

**Deschutes County Transportation Coordination Project
Core Team Meeting #1 - April 27, 2006
Redmond COIC**

In Attendance:

Project Core Team Members:

Mike Daly, Deschutes County Commissioner and Project Convener
Dan Vizzini, Oregon Solutions (Facilitator)
Richard Gorby, Oregon Employment Department Veterans Representative
Greg Cole, Black Butte Ranch
Lin Gardner, Department of Human Services
Allan Flood, Bend Community Action Team
Rose Alsbury, La Pine Chamber of Commerce
Cheryl Mills, Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce
Mike Patterson, City of Redmond
Bud Prince, Redmond Economic Development
Heather Ornelas, City of Bend Transit Division
Carol Maszk, Central Oregon Council on Aging
Ed Moore, Oregon Department of Transportation Region 4
Steve Jorgensen, Deschutes County Community Development
Corky Senecal, Central Oregon Community Action Agency Network
Judy Trego, Community Action Team of Sisters/City of Sisters
Eileen Stein, City of Sisters
Jeff Monson, Commute Options for Central Oregon
Tyler Deke, Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization
Laurie Thom, Redmond Area Community Action Team
Karen Friend, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council/Cascades East Ride Center
David McDaniels, Central Oregon Partnership
Sherrin Coleman, Oregon Department of Transportation Transit Division
Andrew Spreadborough, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council

Interested Parties:

Ray Lewis, Central Cascade Line
Lupita Lewis, Central Cascade Line
Don Lehman, Interfaith Action for Justice
Chuck Arnold, Bend Downtowners Association
Kendal Shaber, Deschutes County Commission on Children and Families
Tammy Baney, Citizen
Jeff White, Central Oregon Coalition for Access

Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

Commissioner Daly called the meeting to order at 9:15 by welcoming attendees to the first meeting of the Deschutes County Transportation Coordination Project. He explained that he was appointed by the Governor to serve as the project convener - the

neutral party that leads the project in an effort to address the challenge. He said that the challenge that we plan to address is the need for increased transportation services for workers, seniors, the disabled, and other residents of Deschutes County. This need is increasing – as the region grows, more people are commuting between communities for work. Critical services such as medical providers, Central Oregon Community College, and many social services tend to be located in Bend. This presents challenges for residents of other communities. On top of this, gas prices rising. No single organization or government has the resources to implement on their own a transportation service that will meet these needs for improved transportation options for Deschutes County residents. However, if we can find a way to better use the existing resources by working together and by leveraging what we already have, we can improve mobility throughout the County. That's what we plan to do in this project – to develop a shared vision about transportation services in Deschutes County, and to better coordinate our existing transportation services and providers.

Commissioner Daly asked for introductions from participants, and then turned the meeting over to the project facilitator, Dan Vizzini of Oregon Solutions.

Agenda Review and Announcements

Dan Vizzini introduced himself and provided information about his background and the role of Oregon Solutions. He reviewed the meeting agenda.

Project History and Background

Andrew Spreadborough provided a project overview through powerpoint presentation. The slides provided background on the project partners (COIC, Bend Community Action Team, Redmond Community Action Team, La Pine Community Action Team, Community Action Team of Sisters, and the Oregon Department of Transportation Transit Division); and challenges facing the region as a result of population growth, increasing commuter rates, and uneven housing prices and distribution of employment. He summarized the Oregon Solutions process:

- Assessment - Assess the goals of the project and the community readiness to find and implement solutions.
- Leadership- Select a Convener who is neutral, respected, skilled in group decision-making, innovative and a problem-solver, enjoys support of the Governor, is available and understands the project vision.
- Project Membership - Form a project team of key stakeholders who are critical to finding solutions or may be in a position to block them.
- Integration - Conduct project meetings to identify challenges and opportunities and integrate stakeholder resources to achieve the project goals.
- Commitment to Solutions - Develop a Declaration of Cooperation consisting of specific commitments of services and/or resources to be provided by stakeholders to advance the project solutions.
- Implementation and Monitoring - Implement the solutions as set forth in the Declaration of Cooperation, monitor progress, and develop new strategies in response to changing project conditions.

He then provided the project's initial problem statement:

Rapid population growth is increasing the need for transportation services in general and better coordination of transportation options for seniors, the disabled and persons without the means of personal mobility.

