

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
Thursday May 14, 2009

PRESENT: Jenifer Falls, Huntersville
D Evans, Charlotte
Scott Jernigan, Charlotte
Terry Lansdell, Charlotte
Walt Horstman, Charlotte
Anthony Wesley, Charlotte
Don Carnahan, Cornelius
Rob Cornwell, Davidson
Rick Sanderson, Charlotte

STAFF: Vida Covington, Larry Kopf, Duretta Weicken, Pamela White, Olaf Kinard,
Dwayne Pelfrey, Lisa Flowers, Paul Renaud, Ramond Robinson, Don Ivey,
Theron Barrino,
Vince Brown, Dietrich Brown, Celia Gray, Rocky Paiano

MEETING TIME: 4:00-5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Approval of April Meeting Summary

Acting Chair Jenifer Falls called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed new member Rob Cornwell who will be representing the town of Davidson. The April meeting summary was then approved as written.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items

No Public comments were made.

III. Information Items:

A. Bylaws

Lisa Flowers

Lisa Flowers City Attorney Staff reviewed the current rules of procedures for TSAC, CTAG and MTC. Lisa recommended the committee elect a new chair to serve until the end of the calendar year. Attendance requirements and term limits for TSAC and CTAG were reviewed.

Larry Kopf recommended the committee elect a Chairperson to finish out the year.

Jenifer Falls asked the committee who was interested in finishing the Chair term. Rick Sanderson stated he was interested.

Anthony Wesley asked if the Vice Chair could act until the end of the year. Jenifer stated she was not interested in acting as Chair for the rest of the year.

Vida Covington asked if a new Chair and Vice Chair would then be elected in January 2010. Lisa answered yes.

The committee then voted Rick Sanderson as the newly appointed TSAC chair. Rick's term will start in June and run through December, when a new Chair would be elected.

The TSAC also voted to not meet in July.

The committee discussed the current bylaws but was undecided about bylaw specifics.

Don Carnahan suggested the committee wait for staff recommendations related to any decisions. The committee agreed. Lisa stated she will bring back the recommendations at the June meeting.

B. Van Pool Rate Increase

Dietrich Brown

Dietrich Brown vanpool manager presented a proposal for a 15% fare increase for the vanpool program which would begin if adopted in FY10. The last rate increase for vanpool was in 2005. The rate increase is designed to recoup more operating expenses, establish fares consistent with the rate of inflation, and include the vanpool program as part of the overall CATS fare policy. CATS staff will hold public meetings in June and will then present a final recommendation to TSAC and then to MTC for review.

Jenifer asked if the 15% fare increase would help vanpool break even with the budget. Dietrich stated van pool would need more to break even but felt the 15% was a reasonable fare increase without losing customer participation.

Don Carnahan asked if there was Federal funding that supports van pool budget. Dietrich stated there were no federal funds on the operating side, only federal funds on the Capital side for equipment.

Scott Jernigan asked what the percentage of fare increases is for buses. Olaf stated from 2005 until now about 25%. Scott stated he was in support of the 15% fare increase for vanpool.

Larry explained CATS wants to increase fares incrementally so that customers are not so shocked and burdened with the higher costs. Incorporating Vanpool into the overall fare policy would involve Vanpool in the small fare increases that normally occur every two years on bus, rail and STS.

Jenifer asked why CATS serves Winston Salem with vanpool when they have their own vanpool. Olaf explained when US air moved here they had asked CATS to provide vanpool for the employees that live in Winston Salem because of the salary they were making and back then CATS was about equal in vanpool price and our fleet was more reliable. Jenifer asked if we could just cut that service now to save costs. Olaf stated with the air quality issues it is better to continue the service for those that have to travel to and from Charlotte.

Dietrich stated CATS is currently letting people know Winston Salem has their own program and urging requests from Winston Salem to use that service.

C. Rapid Transit Line Color

Olaf Kinard

Olaf Kinard CATS marketing manager presented the committee with an update concerning the line colors associated with the Blue Line Extension and the North Corridor. CATS Staff recommends only one color for the service from Pineville to UNCC as two colors would confuse customers TSAC agreed that the service should be one color. The committee agreed with changing the North Corridor (purple line) to the Red line.

Terry Lansdell asked what color the new airport buses are. Olaf stated the new airport buses are green.

Walt Horstman stated he supports the decision of CATS on the colors.

Rick Sanderson stated it would be better to just change the color of a station instead at campuses than to change the whole line. And that he agreed the current line color should remain.

Rob Cornwell asked if TSAC was voting or just giving input on the line color change at this time. Olaf stated it was just input at this time. Rob continued saying that color themes may also be determined by other marketing sources not just colleges.

