

**GREENSBORO TRANSIT AUTHORITY
GTA OPERATIONS/MAINTENANCE FACILITY & ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
TRAINING ROOM
223 WEST MEADOWVIEW ROAD
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING - GTA SERVICE AND FARE POLICY CHANGES
FEBRUARY 6, 2014**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Lawrence Mann, GTA Board Chair, Co-Chair
Mayor Nancy Vaughan
Council Person Jamal Fox
Council Person Marikay Abuzuaiter
Anthony Barksdale
Larsina Johnson, RAC Chair

CITY/GTA STAFF PRESENT/GUESTS

Libby James Donna Woodson
George Linney Anthony Hayes
Kevin Elwood Burley Wilkins
Adam Fischer
David Parrish, CMO
Sharon Smiley
Claire Stone, GTA Board Member
Paul Clark, Rhino Times
Reporter Kim Wynne, WGHP Fox 8
Brenda Barksdale
Kenny Crawford

Welcome

Adam Fischer welcomed everyone, including riders Larsina Johnson and Artis Barksdale.

Libby James indicated that she was standing in for Chair Mann who was running late. The meeting began with an overview of the transit services presented by George Linney.

Overview of Transit Services

a. Fixed Route Services

George Linney stated that the Greensboro Transit Authority is the public transportation provider in the City of Greensboro and the surrounding areas. GTA operates 16 daytime routes during the weekdays, 15 evening and Saturday routes, 1 connector route on weekdays and Saturdays and 7 daytime routes on Sundays. Weekday daytime service hours are 5:15 am to 6:30 pm and evening hours are 7:30 pm to 11:30 pm. Saturday daytime service hours are 6:00 am to 6:00 pm and evening hours are 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Sunday daytime service hours are 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. GTA operates everyday excluding New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. GTA operates on Holiday (Saturday) schedule on Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day. GTA operates on a 30-min frequency on 14 routes weekdays from 6:00 am to 6:30 pm. All other times, the routes are on a 60-min frequency.

In partnership with the local colleges and universities, GTA also operates the HEAT (Higher Education Area Transportation) service. The local partners are University of North Carolina at Greensboro, North Carolina A&T State University, Bennett College and Elon University School of Law. GTA operates 4 HEAT routes on weekdays, 2 HEAT routes on Saturdays and 1 HEAT route on Sundays. GTA operates HEAT services 39 weeks out of a year (Fall Semester and Spring Semester).

Route #1, W. Wendover Ave., operates primarily on Friendly Ave./Market St., Aycock St., Spring Garden St., and W. Wendover Ave. Buses operate every 30 minutes. The major destinations are UNC-G, Wal-Mart, Target, Super K-Mart, Social Security Administration and Strayer University (Koger Blvd.). The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 3 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 2 buses on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 278,218 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 5th highest ridership, 35,251 annual passenger trips on evening and carries the 4th highest ridership.

Route #2, Four Seasons, operates primarily on Spring Garden St./Walker Ave., Tate St., Lee St., Glenwood Ave., Florida St., Vanstory Ave., Four Seasons Blvd., Vandalia St., Creekridge Rd., Koury Blvd., and High Point Rd. The major destinations are UNC-G, Greensboro College, Four Seasons Town Centre, Coliseum Shopping Center, Industries of the Blind, and Greensboro Public Library Glenwood Branch. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 219,201 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 7th highest ridership, 32,820 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 5th highest ridership.

Council Person Sharon Hightower asked if an additional bus is used to help alleviate the overcrowding.

George Linney stated that additional buses are used and occasionally a van would be used depending on the severity of the overcrowding and the information received from the operator.

Route #3, N. Elm St., operates primarily operates on North Elm St., Pisgah Church Rd. and Church St. The major destinations are Moses Cone Hospital, Greensboro Kidney Center, Greensboro Mental Health Dept., New Bridge Bank Park, Golden Gate Shopping Center and North Elm Village Shopping Center. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 257,216 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 6th highest ridership, 29,117 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 5th highest ridership.

