



CHATHAM AREA TRANSIT

Always on the Move!

Chatham Area Transit

Legislative Agenda 2015

Enhancing Our Community



Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT) adopts a Legislative Program to provide direction for its legislative and policy activities for year.

- ▶ The purpose of the Legislative Program is to **establish financial, statutory, regulatory, and administrative policies and principles** to guide CAT's advocacy efforts.
- ▶ The program is meant to be **flexible** in order to give CAT the ability to pursue unanticipated legislative and administrative opportunities that may present themselves during the course of the year, and to respond expeditiously to the dynamic political and policy processes in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, and the Savannah-Chatham County area.

The 2014-2015 Legislative Program is divided into three sections: **1.** Local, **2.** State, **3.** Federal.

As the mobility manager for Chatham County and surrounding areas, CAT is charged with the responsibility of connecting and enhancing our community. We work diligently every day to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to our area, to generate growth in our economy, to protect our environment, and to move further down the road for American energy independence. We accomplish these tasks by providing more than four million annual trips for jobs, education, shopping, health care, and a host of other activities. Covering approximately 632 square miles and service hours of 5:00 AM—1:00AM, we provide transportation demand management, fixed route bus service, complementary paratransit service, accessible taxis, bike sharing, streetcar, and marine services on the Savannah River.

CAT understands that elected officials and policy makers are required to make tough decisions based upon limited resources and nearly unlimited demands. The role of public transit is ever-evolving and ever-expanding, yet resources continue to lag. An investment in public transit is an investment in our current infrastructure and our future as dependence upon affordable transportation continues to grow.

Major Needs/Initiatives

Vehicles	Amenities	Services
40 Fixed route buses	100 Shelters and benches	Service expansion to major westside employers: JCB, Mitsubishi, Gulfstream
25 Paratransit vehicles	5 Enhanced transfer locations	Enhanced & express service along major corridors: Waters Ave., MLK Jr. Blvd., Abercorn St.
5 Paratransit taxis	Infrastructure improvements at transit stops	
20 Seven-passenger vans	Official Park-and-Ride locations	Vanpool Program

LOCAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEM:

Transit Service Area Expansion

Chatham County, GA is currently home to more than 275,000 residents and receives more than 13 million visitors annually.*

CAT strongly supports the County Commission's expansion of the Transit Special Service Tax District that will allow the expansion of transit services within targeted areas of Chatham County and provide public transportation connectivity in the layout of new developments, minimize congestion, and maximize accessibility to jobs and markets.

* Longwoods International TravelUSA study for 2013



STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEMS:

Regional Transportation Planning

A vital communication link is well established between CAT, government agencies, and local utility companies to ensure the inclusion and successful installation of safe ADA accessible bus stops and shelters in various construction and repair projects. A comprehensive land use and transportation plan that maintains a clean environment, fosters orderly development, and preserves natural and historic resources is essential to the quality of life in our communities. **Emphasizing public transportation connectivity in the layout of new developments minimizes congestion and maximizes accessibility.**

- ◆ **HB 833**—A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Chapter 61 of Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the "Urban Redevelopment Law," so as to include areas; to modernize terminology; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.
- ◆ **HR 1573/SR 1064**—A RESOLUTION creating the Joint Study Committee on Critical Transportation Infrastructure Funding; and for other purposes.

Transit Operating Assistance

In response to funding challenges, transit systems have had little choice but to cut services, eliminate jobs, and implement significant fare increases. In order to maintain the transportation system and preserve its long-term viability while contending with an aging population, the State must continue to assist with public transit funding by increasing its portion to previous levels, and a dedicated, stable, local funding source must be created. **CAT strongly supports legislation that would permit all regions in Georgia to consider and implement funding mechanisms necessary for allowing other revenue streams for transit than the local property tax.**

- ◆ **HB 651**—A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Article 5 of Chapter 13 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to excise taxes on rental motor vehicles, so as to add public transit to the authorized purposes for the proceeds of such tax; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.
- ◆ **SB 92**—A BILL to be entitled an Act to amend Article 5 of Chapter 13 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to excise taxes on rental motor vehicles, so as to add public transit to the authorized purposes for the proceeds of such tax; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.
- ◆ **Tax Exemption from Motor Fuel Purchases**—A permanent exemption for local transit would allow for more accurate budgeting and free up resources used in seeking legislative renewal each period.
- ◆ **Dedicated Transit Sales Tax**—CAT strongly supports legislation that would permit local jurisdictions to allow voters to consider a 1 cent sales tax dedicated to transit. CAT also strongly supports legislation that would permit all regions in all local governments the flexibility to create or operate transit systems outside their region, which might include multi-county transit projects such as express bus systems.

Accessible Taxis

One impediment to more widespread usage of wheelchair accessible taxis is the territorial limitation to taxi travel in Georgia under current law. A Senate bill relates to certificates of public necessity and convenience for vehicles for hire and addresses the territorial issue by outlining the requirements under which wheelchair-accessible taxis can travel outside their home jurisdiction and return with a paying fare.

Supporting this allows taxi usage to become a regional transportation option.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION ITEMS

Federal Surface Transportation Program Reauthorization/Support GROW AMERICA Act

CAT relies on federal grants, with matching local and state funds, to meet its capital and operating needs. Federal transportation policy and investment should address changing demographics and an increased demand for public transportation. The next reauthorization bill should be for at least 4 years and provide adequate, sustainable funding to meet capital and operational needs.

CAT strongly supports the GROW AMERICA Act and urges the Georgia Congressional Delegation to aggressively advocate on the fair and equitable distribution of discretionary funds for our region.

Fuel Purchasing Flexibility

As is the case for all Americans, urban and rural transit systems are paying some of the highest fuel prices ever while continuing to face other funding challenges. Providing transit agencies with the flexibility to utilize federal transit capital dollars to assist in the purchase of fuel would aid all transit systems in meeting these challenges.

CAT urges the Georgia Congressional Delegation to support necessary changes, whether regulatory or legislative, to allow transit systems to use federal capital funds to purchase motor fuel.



CHATHAM AREA TRANSIT

The phrase 'MAKING CONNECTIONS' is written in a large, bold, green, sans-serif font. The text is framed by a network of thin green lines that connect four circular nodes (two on the left and two on the right) to form a diamond shape around the text.

MAKING CONNECTIONS