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NBS Neighborhood Board Retreat Participants Announced

Staff Resource: Nicole Storey, NBS, 704-336-2929, nrstorey@charlottenc.gov

On Saturday, March 19, 2016, Neighborhood & Business Services will host the Neighborhood Board Retreat at Johnson C. Smith University's Science Building, 100 Beatties Ford Rd, from 8:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. The Mayor and City Council are invited to attend the opening session at 8:30 a.m. or to drop-in throughout the day.

Nineteen neighborhoods were selected from 45 applications. Priority was given to organizations that had not previously participated, met the five participant minimum, and represented a diverse cross section of the City. Neighborhoods who could not be accommodated at the March retreat will be invited to apply for the July 2016 retreat. Previous participants have been referred to Community Engagement staff for assistance in implementing their plans.

The Board Retreat was created to help neighborhood organizations engage in meaningful conversation about quality of life improvements in their communities. Attendees participate in facilitated discussions and develop strategic plans. Participating associations within the Neighborhood Matching Grant eligible geography can receive a \$1,500 match credit toward their next grant application.

This is the seventh Neighborhood Board Retreat. Since the program began in July 2012, 287 applications have been received and 101 organizations have participated. In addition to neighborhood representatives, the event features facilitators and staff resources from several City departments.

The following neighborhood organizations are scheduled to attend the March 19 Neighborhood Board Retreat:

District	Neighborhood Organization
1	Farmcrest Community Neighborhood Association
1	Shannon Park Neighborhood
1	Villa Heights Community Organization
1	Windsor Park Neighborhood Association
2	Avalon @ Mallard Creek
2	Historic Washington Heights
2	Oaklawn Park Community Improvement Organization
2	Wesley Heights Neighborhood Association
3	Forest Pawtucket Neighborhood Association
3	Historic Camp Greene Neighborhood Association

District	Neighborhood Organization
3	Windsong Trails
4	ArborHills HOA
4	College Downs Community Assn.
4	Villages at Hilltop Faires Farm HOA
5	Avensong HOA
5	Hampshire Hills
5	Herons Pond Homeowners Association
5	Winterfield Neighborhood Assoc. & Community Garden
6	Olde Georgetowne Homeowners Association

1600-1799 Blocks of Moretz Avenue To Be Renamed

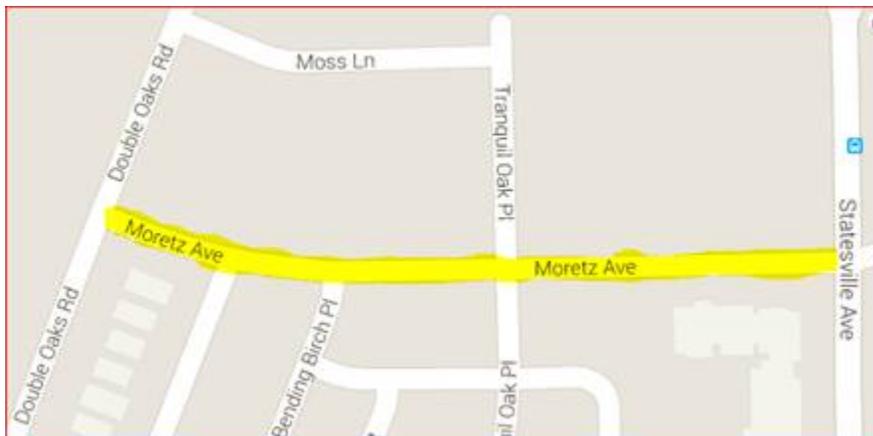
Staff Resource: Doreen Szymanski, CDOT, 704-336-7527, dszymanski@charlottenc.gov

The Charlotte Department of Transportation was recently asked to rename the west segment of Moretz Avenue between Statesville Avenue and Double Oaks Road (1600-1799 blocks) to Pat Garrett Street.

The petitioner fulfilled all departmental renaming requirements including obtaining support from existing property owners in those blocks.

The street is being renamed for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership's (CMHP) past president, Pat Garrett. Ms. Garrett led the CMHP for 24 years. CMHP builds affordable housing in the community, and is responsible for the Brightwalk development currently being built along the street.

