CAT launches improved CAT Mobility online reservation service

CAT is pleased to announce that we have upgraded the recently launched online reservation request service for paratransit services, so that the redesigned reservation page is more attractive and easier to use for our CAT Mobility customers.

If you are not familiar with the recently launched service, the service allows CAT Mobility customers to submit reservation requests online at any time. (Requests must still be received by 4 p.m. for a next-day trip.)

To make your online reservation request, just go to CAT’s website at catchacat.org.

The CAT Mobility paratransit service is comprised of a fleet of ADA accessible vans for people with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed-route buses for some or all of their transportation needs.

CAT Mobility customers can also continue to schedule or re-schedule an appointment by calling (912) 233-5767 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., seven days a week.

Key points:
- Customers must already be certified in CAT’s paratransit program to request a reservation
- Reservations can be submitted online 1-7 days in advance of the planned trip.
- Customers will receive a response immediately from CAT’s website indicating receipt of the reservation request.
- A separate confirmation will be sent via email and made by phone once the schedule is completed.
- CAT is currently not allowing CAT Mobility customers to have companions during their trip due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but Personal Care Attendants and service animals are still permitted.
- Customers can call (912) 236-5767 for more information.

CAT meeting calendar

All of the February meetings will be held remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual meetings can be viewed live on CAT’s YouTube page at: YouTube.com/ChathamAreaTransit.

CAT Board Committee Meetings
Date: Feb. 9
Strategic and Operational Planning: 10:30 a.m.  Performance Monitoring/Audit: 1 p.m.
External Stakeholder Relations: 2:30 p.m.
CAT Governance Committee
Date: Feb. 16
Time: 11 a.m.
CAT Board Regular Meeting
Date: Feb. 23
Time: 10 a.m.

February 2021 edition

A message from interim CEO Valerie Ragland

Dear CAT customers,
If you have not heard by now, the CAT Board of Directors recently made a difficult decision to terminate the employment of CAT’s CEO, Bacarra Mauldin.

Following their vote, the Board placed their trust in me by appointing me interim CEO to lead the organization through this transition.

After about 34 years working with CAT, most recently as our Outreach Manager, I have been here for the many of the ups and downs experienced at this organization. I want to assure you that I take the responsibilities placed upon me seriously and we will get through this latest change in leadership. CAT is more than just one person. We are a team comprised of hundreds of men and women who are devoted to serving the community.

We recognize there are a lot of questions regarding the Board’s decision, but because this is a personnel matter we are asking for your patience and understanding at this time.

With that said, I pledge to be as transparent and open as possible with regards to moving forward. Many of you who already know me, know I can be counted on for being straightforward. For those who do not know me, I promise you that our customers and employees will be foremost in my mind as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and seek ways to improve our services.

This is not a task I take lightly, but one in which I wholeheartedly believe can be achieved. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Valerie Ragland, interim CEO

CAT expecting almost $5.9M in federal relief funds

CAT expects to be able to fund operations at the current level until at least July, as a result of additional federal COVID-19 pandemic relief funding.

CAT is set to receive $5,868,708 in support from the Federal Transit Administration, after Congress recently approved the $900 billion Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA).

The funding is expected to cover CAT’s costs through the current fiscal year, which runs through June, but additional funding may be necessary beyond then to continue operating without making cuts, said interim CEO Valerie Ragland.

“While the additional funding will help, we will still be forced to tighten our belts as we start work on next year’s budget,” Ragland said. “We do not know when things will rebound from the pandemic and we must fiscally manage as if there will be no additional stimulus funding.”

CAT has had to contend with various funding challenges caused by the pandemic, including decreased fare and tax revenue and increased expenses related to safety equipment and hazard pay.

Send an email to marketing@catchacat.org to subscribe to our weekly electronic newsletter, the CAT Express
CAT now requiring customers to wear masks following federal order

On Tuesday, Feb. 2, Chatham Area Transit began requiring customers to wear masks while using CAT’s bus, paratransit and ferry services.