He wrapped up with an overview of the project goals:

- Identify present and future needs for providing ride options, coordinating transportation services, and ensuring citizen and visitor mobility in Deschutes County. Identify present and future transportation needs in Deschutes County.
- Develop a shared vision for the ideal transportation system for Deschutes County.
- Identify steps to work toward the shared vision, including coordination of existing resources and services as well as identifying potential future projects.
- Prioritize coordination initiatives based on the needs that would be met and the potential for success.
- Implement top priority coordination projects.

Dan explained that the problem statement and goals are open to modification from this group (the project Core Team). It is important that Core Team members are able to speak for their organizations and can bring information from these meetings back to their organizations. He said that we want to work toward implementing solutions through this process, and each Core Team organization should expect to contribute toward those solutions through resources and/or efforts. Dan distributed an organization assessment tool document, explaining that it is for informational purposes only at this point, but that we may return to the assessment at future meetings.

Dan went on to discuss the Jefferson County Transportation Coordination project, and how that process resulted in a Declaration of Cooperation among participating organizations. Andrew said that the project that the Jefferson group agreed to implement was a Madras-Warm Springs Shuttle developed through the coordination and expansion of existing transportation providers. The project has not yet been implemented; the Jefferson County Core Team is working on an implementation plan. Dan said that the challenges faced by that group were the development of an effective leadership structure, securing grant funding, and identification of a fiscal agent. Dan asked for feedback or thoughts from the group.

Carol Maszk said that the keys to success in this effort are involving the local leadership and for the Core Team to take ownership in the project. Jeff Monson said that there are jobs in the region, but the challenge is that workers cannot always get to those jobs. Judy Trego said that Sisters faces many of the same problems as Jefferson County – specifically moving people between communities. She said that we have a great opportunity through this process to find a way to move more people by better coordination of existing resources.

Laurie Thom said that through community surveys it has become clear that transportation is a challenge for people getting to work. Affordability of housing is

driving people out of the Bend area and away from employment centers, resulting in workers traveling increased distances to get to work. Allan Flood discussed the need to get workers to places of employment.

Dan reviewed the “Challenges” and “Goals” sections of the meeting agenda, and asked for additions. Corky Senecal said that the need for transportation services for low income populations should be included within these sections. Ed Moore said that the root cause for increasing transportation needs is not population growth; rather, the fundamental challenge is the distribution patterns of affordable housing and jobs. The connection between land use and transportation should be considered.

Lin Gardner said the Department of Human Services clients face challenges because many do not have driver licenses or vehicles. And the need extends beyond jobs – getting to child care for instance can be a challenge. Many clients have substance abuse issues and are not able to drive. Allan Flood said that we need to engage the business community in developing solutions. Lupita Lewis said that we should ensure that all solutions ensure ADA accessibility, so that we do not exclude any groups.

Chuck Arnold asked how this project would integrate with private transportation providers and services. Will solutions be able to assist or provide resources to private providers – public/private partnerships? Dan replied in the affirmative.

Richard Gorby said that jobs are going unfilled in Bend – the Employment Department has 500 open jobs currently. One of the problems in filling those jobs is the inability to get some workers to the jobs. A transportation system would help get people working. Jeff Monson said that several businesses have implemented van pool systems – including Columbia Air and Black Butte Ranch. Fuqua Homes wants to hire, but cannot get workers to their site.

Heather Ornelas suggested that we think in a multi-modal fashion – that our solutions should attempt to link all options (trails, bikes, etc.). We first need to understand the specific transportation needs. The solution should address needs for informal/last minute rides as well as fixed route. Ed said that solutions should have certain qualities such as reliability, timeliness, and affordability. Judy said that this process should link to other systems, and that improved transportation could be a tool for economic and workforce development efforts.

Andrew distributed the list of Core Team invitees, asked for additions if any organizations are missing.

Tammy Baney asked how we will know we are successful. Dan said that success must include the development of a project implementation plan. Judy said we need to get a project implemented. Tammy said that it should be used and valued by the community. Andrew added the need for sustainability once it is launched. Richard said it should meet the needs of the most. Dan said that success through this process means that we have selected our priorities correctly and implemented them.

At the completion of this discussion, Dan had recorded the following goal/challenge items on the flipcharts:

- Focus on low income populations
- Cause – mismatch : distribution of jobs, affordable housing (connection between land use and transportation)
- Impacts of substance abuse, family situations
- Need to engage business community, employers
- Full accessibility to disabled populations
- Public-private partnerships
- Obstacle to filling job openings
- Think multi-modal
- Cover all kinds of needs – informal, fixed
- Focus on improved public mobility – not public transit (exclusively)

Flipchart items for “Qualities” for solutions:

- Reliable
- Timely-convenient
- Affordable
- Accessible
- Comprehensive (multi-modal)
- (Needs to have sufficient) Participation, ridership
- Sustainable, core business

The group adjourned for a 10 minute break.

