

**Deschutes County Transportation Coordination Project
Core Team Meeting #5 – August 24, 2006
Deschutes County Services Center, Bend
Lewis and Clark Room**

In Attendance:

Project Core Team Members:

Mike Daly, Deschutes County (Convener)
Dan Vizzini, Oregon Solutions (Facilitator)
Allan Flood, Bend Community Action Team
Tom Azbell, Central Oregon Council on Aging
Mark DeVoney, Oregon Department of Transportation Region 4
Steve Jorgensen, Deschutes County Community Development
Jeff Monson, Commute Options for Central Oregon
Andrew Spreadborough, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
Jeff Nielson, Bend Chamber of Commerce
Judith Ure, Deschutes County
Gene Zinkgraf, Central Oregon Community College
Don Horton, Bend Metro Park and Recreation District
Kristi Otteni, La Pine Community Action Team
Patty Geraghty, Department of Human Services
Judy Trego, Community Action Team of Sisters
Bud Prince, Redmond Economic Development

Interested Parties:

Richard Etzel, Interfaith Action for Justice
Chuck Arnold, Bend Downtowners Association
Jeff White, Central Oregon Coalition for Access
Nancy Ruel, La Pine Community Action Team
Gary Daniele, Worksource Central Oregon
Yesenia Sharp, Bend Community Action Team/Latina Leadership Ed. Center
Mark Schindel, Old Farm District Neighborhood Association
Lupita Lewis, Central Cascade Lines, Inc.
Ray Lewis, Central Cascade Lines, Inc.
Lynda Tucker, Central Cascade Lines, Inc.

Introductions

Commissioner Daly opened the meeting by asking for introductions from participants. Dan Vizzini asked for any updates or news items from participants. Dan then asked how many transportation providers were in attendance (COCC, Central Cascade Lines, COCOA, Jeff Monson representing vanpools). He asked how many purchasers of service were in attendance (DHS). He explained that the focus of today's meeting will be to begin to figure out which providers will participate in the coordination of transportation services, and how it will be coordinated (e.g. voucher system, compensation). He said that at some point we will need to pull together the providers to

determine what it will take to make it work. We also will need to pull together the purchasers of service to see how funding can contribute to an inter-community project.

Chuck Arnold asked if the City of Bend had participated in the July meeting, and pointed out the importance of their engagement in this process. Dan replied that Bend had made a presentation on the new Bend Area Transit System at the July meeting.

July Meeting Minutes

Dan said that the July meeting minutes are not yet available, and will be distributed at the next Core Team meeting.

Jeff Monson announced that the Bend Area Transit System ribbon cutting event will be held on September 26 at the Bend City Hall. Services will begin on September 27.

Needs Assessment Survey Update

Andrew Spreadborough provided an update to the group on the transportation needs assessment survey process. He reminded the group that the intent of the survey is to collect information on the needs of employers, agencies, and individuals. He explained that a sub-committee worked on the development of the survey forms in July. Committee members included Osmar Blanco of T-Mobile, Jeff Monson of Commute Options, Mike Schmidt of the Bend Chamber of Commerce, Gary Daniele of Worksource Central Oregon, Yesenia Sharp of the Bend Community Action Team and Latina Advocacy, and Andrew Spreadborough.

The survey process began in early August. Core Team volunteers have been distributing surveys to organizations and businesses in Deschutes County, and to date a total of 201 have been received. The committee plans to have most of the employer/organization surveys collected by August 31, and the individual/employer surveys by September 30. Andrew reminded the group that the needs assessment findings will not only help the core team in developing priority projects – it will also be useful to the Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation regional transit meeting scheduled for November.

Andrew said that one remaining task is to have the surveys translated to Spanish and disseminated to Latina/Hispanic organizations. He said that he would work with Yesenia Sharp to develop the translation.

Dan asked for feedback from the group regarding the surveys – what has been the response of the survey recipients? Jeff White said he had not yet begun surveying the organizations that he had volunteered for because he has not yet received the cover letter. Andrew said that he would send one to him.