Route #4, Benbow/Willow Rd., operates primarily on MLK Jr. Dr., Julian St., S. Benbow Rd., E. Florida St., Willow Rd., Rotherwood Rd., Alamance Church Rd., Bothwell St., Ardmore Dr., Pear St., and Lee St. The major destinations are Kindred hospital, Guilford Health Care Center, Alamance Church Rd. and Greensboro Public Library Vance Chavis Branch. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 167,866 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 12th highest ridership, 20,428 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 12th highest ridership.

Route #5, Gorrell St., operates primarily on Gorrell St., McConnell Rd., Banner Ave., Holts Chapel Rd., Franklin Blvd., Lowdermilk St., Apache St. and English Ave. The major destinations are Bennett College, Windsor Recreation Center and Greensboro Public Library Vance Chavis Branch. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 197,924 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 9th highest ridership, 24,260 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 9th highest ridership.

Route #6, Summit Ave., operates primarily on Summit Ave., Textile Dr., Yanceyville St., 16th St., Cone Blvd. and McKnight Mill Rd. The major destinations are Wal-Mart (Pyramid Village), Northeast Shopping Center, Bell House, Dept. of Social Services, American Red Cross, Greensboro Public Library

(Main Branch) and the Cultural Arts Center. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 375,240 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 2nd highest ridership, 42,988 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 2nd highest ridership.

Route #7, Friendly Ave., operates primarily on Friendly Ave., Elam Ave., Green Valley Rd. and Grandview Rd. (Friendly Center). The major destinations are Friendly Shopping Center, Wesley Long Hospital, Guilford College, Friends Home West and Greensboro College. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 151,718 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 14th highest ridership, 17,104 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 15th highest ridership.

Route #8, Battleground Ave., operates primarily on Friendly Ave./Market St., Westover Terr., Battleground Ave., Cotswold Terr. and Old Battleground Ave. The major destinations are Wal-Mart at Cotswold and Battleground Ave., Women's Hospital of Greensboro, several shopping centers along Battleground Ave. and Guilford Courthouse National Military Park. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 183,117 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 10th highest ridership, 21,908 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 10th highest ridership.

Route #9, W. Market St., operates primarily on Friendly Ave./Market St., Swing Rd. and Guilford College Rd. The major destinations are UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro Veteran Center, Golden Living Center – Starmount and Greensboro College. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 175,603 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 11th highest ridership, 21,608 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 11th highest ridership.

Route #10, E. Market St., operates primarily on E. Market St., Pine St., Holts Chapel Rd., Franklin Blvd., Huffine Mill Rd., Penry St., and Phillips Ave. The major destinations are NCA&T State University, Division of Motor Vehicles, K-Mart Distribution Center, GTCC Wendover Campus, Greensboro Public Library (McGirt-Horton Branch) and Peeler Recreation Center. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 347,188 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 3rd highest ridership, 41,990 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 3rd highest ridership.

Route #11, High Point Rd., operates primarily on Lee St., High Point Rd., Farmington Dr. and Merritt Dr. The major destinations are Industries of the Blind, Greensboro Coliseum Complex, War Memorial Auditorium, Four Seasons Town Centre, GTCC Jamestown Campus (Weekdays only) and Urban Ministries. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 3 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 338,911 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 4th highest ridership, 29,294 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 6th highest ridership.

Route #12, Randleman Rd./S. Elm-Eugene St., operates primarily on Eugene St., Whittington St., Ashe St., Randleman Rd., S. Elm-Eugene St., Vandalia Rd., Mobile St., Freeman Mill Rd. and Florida St. The major destinations are Urban Ministries, Goodwill Industries, Employment Security Commission, J. Edward Kitchen Operations Center, GTA Operations/Maintenance Facility and Administration Offices and Wal-Mart on Elmsley (evenings only). The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on

Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 391,842 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 1st highest ridership, 52,672 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 1st highest ridership.

Council Person Sharon Hightower asked how long it takes for a bus to complete a route.

George Linney stated that generally it takes an hour to complete a route, 30 minutes out and 30 minutes in, except for Routes #1 and #11 which take 1 ½ hours to complete.

Route #12A, SouthTown Connector, operates primarily on S. Elm-Eugene St., Meadowview Rd., Elmsley Dr., Randleman Rd., Vandalia Rd., Osborne Rd., Holden Rd. and Glendale Dr. The major destinations are GTA Operations/Maintenance Facility and Administration Offices, Wal-Mart on Elmsley, Ashley Square, Benchmark Square, Greensboro Public Library (Hemphill Branch), Holden Crossing and Randleman Market. The frequency of service is hourly using 1 bus during the weekdays and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 68,006 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 16th highest ridership.