Project Ground Rules and Operating Principles

Dan sent around a handout that included examples of ground rules from other Oregon Solutions projects. He explained that the ground rules define how we interact within the Oregon Solutions process, how we interact with the outside world, and how decisions are made. He asked for comments on ground rules for this project.

Rose Alsbury said that the Jefferson County Transportation project ground rules were appropriate, and that we should adopt their rules. Jeff Monson agreed, and explained how the Jefferson rules were adopted. As he recalled, more than one meeting was spent on developing the rules. Carol stressed the importance of the second Jefferson County bullet – the need to send a representative to all meetings.

Discussion turned to the 7th Jefferson County bullet that defines the project area. Mike Patterson said that in developing and prioritizing projects we should be realistic and focus on connections between Sisters, Bend, Redmond and La Pine. Sherrin said that the needs assessment should in part dictate where projects are developed. Laurie said that there are substantial needs in Terrebonne. Andrew mentioned the needs of the Camp Sherman community to connect to Sisters and Bend. The group agreed to drop the parenthetical reference to a specific area of the county, and agreed to change

“community” to “Deschutes County” so that the 7th bullet now reads: “Any decision we make will be for the overall benefit of Deschutes County.”

Dan said that the Deschutes County project is a step toward a broader regional inter-community system. We are building the Deschutes County piece of the Central Oregon solution. David asked if we will be implementing pieces of a Deschutes County solution, or if we will be waiting to implement the entire solution. Dan said that we will make choices, which implies that priorities will be set. An entire system may be identified, but certain pieces or phases will be implemented. Mike Patterson said a challenge will be paying for a transportation system – subsidies will be necessary. That is why focus on the population centers makes sense initially. A county-wide solution may be too grand and difficult to support financially. Mike Patterson said that we need to start with a modest project to establish success. Ed pointed out that no public transportation system is unsubsidized, and that private providers will not meet our affordability criteria. Heather said that transportation is a necessary infrastructure – we don’t expect other infrastructures to pay for themselves.

Greg Cole talked about Black Butte Ranch’s employee transport system. He said that they started with a single van, and have increased ridership to the point where they will be buying a bus.

Dan said that there is a reason why we called this the Transportation Coordination project rather than the Public Transit project. We need to recognize the political dynamic we are faced with – limited resources. We should look first at redesigning existing resources (including \$ and capital), and use them to leverage and coordinate new resources.

Commissioner Daly asked if we are looking for public funding? The County does not have any new resources for transit. Laurie said that the intent is not to develop a public transit system. Jeff Monson said that there are other dollars besides County resources – such as ODOT and Federal Transit Administration resources. Sherrin Coleman agreed, stating that there are a number of public funding sources, and she will present detail on these funding sources at the May meeting.

The group adopted the Jefferson County ground rules, with the noted modifications.

Chuck said that lack of public transit is a challenge, but is also an opportunity. The outcome of this process could be transit, but we should first focus on need for improved mobility. Heather agreed, and said that in NW Oregon a needs assessment yielded new information on resources and services. Eileen said that it would be helpful to hear about the data and need for improved transportation. Andrew described the work under way – looking at data and demographics, and conducting a needs assessment survey.

Lin said that this effort has been under way for several years and discussed the success of earlier coordination efforts in Deschutes County – the development of the medical

ride brokerage program. Carol Maszk said that a Bend-Redmond shuttle was designed and proposed several years ago but came to a halt due to lack of County support. Dan said that we will be using the previous needs assessments and surveys as a starting point. We hope to have information to present at the next meeting.

Sherrin agreed with earlier comments about not pre-agreeing on a solution; that we should work toward increased mobility. Bud Prince said that the solution should be driven by the needs of the users rather than the provider market. Commissioner Daly discussed challenges faced by the County – that most of their funding is earmarked. The County may be losing substantial road/transportation revenues with the potential loss of the federal County payments program. And gas tax rates do not appear to be increasing any time soon. No dollars are currently identified at the county for public transit. Any new funding would have to come from new taxes, and be approved by the voters. Commissioner Daly said that federal funding may be an option, and agreed to discuss the project with the County's lobbyist.

Wrap Up, Next Steps

Dan said that the goal is to implement projects – get a handful of things that can be implemented successfully. The vision matters – we need to establish something reliable and sustainable. This is a long term commitment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, May 25, 2006
 9:00 AM to Noon
 Redmond COIC Office, Upstairs Board Room**