as written by CATS staff. Christine Bryant second. The motion was approved to recommend to MTC the June 30 service change as written.

V. Service Issues

Scott stated the restroom at the transit center has one soap dispenser for three sinks and wondered if that could be changed. Larry stated he would have it checked into.

Walter asked if CATS was any closer to having real time for the buses on the phone app instead of just the schedules. Larry stated he would get an answer to that from Olaf Kinard.

VI. Chairman's Report

Rick stated at MTC there was discussion on fare increase and service change, everything else was deferred to the next meeting on April 23.

VII. Manager of Operation Report

Larry reported that the NCPTA conference was very successful. Also CATS will present a proposal to Council to enter into two contracts for bus purchases for the next five years with Gillig and Motor Coach Industries.

TSAC MEETING: THURSDAY MAY 8, 2014