Chuck said that he has/will be taking the survey to downtown Bend businesses in person to ensure the surveys are completed. Nancy Ruell said that she had contacted the school districts, but found that this is the worst time of year for surveying. She has discussed transportation with the districts, and learned that more kids are riding school

busses because of the higher fuel costs – parents don't want to drive them to school. That increased ridership has resulted in increased stops and the need for more drivers.

Jeff Monson noted that libraries were not listed on the survey list, pointing out that they have an interest in public transit issues, parking, etc. Don Horton volunteered to take the surveys to the libraries.

Provider Resource Assessment Update

Andrew provided an update on the provider survey process. He distributed an updated provider resource assessment, and summarized changes to the document. Additions include a listing of providers who currently provide services between communities, a broader list of provider information, and updated aggregate provider data. He said that the document remains incomplete, and efforts are under way to collect additional information.

Nancy asked about the aggregate information section – wondering which of the providers have lift vans for wheelchairs. Andrew said that he has that info, and will make sure it is included in the next draft. He asked about other info that should be included, or other recipients of the provider survey. The group suggested DHS, Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, Deschutes County Veterans, churches, private schools and destination resorts.

Transportation Mapping Exercise

Dan explained the mapping exercise: the group will identify on a county map providers serving inter-community routes, and geographic concentrations of potential transit system users. This exercise will help set the stage for the next steps in the process toward developing a coordinated system and to get the group thinking about the system. Eventually, the group will map who is providing services, frequency/schedules, and potential stops on a system.

Lupita Lewis said that there is a problem for providers in accessing ODOT funds because to be eligible for certain funds a provider has to fit within a specific classification. She said in developing her service, ODOT has encouraged her to structure it up as a vanpool. Lupita does not envision a vanpool structure for the Central Cascade Lines, but said that she does not yet qualify for other federal or state funds. For instance, the FTA 5311 program is intended to support rural providers, but she said that if she provides service to Bend she cannot receive 5311 because ODOT will not support duplicate or parallel services. The challenges in accessing funding have and will negatively impact the provision of transportation services in rural areas. She suggested that the group needs to look at this issue before working on specific coordination activities.

Dan agreed that funding is critical and that we need to devote time to this issue. However, he said that today's exercise is to identify potential routes for service and that once identified we will work on the funding piece.

Dan began the exercise, and asked the group to focus on the inter-community connections rather than local needs within each community. He noted that the local systems are critical to the success of inter-community transit, stating that Bend's fixed route system does not serve the entire community. He suggested that we hold the question of transit within the nodes to future discussions, and that we start with inter-city links.

Nancy asked that absent local systems, how would one get to the inter-community shuttle? Park and ride lots are needed as meet points. Dan said that the lack of park and ride lots would be a weakness of the system. Jeff Monson pointed out that there are a number of park and ride lots, including at least one lot in each community. In La Pine the lot is located at Wickiup Junction.

Lupita again mentioned the challenges that providers are facing in dealing with limitations around ODOT classifications of providers. Mark DeVoney offered to check in with ODOT Transit on this issue. Lupita said that she does not think vanpools will solve the region's transportation needs. Dan said that we will look at funding issues at a future meeting – we are still at the “30,000 foot” level of looking at needs generally. We will focus on specific components of a project – such as funding, local match, organizational structure – at a later point in the project.

The group worked through the mapping process, identifying providers, geographic concentrations of potential riders, park and ride locations, and other relevant info.

Meeting Wrap-Up

After completing the mapping exercise, Dan announced that he would take the marked up map and develop GIS version. He said that we will focus on the needs assessment and provider survey data at the September meeting, along with discussions on communicating with providers.

Mark announced that he spoke with someone at ODOT Transit during a break, and learned that in regard to the classification issue that Lupita brought up, ODOT plans to simplify the classification system for their October funding round. Dan said that Sherrin Coleman or another ODOT Transit staff person would attend the September meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, September 28, 2006
 9:00 AM to Noon
 Deschutes County Services Center, Bend
 DeArmond Conference Room**