

**CITIZENS TRANSIT ADVISORY GROUP (CTAG)**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**October 16, 2012**  
**DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

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Present: Mary Barker, CTAG Co-Chair  
Hugh Wrigley, CTAG Co-Chair  
Todd Steiss, Town of Huntersville  
Henry Antshel, City of Charlotte  
Katherine (Kate) Payerle, City of Charlotte  
Rob Watson, Mecklenburg County

Staff: Carolyn Flowers, John Muth, Dee Pereira, John Trunk, Larry Kopf, Wanda Braswell  
Meeting time 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

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**I. Call to Order**

Mary Barker, CTAG Co-Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. with the group welcoming new committee member Hugh Wrigley. Mr. Wrigley is also the co-chair.

**II. Approval of May 15, 2012 meeting summary**

The meeting summary was approved as written.

**III. Update on FFGA Signing/BLE Status**

**Carolyn Flowers**

Ms. Flowers reported that Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff is in town today to sign the federal 50% of the construction cost commitment to extend the light rail to UNC Charlotte. This is a seven year commitment that got CATS through prelim engineering design into construction. The ceremony is 10:00 am at the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Trolley station which is the first station in the extension Blue Line alignment. One benefit is it will connect the university area to uptown. The extension will connect the Uptown campus of UNC Charlotte to the main campus. CATS is providing mobility and accessibility.

Construction will start in 2013 with March 2017 as the target opening date. The full funding grant agreement expectation is March 2018 as the opening date. There is reserve in the contract to give us a year in case of market factors or anything else that occurs. The extra year will assist CATS if there are schedule delays that we have an opportunity not to ask for extensions. Mr. Antshel asked staff to explain the contract that is being signed. Ms. Flowers stated that it is a full funding federal grant agreement for 50% commitment with a delivery date. Mr. Antshel asked about CATS percentage of the cost. CATS' percentage is 25% local. The State is providing 25.8% to include a commitment for 36 Street Station.

Ms. Flowers added that staff is in the process of hiring a construction manager. Staff is also working to get financing to go to the local government commission. We will start pre-construction activities. The activities include hiring surveying and utility relocation. These are major contracts in the spring. Mr. Antshel asked if all engineering is complete. Mr. Muth replied that the project is at 90% of final design. We completed a constructability review. Real estate acquisition is ongoing; 297 parcels. Mr. Watson asked if grant is 50% of cost not a set dollar amount. The

contract is set at 50% because the contract is for \$1.16 billion. Mr. Watson asked if it is the same with state 25%. Ms. Flowers stated that it is. CATS has a State full funding grant agreement. Mr. Flowers added that CATS received approval at the end of September to contract for our cars. Some discussion of why we were doing that at that time. CATS was able to piggy back onto the Portland's contract. Portland had received approval for Siemens' S70 cars. CATS wanted to continue with the S70 cars. They are reliable, also for future operation cost not to have a mix of cars. We don't have to carry additional inventory and we do not have to train staff. We were able to get our cars at a lower cost than our current cars. CATS was also able to get storage and warranty coverage in the contract.

#### **IV. Dates for upcoming budget review**

**Dee Pereira**

Ms. Pereira provided a checklist with a calendar to explain how the budget works. CTAG will make a recommendation of the two-year operating programs and the five year capital programs to MTC at the end of budget review in April. Charlotte City Council approves the budget in June after the MTC's approval. Ms. Pereira asked CTAG to select topics of discussion from the options provided for the November and the January meetings.