Anthony Barksdale stated that the dead wait time for the connector bus at Home Depot is regularly 20 minutes and shouldn't take that long.

George Linney stated that staff would monitor.

Route #13, Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., operates primarily on Eugene St., Whittington St., MLK Jr. Dr., Alamance Church Rd. and Willow Rd. The major destinations are Urban Ministries, Goodwill Industries, Alamance Square Shopping Center, Guilford Health Center and Benbow Professional Center. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using one bus on evenings and hourly service using one bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 159,038 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 13th highest ridership, 17,397 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 13th highest ridership.

Route #14, Bessemer/Phillips Ave., operates primarily on Murrow Blvd., Lindsay St., Bessemer Ave., English St., Phillips Ave., Tucker St. and Textile Dr. The major destinations are NCA&T State University, Guilford County Health Dept., Greensboro Public Library (McGirt-Horton Branch), Peeler Recreation Center, Old War Memorial Stadium, Farmers Market and the Greensboro Historical Museum. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using 1 bus on evenings and hourly service using 1 bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 206,221 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 8th highest ridership, 27,306 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 8th highest ridership.

Route #15, Yanceyville St./Brightwood School Rd., is a fairly new route and operates primarily on Church St., Summit Ave., Yanceyville St., Lee's Chapel Rd., Brightwood School Rd., Cone Blvd. and 16th St. The major destinations are Greensboro Public Library (Main Branch), Children's Museum, Dept. of Social Services, American Red Cross, Craft Recreation Center, Brightwood School, Cove Creek Gardens, Wal-Mart at Pyramid Village, Bell House and Hospice of Greensboro. The frequency of service is every 30 minutes using 2 buses during the weekdays, hourly service using one bus on evenings and hourly service using one bus on Saturdays. The ridership for FY2013 was 119,558 annual passenger trips on weekdays/Saturdays and carries the 15th highest ridership, 17,567 annual passenger trips on evenings and carries the 13th highest ridership.

Route #17, Lawndale Dr., operates primarily on Eugene St., Battleground Ave., Lawndale Dr. and Smith St. The major destinations are Greensboro Mental Health Dept., New Bridge Bank Park, Women's

Hospital and the Natural Science Center. The frequency of service is hourly using 1 bus during the weekdays (6:00 am – 8:00 am and 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm). The ridership for FY2013 was 19,087 annual passenger trips on weekdays and carried the 17th highest ridership.

Anthony Barksdale asked if there are plans to extend bus service to the New Garden Rd. area and further along Battleground Avenue because of all the new businesses in that area. George Linney stated that there have been requests to extend service along Battleground Ave.

Anthony Barksdale stated that extending Route #17 and increasing the ridership on that route it could cover those areas and be profitable. Adam Fischer stated that the fares only cover 20-25% of the cost of the services so extending service would require outside funding.

Council Person Sharon Hightower asked how new routes are created. George Linney stated that the first step would be to receive a request for a new route and then questionnaires are sent out to the community to determine possible ridership. Next, the proposed route will be timed using a City bus to make sure the turns can be made.

Adam Fischer stated that another thing considered is the number of passengers per hour and the average productive route is 30 passengers per hour.

Route #21, Summit Ave./N. Elm St., operates primarily a combination of daytime routes #6 and #3. The major destinations are Wal-Mart at Pyramid Village, Northeast Shopping Center, Bell House, North Elm Village Shopping Center and Moses Cone Hospital. The frequency of service is hourly using 1 bus and the ridership for FY2013 was 28,360 annual passenger trips on Sunday and carries the #1 highest ridership.

Route #22, E. Market St./Bessemer/Phillips Ave., operates primarily a combination of daytime routes #10 and # 14. The major destinations are NCA&T University, Division of Motor Vehicles, K-Mart Distribution Center, GTCC Wendover Campus, Greensboro Public Library (McGirt-Horton Branch), Peeler Recreation Center, Old War Memorial Stadium, Farmers Market and the Greensboro Historical Museum. The frequency of service is hourly using 1 bus and the ridership for FY2013 was 21,391 annual passenger trips on Sundays and carries the 4th highest ridership.