The addressing division of Mecklenburg County will be notifying all services and the affected property owners of the change. The street renaming is effective March 24, 2016.



Open Streets 704 – Public Outreach Plan

Staff Resource: Scott Curry, CDOT, 704-432-2648, scurry@charlottenc.gov

The City of Charlotte is helping launch a new “Open Streets” initiative –Open Streets 704– beginning this spring. The first Open Streets event will coincide with the opening weekend of Bike!Charlotte. It is planned for Sunday, May 1 from Noon to 4 p.m. The route map is attached. It will connect the North Davidson Arts District (NoDa) to Cordelia Park, Uptown, First Ward Park, Little Sugar Creek Greenway, and Memorial Stadium. The route has been vetted and approved by CMPD, the Charlotte Fire Department, and NCDOT. City staff are working with the event organizers to notify businesses and residents along the route in the following ways.

- GeoNotify calls to all phone numbers near the event route;
- Mailers to all addresses within ¼ mile of the route;

- Calls/meetings with businesses and organizations along the route;
- A public meeting at the Belmont Center (700 Parkwood Avenue) on Tuesday, March 29 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. (drop-in format); and
- Door hangers on residences along the route the week before the event.

The Open Streets 704 event on May 1 will be the first in a series of four events made possible by a grant from the Knight Foundation. Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation is taking the lead in partnership with the Charlotte Department of Transportation, the Mecklenburg County Health Department, and Partners for Parks.

Open Streets events temporarily close streets to automobile traffic so that people may use them for walking, bicycling, dancing, playing, and meeting their neighbors. Open Streets festivals currently take place in more than 100 cities across North America. These events typically are held on Sunday afternoons when traffic volumes are minimal. Open Streets programs have proven to be successful at achieving goals related to recreation, public health, active transportation (walking and biking), and community building.

For more information, go to: <http://www.openstreets704.com/>



Open Streets -
Zones-sm.pdf

February 24 Metropolitan Transit Commission Meeting Summary

Staff Resource: John Lewis, CATS, 704-336-3855, John.Lewis@charlottenc.gov

MTC heard two information items at its February 24 meeting:

2016 Federal & State Legislative Agendas

CATS' Federal legislative agenda for the upcoming year includes continuation of federal resources for build-out of the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan, continued federal funding for the BLE, and funding for eventual construction of the LYNX Red Line. The state legislative agenda includes support for repeal of the light rail cap.

Transit Service Budgets and Programs

Division managers reviewed their programs with highlights of budgets and costs, as well as performance measures and policies that drive the services. Bus ridership grew historically until leveling off since the economic downturn. Key cost drivers for the Bus Operations Division (BOD) include Personnel Services, which comprises 75 percent of the cost of service, followed by fuel and other items such as equipment, parts and insurance. The BOD is CATS' largest division, with over 800 employees. Since BOD positions are unionized and the City is prohibited by NC law from collective bargaining, CATS has a management firm, McDonald Transit, to oversee operations and union negotiations. Union negotiations have begun for the bus drivers' contract, which expires on June 30. CATS has mentoring programs to develop maintenance

talent, including high school programs and a partnership with Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) to give students hands-on experience with diesel mechanics.

CATS is developing initiatives to address ridership challenges:

- Transit Signal Priority allows a traffic signal to be held up to five seconds to allow time for an approaching bus to clear the intersection. This is in place now in a few heavily-traveled routes. The new initiative is to upgrade the overall CDOT system so this can be used at all intersections. Fire and police also receive traffic signal preemption.
- Additionally, CATS is planning a Smart Card system which can be tapped on the fare box; the fare would be deducted from the card at the tap. The system will begin with a magnetic strip system and phase in Smart Card technology. CATS is currently meeting with potential card vendors.
- CATS is also developing an app to call a bus for same-day North Meck Village Rider Service, which currently gives riders the option of calling a day in advance for deviated service that picks riders up along the route. The Village Rider Service will be the pilot program. CATS hopes to coordinate with Uber and Lyft to provide first- and last-mile connections for bus or vanpool rides.
- CATS has also applied for a grant for next-generation alternative fuel vehicles with higher energy efficiency.