The mask requirement was recently mandated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of President Joe Biden’s executive order promoting COVID-19 safety in travel. The requirement is to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and support state and local officials in their efforts to keep passengers, employees, and communities safe.

The order exempts children under 2 years old and people with a disability that makes it unsafe to wear a mask.

CAT was previously limited in its ability to enforce mask usage due to the lack of a state or federal mandate.

“CAT fully supports the Biden Administration’s mandate to require our riders to wear masks on all our vehicles,” said interim CAT Chief Executive Officer Valerie Ragland. “It’s simply the right thing to do as the requirement not only helps to further protect our riders and employees against COVID, but also assists CAT in enforcement efforts. Our number one priority during the pandemic has been to ensure the health and safety of our riders and employees.”

Customers who do not comply with the CDC’s mask mandate will be subject to suspension of CAT services. CAT operators will have masks available to hand out to any customer who needs one.

The mask requirement is the latest safety measure implemented by CAT since the start of the pandemic to protect customers and employees. Additional measures include the installation of operator safety shields, reduced vehicle capacity levels, daily employee health screenings and enhanced cleaning of vehicles and facilities.

Due to the reduced capacity, customers are encouraged to use CAT services only for essential trips, such as getting to work, medical appointments or grocery shopping.

For more information on the order or to view frequently asked questions, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/masks/mask-travel-guidance.html.

CAT Route 3 West Chatham schedule adjusted with new test stop

CAT is testing out a new bus stop along the 3 West Chatham route to serve FedEx Ground and other employers at Morgan Lakes Industrial Park off of Morgan Lakes Industrial Boulevard and Jimmy Deloach Parkway. As a result of this pilot project, route 3 West Chatham’s service schedule on weekdays has been adjusted slightly to accommodate the extra stop. The change means that the bus now departs/arrives 10 minutes later during the day at some locations.

Customers are encouraged to check the modified schedule online at www.catchacat.org/current-schedules/current-schedule-reduced-evening-hours/. Printed copies can also be obtained at the ticket window at the joe murray rivers, Jr. Intermodal Transit Center, 610 West Oglethorpe Avenue. The test stop is expected to be in place until early summer and potentially be installed permanently, depending on usage.

CAT celebrates Savannah’s Black History with landmark route map

As one of the oldest cities in the US, Savannah is well known for its rich vibrant history and many historical landmarks. This Black History Month, CAT is promoting education and the exploration of the many contributions Black Americans have made in the city with the release of the first CAT Black History Landmark Tour Map.

CAT has produced a custom-designed bus route map featuring six historical landmarks in Chatham County that are significant to Black history and culture. The six locations featured on the map are the First African Baptist Church, the Laurel Grove Cemetery, the King-Tisdell Cottage, the Beach Institute, the Savannah African Art Museum and the Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters.

“This campaign — a celebration of Savannah’s rich Black history — is in line with CAT’s goal to be a community leader that positively contributes to the overall success of the community. It helps demonstrate our ability to be seen as more than just a transportation provider,” said interim CEO Valerie Ragland. “We consider ourselves fortunate to be in a position to help raise awareness of these important local institutions and of the significant contributions of Black Americans in our community’s development. I think our riders and the community at large will be as excited about this campaign as I am.”

Ragland says the map was designed, in part, to encourage the community at large and especially those who do not regularly ride the bus, to hop on board to explore the city.

“CAT bus service is one of the most affordable ways to see our beautiful city and to explore all the historical sites we are lucky enough to live, work and play among,” Ragland said. “We are always looking to create opportunities to promote education and exploration on our buses.”

The Black History Landmark Tour Map, which features information about each site on the back, will be distributed to riders and made available to CAT’s partners for dissemination. It can also be downloaded from CAT’s website at catchacat.org. In addition, interior signs have been installed inside CAT’s buses to highlight the locations identified on the map.

For those who prefer to use cell phones or tablets to access the Black History Landmark Tour Map, CAT has published an interactive map on our website and on our CAT Facebook page.

Other significant locations, in addition to those includ- ed on the map, will also be promoted in CAT’s community newsletter, the CAT Outbound, and on various social media sites, including Face- book, Twitter and Instagram.