

Cascades East Transit – Regional Public Transit Advisory Committee

April 21, 2015

COIC Hawthorne Conference Room

334 NE Hawthorne Ave.

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Attendees: Elaine Henderson, Jordan Ohlde, Scott Cooper

Staff: Karen Friend (COIC), Andrew Spreadborough (COIC), Judy Watts (COIC)

Public Attendees: Trevor Johnson, David Carlson

Meeting called to order at 1:34p.

Introductions were made.

1. General Public Comments

General comments were solicited from the guests. Trevor introduced himself and said he lives in Central Oregon and talked about using transit to attend classes. He recommended utilizing a gas tax to help support fund the system and talking to businesses individually to support a tax for transit. Jordan recommended adding one more transit rider for the committee. Trevor talked about providing later service hours for students leaving campus and asked about weekend hours. Discussion continued about relationship between gas prices and transit ridership. Dave resides in Deschutes Market and Dale; there is no transit service in this area. A question was asked about the type of fuel used for buses. The fixed-route uses diesel and the dial-a-ride vehicles use ethanol. The fleet meets the emissions standard. Once the city builds a CNG station CET might have an opportunity to use other types of fuel. Discussion about sales tax and tax structure in Oregon continues.

Dave asks COIC to speak about ORS 190. Andrew explains that COIC has approached the legislature on a bill to change a state statute that would allow COIC to directly propose a property tax, but the state legislatures are not completely behind it. More work is needed.

2. RPTAC Schedule & Business

- **Meeting minutes from 2/17**

Scott refers the group to minutes from February 17 meeting. Dave has one correction, he is from San Jose. Elaine moves to approve minutes. Jordan seconds. Motion approved.

- **Revised Meeting Schedule**

Scott recommends using a COCC/OSU location in Prineville.

- **Reappointments**

Scott Cooper, Jordan Ohlde, and Elaine Henderson were reappointed to the RPTAC.

- **RPTAC Recruitment Strategy**

Discussion about Recruitment Plan. Jordan asks if a rotating Board member can attend the RPTAC meetings. Trevor says it would be good to have a kiosk where riders can buy tickets. Scott Cooper recommends adding Chris Watson from Warm Springs. Jordan recommends asking Bethlehem Inn.

3. Proposed Bend Transit Expansion

- **Overview**

Andrew presents the Bend Transit Expansion project. Andrew mentions who the partners and chairs were for the Bend Transit Expansion and priority improvements identified from previous outreach and the long-range transit plans. Andrew explained the proposed project should align with the needs of the community.

Andrew reminds the RPTAC that the committee provides recommendations to the Board of COIC and they will be asked to provide a recommendation at the June meeting that will go to the Board.

The expansion involves 3 new routes: 7, 10, and 12. Peak hours would reduce headway to 30 minutes. Later hours of operation would extend to 8:00 PM (currently CET operations end around 6:15 PM).

Changes proposed for Routes 5-6 and 6-5 involve making service bidirectional.

Details were given on Westside routes.

Andrew directs members to memo where information displays existing number of buses per day. With proposed expansion CET will increase number of buses per day.

The estimated annual cost for operations will increase by \$1.27 million. The main partners other than City of Bend are St. Charles, OSU Cascades, and COCC to meet the budget. COIC has already secured a state grant. In the future, there could potentially be a fare increase, but COIC is not thinking of increasing fares at this time. If all partners contribute to Bend transit expansion, a gap in funding will remain, but group bus fares could help close the gap.

- **Comments/Questions**

Jordan asks about Sunday service.

Trevor asks if the college has a fare based student discount.

How high demand is weekend route for community connectors? The only weekend service is in Bend and it is currently on an 80 minute headway.

Jordan says he hears every weekend: why is there not Saturday service from Bend to Redmond? Karen says we have taken the funding for transit and met the highest priority needs. We will continue to do that.

Trevor asks about a route going to Southeast corner of Bend. Andrew explains that it is in the long-term transit plans but will not be included in the upcoming proposed transit expansion.

Jordan asks for clarification on service to St. Charles.

Scott C. says Routes 5, 6, and 7 serve east side and the west side is served by several more routes. Is the expansion focused on west side? Andrew says we are not meeting all the community needs but we are maximizing access to student populations, health care groups, and the data that we have. In building productivity goals this was the best approach.

Scott asks at what level was the decision to favor productivity over equity? Andrew says the partners made this decision. To avoid future criticism, Scott recommends that COIC should emphasize the partners' choice in favoring productivity.

