

**Deschutes County Transportation Coordination Project
Core Team Meeting #7 – October 26, 2006
Deschutes County Services Center, Bend
DHS Conference Room**

In Attendance:

Project Core Team Members:

Mark DeVoney, ODOT Region 4
Jeff Monson, Commute Options
Tyler Deke, Bend MPO
Heather Ornelas, Bend Area Transit
Gene Zinkraf, Central Oregon Community College
Nancy Ruel, La Pine Community Action Team
Judith Ure, Deschutes County
Kristi Ottenti, La Pine Community Action Team
Osmar Blanco, T-Mobile
Karen Friend, COIC/Cascades East Ride Center
Jeff Nielson, Bend Chamber of Commerce
Allan Flood, Bend Community Action Team
Andrew Spreadborough, COIC
Lin Gardner, Oregon Department of Human Services
Lupita Lewis, Central Cascades Lines
Chuck Arnold, Bend Downtowners

Introductions

Andrew Spreadborough welcomed everyone to the meeting, and explained that Commissioner Daly would not attend due to an out-of-country trip. He also said that Dan Vizzini is unable to attend due to illness. Introductions followed.

Announcements

Jeff Monson asked about the status of the Mobility Franchise project, and said that the Mobility Franchise proponents should be participating in this project. Chuck Arnold said that the Mobility Franchise process is moving forward. He said that they have not coordinated closely with this project because the Mobility Franchise project is proposing a specific solution. Heather asked if there will be a chance for public involvement at any point. Chuck said that there are lots of unanswered questions, and they are not at that point yet. He suggested that this group invite David Foote to attend a future meeting.

Nancy Ruel discussed concerns about the Dial-A-Ride service in Bend, explaining that some elderly residents were having difficulty accessing the service after the changeover to the fixed route system. She said that some elderly were told that they were ineligible to ride, and that the application process was burdensome. Heather Ornelas explained that there is a 90-day period to complete the paperwork that demonstrates eligibility for Dial-A-Ride, and that if a rider is disabled or income eligible they will be provided a ride.

She explained that this was a complicated changeover, and she offered to help with any issue that arises.

Lin Gardner agreed that the changes are challenging, and that Heather has been reliable in addressing issues as they arise. She said that often times when elderly are told that they cannot get service, then they do not pursue it further.

Heather said that over the last month that the Dial-A-Ride serve provided just short of 5,000 rides. The Dial-A-Ride system provided 7,300 per month when the Dial-A-Ride was the general public service. The overall system's efficiency has increased through the changeover – they are providing more rides per service hour. There is the perception that the Dial-A-Ride system was cut to the bone – that perception is not true. They provide 20,000 rides on the bus. For the same number of service hours the system increased from 7,300 rides to 24,000.

Judith Ure discussed the Special Transportation Fund (STF) grant funding process. She said that applications will be submitted to the county, and the STF committee will work through a process to select recipients. The ODOT public transit division is hosting a training to assist applicants of the state discretionary grant program. She distributed a flyer with information on the training. When asked for clarification on the STF and ODOT discretionary grant timeline, Judith explained that the STF committee will be formed, STF applications will be accepted in November and December, staff will review in December, and committee will form funding recommendations in January.

Andrew provided a summary of the Tri-County Council of Chambers Transportation and Transit conference, which was held at the Deschutes County Fair and Expo Center on October 25. He said that about 30-40 were in attendance. Andrew said that he presented on the Deschutes Coordination project. Other presenters were: Bob Bryant, ODOT Region 4 manager, Heather Ornelas, BAT, Jeff Monson, Commute Options, Ray Kurka, Crooked River Ranch, Lupita Lewis, Central Cascades Lines, and David Foote, Mobility Consortium.

Andrew said that he stressed a several points in his presentation:

- The Core Team enjoys broad representation of public, non-profit and private partners. The group has become an effective technical discussion group;
- Through this project, the participants would like to address the need for expanded regional transit/mobility options by building on what we already have in place in the region;
- The most significant barrier that this project faces is a lack of leadership support – the need for a designated coordinating entity with the authority, capacity, expertise, and resources to implement a regional system.

