

TRANSIT SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting Summary
Thursday March 13, 2014

PRESENT:

Rick Sanderson, Charlotte
D. Evans Charlotte
Christine Bryant, Huntersville
George Schaeffer, Charlotte
Scott Jernigan, Charlotte
Mike Warner, Charlotte
Anthony Wesley, Charlotte
Walter Horstman, Matthews
Jean Veatch, Cornelius

STAFF: Theron Barrino, Larry Kopf, Pamela White, Paulus Ford, Darryl Frierson,
Austin Faulk, Brandy Decker, Dee Pereira, Olaf Kinard, Duretta Weicken

Meeting Time 4:00-5:30 PM

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

Chairman Rick Sanderson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., The January meeting summary was approved as written.

II. Public Comment on Agenda Items:

There was no one from the public to give comment.

III. Information Item

A. CATS budget update

Dee Pereira, CATS Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Director of Public Transit, spoke to the committee about some of the key MTC Financial policies, as well as an overview of the recommended programs and a review of the budget schedule. As a City department, CATS follows City policies of a two-year Operating budget and a five-year capital

program. Dee explained the proposed 20 cent base fare increase effective July 1, 2014 and that it is in compliance with the MTC approved CATS Financial and Fare Policies. Dee continued saying operations assistance from FTA (Federal Grants) and the State of North Carolina (Maintenance assistance) has been drastically reduced and CATS must sustain service through funds that are now available.

Olaf Kinard CATS Marketing and Communications Manager continued with the Fare comparison showing the cost of existing and proposed percentage of increase for each service. Olaf showed the committee how CATS compared to the US Transit industry chart from 1999-2012 cost per passenger mile and cost per passenger trip,

Rick asked if there is a reason why the fare formula is calculated differently for the weekly and monthly passes. Olaf stated that is the way it was set up from since before he was here. Larry Kopf stated another reason why we give the monthly pass a break in cost is because if someone is willing to commit to riding for the whole month we may typically want to give them a break.

Scott Jernigan stated he works with people that are living from pay check to pay check and don't have \$80 to purchase the monthly pass.

Rick asked if Smart Technology will take the place of the magnetic swipe system. Olaf stated CATS will keep the magnetic swipe and cash system to keep from having Title six issues as those riders typically don't have bank accounts.

Walter Horstman asked if other cities charge the same fare for light rail as CATS does. Olaf stated they do or they have zone bases or mileage based fares. Walter asked if CATS was comparing light rail figure to other city figures that don't have light rail. Olaf stated any system that has a zoned fare we look at it and see how the mileage compares with our 9.3 mile system. 9.3 miles is typically how far out our local and express go out. This is how we compare apples to apples.

Jean Veatch asked if the \$4 cost per passenger trip is the cost for the passenger. Olaf stated it is the costs for CATS to operate.

Christine asked what the key factors are that keep CATS fares higher than other systems. Olaf stated the other systems do not have the same size service area that CATS' has.

Walter expressed his concerns about CATS fare increases every two years saying the public isn't getting increases in pay to keep up and he felt it isn't fair to the people. Olaf stated going back the fare increase was very political and newly elected seats wanted to

Be noted as voting for a tax increase so for years there would be a long gap in increases then all of a sudden there would be a large increase and people would get very upset, now with the way we do it people know it's coming and the range in which the increase will be. There still are people who get upset but typically this is better absorbed to the public. Larry stated the fare revenue is one of CATS revenue streams and the budget is built on a several revenue streams and some revenue streams are going down. The fare is the revenue stream CATS has more control over while we have no control of the others that is why the percentage seems higher than other systems. Olaf stated in the last couple of years there has been a 9% drop in SMAT so there is less funds for CATS. In the past five years CATS has done a lot to reduce expenses and maintain service. John Muth stated if you are to look at other systems during the same time period you would see they had to take a double hit by increasing fares and reducing service. So one of the things CATS has tried to do is maintain our level of service. Dee reminded the committee that if CATS were to reduce service, funds from State & Federal would be curtailed. CATS must sustain service to receive funds.

Christine stated with the rising costs of everything if CATS could graphically show the public you are doing the best you can with the public's best interest showing a graph at the public meetings that shows how the fares are going up but so are the costs of everything.

Jean asked what percentage of revenue is loss at the fare box. Olaf stated if CATS was not using the 20 year old fare box system we could probably make up 2.8 million dollar gap. Jean asked when CATS would get the new fare boxes. Olaf stated it is in the works now with money in the budget and from grant money CATS is looking at implementation in about a year.

Rick asked if it was a normal practice to give out free transfers. Larry asked driver Mr. Barrino if driver are giving out free transfers, Mr. Barrino stated operators usually do not give out transfers with the unlimited ride pass.

A public hearing on the proposed fare increase is scheduled for March 26, 2014 in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center.

B. State of CATS

John Muth CATS Deputy Chief Executive Officer presented the committee with the 2013 overview of CATS saying the CEO's recommended budget continued the focus on: Advancing the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan within constrained financial resources. Providing mass transportation services which enhance mobility options and service equity for the community and maintaining a structurally balanced financial plan. John

stated the FY 2015 Operating budget and the FY 2015-FY2019 CIP were developed considering the potential impact of limited transit funding for CATS programs from reduced Federal Funding, Changes in the State programs and funding practices, and the need for appropriate legislation to allow for creative approaches in transportation funding. Going forward CATS budget and work plan focuses on balancing the budget within funding constraints, focusing emphasis on operating efficiencies, sustaining service levels and maintaining the quality of service and advancing the 2030 Transit Plan.

IV. Service Issues

Scott stated Route 43 & 20 along Park Road service is back to back and may want to look at the scheduled times. Also Route 43 at Sharon Road West train station on the inbound people are missing their bus. CATS might want to look at the train schedule. Larry stated CATs will look into both issues.

V. Chairman's Report

Rick stated he was unable to be at the last MTC meeting so he wanted Larry to tell the committee about MTC. Larry stated that MTC had several Action items, one of which was to adopt the equitable service change policy and to adopt change to Route 98 within that policy; both items were approved by the Committee. Other items were to allow MTS to use the lane to the Busway on Independence. MTC approved MTS use of the Busway. Then the MTC was presented the proposed Fare increase. Larry stated there would be a public meeting March 26 at the MTC meeting about the fare increase.

VI. Manager of Operation Report

Larry reminded the committee about the NCPTA conference coming to Charlotte April 7-11. Larry gave the committee a draft copy of the schedule explaining the sessions and attendees that will speak.

TSAC MEETING: THURSDAY APRIL 10, 2014