

2250 Florida Boulevard  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
PHONE: 225.389.8920



## EXECUTIVE STAFF

**Bill Deville**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

## NOVEMBER 2020 Executive Report Bill Deville and CATS Staff

### COVID-19 UPDATES: *Bill Deville, Pearlina Thomas*

- Governor Edwards announced last week that Louisiana will stay in Phase 3 for another four weeks, through December 4<sup>th</sup>, as he cautiously and incrementally releases noted restrictions.
- Rear entry in fixed route service continues for those without mobility impairments until all fixed route and paratransit vehicles have operator barriers received and installed for their safety.
- The agency continues to waive fares in both fixed route and paratransit due to using “read door” entrance/exit for Operator safety in fixed route system.
- The Agency recognizes the need to resume fares/front door farebox entrance, as well as the growing need to increase the nine passenger maximum capacity to a higher number. This is especially true on our higher ridership core routes where the demand is incrementally increasing with the continued reopening of the state.
- Key to enabling increased capacity, and the resumption of fares, is the procurement/delivery of operator seat barriers for the protection and safety of Operators, and the continuation of 100% use of face masks by all those using CATS.
  - NEXT STEPS:
    - Planning and Operations have begun the process, to make these necessary changes, starting with a 5 day advance notification to the Union –Underway.
    - Order Operator Seat Barriers for remaining 28 buses, and Paratransit vehicles – Completed.
    - Paratransit vehicles have barriers installed – Completed.
    - Bus barriers for the remaining 28 buses have been delayed and the agency has an expected ship date of November 28<sup>th</sup> – Open.
    - After being notified of yet another delay in delivery of the operator seat barriers to the end of November, CATS has requested Procurement and Maintenance to seek alternative vendors while still complying with FTA procurement regulations for grant funding.
    - In the wake of expected spikes in Covid cases this fall and winter, CATS will continue to cautiously weigh Covid safety concerns for both operators and customers in this process.
- CATS continues to operate its essential “lifeline” service that was designed to carry incrementally increased ridership that should remain in place through January, leading to the February service schedule plan implementation;

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however, staff has begun to plan for the February service pick, with an opportunity to plan for a return to near normal service level during 2021.

- The agency continues to monitor COVID-19 status, daily ridership trends, and local news conferences and announcements from local officials and key stakeholders.

### **OPERATIONS: *Dwana Williams***

- There are 147 total operators, and there are currently 100 active operators working. The remaining 47 operators are out as a result of COVID-19, FMLA, and Workers' Comp.
- Operations is meeting more frequently as the "Reopening" incrementally expands, to determine what Phase 3 requirements looks like for the agency.
- See attached Performance Measures that reflect measures for the month.

### **AGENCY UPDATES: *Bill Deville***

- The 2021 budget has been completed and is being advertised as is required. Staff will be working to schedule meetings with board members between now and the December F&E meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>.
- CATS is collaborating with the Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts, a public school in East Baton Rouge Parish, on a project to introduce transit to students.
  - In conjunction with STEAM curriculum, students will participate in a contest to draw posters that will be made into bus shelters and interior ads.
  - The grand prize winner will have two bus ads with their artwork displayed.
  - This is being done as a pilot program with the hope of including more (hopefully all) EBR public schools in the contest in the coming years.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES: *Pearlina Thomas***

- Staff is working with Operations to get operators back to work who have been out as a result of COVID-19.
- CATS has met with Gallagher regarding the health insurance benefits for 2021 and is making a recommendation to the board members as an action item.
- Pending approval of the recommended 2021 Health Insurance Plan by the Board Open Enrollment is slated for the first week in December 2020.
- CATS has partnered with the Urban League of Louisiana in applying for a grant as part of the One Workforce Grant Program, through the U.S. Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration. Award of this grant will provide resources to expand CATS current workforce development training and support the CATS Apprenticeship Program.

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### **EMERGENCY PREPARDNESS TASK FORCE: *Pearlina Thomas***

- Friday November 13, 2020, CATS played host to the “United We Feed” Event sponsored by Exxon Mobile and the Capital Area United Way. The turnout for the original giveaway of 200 food boxes was so great, an additional 100 food boxes were prepared and distributed.
- CATS submitted a grant application for the Public Transportation COVID-19 Research Demonstration Grant Program.
- CATS is supporting the marquee host, Build Baton Rouge, with the “Holding On To The Dream” luncheon and plaque unveiling to honor Mr. Jonnie Jones, Sr., for his tireless efforts to remove social injustices on Federal, State and Local levels.

### **PLANNING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: *Cheri Soileau*** **SERVICE:**

- Key performance indicators (KPIs) –
  - A kick-off meeting was held with HDR and they will be requesting data and information for this work.
  - This is anticipated to be a three month project.
- The Transit Development Plan is being worked with HNTB and they are concluding interviews.
  - HNTB has a draft Strategic Plan (based on the current SP) for staff review and comment.
- February 2021 Service Change
  - Live date: February 28
  - Staff is examining minor modifications of some routes.
  - It is anticipated that the Capital Trolley shuttle/circulator route will be in service beginning in February 2021, based upon discussions with the Downtown Development District and Visit Baton Rouge. The Trolleys essentially have reached and surpassed their useful life, and Staff is seeking do a temporary leasing of 3 smaller 30 foot BYD electric buses in time for February – 3 demo buses are available for immediate use. The terms are extremely attractive, and grant funding is available for the temporary lease terms – length of term depends on how soon funding can be obtained to purchase/deliver trolley/electric bus replacements.
- Service Standards Manual
  - Draft for internal review and comment.
  - Manual will encompass all things service related, from types of routes operated to passenger amenities and Title VI/Disparate Analysis evaluations and ADA/Paratransit operations (does not supersede the current Paratransit manual but supplements).
- Capital Budget projects prioritized and dependent on available funding submitted for FY 2021.
- Beginning to work on capital budget process and procedures

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- Will start with the next 5 years, but ultimately include 10 years out.

