

**METROPOLITAN TRANSIT COMMISSION**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**March 25, 2015**

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**Presiding:** Mayor John Woods (Davidson)

**Present:**

Dan Clodfelter (Charlotte)	Mayor Jill Swain (Huntersville)
Debra Campbell (Charlotte Assistant City Manager)	Greg Ferguson (Huntersville Town Manager)
Scott Jernigan (TSAC Chair)	Bill Coxe (Huntersville Town Planner)
Rob Watson (CTAG Co-Chair)	Ralph Messera (Matthews)
Dena Diorio (Mecklenburg County Manager)	Bill Thunberg (Mooresville Representative)
Mayor Chuck Travis (Cornelius)	

**Interim Chief Executive Officer:** John Muth

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**I. Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Metropolitan Transit Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by MTC's Vice Chair, Mayor Woods. Mayor Woods said that he would preside over the meeting as Mayor Clodfelter had to leave early.

**II. Review of Meeting Summary**

The meeting summary of March 11, 2015 for the February MTC meeting was approved as written.

**III. Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) Chair's Report**

**Scott Jernigan**

Mr. Jernigan reported that TSAC met on March 12, 2015. Committee members received an update on the proposed June service changes and on the CATS budget.

**IV. Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CTAG) Chair's Report**

**Rob Watson**

Mr. Watson reported that CTAG met on March 17, 2015. CTAG received the initial budget discussion and will receive a second budget presentation at their April meeting. He will bring their feedback to the April MTC meeting. CTAG also received an update on their social media efforts and will bring a detailed analysis to the April MTC meeting.

**V. Transit Funding Working Group Update**

**Jill Swain**

Mr. Thunberg said that there is a legislative advocacy trip on April 8. Some of the TFWG's legislative advocacy committee members will attend. He will send out information on the trip in case anyone else wants to attend.

**VI. Public Comments**

None.

**VII. Action Items**

**a. Charlotte Gateway Station Project**

**Tina Votaw**

Ms. Votaw, CATS Transit Oriented Development Specialist, reminded members that she reviewed the revised draft Municipal Agreement for the Charlotte Gateway Station at the March 11 MTC meeting. CATS is working with the State on funding. This project will take a variety of funding sources, as mentioned in the revised document. If MTC approves the Municipal Agreement tonight, the Agreement will go to the City for approval.

**Discussion:** None.

**Resolution:** Mayor Swain motioned to approve the revised draft Municipal Agreement; Mr. Messera seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**b. MTC Rule of Procedure**

**John Joye**

Mr. Joye, Senior Assistant City Attorney, said that staff periodically reviews the MTC Rules of Procedure. The MTC Rules of Procedure were adopted in 1999 and last revised in 2009. Staff recommends one minor clarification to the Rules, an amendment to formalize the procedure for opening MTC meetings in the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair. The rules specify that MTC members will select a member to serve as presiding officer, but do not indicate who calls the meeting to order. In the past two instances when this happened, the Chief Transit Official opened the MTC meeting. Staff would like to amend the rules to formalize that practice and indicate that in the absence of both Chair and Vice Chair, the Chief Transit Official will call the meeting to order and MTC members will select a member to serve as presiding officer.

**Discussion:** None.

**Resolution:** Mayor Swain motioned to amend the MTC Rules of Procedure to allow the Chief Transit Official to call the meeting to order in the absence of both Chair and Vice Chair; Ms. Diorio seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**VIII. Information Items**

**a. FY2016/ 17 Budget Overview**

**Dee Pereira,**

**Levern McElveen, Larry Kopf, Allen Smith**

Ms. Pereira, CATS Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Director of Public Transit, said that this month will include a detailed budget review. Transportation Services include the areas of Bus and other Bus Services, Safety and Security, Rail and Streetcar Operations and Facilities. Staff will also review how the capital program supports Operations. The bulk of the capital program will support LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE) construction; the remaining 29 percent of the Community Investment Plan (CIP) supports all other operations.

