

CITIZENS TRANSIT ADVISORY GROUP (CTAG)
Meeting Summary
June 15, 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
Sam Spencer, CMS

Staff: Wanda Braswell, John Trunk, Larry Kopf, Celia Gray, John Muth, Dee Pereira, Olaf Kinard, Carolyn Flowers

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 May 18, 2010 meeting summary

The meeting summary was approved as written.

III. Information Items

A. Fare Enforcement Update

John Trunk

Mr. Trunk gave an update on the continuing complaints regarding fare evasion. Past blitzes show that less than one percent of passengers boarding the trains were without tickets. In May 2010, a blitz conducted at the Charlotte Transit Center (CTC) and Third Street continued to show a less than one percent rate. CATS has teams of officers randomly checking throughout the day and at undisclosed stops. On July 1, there will be an additional nine Allied Barton police officers providing more fare checking personnel on the trains and platforms to insure that fare evasion is kept to a minimum.

Discussion

Mr. Antshel asked about existing accountability measures to ensure that the policing efforts are actually being performed. Mr. Trunk said that the job requirements are explained to them, surveillance cameras monitor activities, clickers are issued for measuring the passengers checked and the number of issued citations is used to ensure officers are actually working. Mr. Cox asked about the average number of complaints received. Mr. Trunk said approximately two complaints

a week. Mr. Bischoff asked if the Allied Barton officers have the same arresting authority as CMPD officers. Mr. Trunk said yes but only on CATS property. Mr. Cox said that the ease of boarding the train and no visibly seen checking could be a factor in the perception of free riding. Mr. Trunk said on July 1 additional officers will provide more visibility and presence on the train. Mr. Bischoff asked if it is correct that 80 or 90 percent of other light rail systems use the same type of system Charlotte has. Ms. Flowers said the Los Angeles was a barrier free system but has recently decide to install barriers at a cost \$60,000 that covers only the two light rail stations and the subway. Mr. Spencer asked if at special events the fare evasion is higher due to out-of-town visitors. Mr. Trunk said the installation of the platform fare zones is a result of fare checks done during special events. Ms. Flowers commented that CATS ambassadors are present during the events to explain and guide the visitors through the process of ticket purchasing.

B. MTC Policies and Procedures

Celia Gray

Ms. Gray presented an overview of the seven MTC policies that are being reviewed in 2010. The policies are on a three-year review cycle to maintain their usefulness. Four of the policies are being presented in today's meeting. The Financial Policy's review is in fall 2010, the Procurement Policy review and the Transit Rules and Regulations Policy is in August 2010.

i. Transit Service Guidelines Policy and Travel Market Policy

Larry Kopf

Mr. Kopf gave a brief description of the types of services within the service policy, i.e. bus stops spacing, low thresholds, standees, directness of services, passenger amenities and reliability (on time performance). The purpose of the service policy is to provide an objective basis for evaluating the services and perimeters for use in the development of services to determine the placement of bus stops, expansion of route and provide a frame work for fare services. The policy is a tool in explaining to the community why a service can or cannot be implemented.

Discussion for Service Policy

Mr. Bischoff asked what determines a service change. Mr. Kopf said that in February the routes and their performances are reviewed. In June and October, the routes are changed or tweaked as needed. Mr. Steiss said that he has heard comments from customers concerned about safety in areas that do not have sufficient lighting. Mr. Kopf said that lighting is not in the service standards because CATS does not control lighting. When a customer calls with a request about lighting, it is researched and the Department of Transportation is contacted. Mr. Sottilo asked about the reasoning for staying away from loops routes. Mr. Kopf says they are not effective routes and do not allow break opportunities for the drivers. Mr. Antshel asked about the enforcement of the eating and drinking policy found in the Transit Rules and Regulations. Mr. Kopf said that the policy needs to be review to see if any changes are needed because there is a level of cleanliness that must be maintained on the buses to reduce the chances of pests. Mr. Fox asked about the 80 percent on-time and wanted to know if delays due to accidents, road detours, etc. were factored in. Mr. Kopf said only if they occur at time points. Mr. Bischoff asked if there were allowances in the on-time performance. Mr. Kopf said yes, one minute early is not on time and five minutes or more late and not on time.

Mr. Kopf continued his presentation with an explanation of the Travel Market Policy. The purpose of the Travel Market Policy is to show the primary markets CATS was design to serve. In the times of lean resources and certain services need to be reduced or eliminated, the

policy is a guideline to keep in focus the markets that must be maintained. The policy is used to explain to customers when a service is requested in markets not specifically within CATS scope of business and cannot be considered.

