

CITIZENS TRANSIT ADVISORY GROUP (CTAG)
Meeting Summary
June 21, 2011
DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Present: Tom Cox, CTAG Co-Chair
Mary Barker, CTAG Co.-Chair
Bob Bischoff, Mecklenburg County
Todd Steiss, Town of Huntersville
Peter Larson, Town of Mint Hill
Sam Spencer, CMS

Staff: John Trunk, Larry Kopf, Olaf Kinard, Chris Bauer, David Feltman, John Muth, Wanda Braswell, Carolyn Flowers

Meeting time 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

I. Call to Order

Tom Cox, CTAG Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

II. Approval of April 19, 2011 meeting summary

The meeting summary was approved with a change on Page 4 of *effective* to *effected* and placing a question mark at the end of the sentence.

III. Information Items

A. Center City Access and Circulation Study

John Muth & Chris Bauer

For 20 years, NCDOT has expressed an interest in developing a West Trade Street multi-modal station; integrating current and future transportation services into one location, i.e. high speed rail, trolley, bus system, Amtrak. In the fall of 2010, CATS performed a bus operational assessment and a Center City access assessment to provide information on how the operation would work. NCDOT has asked CATS to identify potential needs for the development of the hub system. CATS contracted a master developer to assist with identifying the potential needs. The acquiring of a master developer was postponed due to the recession and budgetary restrictions.

The purpose of a master developer is to coordinate with all the transit entities; Greyhound, Amtrak and CATS, the development and construction of the hub. CATS' vision is to purchase the Greyhound property as a contribution to the project and has already purchased property to be use as the Red Line platform area.

Mr. Bauer detailed the assessment for the CTAG members. A core team, lead by David Feltman, was established to evaluate the information. The West Trade Street location was chosen because the current transit systems routes include this area. The future Amtrak National high speed rail and the streetcar line will also intersect at the site.

The project deliverables received from the consultant firm included the Charlotte Transit Center (CTC) assessment and existing conditions memorandums, i.e. the transfer analysis, system trends report, the fare collection assessment and the CATS bus stop condition summary.

The CTC assessment provided information concerning issues at CTC and how to possibly avoid them at the Gateway station. The memorandums are the uptown operational assessment regarding CATS customer base, the customers, how are they paying, how are they using the system(s) to get a vision of how the customers are moving through center city. Using the collections of reports, the core team was able to identify a more efficient system to move people in the new station, lightening the customer traffic in the transit center.

The largest portion of the reports pertain to the Charlotte Gateway station. The reports helped to develop the bus operational assessment, operating cost assessment and an assessment of the existing route maps.

The bus operational assessment is the identifying aspects of CATS footprint and what information to provide to NCDOT. The assessment included CATS new services, the 2030 Plan and developed scenario of how the buses and fixed routes could work together in the uptown area. Using the scenario, the team identified the number of bays needed (10 to 14 bays for current and future services), staging areas, and ticket vending areas.

The information to be presented to NCDOT is in a three tier approach.

- Tier I is comprised of all the “must have” and “deal breaker” requirements for the Charlotte Gateway.
- Tier II are the amenities CATS would like to have at the center.
- Tier III are the design restrictions or aspects that CATS want to avoided in the design.

Mr. Bauer presented a rendering of the site that shows the operational function of the multi-transit site. The main purpose of the rendering is to provide a visual tool showing the main points of the design, i.e. open-air environment, Wilkes Place Extension “transit only” street and the operational function of the multimodal services.

Mr. Bauer said the information is scheduled to be presented to MTC on June 22 along with future presentations to NCDOT Rail staff, Center City Partners and Transit Service Advisory Committee (TSAC).

