



## Canopy Highlights Chatham Area Transit Renovation

At 497 feet long and up to 60 feet wide, flooded with natural light by day and illuminated at night, the platform canopy of the recently renovated Chatham Area Transit's Downtown Intermodal Transit Center in Savannah GA has become a landmark.

Opened in the 1960s, the current Greyhound facility needed to be reconfigured to include the Chatham Area Transit (CAT) fixed-route buses along a central transfer platform. The major renovation for both the site and the facility was completed in October 2013. The project was a design collaboration of the architectural firms Cogdell & Mendrala Architects PC in Savannah and Wendel Companies in Alexandria VA. The huge central platform canopy features curving metal wings of zinc with a 10 to 25-foot-wide sloped center spine of translucent polycarbonate supported on curved columns. The polycarbonate system was engineered by Duo-Gard.

Wendel's Sean Beachy, AIA, NCARB, says the goal was to design a "signature facility that the citizens would be proud was built in their city, and something that would elevate the perception of public transit."

He says the central canopy's main function is to keep passengers out of the elements. It had the potential to be very dark. "Our goal was to bring in natural light, either with open air or glass. However, glass was not cost effective, and keeping the central spine open would not protect the passengers. The translucent polycarbonate brings in the perfect amount of natural light and also keeps the space significantly cooler," Beachy says. The strength of the polycarbonate is another advantage, allowing workers to walk on it when maintenance is necessary. He adds that the zinc wings and the polycarbonate spine complement each other: "They look great together, and both have a long life expectancy."



Duo-Gard used its Series 2500 system, engineered for large expanses of sloped glazing. The translucent multiwall polycarbonate in 20mm thickness allows 40% visible light transmittance as it minimizes solar heat gain and glare. The material is shatterproof and completely recyclable.

Duo-Gard engineered special angle brackets to accommodate the system's attachment to the existing steel framing structure.

"The translucent polycarbonate system is the central interior design component bound by the signature curving steel beams," Beachy says. "It highlights a huge space and is both aesthetically pleasing and functional. Everyone is so happy with the results that we've been asked to design future canopies utilizing polycarbonate panels."