



900 East Gwinnett Street · Savannah, GA 31401

AGENDA NO: 2025-10-11-006

AGENDA MONTH AND YEAR: November 24, 2025
NAME: 2026 Georgia General Assembly Legislative Agenda
FROM: Executive Office and Governmental Affairs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION:

Request Board adopt the Chatham Area Transit 2026 State Legislative Agenda as priorities set forth for the agency during the upcoming General Assembly Session.

DATE AND IDENTIFICATION OF PRIOR BRIEFING OR AUTHORIZING ACTION:

ICEO Update dated 10/23/2025 Legislative Matters

ISSUE:

Chatham Area Transit Authority has developed a legislative plan to pursue at the state level. Adopting a formal strategy allows for more effective communication with elected officials and policymakers, in uniform with the CAT Board of Directors has set forth. In addition, this agenda captures agency priorities and provides direction for Board members engagement on behalf of the agency, as well as policy direction to staff and contracted lobbyist to assist in representing the agency's interest during the 2025 legislative session.

DISCUSSION:

During the month of October, ICEO Cutter circulated an update outlining legislative matters impacting CAT with primary goals for the FY 2026 legislative agenda focused on sustainable funding to support CAT's transit system.

The proposed agenda builds upon efforts in the 2025 General Assembly session that passed HB 756 that restructured the CAT Board. The outcome has been met with opposition that it has had a major impact on CAT's operating revenue and the elimination of SPLOST VIII funding needed to support capital projects projected at \$48.2 million. It is critical that the Board, federal and state lobbyist advocate for capital funding and continued participation in the Transit Trust Fund Program.

Work towards the further implementation of the priorities outlined in the CAT Master Transit Plan and COA/TDP efforts are in jeopardy. CAT and its government affairs team will continue to participate in community partnership discussions with local government and business community in scoping out the 2026 legislative agenda. Today's proposed legislative plan acknowledge the essential need, and importance of transit infrastructure as it builds economic vitality for Savannah and Chatham County region.

In preparation for the 2026 session of the Georgia General Assembly session, convening on Monday, January 12, 2026, the proposed action would authorize CAT Board members, staff, and consultants to advocate, pursue and focus on the following positions during the upcoming state legislative session as proposed below.

During the 2026 Legislative Session, CAT will focus primarily on seeking local match and new funding for the following projects

As a result, it is recommended that CAT ask the delegation to amend HB 756 to grant us the authority to set and protect our own mileage rate or to protect CAT from reductions that prohibits it from providing public transportation that meets community needs. Having control over CAT's millage rate and/or protection from harmful mileage rate reduction would provide stability in basic funding to support administrative and operating costs. Like any other business we need certainty for operating purposes. Our attorney is reviewing this request to determine possible options.

Along with this we plan to aggressively pursue funding for the following capital projects.

1. Paratransit maintenance facility, (\$2.25 million in federal match dollars).
2. Ferry maintenance facility and electric infrastructure, (\$2 million in federal grant match dollars).

3. Fixed route bus replacement, \$7 million for hybrid and clean energy diesel buses, (purchase and federal and state grant match dollars).

4. \$7 million to support the Savannah Belles Ferry System expansion, (additional ferry, ancillary equipment and dock).

As you know, a ferry takes about two years to build and with the trade center expansion this will enable us to manage passenger surges brought out by conventions, to support workforce transportation, and citizen transportation across the Savannah River.

In addition we will explore avenues for sustainable revenue sources from state and federal governments.

Georgia Transit Trust Fund (GTF) (HB105-2020) Capital

CAT will build upon the success of last year’s funding through two approaches:

- 1) Funds through the **Transit Trust Fund Proposed Formula** program
- 2) Request the delegation’s support of a **direct line-item allocation** in the amount of \$1,900,000.00 for the Plant Riverside Dock Project. CAT will also have a ready proposal regarding funding needs should unallocated fund opportunities arise, as occurred last year, focusing on additional vehicle replacements. The agency will continue cultivating partnership with the County, Cities of Savannah, Garden City, Port Wentworth, and Greater Savannah Chamber of Commerce, Savannah Economic Development Authority, and Georgia Power for a countywide EV charging System
 - CAT will continue to work with the Savannah Waterfront Association and SaMMI to secure funding to support operating and capital improvements for the Savannah Belles Ferry System
 - CAT will continue to work with the RISE Transportation Working Group to address workforce transportation issues. The initial steps will be to invite industry to the table to identify and discuss their needs and work collaboratively to seek State Legislation to support planned initiatives and financial support.

PROCUREMENT | COMPLIANCE: *(provided by the Procurement Officer)*

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Project Scope Number	FTA/Grant Number	CAT Budget Line Item	Budget Line-Item Description	Federal Funding Request Amount	State Funding Request Amount	Local Funding Amount	Total Funding Amount
TOTAL SECTION FUNDS:				\$0.00	\$0.00		

NEXT STEPS:

CAT ICEO and Governmental Affairs Consultants welcome your comments and look forward to your advocacy and guidance to successful 2026 General Assembly.

ATTACHMENTS:

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT:

PROPOSED MOTION: (to be read into the minutes)

Move to: Accept staff recommendations for the adoption of the 2026 State Legislative Agenda summarized above to allow effective communication with elected officials and policymakers.

REQUIRED SIGNATURES

Department Item Preparer – Prepared by: Stephanie Cutter and Governmental Affairs Lobbyist

Department Chief – Reviewed by: Stephanie S Cutter, ICEO

Procurement | Compliance – Procurement and Compliance Reviewed by:

Chief Financial Officer – Financial Impact and Budget Reviewed by:

Executive Director/CEO - Final Reviewer: Stephanie S Cutter, ICEO

Board of Directors – Final Approval [insert board action]

This section is completed by the Board Administrator

Passed and approved this [insert date] of [insert Month and Year]

Motioned by:

AGENCY BOARD DESIGNEE:

Seconded by:

Board Approval (signed by Board Chair or Board Administrator)