Mr. Kopf, CATS Chief Operations Planning Officer and Manager of Bus Operations, demonstrated CATS bus service growth since 1998. In addition to local and express bus service, CATS offers Special Transportation Service (STS), regional express, vanpool, light rail and the upcoming Streetcar service. Key cost drivers for the Bus Operations Division are personal services, followed by fuel, equipment and parts, insurance and other contract services. Bus Operations has used efficient management to fund limited growth, with 837,000 service hours planned for FY2016. Bus/Rail Integration uses rail stations to connect buses to provide service to a wider service area. Fuel prices are reviewed daily; "forward" purchases are made when the price is favorable, providing budget stability. Fuel is 13.5 percent of Bus Operations' FY2016 budget. CATS' Anti-idling Program helps reduce the

amount of time buses spend in unnecessary idling time. CATS' fleet has grown to 322 buses with 28 fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles purchased through energy grants. There are 72 bus routes which operate 11.7 million service miles per year.

The Bus Operating Division (BOD) has over 800 employees; State law does not allow the City to negotiate with collective bargaining units, so these employees are employed by Transit Management of Charlotte and are not City employees. CATS hires a management team to provide direct supervision. The management contract is bid competitively every three to five years; McDonald Transit had the contract for the last 11 years. Their management has been successful and has implemented several performance monitoring programs, including the Team of Professionals (T.O.P.) Program which has been cited as a "best practice" program and gives opportunities for positive reinforcement and coaching. CATS and BOD developed an internal Quality Assurance (QA) program during the recession, which has been more cost effective than hiring outside consultants and provides good follow-through.

STS is mandated for persons with disabilities within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of a regular local bus route. Trips outside the ADA-mandated area are made as capacity allows. The ADA service area is so large now and demand so high that CATS provides very few trips outside the ADA service area. STS maintenance is currently provided by the City's Shared Services Department. CATS is considering awarding STS maintenance to Transit Management. They currently handle Bus Operations buses with 24/7 maintenance, so STS buses could be fixed at night when they are not needed for service. BOD would provide additional services not handled by Shared Services such as dispatching a mechanic on road calls, which should reduce towing expenses. This will provide an annual savings of \$89,000, which will be used to hire a Safety Trainer for STS operations.

Other bus services include vanpool and DSS subscription. Vanpool service is unique in that the drivers are not employees, but are the customers themselves. This reduces the program's cost; vanpool has the highest fare recovery rate of any service at 74 percent. There are 74 active vanpools with 250,000 passengers. CATS provides \$300,000 to the Department of Social Services for transporting people with disabilities, primarily people who work at sheltered workshops.

The CIP program for buses includes replacing buses on a lifespan cycle that averages 14 years. To keep the fleet in good running order, CATS replaces engines at least once in a bus's lifetime. There is also a capital project to upgrade the farebox system to a smart card system, a tap-and-go system designed to reduce boarding time and be more convenient for passengers. CATS is upgrading the radio system to meet FCC's requirement to move from analog to digital transmission. CATS will also update firmware on radios compatible with the new operating system and replace radios that are not compatible.

Mr. McElveen, CATS General Manager, Safety & Security, remarked that safety is everything we do. It is not just the Safety & Security department, but is everyone's responsibility in every department. Mr. McElveen discussed the importance of a safety culture. Key cost drivers for Safety are Contractual Services, Personal Services and Contract Maintenance Services. Twelve CATS employees are assigned to transit safety, responsible for safety system audits, operator ride checks, training and other duties. Additionally, 82 others are

dedicated to transit security, including 4 CMPD Transit Police Officers and 77 G4S company safety personnel.

CATS is required to spend one percent of Federal Formula Funds on Safety and Security items. These items are programmed into the five-year CIP and include fencing, camera system replacement, card access readers, lighting and radio replacement.

