



ARTS Newsletter

September 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

The Augusta Public Transit Development Plan - Creating a Better Transit System	1
Name Your Information and Transportation Center Contest	2
Air Quality Initiatives	2
Notice of Public Hearing -Best Friend Express Transit System	2
Palmetto Parkway Update	3
Clean Air Campaign Welcomes New Employer Partners in CSRA	3
Aiken County News	3

FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS:

GDOT Area Office—Augusta
(706) 855-3466

GDOT District 2 —Tennille
(478)-552-4601

Augusta Engineering Department (706) 796-5040

Augusta Traffic Engineering Division (706) 821-1841

Columbia County Road Construction Department
(706) 447-7600

Columbia County Traffic Engineering Department
(706) 868-4223

Augusta Public Transit
(706) 821-1721

Aiken County Transit (Best Friend Express) (803) 648-6493

Economic & Community Development (North Augusta)
(803) 441-4221

This newsletter is part of an ongoing effort of the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) to share information about transportation issues and activities with the citizens of the metropolitan area.

The Augusta Public Transit Development Plan - Creating a Better Transit System

A year-long analysis conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates for Augusta Public Transit has finally come to an end and yielded a finalized Augusta Public Transit Development Plan that should help delineate the path forward for the transit system in Richmond County.

The consulting firm began by documenting the existing conditions, including budget limitations and existing routes. They then analyzed future growth areas, held public participation meetings, and surveyed existing customers. Once the analysis was complete, Wilbur Smith Associates outlined a number of recommendations to transit authorities. These recommendations included the elimination of poorly performing routes, such as the Sandhill Route and the Medical Center Route, and suggested combining some existing routes to make them more efficient. The goal is to reduce wait times and to eliminate one way loops. The plan also recommended adding a new express direct route to a popular Wal-Mart location in Richmond County.

In addition to route modifications, the plan also identified logical locations for new transfer and park and ride facilities. The plan also identified routes that should be included in future expansion of the transit system. It recommended adding future service to Fort Gordon, and creating a cross-town route that connected Wal-Mart and Augusta Mall. The plan also indicated a need for a future south Augusta shuttle service and connections to Columbia and Aiken County.



Other issues that were identified in the Transit Development Plan included identifying new funding sources, resource sharing between different transit systems, the possible creation of a downtown streetcar system that would compliment Augusta Public Transit, the provision of more direct Mall access, and the recommendation that a separate review be completed for the ADA para-transit routes and route coordination.

Besides a desire to design a more efficient transit service, another goal of the study was to come up with ways to re-invigorate, re-create and re-establish the Augusta Public Transit system as a community resource, and to create a system that would ultimately appeal to a broader ridership.

For those that are interested in reading the Augusta Public Transit Development Plan it will be available for download from the City of Augusta website <http://www.augustaga.gov>.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments - Naming Contest

Help name a new information and transportation center opening in 2010. We're looking for a name that lets the local public know the center's purpose is to help make it easier for people to access information about services and benefits, and to help the residents of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties to connect to the places they want to go by accessing transportation. People will be able to make one call to the center to get human services information, transportation information or to schedule a ride. If your entry is chosen, you could win one of three great prizes, and recognition during the grand opening event for the new center. For more detailed information on the center that may help you with your entry, go to our web site at www.lscog.org, or call 803-649-7981/toll free 1-866-845-1550

Air Quality Initiatives

The CSRA Air Quality Alliance has developed a new website with useful and timely information related to air quality and links to other websites. Please check our web-site at: <http://www.csra-airquality-alliance.com/>

Related Air Quality Links:

Clean Air Campaign – link to <http://www.cleanaircampaign.com/>
Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) - link to http://www.gaepd.org/Documents/index_air.html

Georgia Department of Natural Resource Air Protection Branch—link to <http://www.georgiaair.org>

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control – link to <http://www.scdhec.net/environment/baq/pm.aspx>

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency – link to <http://www.epa.gov/air/particles/index.html>

Notice of Public Hearing - Best Friend Express Transit System



The Lower Savannah Council of Governments/Best Friend Express will hold a series of public hearings for the purpose of presenting information and receiving comments on the following items:

- Elimination of all Saturday Service effective October 15, 2009.
- Service reductions on all daily transit routes, which could include later start times, earlier ending times, and elimination of one or more daily runs.
- Increase in fares to \$2.00 for adults, \$1.50 for students with ID, \$1.00 for seniors or Disabled with ID and Medicare Card Holders.
- Possible changes to Dial-A-Ride Service which would require deviation from the fixed route for pick-up of Dial-A-Ride certified customers

The hearings will be held as follows:

September 15, 2009

7:00 A.M. – 8:00 A.M.

Aiken Area Council on Aging
157 Morgan Street, Aiken, S. C. 29801

September 15, 2009

2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments
2748 Wagener Road, Aiken, S. C. 29801

September 15, 2009

4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Aiken Area Council on Aging
157 Morgan Street, Aiken, S. C. 29801

Any questions about the hearing should be addressed to Ms. Connie Shade, Lower Savannah Council of Governments, 803 649-7981. Any persons with special needs related to ADA accessibility or foreign language should contact Ms. Shade for assistance 48 hours prior to the meeting date(s).