Route #23, Gorrell St./Benbow Rd./MLK Jr. Dr., operates primarily a combination of daytime routes #4, #5 and #13. The major destinations are Bennett College, Windsor Recreation Center, Greensboro Public Library (Vance Chavis Branch) and Guilford Health Care Center, Alamance Church Rd. The frequency of service is hourly using 1 bus and the ridership for FY2013 was 17,218 annual passenger trips on Sundays and carries the 6th highest ridership.

Route #24, Randleman Rd./S. Elm-Eugene St., operates primarily a combination of daytime routes #12. The major destinations are Urban Ministries, Goodwill Industries, Employment Security Commission, J. Edward Kitchen Operations Center, GTA Operations/Maintenance Facility and Administration Offices and Wal-Mart on Elmsley Dr. The frequency of service is hourly using 1 bus and the ridership for FY2013 was 25,740 annual passenger trips on Sundays and carries the 2nd highest ridership.

Route #25, Four Seasons/High Point Rd., operates a combination of daytime routes #2 and #11. The major destinations are UNC-G, Greensboro College, Four Seasons Town Center, Coliseum Shopping Center, Industries of the Blind, Greensboro Public Library Glenwood Branch, Greensboro Coliseum Complex and War Memorial Auditorium. The frequency of service is hourly using one bus and the ridership for FY2013 was 22,104 annual passenger trips on Sundays and carries the 3rd highest ridership.

Route #26, W. Wendover Ave./Friendly Ave., operates primarily a combination of daytime routes #1, #9 and #7. The major destinations are UNC-G, Greensboro College, Wal-Mart, Target, Super K-Mart and Friendly Shopping Center. The frequency of service is hourly using one bus and the ridership for FY2013 was 19,983 annual passenger trips on Sundays and carries the 5th highest ridership.

Route #27, Battleground Ave./Friendly Center, operates primarily a combination of daytime routes #8 and #7. The major destinations are Wal-Mart at Cotswold and Battleground Ave., Women's Hospital of Greensboro, several shopping centers along Battleground Ave., Guilford Courthouse National Military Park and Friendly Center. The frequency of service is hourly using one bus and the ridership for FY2013 was 16,059 annual passenger trips on Sundays and carries the 7th highest ridership.

George Linney stated that the top three longest routes are Route #11, #8 and #26.

Adam Fischer stated that passes are available for any committee member wishing to ride the routes.

Mayor Vaughan asked Libby James if she had been contacted by the school system as far as partnering with the magnet schools since they've decided to no longer provide bus service.

Libby James stated that she had not been contacted by the school system. George Linney stated that he had been contacted in a previous year by the school system in relation to school locations in order to provide the students with another option.

Mayor Vaughan asked if the bus could be stopped at any location, or if it had to be at a designated stop.

George Linney stated that the buses are equipped with a pull cord to let the driver know a stop has been requested and the bus will stop at the next designated bus stop.

An Overview of transit services handout is attached and referenced herein.

b. SCAT Services

Sharon Smiley stated that each public entity operating a fixed route system is required to provide paratransit or other special service to individuals with disabilities that is comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system.

An eligible individual is defined as: 1) any individual with a disability who is functionally unable, as the result of a physical or mental impairment, to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on the system; 2) any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device to board, ride, or disembark; 3) any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition.

SCAT is the ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for the City of Greensboro. One may be eligible for the SCAT service if they have a disability that prevents them from using GTA's fixed route bus services.

The regulations use the following six service criteria to define what comparable service is: service area, response time, fares, days and hours, trip purpose and capacity constraints.

ADA Paratransit services must be provided, at a minimum, in all areas that are within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of a non-commuter fixed route bus route. The reservation hours are the same as administrative hours and reservations are taken up to the close of business on the day before. The fares are no more than twice

the full, non-discounted fixed route fare for similar trips. Fares charged to elderly persons, persons with disabilities and individuals with a medicare card during non-peak hours must not exceed ½ the rate charged to others during peak hours. Base fare on SCAT is the same as the base fare on fixed route. Free fare on fixed route services allowed for eligible SCAT riders. GTA extends one half the adult base fare on fixed route to persons 60 or older. GTA extends one-half the adult base fare to Medicaid card holders, and offers discounted passes, including two unlimited ride passes on fixed route. The days and hours are considered the first pick-up and the last drop-off of a non-commuter fixed route schedules and SCAT must operate during the same days and hours. There should be no trip purpose or priorities for non-subscription trips because there is no prioritization of trips by purpose on fixed route. Priorities can be set, however, for subscription trips *only*.