Mr. Smith, CATS General Manager, Rail Operations, said that CATS' LYNX Blue Line was the region's first light rail service. Weekday service begins around 5:30 a.m. and runs to 1:30 a.m. at 10-minute intervals during peak service and 15, 20 and 30-minute intervals during non-peak hours. CityLYNX Gold Line service will run from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 6 a.m. to 12 a.m. on Friday and weekend hours also. CATS has 24 Siemens S70 light rail vehicles; four new Siemens cars have been delivered. The three Gomaco replica trolleys were built in 2000. Rail staff budgeted for the next budget cycle include 49 rail operations staff, 20 maintenance of way staff, 34 rail car maintenance staff, 4 parts and inventory staff, 7 administration and management staff and 12 streetcar staff. Mr. Smith said this staffing level for rail is a very bare-bones level for the 24/7 service. Tracks are maintained in the four hours a day the rail is not running. Management staff is on 24/7 call and can work 36-48 hours straight during weather events. Operations staff cannot work those schedules safely, so more staff is needed. The low staffing levels make it very difficult to run Rail Operations when staff is out on vacation, sick or out for family emergencies. Rail's on-time performance rate is 99.27 percent, which is as good as it gets. In FY2014, rail revenue service hours were 60,519 and rail service miles were 946,241 with 5.1 million passenger rides and extra trips run for 164 special events such as the CIAA Tournament, Hornets and Panthers games and Speed Street. Key cost drivers for Rail Division are personal services, risk insurance, traction power, equipment and parts and contract services.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) is the President's transportation initiative. One of MAP-21's requirements is a formula-based State of Good Repair program, mandating regular maintenance so equipment lasts for the full length of its designed life expectancy. Mr. Smith reminded MTC members that the system is eight years old now and is beginning to need repair. He reviewed highlights of the maintenance program on vehicles and other rail equipment.

Mr. Smith said that the Facilities Management area maintains all CATS-owned and leased facilities, properties and passenger amenities. They provide for trash collection and recycling, landscape maintenance, janitorial services and snow and ice removal. CATS is required to spend one percent of its Federal Formula Funds on Transit Enhancements, including ADA-compliant bus stop improvements.

**Discussion:** Mayor Swain asked if CATS gets any money back when buses are retired. Mr. Kopf replied that buses are auctioned by the City Shared Services department; CATS does receive some money at their sale. Mayor Swain asked if there was an initial cost for the new fare card. Mr. Kopf said that it a \$7 million dollar capital project; the card cost to the passenger has not been determined. This is a whole new system. Mr. Muth noted that the card will offer a stored value for customers. They will be able to use the new card for all services, rail and bus, as well as for transfers. Mayor Travis asked how the STS system will expand in the next five years, and how does budget planning take that into account in terms

of replacing buses. Mr. Kopf said that with the BLE coming on-line, CATS will re-direct bus service toward the rail line, which will free revenue hours to extend to more outlying areas. That will increase the coverage area and the STS coverage area will account for that. We may end up increasing the fleet to some extent. Mayor Travis said that he would like to see a breakdown on how STS will be expanded in the future, as this is a service that is needed.

Mayor Swain asked what qualifies as a bus stop. Mr. Kopf said that the facilities team reviews areas for safety. Mayor Swain said that there are concerns about stops being ADA-compliant, yet some stops have dirt. Mr. Kopf said that we are not required to deny service to neighborhoods without sidewalks, so there are some bus routes where the bus stop will not have a sidewalk. There are usually requirements in those neighborhoods to make bus stops compliant when neighborhoods are improved with sidewalks. Mr. Muth said that CATS tries to coordinate with the City's sidewalk program and, if possible, install a bus pad to provide a more stable surface for riders to stand as they wait. Mayor Travis said that just putting a sign at an area without a defined bus stop seems like it is missing an opportunity. He saw someone standing almost in a ditch the other day; why would we identify a space for a bus to stop and not define the space with a concrete pad. Mayor Swain said that some stops are on undeveloped property. That is the case along Highway 21, where those stops by the ditch are at undeveloped property. If CATS installed a pad, it could be torn out later. Mr. Messera remarked that Matthews put pads at all the bus stops. Mayor Travis said that he thought we needed to look at that issue. Mayor Swain asked if there was a potential for grants for pads. Mr. Kopf said that CATS has received grants to improve stops in certain areas and has worked with towns during streetscape projects, as well as with the City of Charlotte on streetscape improvements. CATS has to be careful about putting a pad because there is a requirement for accessible paths. Just putting in a pad may not be compliant in all cases. The cost of new infrastructure is a pretty large cost along all our bus routes, so that must be taken into account. Mayor Swain said that we may want to have a discussion about having ADA access along the corridor, close to stops. Mayor Travis said that we need to have a conversation about encouraging ridership, so why not have stops where people can have a little bit of refuge. Mayor Swain said that some people who stand in the grass may have called to have service off the route, an option that needs to be publicized better.

