

**OneAthens Public Transportation Implementation Team**  
**October 4, 2007, Multimodal Transportation Center**

Team Members Present: Beth Gavrilles (Chair), John Devine (RDC), Butch McDuffie (ATS), Andrew Neighbors (ABHS), Alice Kinman (ACC Commission), Peggy Hackett (DHR), Dick Field (ACC Environmental Coordinator), Ron Hamlin (UGA Transit)

Present from the Community: Nicky Crew and Mary Crissle (Georgia Options)

Staff: Delene Porter

- I. Beth welcomed group and had Team review and approve minutes from September 30th.
- II. Georgia Options- Mary and Nicky shared that Georgia Options has money to buy an accessible van and is considering starting a car sharing program. Their goal is to support people with disabilities to have typical/spontaneous access to transportation.
- III. Team reviewed Local Transit Needs (See Appendix A)
  - A. Team recommended additions
    1. Outreach should include a recommendation for promotion of new routes
    2. Add a line that revenue will be recovered through the fare box
    3. Attach basic facts sheet so people know current hours (See Appendix B)
- IV. Regional update:
  - A. **Try Transit Day- AN AFTER ACTION REPORT ON THE OUTCOME**
    1. In order to determine why there was such a lack of ridership in the Try Transit Day – Sales Tax Holiday Transportation effort, I agreed to speak with three of the Managers of the DOT 5311 programs (Banks, Elbert, Greene) who had participated in the August 3, 2007 promotion to find out why. Another reason was to determine if there was a way the Try Transit promotion could be made more “consumer friendly” with a resulting increase in ridership and the participation.
    2. Various reasons were provided by each of the managers, but there was one basic underlying theme, the typical rural transit rider’s income is below the median level and they don’t shop at the mall. Some of the other ‘reasons’ are listed below:
      - No demand for trips to the mall or Athens
      - Riders Shop at the Dollar Stores, Big Lots or Fred’s
      - Riders typically do not plan trips for shopping.
      - A shopping trip to Athens would be a ‘spur of the moment’ event
      - The riders are shopping in other rural communities where it is cheaper
      - Plans for shopping would be changed by anything (minor or major).
      - Did not want to be in Athens without a ride
    3. All of the transit managers thought Try Transit was a good idea. Some would consider participating again with a little encouragement; other managers would take a little more. They all agreed that focusing the effort on shopping at the Mall, Wal Mart or other centers was probably not a good incentive, but they really could not articulate a different motivation that would be successful.

4. Team also discussed that Try Transit Day was such a different model than what is currently used- door to door
- B. Further defining “regional system” mission-**
1. Team discussed the need to further define what “Regional System” means for OneAthens- is it just to and from Atlanta? Or should ACC coordinate area transit trips but not provide them?
    - a. Expand/Establish coordination of existing systems or
    - b. Work with bus to and from Atlanta- Southeastern Stages?
  2. DHR has changed their view of regional- rather than provide transit, they help foster transit in counties
  3. Need area coordination- need other policy making entities at the table
  4. Need to hear from other counties- Southwest RDC- surrounding counties need to hear what benefit it would be to them
  5. The goal is to alleviate poverty- put more money back into the pockets of more low-wage workers by helping them access jobs without having a car
    - a. Focus on reliable transit to employers- include on outreach product
  6. Beth with draft report and email to team
- C. DHR Needs Assessment-** DHR is conducting a needs assessment to ascertain the “unmet” transit needs of DHR clients. Results may help with increased funding. Peggy went over survey and will report back as results come in.
- D. Email Alert for Legislative Action-**
1. Team approved idea of creating a listserv for action alerts on legislative action related to Transportation
  2. List could start with the PPA Transit committee emails, PPA co-conveners, and BikeAthens
  3. GTA has approved their legislative agenda- could GTA’s lobbyist be the one who watches for bills and actions?
  4. Could possibly have a Legislative Breakfast as well- during the December 12-14 GTA Annual meeting in Athens
  5. Need to connect with other Associations of Transit Advocates (Georgia Association of Transit Advocates)
- V. Next steps:**
- A. Next Meeting will be on Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:30am at the Multimodal Transportation Center.
  - B. We will try to set up conference calls with Southwest RDC and McIntosh Trail at 9 and 9:45

## APPENDIX A:

### Draft OneAthens Transportation Implementation Team: Transit Needs

This document is based upon the recommendations of the PPA Transportation Subcommittee and the Athens Transit System's Transit Development Plan (TDP). The OneAthens Transportation Implementation Team found that the PPA recommendations and the TDP are closely aligned. This is not too surprising, since the input of transit users was critical in crafting both documents.