Mayor Vaughan asked Ms. Smiley to define a subscription trip.

Sharon Smiley stated that a subscription trip is a standing order trip, which is provided to riders traveling to and from the same origin and destination on the same day of week and at the same time.

There should be no trip caps or waiting lists for non-subscription trips and there should be no pattern or practice of a substantial number of trip denials, missed trips, late trips, or excessively long trips.

The SCAT complementary paratransit service either meets or exceeds the minimum ADA requirement in all areas, despite the fact that GTA offers city-wide ADA service. SCAT's on-time performance remains above the 90 percentile. GTA has managed to maintain the service levels during tough budget periods. Greater demand for the service, however, is making it increasingly difficult to provide the SCAT service at the same level the public has grown to expect.

Adam Fischer stated that SCAT is a very complex system to run from a logistics standpoint because every day there are hundreds of trips and the routes are constantly being changed. Also the services are currently out for bid as the contract expires at the end of the year. One of the things changed in the proposal is that the SCAT service provider will not be paid on an hourly basis, but instead will be paid on a per trip basis, which could equal some cost savings.

Service and Fare Policy Changes

a. Ridership and Revenue Impact

Libby James discussed the impact of the proposed service and policy changes. The service change being considered is a 15.7% reduction in services which will equal about a \$1.5 million annual savings. What makes up this option is combining routes #4 and #5 which is Benbow Rd./Willow Rd. and Gorrell St. Also it would involve changing the frequency on 4 of the weekday routes from every half hour to hourly. The number of Sunday routes would be increased from 7 to 10 which would allow them to mirror the weekday and evening routes. Overall loss of ridership would be 145,000 passenger trips with this option, \$83,000 loss in revenue and \$100,000 loss in federal subsidies.

Claire Stone asked if the loss in federal subsidies would be because of the drop in ridership. Libby James stated that that was correct.

Council Person Sharon Hightower asked if this option included increasing the rate. Libby James stated that the fare rate would go from \$1.50 to \$1.75 and this increase would generate an additional \$300,000 in revenues, which is based on the increase going into effect July 1st.

Council Person Sharon Hightower asked if the fare increase would cause a drop in ridership. Libby James stated that studies have shown that on average, there is a 4% loss in ridership with any fare increase.

Council Person Jamal Fox stated that he does not see the benefit for the community with the options being considered and that there has to be other options.

Council Person Mary Kay Abzuwaiter asked if anything had been heard from Veolia about reducing their charges. Adam Fischer stated that it would not be known until the bid is received from Veolia and that the drivers are a unionized work force.

Burley Wilkins stated that Veolia faces the challenge of managing other systems and they must consider their overall cost.

Council Person Mary Kay Abzuwaiter asked if it has been considered making some of the 30 minute routes into 45 minute routes. Adam Fischer stated that 4 routes have been identified that would be impacted the least to reduce service from 30 minutes to 1 hour during the midday.

Anthony Barksdale stated that the public should be made aware of the availability of an all-day pass.

Larsina Johnson, RAC Chair, asked why the City of Greensboro was not eligible for the Medicaid dollars that Winston-Salem's transit system received. Libby James stated that Guilford County receives the Medicaid dollars.

Adam Fischer stated that another issue with the Winston service is that they don't provide the level of service that Greensboro does. He pointed out that there are other options on the table that would take council or legislative action to pursue. In the bigger picture for the region as in Charlotte and South Carolina, sales tax supports public transportation.

Council Person Sharon Hightower stated that if the rate is raised, an efficient service should go along with that.

Mayor Vaughan stated that there are things being looked at as far as partnering with the County. It was clarified that about 80% of the cost for GTA is being subsidized.

Claire Stone stated that of the 4.5 million rides, many of those are for employment. GTA is not a profit maker, but a service for the community.