Discussion for Travel Market Policy

Mr. Spencer asked about services that eliminate the need to go to the Transit Center. Mr. Kopf said that Route 3 is a connecting corridor route within the primary market. Mr. Spencer asked if the policy has remained consistent in past reviews or have changes occurred. Mr. Kopf said that he is not aware of any changes since its original adoption. Mr. Kopf said that he relies on this policy. It is working well and no changes are being recommended. Mr. Fox asked Ms. Flowers how the Travel Market and the 2030 Plan relate. Ms. Flowers said that this summer the long range transit plan will be reviewed and updated. The community's desire is to have less of a hub system and more of a grid system. For this to occur, Ms. Flowers said the travel patterns would change and a restructured study is needed before implementing a change of this type. It is not in the budget for FY2011. Mr. Kopf said that the reason CATS has a radial system is because of Charlotte's radial street system.

ii. Fare Policy and Advertising Policy

Olaf Kinard

The Fare Policy was developed to regulate fare increases within time periods that would offer moderate increases in a consistent timeframe and remove any political aspects which created issues in the past. MTC does not vote on fare increases; fare increases are included in the yearly budgets. Fare increases are recommended every two years, but it is not mandatory and can occur every year. The fare increase should be in line with the rate of inflation. Different services will have different fare rates, i.e. long distances – higher fare. The local fare is the base level and all other services rate increase is a additional percentage of the base level.

The purpose of the Advertising Policy is to raise revenue to supplement the operation cost and is not intended for general public forum for purposes of communication. CATS does allow for profit products and government speech. Political and non-profit ads are not allowed. Interior advertising is currently being done.

Discussion

Mr. Fox asked if the sales volume discounts apply to non-profit organizations. Mr. Kinard said the volume purchase does not apply but there is a 25 percent discount for non-profit. Some of the non-profit organizations no longer want to distribute passes. To retain the numerous customers affiliated with the organizations CATS staff is distributing the passes. If staff continues offering this service, the discount percentage will need to be adjusted to compensate for some of the cost incurred by CATS.

Mr. Antshel asked if the current policy addresses the current financial situation. Ms. Pereira said the wording of the policy is that MTC has the authority to increase fares if there a significant change in the economy. Mr. Spencer asked if any for-profit vendors had an interest in distributing passes would there possibly be a discount allow to them. Mr. Kinard said that it would be consider. CATS would need to determine if it was advantageous to pursue.

IV. Action Items

A. **Approving the Schedule**

Mr. Fox said that Ms. Flowers requested the July meeting be cancelled but that all other meetings remain as schedule.

V. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Carolyn Flowers

A. **Summer 2010**

Staff is planning stockholders meeting during the summer to discuss the present and future plans and to keep the vision alive. The contact with the communities would be a precursor to the reviewing of the 2030 Plan. Ms. Flowers suggested that the 2030 Plan title be changed to The Long Range Transit Plan because of the uncertainty of the economy and CATS ability to have the current plan completed by 2030. The Blue Line Extension 30 percent preliminary engineering is scheduled for completion with the Draft Environmental Study being completed and submitted to the FTA in the September 2010. After the draft's submission and approval, CATS will move into the 65 percent of the preliminary engineering. The Red Line is scheduled for the development of a work plan.

B. **North Davidson Facility**

Work continues on the facility with plans of moving supplies and equipment into the building by September 2010. January 2011 is the planned reopening. CATS received a construction bid for less than the estimated cost of construction, freeing some funding money that is allowing for additional scopes of work to be developed.

C. **North Davidson Community Mural Painting**

Saturday, June 12 and Sunday, June 13 the community participated in the mural painting. It was very successful.

D. **Former Governor Dukakis**

Former Governor Dukakis was in Charlotte this past weekend and took a tour of the LYNX system. Mr. Dukakis is a major advocate of transit and was very complimentary of the system and the uptown area.

E. **Ridership**

In the last two months, the ridership figures exceeded the peak periods of last year due to higher fuel prices. It is encouraging that the rail and bus ridership numbers have exceeded the 20 year ridership mark. With the success of LYNX, staff has gone to FTA for funding to retrofit the South Corridor of the Blue Line system. FTA reviewed and gave the request considerable consideration but denied the funding. FTA said they would work with CATS in the future for other opportunities.

F. **American Public Transportation Association (APTA)**

Ms. Flowers participated in APTA peer review in Alabama. The review offered opportunities to share lessons learned and to see other transit properties. In comparison, CATS system is in extremely good shape. Other properties are not as well maintained and as clean and graffiti free as CATS.

VI. Public comments

None

VII. Other Business

A. Gerald Fox

Ms. Flowers presented a token of appreciation to Mr. Fox for his years of service and commitment to the CTAG committee. This meeting is his last official attendance; Mr. Fox has agreed to remain on the committee until the vacant position is filled.

Discussion

Mr. Bischoff asked about the status of the streetcar federal grant. Ms. Flowers said that a decision should be made by tomorrow, Wednesday, June 16, 2010. There were 25 applications for the funding, but Charlotte chances of obtain the funding is high.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

NEXT CTAG MEETING: TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2010, 7:30 A.M.