Special Transportation Service (STS) is the service for people with disabilities who are not able to ride the fixed-route system. CATS is required to operate this service within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the fixed-route system. STS has experienced a 20 percent ridership increase, with so many requests in the required service area that CATS is not able to provide much service outside that area. Other programs include the Vanpool Program, with 75 active vanpools carrying 220,000 passengers annually, and funding to the county's Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide transportation for persons with disabilities, primarily to sheltered workshops.

CATS' Safety and Security division ensures that CATS has a very strong safety culture, which can help reduce accident numbers and reflects good business practices. A new FTA rule will require transit systems to incorporate oversight for both rail and bus, and CATS is already working to incorporate these plans. As part of the new regulation, NCDOT as the State Safety Oversight is required to certify that CATS has developed and implemented a Safety Plan. This is a new role for NCDOT. CATS has 13 employees assigned to transit safety and 75 transit security personnel, including a CATS employee, four CMPD Transit Police Officers and 70 G4S employees. CATS is required to spend one percent of Federal Formula funds on Safety and Security items. This is programmed into the five-year Community Investment Plan (CIP) and used for items such as required drills, fencing, camera system replacement, lighting and other areas. CATS' Transit Security Grant Program is used to improve security through a Threat and Vulnerability Assessment. CATS also has a Community Awareness grant, which was used for the "See Something, Say Something" public awareness campaign. There are about 3,000 cameras throughout the system. The Safety division also operates a seven-week training class for bus

operators. Other training programs include sensitivity training for the G4S officers and a Roadway Worker Protection Program to train workers near rail lines.

CATS' Rail Operations division worked with CPCC to develop an Apprenticeship Program and will hire an individual as a rail car mechanic when he completes the program. CATS has been fortunate to hire and train people from the airlines and the speedway. Through CATS' involvement in the Goal program with the North American Light Rail Benchmarking Group, CATS has joined with industry partners from the benchmarking group for negotiating leverage in securing rail parts at lower prices. CATS has also partnered with UNC Charlotte's Energy Production and Infrastructure Center (EPIC) to work with engineers in hopes that they will help supply the workforce that we need. Rail preventive maintenance is 99.9 percent on-time with overtime held at 10 percent with 66,612 rail revenue service hours and an on-time performance at 99.74 percent with over one million rail service miles. The cost per revenue mile is \$12.87 and the cost per passenger is \$2.61. The BLE will open in 2017, adding 9.2 miles and 11 stations and four park and rides to rail service. CATS will continue to operate about 20 hours a day with the four-hour rail downtime used for infrastructure maintenance. CityLYNX Gold Line service initiated in 2015; ridership has exceeded all expectations thus far. Rail vehicles include Siemens S70 light rail vehicles for light rail and Gomaco replica trolleys. The Gomaco replicas are difficult to maintain. Currently, Rail employs 164 employees and projects 245 employees for FY17 as rail service expands with the BLE's opening. CATS has an aggressive rail maintenance program, performing major vehicle overhauls every five years. Rail equipment, including signal houses and track and systems, also needs regular maintenance and repair.

The Facilities Management division maintains buildings and grounds for bus, light rail, streetcar and STS. Facilities maintains amenities such as park and rides and the Charlotte Transportation Center, as well as three Community Transit Centers and over 3,000 bus stops and stations.

There is a gap of about \$2.8 million in the Operating Budget for FY17. CATS has considered several options to the usual fare increase or service reduction, including a smaller fare increase with different combinations of changes to the pass fare and Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) discount programs. The total discount amount for FY15 was about \$4.14 million. There will be a public hearing before the March MTC meeting on fare increase options.

CATS CEO Report

Under the CEO's report, Mr. Lewis discussed:

a. Ridership Update:

Ridership for January was a little higher than January 2015. Snow days in 2015 may have affected the numbers.

b. Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO):

In February, CRTPO asked CATS to delay discussion of CATS' representative to CRTPO until after the Short Session ends in the legislature. That will push this item back to the summertime.

The next MTC meeting will be March 23, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

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OPEN
STREETS

- Arts & Science
- Family Zone
- Green Zone
- Wellness Zone