Council Person Sharon Hightower stated that most of the money is lost on SCAT and that some of the Medicaid money should be available.

Libby James stated that to clarify, GTA gets reimbursed by the County for a handful of Medicaid eligible trips that fall during certain times of the day that are done for the county. David Parrish stated that with increased revenue, there would be an increased expectation of service.

Claire Stone stated that another aspect of working with the County is not necessarily combining service, but also that a referendum has to be started at the County level.

Public Education Campaign

a. Public Meeting Schedule

Libby James stated that the public input is an important and valuable piece of the process and will be a major factor in the final recommendation that comes out of this steering committee. The customers and stakeholders will react strongly to the potential service and fare policy changes that will be

recommended by the committee. The question will be asked why a successful city service that is being increasingly used by the public is being targeted for changes and reductions and that any proposal related to the SCAT fare will be extremely sensitive. So it is critical that the community knows all the facts as the Board knows them. A copy of the scheduled public meetings is available and all were encouraged to attend at least one of the meetings. Free transportation is provided to any of the attendees of the meetings and they will start at 6:30.

Claire Stone stated that she put together an alternative that hopefully would be a compromise, tier one and two for ADA Required service and Premium service, and asked the Board members to consider it. A copy of this proposal is attached and referenced herein.

Adam Fischer stated that part of the meeting was to determine whether the options discussed were ready to be presented to the public.

b. Communications Plan

Kevin Elwood stated that one of the things that the Board wanted to do was come up with a name for the discussions that would resonate with the community and get them to speak up during this process. The name that was decided on was "Real Talk: Honest Conversations for Tomorrow's Transit Needs". Over the years GTA has exploded in terms of ridership and services offered to the community. Like any other organization, GTA has to dispel some of the misinformation that is out there and there is no better time than this to talk about what the needs are for GTA. Also to remind the public about what has been accomplished over the years and put it in perspective. A plan has been put together that if approved will be implemented on February 10th and last through the end of the campaign process. Press releases will be issued on a regular basis to the local broadcast and print media so that the meetings will be made aware of. Specifically an editorial letter will be submitted to the News & Record for print in the Sunday edition. Also a webpage will be set up at ridegta.com, which will serve as a depository for information relevant to the steering committee's efforts including budgets, surveys, Minutes of the meetings and things of that nature. Posters and flyers will be created and distributed in locations around the city, such as in the Depot, inside the buses and in libraries. Real Talk buttons will be made and worn by the operators and staff which will serve as conversation starters. The talking bus messages will air information on the Real Talk Campaign and dates for upcoming meetings. The Twitter account which has close to 2,000 followers will contain information about the status of the. The Real Talk campaign will be discussed on talk shows on 90.1 FM and WQMG FM so that a city wide audience can be reached.

Claire Stone asked if the fair alternatives would be presented at the public meetings. Sharon Hightower stated that the purpose of the meeting was to let the public weigh in, so other options would be discussed.

Mayor Vaughan stated that in addition to presenting what staff has done, other alternatives would be presented.

Adam Fischer stated that the fare alternatives would be presented at some point and these discussions are a starting point.

David Parrish stated that the public input process would give an opportunity to work through a variety of alternatives so that by late March the picture would be clearer.

Claire Stone stated that the primary purpose for riders is employment, medical and school and the fare increase is unreasonable.

Council Person Mary Kay Abuzuaiter stated that the morning talk shows are always looking for people to come in and talk about community type events and that is something that should be considered.

Council Person Jamal Fox asked what the cost for the campaign would be overall. Kevin Elwood stated that the majority of items were done within the operating and marketing budget. The only two additional costs are for the buttons and the radio and advertising which equals about \$8,000.

David Parrish asked if there was a way to pursue more public service announcements. Kevin Elwood stated that radio stations are required to run a certain amount of public service announcements and it depends on how much time the station wants to devote to that. A short video message of approximately one minute would be produced that would address the need for the steering committee and the Real Talk process and that will air on TV Channel 13 along with a web video on the You Tube site.

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Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting ended at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hightower, District 1 City Council Representative and Steering Committee Co Chair
Lawrence Mann, GTA Board Chair and Steering Committee Co-Chair

LM/jd