### **CAPITAL: Cheri Soileau**

- Plank-Nicholson Bus Rapid Transit
  - US DOT Grant agreement between City-Parish and FTA has not yet been signed, but it is expected soon; in most recent meetings with HNTB/CP/FTA, Region 6 was impressed with the collaboration achieved for the BUILD project with all of the stakeholders involved.
  - Property for North Transit Center
    - Agreement has been signed; funds have not been transferred but expected soon as “wiring of funds” capability is worked out with the banks involved.
- Ferry Study (with CRPC)
  - Kick-off meeting November
  - The consultant is Moffat and Nichols
- Microtransit Study
  - The Goodman Corporation has made recommendations and staff is currently evaluating the recommendations
- Emergent Method (one of 4 sub-consultants listed under the CATS/ Atlas Technical On-Call Master Service Agreement, who has a focus on organizing and implementing overall public engagement campaign for CATS capital and service improvements going forward)
  - Emergent Method staff is conducting interviews with staff and coordinating external meetings with other consultants and entities (e.g. CRPC)
  - Emergent Method staff is coordinating future public engagement activities with HNTB, The Goodman Corporation, and CATS Communications and Leadership Staff.
- Transit Centers
  - Downtown- CATS Planning Director, Atlas, and HNTB is reexamining the relocation of the terminal to the I-110 site, on a temporary basis.
  - South, Mall of Louisiana-staff is seeking a permanent site.
  - Baker Park & Ride- an request for proposal for preliminary engineering and design is being considered by CRPC subsequent to the planning study performed via CRPC.

### **TECHNOLOGY –**

- The Tyler Technology kick-off has taken place and training sessions are in Phase I; financials modules have been scheduled for the next three months.
- Planning and Operations, along with AVL and Maintenance staff are seeking solutions for scheduling/AVL software.
- Business Analytics solicitation is about to begin that will entail procuring an agency-wide tool to gather reporting data automatically from core systems in order to create those KPIs that are lacking but needed for better management and control of finance, personnel, transportation, and maintenance

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operations, and the use of “dashboard” reporting strongly desired by CEO and senior management.

- An enterprise asset management system is being sought.
- A customer service system with work rules based on customer service application is being considered.

### CEO NOTES: *Bill Deville*

- Engaged new Interim HR Director and Gallagher to pick up the slack regarding a renewal or new improved health insurance plan asap, and to re-implement employee evaluation system using the Gallagher software system (formally used a “programed spreadsheet” format borrowed from another transit agency); assess HR compliance status.
- At the request of Fred Raiford/Director Transportation at the City-Parish, the CEO attended the November 10<sup>th</sup> Metro Council meeting where CATS/CP Plank Nicholson BRT BUILD Project CEA was up for vote; the motion passed unanimously and is pending CATS Board upcoming vote of same CEA.
- Organized PTASP Virtual Training – new federal requirements for transit safety as a new matter for compliance with those regulations to remain eligible for federal grant funding – by Alliance Transportation Group (ATG was contracted by state/DOTD, and without charge CATS was able to benefit by having ATG assist/guide CATS with creation and implementation of its own PTASP safety plan;).
- At the request of Councilmember (and former CATS Board President) staff met with SJB to bring resolution, as well as concluding its past CATS/BRT related contract and clean the slate for potential business going forward.
- At request of CRPC, CEO and Planning Director participated in the MPO FHWA Certification evaluation (somewhat like our Triennial Review).
- Responded to Board’s Special Committee’s inquiries/questions in preparation for the meeting with CEO and staff on Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Responding to numerous National ATU Public Records Requests.
- Responding to a number of Advocate Public Records Requests
- Working with CATS counsel and staff in response the ADA/Wright suit filed against CATS.
- Completed final draft of CATS 2021 Budget, to be voted on by CATS board at its December board meeting.
- As reported by Planning Director, Atlas/Emergent Method organizing and preparing for Public Outreach campaign by meeting with CEO, Communications, and CATS leadership getting oriented to CATS five year Strategic Plan and five year Capital Plan and everything in between – using CEO and staff interviews and reports as part of outreach campaign preparations.
- CATS CEO participation invited by LSU IFC Regional Roundtable Discussion rescheduled (due to Hurricane Zeta), to December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

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- CATS was awarded the “Rising Star” (one of several awards, and the video of the awards event can be found on their web-site) award by Louisiana Clean Fuels organization, for its significant introduction of BYD Electric Buses into the CATS Bus Rapid Transit fleet program, with nine electric buses (three delivered and in service, three more expected to be received in first quarter 2021, and staff will be requesting board approval to order the final three very soon).

### **Finance: *John Cutrone***

- See attached financial report for the month.