Mr. Thunberg asked Bill Coxe if the Town of Huntersville could submit a project for building pads for Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) money through the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO). Mr. Coxe said those funds are for planning purposes only and cannot be used for construction. There are options for local entities to provide the ability to get to bus stops, the infrastructure, out of their own implementation funds. Mr. Thunberg said that a municipality that wanted to improve bus stops could work with CATS to develop a plan and apply for HUD money for that. Mr. Ferguson said that some areas have no bus stops; the stops were moved or eliminated in redevelopment. He asked if there could be a minimum number of stops per community. There is development happening now and sidewalks being built; Huntersville had some extra concrete and put a pad down itself. Some of the roads are not town roads; they are DOT roads. Mr. Jernigan said that where he lives at the intersection of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and North Davidson Street, the City allowed a developer to move the sidewalk further away from the road, which created a grass area to walk through to access the bus. He understands that there will be a pad there eventually, but it should have been required at the beginning because the stop currently does not meet code.

Mayor Woods thanked the speakers for their comments. He said that it was interesting to see how the budget funds are used.

**b. Title VI Service Equity Analysis**

**Arlanda Rouse**

Mr. Rouse, CATS Civil Rights Officer, said that he was going to talk about the Title VI Service Equity Analysis for the Gold Rush Red Line and the CityLYNX Gold Line. The Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. FTA has added income to the list. A few months ago, MTC passed a policy that defined a Major Service Change as a change to an existing bus or light rail route that affects more than 25 percent of daily revenue miles, eliminating an existing transit route without replacement and new service routes or changes in mode of transportation (as with moving from the bus-based Gold Rush to CityLYNX Gold Line). Mr. Rouse reviewed the steps in determining service equity and analysis. Demographic review of the CityLYNX Gold Line Phase 1 service area did not meet the threshold for minority or low income population proportions. However, further analysis revealed that the majority of the transit riders to Central Piedmont Community College were minorities. Service access analysis revealed both positive and negative impacts of the service change from the Gold Rush service to the CityLYNX Gold Line service. There are fewer CityLYNX Gold Line stops than Gold Rush stops, but all CityLYNX Gold Line stops will have covers, benches and art. Currently, only two Gold Rush stops have shelter.

The only significant negative in the service change is that headways for CityLYNX Gold Line will be three minutes longer than for Gold Rush, so there will be a three minute longer wait between CityLYNX Gold Line vehicles than for Gold Rush. CityLYNX Gold Line will run for longer hours and on weekends, and will remain fare free. The Service Equity Analysis was posted online from the end of April 2014 through December 31, 2014 and received no comments, nor did comments result from a public meeting held on March 4, 2015 at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Main Library. Staff has determined that although there may be a disproportionate percent of minority riders on the CityLYNX Gold Line, the overall impacts of the CityLYNX Gold Line's implementation are either positive or negligible.

**Discussion:** Mr. Messera said that the people who get off the rubber tire trolley from Johnson C. Smith University and get on CityLYNX Gold Line to Novant Hospital will have to change vehicles; Mr. Rouse agreed that they would need to transfer from one vehicle to another. Mr. Watson asked whether the fare free zone was part of compliance and asked what the expectation is for Phase 2 and 3. Mr. Rouse said that those would require separate equity analyses. Mr. Watson asked whether the risk of adding fares spoils the analysis. Mr. Rouse said that adding fares would be a negative impact and mitigation would have to be considered. There would need to be an analysis for the service and another analysis for the fare. If a fare was considered, there would probably be comments and ensuring that the minority service was not disproportionately impacted would be part of that analysis. Mr. Muth said that the intent when we add Phase 2 is that the local fare would be charged, with the ability to use that ticket as a transfer with full integration into the fare system.

**c. Proposed Route Changes**

**Pamela White**

Ms. White, CATS Manager of Service Development, said that the June service change includes proposals for some major route changes. CATS is experiencing limited budget growth, resulting in limited resources for increasing revenue hours. The long term financial

plan projects limited growth in revenue service hours, but demand is not limited; CATS has constant demand for other areas. CATS has to be innovative in taking advantage of opportunities, and evaluate the structure to make sure it still works for customers and that service is allocated to match demand.