Written comments concerning the route changes, fare increases, reduction of paratransit perimeters, and/or reduction of service hours should be mailed to Lower Savannah Council of Governments, P. O. Box 850, Aiken, S. C. 29802, emailed to Connie Shade at cshade@lscog.org, or hand-delivered between 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday to the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, 2748 Wagener Road, Aiken, S. C. 29801, Attention: Connie Shade. The 30 day comment period for receipt of comments will be 30 days beginning September 15, 2009. All comments received will be considered when the decision on the above items is finalized.

Palmetto Parkway Update

The Palmetto Parkway portion of I-520 is nearing completion and is scheduled to open at the end of October 2009. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony, which will be announced at a later date. Additionally, the associated construction work on US 25 and the bridges at the interchanges are also scheduled to be completed by December 31st of this year.

There is a five mile section of multi-purpose greenway trail that runs parallel to the west side of I-520 that should be completed by the end of the year. Currently, the City of North Augusta is evaluating a way to connect this new five mile portion of multi-purpose trail to the existing North Augusta Greenway.

Tips to Save Gas and Reduce Air Pollution

- Walk, bike, take a bus or carpool when possible
- Combine errands into one trip
- Avoid revving or idling engine over 30 seconds
- Use air conditioning only when necessary

Clean Air Campaign Welcomes New Employer Partners in CSRA

Employers work to help employees cut commute costs and improve air quality



(ATLANTA – September 1, 2009)

With Augusta and Richmond County being reviewed for failing to meet federal air quality standards, more area employers have joined the fight against air pollution by partnering with The Clean Air Campaign. The new partnerships promote alternatives to driving alone, which improve air quality and relieve commuting costs for employees.

ADP and Plant Vogtle have joined other employers including DSM Chemicals, Milliken Co., Fort Gordon and Kellogg in reducing smog and traffic by promoting carpooling, vanpooling, transit and telework at their worksites.

“More than a third of the pollution that forms ground-level ozone in the CSRA comes from tailpipes,” said Kevin Green, executive director of The Clean Air Campaign. “Through their commute options programs, employers help take cars off the roads, creating cleaner air and a healthier community.” ~ *Continued above*

~ *Continued from previous column* The Clean Air Campaign provides program support at no-cost via transportation fairs, marketing tools and training seminars. Commute options programs help employees save money on gas, maintenance and even auto insurance, and employers partnering with The Clean Air Campaign report more productive employees coming into work.

The Clean Air Campaign also offers commuter incentives, school-based programs and public education. The Commuter Rewards program pays commuters \$3 a day – up to \$100 – when they make the switch from driving alone. Carpoolers and other commuters using alternatives on a regular basis can also earn cash and win prizes. Each day, these programs eliminate 1.6 million miles of vehicle travel from Georgia roads and keep 800 tons of pollution out of the air we breathe.

Get more information on The Clean Air Campaign at www.CleanAirCampaign.org/CSRA or by calling 1-877-CLEANAIR.

Aiken County News

- Aiken County ARTS staff participated in three air quality meetings within the last few months. Two of the meetings involved discussions on the critical air quality challenges ahead of us and looming EPA decisions which will have a huge impact on existing industries and Aiken County's ability to recruit new industry. We also discussed specific air quality issues with industry stakeholders of Aiken County. The other meeting was a kickoff meeting to discuss prescribed burning/smoke management issues with Fort Gordon, SRS, Georgia EPD, Georgia Forestry Commission, and SCDHEC.
- In May, staff attended the 2009 Statewide Spring MPO/COG Conference, a three day event held in Greenville, SC.
- Also in May, staff attended a public hearing at Millbrook Baptist Church on Whiskey Road in Aiken for the proposed widening of Powderhouse Road. The hearing was hosted by SCDOT.
- Staff participated in a GIS Technology Working Group kickoff meeting.
- Recently, staff helped the City of Aiken select a consultant for their North Side Traffic Network Study and helped the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission select a consultant for the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan update.



Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission
525 Telfair Street
Augusta, GA 30901

PRSRT STD

US POSTAGE

PAID

AUGUSTA, GA

PERMIT #363

UPCOMING ARTS MEETINGS

November 2009

CAC/TCC- 11/11/09 @ 10:00 AM
Policy Committee-No Meeting

December 2009

CAC/TCC- 12/09/09 @ 10:00 AM
Policy Committee-12/03/09 @
11:00 AM

ARTS Committee Meetings are usually held on the 8th Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call the ARCPC (706)821-1796 to verify time and place.

The ARTS Staff

George A. Patty, ARCPC
Executive Director
(706) 821-1796
gpatty@augustaga.gov

Marya Moultrie, ARCPC
Transportation Planner
(706) 821-1796
mmoultrie@augustaga.gov

Lynn Russell, ARCPC
Arts Coordinator
(706) 821-1796
lrussel@augusta.gov

Connie Shade, LSCOG
Assistant Director
(803) 649-7981
cshade@lscog.org

Paul DeCamp, ARCPC
Planning Director
(706) 821-1796
pdecamp@augustaga.gov

Juriah Lewis, ARCPC
Transit Planner
(706) 821-1796
jlewis@augustaga.gov

Gerald Jefferson, ACPDD
Aiken County (SC) Transportation Planner
(803) 642-1520
gjefferson@aikencountysc.gov

<http://www.augustaga.gov/index.aspx?nid=680>

Visit Us at the Web!

<http://www.augustaga.gov/index.aspx?nid=680>