Mr. Watson stated that as a new member he felt the information was helpful and suggested what topics he thinks could be of interest. Mr. Wrigley asked about risk projections. Ms. Flowers stated that it is insurance. Ms. Payerle added that she has an interest in risk management. Mr. Steiss asked of these items "where can we help as far as our input? Do we have some help in the decision making process?" He added that the average fare helps him with his decision but unsure of the other topics; although they are good to know. Ms. Barker said she thinks it is our responsibility to know about these subjects to converse with the citizens/community. We have facts to discuss with the public. Ms. Flowers added that having an understanding of our overall plans to leverage our existing assets to insure we have funding to sustain operations in the future. Also, how we direct ourselves to have other revenues sources so that we are not solely dependent on fares for the system. With less reliability from the federal and local sources to subsidize operation, if we can generate our own sources of revenue that is the story we want to tell. Mr. Steiss added that the Town of Huntersville talked about which buses will have the alcohol ads. Ms. Flowers stated that the decision will be made at the MTC meeting on October 26. Mr. Antshel asked about DNC service reimbursements. Ms. Flowers stated that we have submitted reimbursement requests. Mr. Wrigley asked about personnel. Ms. Flowers explained that we contract out our bus operators; however, staff can provide information on personnel.

Mr. Antshel suggested an income discussion in November to focus on ancillary revenue plan, fares, service reimbursement plans and the Red Line then an expense discussion in January to focus on the fuel program and projections, the risk projections and the Silver Line.

#### **Discussion**

Ms. Barker asked about the vacant positions on CTAG. She asked Ms. Braswell to inform the towns and the current committee members that it is important for them to attend these meetings. Ms. Payerle asked about service reimbursement. Ms. Pereira stated that service reimbursement is received from entities outside of Mecklenburg County. CATS staff is meeting with Norfolk Southern. We had two meetings and will meet on October 30 with a formal LKNTC member.

#### **V. CEO's Report**

Carolyn accompanied Mayor Foxx to Washington on September 19 to talk about federal commitment for the BLE. President Obama included \$70 million in his budget. They also met with the FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff and Secretary of Transportation LaHood. After the trip, we followed up with Representative Myrick and Administrator Rogoff. CATS is competing with Hawaii. Honolulu was tracking with CATS, but they have recently encountered issues. CATS is now further along. In the appropriation process, Hawaii has a strong advocate. The appropriations will not be distributed until December. In the meantime, it has made CATS concerned about our cash flow. Staff will continue to follow up.

Mr. Antshel asked if the signing ceremony today guarantees the funding. Ms. Flowers stated that today's event is a guarantee that CATS will get the funding. We want to make sure the funding matches our cash flow. The funding is important in the project's schedule and to cost. The State changed the way they will fund the project; \$25 million a year for 10 years plus the reserve set aside in this year's budget for the New Starts Program. CATS will receive \$62.5 million this year from the State with \$25 million flat in the future years. We were planning to get funding in a four-year period but now have to stretch it over a longer period.

During the DNC, there were challenges with the relocated transit center yet CATS did as much as possible to make it a smooth transition. Protesters and street closings caused delays. In the end, CATS did not receive complaints.

Ms. Flowers met with John Edwards of Norfolk Southern and Mayor Woods to discuss their requirements for the Red Line. Norfolk Southern requested a rail study on the corridor; a model for usage of a commuter and freight. It is an 18-month study. Deputy Director John Muth and Brian Nadolny met with Norfolk Southern and the NC Department of Transportation to discuss the scope of the study. The scope is being drafted. Staff has a conference call scheduled for October 17. The State is working on a study agreement. Lake Norman Transit Commission (LKNTC) scheduled a meeting with Craig Lewis for October 30. Mr. Lewis is a former Norfolk Southern employee.

City staff continues to meet with citizens group regarding the Silver Line. CATS has budgeted funds in FY2014 for a study of possible rail alternatives for the corridor.

Bid opening for Streetcar is October 17. Construction will start at the end of the year with a 2015 opening. CATS will be the operator of the Streetcar. We will have to watch the impact on our budget. The extension of the Streetcar was in the recently discussed CIP and will be part of continued discussions on the CIP.

### **Discussion**

Q: Does the state have a similar funding procedure?

A: Yes. In June they locked in our funding.

Q: Will the success of DNC influence a decision?

A: The FTA administrator is very aware of the successful DNC.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 a. m.

NEXT CTAG MEETING: NOVEMBER 13, 2012, 7:30 A.M.