Jordan asks if there is a transit model we are following. Karen says we have transit specialists that were contracted to decide best how to best grow the transit service. When they were compiling data they looked at activity centers, density, and how to maximally serve the populations.

Jordan says that he has heard from people about pulling out of OFCO on Route 1 and why did we decide to do that. The route goes over a block.

A question was asked about transit buses and if they will get larger or have low floor buses? The new buses will have more seating (38 seats). At this time we do not have funding to purchase low level buses.

Trevor says that we should still pursue a tax for the transit.

David comments that there is a high volume of traffic on Deschutes Market, the USFS who are traveling north.

4. Proposed Recreational Transit Routes

- **Upcoming Recreational Route Opportunities**

Karen discusses recreational routes: Mt. Bachelor shuttle and Ride the River. We have been requested to expand RTR service; we have had a 40 percent increase in riders. We see these routes as a benefit to the system because it attracts riders to the system who would otherwise not take transit. We talked to the COIC Board about recreational transit opportunities and asked

should we continue to offer these types of services. The COIC Board said that as long as recreational routes did not detract from the system or take away funding to the other parts of the system – then it is a benefit to community partners.

- **Ride the River Expansion**

It is proposed that COIC runs the service 7 days a week beginning June 13th – Labor Day. We would propose to raise the fare from Zone 1 fare (\$2.50) to \$3. It is our understanding that recreational riders are willing to pay more and that would cover the service. Bend Parks and Rec would fund any deficit for our first year and provide staffing to direct riders to the buses in an orderly fashion. Sun Country will continue to have a kiosk and sell tickets.

Scott Cooper asks why are we limiting ourselves to covering the fare and why not increase fare even more on recreational routes. Karen says we do not want to turn away riders, and incremental increases are better to implement.

David says tourists will not see the incremental increases because they are coming from out of town. We should investigate those who are here for more than one day and offer a multiple-day passes.

Karen says because Parks and Rec is offering to fund any deficit, we can see what happens if we implement .50 increase.

What if residents receive a discount?

Jordan asks if we are considering offering some type of family pass. Not at this time; we want to keep it simple.

Karen reminds RPTAC that Mt. Bachelor fares were a barrier to riding the shuttle. Andrew reinforces that we do not want to upset riders. Elaine says in Madras there was a family fare offered for a pool and that people began saying they were a family when they weren't. There are a lot of unpredictable factors related to Ride The River -- water level, whitewater park, etc.

If we raise the fare more than a .50 increment, then we think Bend Parks and Rec will take the additional money to fund a staff person.

COIC proposes to increase fare to \$3.

- **Lava Lands Shuttle**

Karen reminds RPTAC about the Bend Bulletin article that came out a few months ago about a Lava Lands Shuttle. The shuttle will run every 20 minutes, beginning Memorial Day weekend and weekends until school is out.

We were going to propose a fare of \$3 for this shuttle service, but we have now gained a partnership with Discover Your Forest. The fare proposed is \$2.50 and any proceeds would go to

maintenance of monuments. The USFS does not want a huge fare because this is the first year a shuttle service will be set in place.

Scott asks about the terms USFS set for this project. Andrew reminds RPTAC that the partnership assures fares are covered in the event that COIC does not recoup its costs.

The ride is about 8 minutes up and 8 minutes down including loading. Last year they were doing a permitting service that gave cars a certain amount of time they were allowed up.

- **Recommendation on Fare**

Elaine moves that RPTAC recommends to COIC Board to increase the fare at least to \$3 and increase the service to 7 days a week. Jordan seconds motion. Motion approved.

Jordan moves to recommend to COIC Board to set fare to \$2.50 and begin service to Lava Lands Shuttle. Elaine seconds motion. Motion approved.

5. CET Outreach

- **Bend 2030 Forum**

Judy recapped the Bend 2030 Transportation Forum. There were about 200 attendees and COIC presented information about CET services and then asked attendees to participate in three activity stations related to transit.

- Bend Maps & Schedules

The new Bend transit maps will arrive sometime between this Friday and Monday.

- Transit Vision

COIC is working on a transit vision with GB2 to explain a forward thinking, inspiring vision of transit services. This messaging will be used at public meetings, with local governments and elected officials, and in a variety of ways.

6. CET Updates

- Transportation Report

Scott notes that Community Connector rides are sharply increasing. Andrew says that service outside of Bend is a growing demand and we will look at expanding outside of Bend next. Scott says that transit service from Prineville to Redmond would be a good idea.

Meeting adjourned at 3:26 PM.