Route 12 South Boulevard changes are proposed to improve service reliability, discontinue service in underutilized areas while maintaining access to the LYNX Blue Line Scaleybark Station and add service to Pressley Road.

Route 16 South Tryon Street proposed changes will allow CATS to eliminate service gaps along South Tryon Street and will provide access to Whitehall Commons as well as improve service reliability.

Route 53X Northlake Express is proposed for discontinued service for the underutilized reverse service, which carries only about three passengers a day. Those passengers will be able to use Route 7 Beatties Ford or request service deviation for Route 99 North Mecklenburg Village Rider as partial mitigation for their lost service.

Route 60 Tyvola/ SouthPark is proposed for discontinued service from the LYNX Blue Line Tyvola Station along Tyvola Road to SouthPark Mall. Five routes provide service to the SouthPark Community Transit Center. Riders currently take the first available bus from SouthPark to the rail station and back, so Route 30 Woodlawn and 57 Archdale will serve those needs.

Route 80X Concord Express service adjustments address the desires of the City of Concord to improve route efficiencies. The changes reduce the number of trips by two trips in the morning and in the evening but maintain the route's structure, improve service efficiency and maintain service reliability.

CATS staff held three public meetings about the changes on March 4, 12 and 17, and conducted 208 on-board surveys. In addition, customers completed 133 online surveys. TSAC heard this as an information item on March 12.

**Discussion:** None.

**IX. Chief Executive Officer's Report**

**John Muth**

Under the CEO's report, Mr. Muth discussed the following:

**a. Financial Report:**

Mr. Muth told MTC members that the February ridership report is in their agenda packet, as well as the sales tax monthly report. March was a stellar month, with sales tax receipts at \$8.4 million. This is about 10 percent over budgeted projections. Staff will continue to monitor sales tax receipts.

MTC members received a memo tonight that addresses Senate Bill 369, on local sales tax. The bill does not seem to include Article 43, which relates to transit sales tax.

**Discussion:** Mayor Swain asked whether the option for additional sales tax was included in SB 369. Mr. Thunberg said that the legislation included a rider that if a sales tax referendum

has not been defeated in a certain time period, an additional quarter-cent sales tax could be imposed without a sales tax. Mr. Muth agreed that under the bill, Mecklenburg County would have to hold a referendum for an additional quarter-cent sales tax, since the sales tax referendum last fall was defeated.

**b. Stand Up For Transportation:**

Krystal Green, CATS Public & Community Relations Manager, said that April 9 is Stand Up For Transportation Day, an action day designed by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to tell Congress to pass a long-term sustainable and reliable transportation funding bill. CATS is leading the charge locally for this day. At 11:30 a.m. on April 9, there will be a media event at Trade and Tryon Streets. CATS is working with elected officials and NCDOT and will be giving away t-shirts at the event. CATS will put ads on buses to make the public aware. Ms. Green asked MTC members to put the event on their calendars and plan to attend.

**Discussion:** Mayor Swain asked if this is in support of the GROW AMERICA bill. Ms. Green replied that this is more about the MAP-21 bill. Mr. Muth said that this could be an opportunity to combine them, but it is important to get reauthorization. This is less about what the bill needs to be, but more about the need for funding that is longer term than a six month continuing resolution. The Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization has also endorsed the action day. Mayor Swain suggested that Centralina Council of Governments be included and Ms. Green said she would make a note about that.

**c. Rodeos:**

The Maintenance Rodeo at the bus was held on March 21, 2015; the Operator Rodeo will be held on March 28, 2015. The Rail Rodeo will be held on April 18, 2015. Staff hopes to bring the winners to the April MTC meeting for recognition and more details. Mayor Swain said that she would like to see videos. Ms. Green said that she has many pictures, and Mayor Swain said that would be fine.

**X. Other Business**

Mr. Jernigan said that law enforcement officers park in front of the magistrate's office, affecting how the buses can move in and out of traffic during rush hour. He said that this is a problem during the evening rush hour between 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. It is supposed to be a designated area for buses to line up and go to the Transit Center. Officers could park further away and walk. He felt this should be reviewed so bus operators do not have to weave in and out of traffic. Mr. Muth said that it would be addressed.

**XI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m. by Mayor Woods.

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NEXT MTC MEETING: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2015, 5:30 P.M.