

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
Thursday April 14, 2011

PRESENT: Rick Sanderson, Charlotte
Dee Evans, Charlotte
Terry Lansdell, Charlotte
Scott Jernigan, Charlotte
George Schaeffer, Charlotte
WALTER HORSTMAN, MATTHEWS
MARVIS HOLLIDAY, VAN POOL
CHRISTINE BRYANT, HUNTERSVILLE
ROB CORNWELL, DAVIDSON
MARVIS HOLLIDAY, VAN POOL
ANTHONY WESLEY, CHARLOTTE

STAFF: Theron Barrio, Duretta Weicken, Larry Kopf, Kirk Scott, Paulus Ford, Judy Dellert-O'Keef, Vince Brown, Gary Lee, Olaf Kinard, David Murphy

MEETING TIME: 4:00-5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Approval of the March Meeting Summary

Co-Chairman Terry Lansdell called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., the March meeting summary was approved as written.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items:

There was no comment from the public.

III. Action Item:

A. Reduction in Discounts

Olaf Kinard

Olaf Kinard CATS Marketing Manager stated because of the low level sales tax receipts CATS finance has asked if something could be done to generate revenue in regards to pass sales. Last month CATS presented proposed changes to Pass Sales and the Discount Programs to MTC. CATS' is asking TSAC to endorse a 5% reduction in the discount level to Employee

Transportation Coordinator Program (ETC) and the non-profit sales discount that would create a \$577,500 annual savings to CATS. Olaf stated the proposal will go back to MTC for approval in the April meeting.

Terry asked if CATS staff were selling tickets in the corporate facilities. Olaf stated CATS' does not have staff in corporate facilities but many facilities are cutting their expenses and employees are asked to use the online ticket sales. As an interim measure CATS is sending staff to those facilities once a week to sell passes but CATS wants to stop sending staff and encourage online ticket sales to cut costs. Terry asked if CATS lost sales volumes when discounts were reduced from 30 to 25%. Olaf stated he did not think so but it is hard to know with the recession but typically 5% does not affect those groups.

Christine Bryant asked if non-profit organizations were willing to negotiate the percentage of reduction for the discount program. Olaf stated not at all. Christine asked what percentage of the discount program are non-profits. Olaf stated about ½ to 1%. Larry stated there are more ETC sales than non-profits.

Walter Horstman asked if cash fares cost more in the long run with hidden expenses. Olaf stated yes cash fares cost more but there is still higher revenue per fare per customer fee.

Wesley asked what the national poverty level was. Olaf stated he believed it was somewhere around 12,000-15,000 dollars a year for a family of four.

Rob Cornwell asked how non-profit or ETC organizations sign up for the program. Olaf stated if you are a non-profit you must prove you are a non-profit serving poverty level customers. ETC can be any type of business that have a high level of employees that does not serve poverty level customers so what CATS gets is the push off of cash handling and we are allowed to do marketing within their business. Rob asked is it an assumption that non-profits will be hurt more by the reduction because of loss of income. Olaf stated typically non-profit clients are not buying the passes they are give away so this impacts their budget.

D. Evans stated the Goodwill industry has clients buy their passes.

Terry asked what the top three ETC programs are outside of non-profits. Olaf stated BOA, Wells Fargo, Duke Energy, and hospitalities are the top dollar wise.

Walt asked if sales tax increases to better levels would the 20% reduction go back up. Olaf stated he doubted the 20% would go back up.

There was a motion to endorse the proposed discount program reduction as is. The committee did not endorse. There was a second motion to endorse the proposed discount program if there was a reduction only to the ETC program and to make no change to the non-profits discount at this time. The Committee endorsed the second motion 5 yes and 1 no. The second motion passed to recommend to MTC.