We have made an effort to estimate operating and capital costs associated with each of these recommendations. The operating costs include fuel, salary and benefits, service and maintenance of vehicles, and inflation. Also, note that SPLOST 2005 included \$1.8 million to serve as local match for transit vehicles. This will allow ATS to purchase 1 – 2 buses per year for the next 10 years. We assumed no costs to Athens-Clarke County for advocacy efforts.

#### Routes:

1. Increase frequency of 2 fixed routes per year, until all routes operate at a minimum of once every 30 minutes. Note that increases in fixed route service include proportional increases in "The Lift" paratransit service and supporting staff.

*Approximate cost to ACC:*

*Operating expenses:* \$250,000 for 2 routes per year, increasing by 4-6% annually for out years;

*Capital expenses:* \$120,000 (Local Match) from SPLOST funds for 2 routes in the first year (this is the 10% required local match; most of the capital cost is covered by federal and state funds;) \$350,000 per bus (100% costs) for each route added in out years, above the two buses currently programmed annually.

2. Begin early morning service (starting at 5 am) and create Sunday and holiday service. Note that increases in fixed route service include proportional increases in "The Lift" paratransit service.

*Approximate cost to ACC:*

*Operating expenses:* \$250,000 for the first year, increasing by 4-6% annually for out years.

*Capital expenses:* none, other than currently programmed capital maintenance.

3. Increase the operating hours of "The Link" to match those of fixed route service.

*Approximate cost to ACC:*

*Operating expenses:* \$250,000 for first year, increase by 4-6% annually for out years.

*Capital expenses:* none, if only two current vehicles are used, other than currently programmed capital maintenance.

4. Increase the service area of "The Link" to county-wide.

*Approximate cost to ACC:*

*Operating expenses:*

*Capital expenses:* \$400,000 to add 4 vans in the first year, if ACC must pay the entire

cost. ATS could apply for federal funds to cover 80% of the cost, and state funds to cover 10%, so if additional capital funding is approved the actual cost to ACC is likely to be \$40,000 ; vans are 5-year life cycle vehicles.

### **Outreach:**

1. Develop and implement a Marketing and Public Awareness program with paid staff, targeted to help identified segments of the population. Specific outreach programs should include:
  - A. Develop a Community Outreach program that will work with employers, community groups, and service providers on discounted pass sales and teach staff “Travel Training/Trip Planning.”
  - B. Allow agencies like East Athens Development Corporation and Hancock Community Development Corporation to administer program to purchase and distribute discounted passes to clients with verified need.

Approximate cost to ACC:

Operating expenses: *\$75,000 annually (\$50,000 salary and benefits and \$25,000 in additional marketing expenses above current annual marketing budget of \$30,000)*

Capital expenses: *none*

2. Explore outdoor advertising on buses, bus shelters, and trash receptacles at shelters as a source of revenue to cover the entire marketing budget and other operating expenses.

*Approximate cost to ACC:*

*Operating expenses: none*

*Capital expenses: none*

New Revenue: Estimated \$75-100,000 annually.

### **Advocacy:**

1. Continue to pursue additional and alternative funding sources at the local, state, and federal level for expansion of all transportation services.
2. Encourage local elected officials to discuss regional transportation options at the policy-maker level.
3. Encourage local elected officials and business leaders to lobby our federal delegation for increased federal operating funds for transit.

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **Athens Transit System Department Fact Sheet**

**November 13, 2006**

Department: Transit  
Number of Employees: 68

Divisions: Administration, Operations and Maintenance

Location(s): Multi-Modal Transportation Center, 775 East Broad Street, 613-3432

Operations and Maintenance Facility, 325 Pound Street, 613-3434

Over 80 bus shelters and approximately 500 bus stops throughout Athens-Clarke County.

New Multimodal Transportation Center on the Hickory Street Extension just off East Broad Street, adjacent to the rail corridor and the Classic Center parking deck. Parking is available on the first level of the parking deck, with access via the pedestrian bridge on the second level over the rail corridor.

Operations and Maintenance Facility, 325 Pound Street

#### **Services Delivered:**

Administration Division has 4 employees which provide leadership, management, transit planning and administrative support to the Operations and Maintenance divisions.