D. Evans asked if schools would help pay for any color changes. Olaf stated having the stations on campus will create ridership and that UNCC land will be free to CATS, so CATS probably would not be asking the school to pay.

D. Bus Wraps

Olaf Kinard

Olaf stated the motor speedway approached CATS with an interest for external bus wrap advertising on buses, so CATS staff met to discuss the pros and cons of a possible pilot program related to exterior bus wraps. Olaf stated he would like TSAC's opinion on a pilot program for bus wraps and CATS is awaiting a proposal from the speedway at this time. If the proposal is accepted CATS will take it to MTC for approval.

Terry stated he was against outside ads that he wanted to make clear he felt that years of branding should not be wasted in a few pennies for advertising on the outside of the buses but stated inside ads are ok and asked what the cost to CATS would be to have the bus wraps. Olaf stated the details were still being worked out. Terry stated if the buses travel at least a million miles a month the wraps should cost the customer more. Olaf stated other cities get 3 to 4 thousand dollars per bus and CATS is quoting the customer on the high end of that.

Jenifer stated she was in favor of having the wraps to make money for the system and it would help people know what's going on in the city.

Rob Cornwell asked who approves the quality of the ads on the wraps. Olaf stated he gives the first/final assessment. Rob stated even if there is a policy in place for the wraps they may still look bad or be in bad taste. Olaf stated for the pilot program execute not for profit ads only.

Walt stated the maintenance cost for the wraps might be a nightmare especially when ads are outdated.

After discussion, a straw vote for the bus wrap pilot program was taken of committee members resulting with 4 in favor of CATS implementing the pilot program, 4 against, and 1 abstained.

Olaf also gave a follow up to the request for LYNX late night service. Olaf stated if CATS did late night service until 2AM on Friday and Saturday nights only the cost would be around 68 to 70 thousand dollars a year. And at this time there have been no financial commitments.

Rick asked how running late night trains would impact maintenance. Rocky Paiano manager of light rail stated there would be no major impact as CATS would run only one car unless there was a demand for two cars like during a special event. Rick asked if the money comes in will it need to go to MTC or someplace else. Larry stated CATS has the right to add extra service without addressing MTC but if the money did come in we would definitely inform the MTC.

Jenifer asked if the money comes in does extra service just happen or is there a vote on it. Larry stated service would just start, no vote is needed. CATS would monitor the service and adjust if needed. Rick asked if the additional service would require more security. Olaf stated the cost of extra security was included in the quote for extra service.

IV. Chairman's Report

Jenifer Falls

There was no chairman's report; however Lisa wanted the committee to know the bill for nonsmoking on public grounds is on the desk of the Governor to sign and once signed will take effect January 2, 2010.

V. Interim Manager of Operations Report

Larry Kopf

The Operations and Service Issue were combined as follows.

Scott mentioned an incident with a mental health issue on a bus and how several customers were criticizing the driver for not doing anything. Scott stated the driver did the best she could do. Larry stated it was understandable that the driver needed to get help for the passenger and it may have caused some delay for other customers.

Walt stated there had been a lot of press about House Bill 148 and having more sales tax induced. Larry stated the purpose of House Bill 148 was to address congestion and would give surrounding counties the authority to levy a tax to support transit and originally Mecklenburg County was not included in the bill but City Council voted to make the State aware that there was a desire to include Mecklenburg County in this Bill.

Larry also addressed the public's concern about the Saturday service on Good Friday, CATS discussed Good Friday ridership and had found ridership was usually low on that day so because of budget concerns to save money CATS ran a Saturday service with expresses.

Vida Covington stated CATS is now able to participate in submitting projects for the Job Access Reverse Commute Federal grant program (JARC/ New Freedom). From 07/08 funds CATS was able to compete for selection and received \$400,000 dollars to help support the enhanced bus project, an extension project to the route 1 Mt. Holly with \$172,000 and for a pilot demo project to Concord Mills an express Saturday only service focusing on getting people to jobs and \$41,400.00 for this project. Vida continued saying non-profit organizations also can apply for these funds and Urban Ministries was selected to receive funds for purchasing a 14 passenger van and some bus passes. They received \$166,000 for their transportation needs. Vida continued saying the New Freedom projects which serve people with disabilities, CATS received a little over \$200,000 that will be used to install a navigational system for STS and to extend a signage project to assist the visually impaired. Also the Council on Aging will receive funds for a mobility connections project. All Projects are scheduled to start in 2009.

NEXT TSAC MEETING: THURSDAY JUNE 11, 2009 4:00 PM