Discussion

Mr. Larsen asked if CATS is anticipating subterranean levels in the scenario. Mr. Bauer said it is not anticipated and is not something CATS is interested in having in the design because of visibility, building cost and cost associated with security. Mr. Bischoff asked what percentage of the bus operations would be transferred to the new site. Mr. Bauer said it may range from 50/40 split to a 70/40 split. Mr. Spencer said there is a concern about transferring from the Red Line to the Blue Line and asked if it has been addressed. Mr. Bauer said that the connection would use the streetcar line if available. If the streetcar is not available, then CATS would provide a bus bridge for customers. Mr. Larsen asked if the design could accommodate future expansion. Mr. Bauer said yes. Mr. Cox asked what would be the first step for starting the multimodal site construction. Through a discussion within the group, it was mentioned that Amtrak would

probably be the first transportation system to use the site. Mr. Bischoff asked if the new park and rides in Cornelius and Huntersville will be the future sites for the commuter rail. Mr. Muth said those are future projects and the idea is to locate the park and rides on or near the future train station sites.

B. Safety and Security at the Transit Center

John Trunk

Mr. Trunk spoke with the group concerning the widely publicized Speed Street incident. Mr. Trunk clarified that the incident occurred outside of the Transit Center, areas not under CATS Safety and Security jurisdiction. CATS Saturday night's ridership numbers was 32,000 riders for rail and 35,000 riders for bus and customers were able to embark and disembark safely. The transit center's main objective is to provide services for the customers actually using the transit center and to control the crowd and any congestion that could hinder the customers' access to the buses and the buses' ability to transport within the CTC. During the Saturday night Speed Street event, CATS made no arrests.

For special events, CATS Safety & Security meet with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) to coordinate and to ensure sufficient personnel is on staff.

Steps taken at the CTC to ensure the safety of CATS customers include:

- steel barracks used to block Trade Street and restrict access to the Transit Center.
- portable light banks are place at each corner of the center,
- bus movement from the Center is direct to 4th Street,
- officers are stationed at 4th and Trade Street,
- extra buses and trains are available if needed; and,
- the Center's retail businesses are asked to close early to prevent loitering.

Rail has paid fare zones to help with crowd control. A person must have a ticket if he or she is on the rail platform. If someone does not have a ticket, that person is asked to leave the area or asked to purchase a ticket.

Discussion

Mr. Bischoff asked if any changes or new procedures are expected to be implemented. Mr. Trunk said no, the current system is working. Ms. Flowers said with the announcement of the DNC being awarded to Charlotte, plans are being made for CATS staff to attend refresher courses in safety and security. Until after the convention, CATS' staff will remain on high alert concerning safety and security issues. Mr. Spencer asked about the status in preparing for the DNC. Mr. Trunk said CATS is working with the Secret Services concerning safety and security operation needs. Ms. Flowers said CATS had the first meeting with the DNC Post Committee, DNC National Committee and the Secret Service three weeks ago.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Carolyn Flowers

A. CTAG Changes

Mr. Spencer and Mr. Bischoff are leaving the group. Ms. Flowers presented Mr. Spencer and Mr. Bischoff with a token of appreciation for their work and commitment to the group. A welcome was given to Mr. C. Morgan Edwards who will be the new representative from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS).

B. Red Line and the Legislative Agenda

As part of the legislative agenda for 2012, CATS has requested the design build and the methodology of Blue Line project delivery.

C. Legislative Budget Update

The budget update includes funding for public transit projects. The restrictions of no funding for the Blue Line and Red Line projects was removed from the budget but does include special language about required studies for future projects.

D. FTA Quarterly Meeting

Ms. Flowers, Ms. Pereira and Mr. Muth will attend the FTA Quarterly meeting in Atlanta, GA on Thursday, June 23. CATS will update the FTA on the status of the Blue Line plans as well the streetcar, and other active projects.

E. State Presentation

CATS will make a presentation to the state on July 6 and 7, 2011 to discuss the Blue Line Extension financial plan. The financial plan will be presented to the Board, MTC and City Council in August 2011.

F. Labor Negotiations

United Transit Union (UTU) won the election and will represent CATS bus operators. The negotiations will be extended until a contract is made with UTU.

G. North Davidson Facility

A tentative ribbon cutting date is scheduled for July 28.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

NEXT CTAG MEETING: SEPTEMBER 20, 2011 7:30 A.M.