IV. **Information Items:**

A. Mobility Management

Travis Pollack

Travis Pollack from Gannett Fleming spoke to the committee about a project he is working on that has been commissioned by the council on ageing to look at mobility management. Travis presented the committee with the existing mobility management challenges and proposed possible solutions that were discussed at a planned meeting with several Charlotte Mecklenburg area agencies that provide rides in the area.

Anthony Wesley asked if the current transit system was not working properly. Larry answered saying the current transit systems are not working efficiently as two different buses going to the same place or neighborhood at the same time are not coordinating service. If a workable plan that all agencies agreed to were developed the systems would coordinate services to better serve the county and the agencies would have better service overall.

D. asked if the meeting to manage mobility included all the providers within the Mecklenburg County and stated if all the agencies were not on the same page a better system could never be achieved.

Vince Brown stated it is not just Charlotte with the mobility management problem and it will take a collaborative effort of all the agencies to resolve the inefficiency.

Christine stated it is a very important issue to get resolved.

B. Open Discussion with Committee

Rick Sanderson

Rick opened the meeting up to committee members to discuss how they would like the meetings to be directed. What the committee would like to talk about. Did the committee want more field trips and what topics should be discussed. Rick asked if the committee wanted to keep CATS staff coming in and giving presentations, how to make the meetings more informative, interesting and to

give the members opportunities to be more involved and active in resolving transit system issues.

Rob stated he would like other areas where the committee can help bring items that will take those areas to the next level or have presentations that focus on bringing service related issues to the next level.

Rick stated one of the things discussed was to have different presentations of the corridors where committee members who are on those corridors could have participation in that presentation to give a natural riders perspective identifying particular problems and issues. Then discussing with CATS staff and the two could come up with ways to solve those issues that could be taken to MTC so the issues could get resolved.

Larry stated since TSAC gives endorsements to MTC perhaps the committee could be more involved in current projects such as the Independence corridor where access to that corridor will be changed. Larry suggested the committee could provide input to help make decisions on that corridor.

Rick asked the committee if anyone had any novel ideas for creating revenue for the system. Rick also suggested a system of "adopt a bus stop" where groups that use that shelter would maintain it which would reduce the cost to CATS. Rick also stated if the committee saw where there is a need for a bus stop perhaps a sponsor could be obtained for amenities. Rick stated these are the types of things the committee can discuss.

Christine stated she would be more encouraged if the committee could be more involved with the long range plans and maybe have a meeting between TSAC and that committee sometime.

Scott Jernigan stated he would like to have discussion meetings every fourth month to brainstorm ideas and determine where the committee is on issues.

D. stated she would like to see the committee involved with the core focus of handicap accessible bus stops.

Anthony stated he believe if late night service hours were extended on Fridays & Saturdays that ridership would increase. Larry stated the late trips have not produced the ridership needed to continue late night service.

Walt asked if the committee could have "hands on" how to use 336-ride and Ride Transit.org web-site and how those systems work.

V. Service Issues

All

Terry Lansdell stated that CATS bus number 618 has an exhaust problem and also bus 871 has some lights out.

Christine Bryant stated that the bus announcements on the 48X are working a lot better.

VI. Chairman's Report

Rick Sanderson

Chairman Rick Sanderson reported that the last MTC meeting spoke about the reduction of discounts and the Capital Budget for the next five years.

VII. Operations Report

Larry Kopf

Larry Kopf CATS Operations Manager updated the committee on ridership stating March was a good month with ridership up 4% overall and that revenue was up 2.3 million dollars in March. Larry continued saying that CATS 5310 grants have been approved and CATS is discussing where the funds will be distributed. Larry reminded the committee that the Union County Express bus is in danger of losing its subsidy and that CATS' has been able to get the fuel contract at a lower price of a rack rate.

Terry Lansdell asked if the TSAC committee could do anything to help the Union County express route. Larry stated anyone on the committee as a citizen can do what they want to help the route but CATS staff cannot do anything.

NEXT TSAC MEETING: THURSDAY MAY 14, 2011 4:00 PM