Operations Division has 50 plus employees providing over 60,000 hours of public transit services annually on three modes of transit, 1) "The Bus" the fixed-route bus service on 17 routes with 28 accessible transit buses, 2) "The Lift" a 'curb to curb' paratransit service offered within one-mile of the fix-route services, with 3 assessable vans and 3) "The Link" a general public demand response circulator service in the rural areas of western and northeastern Athens-Clarke County with 2 accessible vans.

Maintenance Division has 10 employees responsible for the daily maintenance, repair and servicing of over thirty transit vehicles and support vehicles which operate in excess of 660,000 miles per year.

#### **Brief Description of:**

- New Projects
  - Evening service from 7-11 PM, Mon-Sat nights on 8 routes provided with 6 buses, service started in August 2006 and currently is providing an average of 6000 passenger trips per month

- Pending Projects:
  - 2 million dollars, Bus Stop improvement program providing new shelters, benches and other amenities making transit more customer friendly throughout Athens-Clarke County
  - Splosted 2005 Vehicle Replacement programs
  - Splosted 2005 Bus Stop Improvements programs
  - Bus Wash facility improvements
- Future Projects:
  - Proposed expansion of services, increased frequency of operations, later hours of service, and service into all areas of Athens-Clarke County
- Recently Completed Projects:
  - 10 million dollar, New Multimodal Transportation Center, under construction on East Broad Street, adjacent to the rail corridor and the Classic Center parking deck.
  - Phase I, bus stop improvement program, 20 new bus shelters and 60 improved level 1 bus stops
  - Vehicle replacements, purchase 9 new transit coaches, 3 new assessable vans, 1 supervisor vehicle
  - Facility storm-water improvements and porous pavement project at Maintenance facility.

## MISSION

The mission of the Athens Transit System is to exhibit excellence in all aspects of transportation services we provide to the citizens of Athens-Clarke County. As a dedicated group of professionals, we value and support our customers and fellow employees, and are committed to the provision of our services in a safe, courteous, timely and efficient manner.

## **GOALS**

### **Fixed Route Service – “The Bus”**

- Provide safe, timely transit services to our community and a safe service environment for customers and employees.
- Provide a safe, friendly environment for our customers and employees.
- Ensure that safe, clean, well-maintained vehicles are available to operate all trips as scheduled.
- Achieve a high level of rider satisfaction and an on-time performance rate that exceeds 95%.
- Maximize fare revenue, while providing economical services.
- Limit the cost of providing service by generating more revenue.
- Increase community awareness and encourage use of available transit service.
- Implement innovative route and scheduling methods to reduce cost and promote increased ridership.

### Demand Response Paratransit Service – “The Lift”

- Limit the increasing cost of providing service by ensuring only qualified individuals are permitted to use the service.
- Achieve a high level of rider satisfaction and an on-time performance rate that exceeds 95%.
- Optimize scheduling to effectively utilize resources.
- Implement innovative route and scheduling methods to reduce cost and promote increased Ridership.

### Rural Circulator / Demand Response Service—“The Link”

- Increase Ridership on Circulator service in the rural areas of western and northeastern Athens-Clarke County
- Effectively utilize resources.
- Implement innovative route and scheduling methods to reduce cost and promote increased Ridership.

## OBJECTIVES

### Fixed Route Service - “The Bus”

- Decrease collision accidents per 100,000 miles to 2.5.
- Improve on-time performance to 95%.
- Increase miles between road failures to 6,000.
- Increase annual ridership and revenue by 2.5%.

### Demand Response - “The Lift”

- Control the escalating costs of paratransit service through demand management by screening applicants and scheduling vehicle trips by zones.
- Increase passengers per hour to 2.0.

### Rural Circulator / Demand Response Service—“The Link”

- Control the escalating costs of service through increased Ridership
- Increase passengers per hour to 2.0.

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
The Bus					
Total Fixed-Route Ridership	1,046,097	1,447,436	1,593,627	1,324,437	1,484,162
Passengers Per Hour	21.75	25.22	29.83	30.92	26.34
Revenue Per Passenger	\$0.65	\$0.61	\$0.64	\$0.60	\$0.73
The Lift					
Demand Response Ridership	11,424	10,152	10,320	9,361	9,906
Passengers Per Hour	1.73	1.72	1.75	1.54	1.82
Revenue Per Passenger	\$1.99	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$1.91	\$2.37
The Link				FY05	FY06
Rural Circulator Ridership	NA	NA	NA	5468	5986
Passengers Per Hour				1.32	1.53
Revenue Per Passenger				\$0.83	\$0.83
Farebox Ratio for All Services	26%	35%	33%	39%	40%