Andrew said that the themes he heard from several presenters included: transit and personal mobility is a regional issue; this issue is now affecting the economy (business recruitment/retention, workforce availability); the issue is increasing in importance;

action is needed at a regional level; and that we need to continue to build on what we have in place in the region by more efficiently accessing and coordinating resources.

Review of Project Status

Andrew said that this was to be one of Dan's agenda items, and that he would attempt to state what Dan had intended. In terms of the steering committee, there has been a change in the composition. The Central Oregon Partnership and the local community action teams have pulled back from steering committee participation due to workload issues. This has resulted in an increased project workload for COIC, and a slower-moving process than was intended. Andrew invited Core Team members to consider serving on the steering committee to help guide agenda development and project planning efforts.

In terms of the remaining work schedule, at the beginning of the project the steering committee set out a timeline for Core Team participation. As per that timeline there are two remaining meetings scheduled after today. Andrew reviewed the project goals, and acknowledged that implementation of a coordination project will be the most difficult.

Andrew said that the issue of regional transportation has changed dramatically in the past 12 months – since this project started. There is now a higher degree of community interest, and an acknowledgement that transit/mobility is an issue that impacts the economy. This increased interest has resulted in the formation of several groups discussing or studying the issue, including our project, the Jefferson County coordination group, the mobility consortium, the Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board, the tri-county chamber of commerce group, neighborhood associations, and others. We have also seen new providers and expanding services, such as the Central Cascades Line. And, the single most significant accomplishment in addressing regional transit was the development of the BAT in Bend, which will provide a regional hub and local system for moving people.

The point: regional transportation is a moving target- it is hard to get one's bearings in terms of how a regional system would be developed, what pieces should be built on. When starting this project, the goal was to identify specific coordination opportunities, modest in size and impact. Now, however, discussion has shifted to how we develop a regional system. The steering committee (and others) discussed how this group's work can contribute to the region's discussion, and how we can have the greatest/most effective impact on regional transportation. Two actions are proposed:

1. Assist Deschutes County in completing the federally mandated coordinated human services transportation plan. Why? The county needs to complete the plan for state and federal funds to flow into the region. Our work aligns nicely with the federal planning requirements in terms of assessment, planning, stakeholder involvement and identification of priorities. And, it provides a formal endorsement of the core team work since the county board of commissioners will need to approve/adopt the plan.

2. Propose to the county that the core team be designated a standing advisory committee to the county, to provide information, priorities, and recommendations as related to transit. The core team would develop policy guidelines, and potentially augment or enhance the STF committee.

Needs Assessment Survey Update

Andrew referred the group to attachment B – Needs Assessment Executive Summary. He went through the document, and summarized key findings. He acknowledged that not all of the surveys had been included – so this document remains a draft.

September Meeting Minutes

After a break, Andrew reminded the group that they had not yet approved the September meeting minutes. The minutes were approved by consensus.

COACT Meeting Update

Andrew said that COACT will be dedicated most of their November meeting to the issue of regional transit. Andrew will be providing an update to COACT on this project. He said that his presentation will be brief due to time limitations, and will be mostly in line with the Tri-County Chambers or Commerce presentation.

Andrew distributed the handout from the chamber meeting, and the group suggested two changes: that Commissioner Daly be identified as the project convener, and that a list of the core team members be added to demonstrate the broad involvement.

Meeting info:

COACT

Thursday, November 9

3:00 to 5:00

COIC Redmond, Upstairs Board Room

Deschutes County Human Services Transportation Plan

The group returned to the discussion of the Deschutes County plan. Andrew discussed the key barrier to coordination of transportation services, as experienced with the Jefferson County project: lack of leadership and organizational capacity. For coordination to work, there needs to be an organization that steps forward or is created that has the authority, expertise, resources and capacity to guide and manage the process. ODOT will only contract with certain organizations (primarily cities, counties or districts). He noted this so that the group could keep it in mind as they developed priorities.

Andrew asked the group for a “check in” to determine if there was consensus that this process will serve as the Deschutes County plan. The group agreed by consensus. There was discussion on how the plan should be structured and used. Osmar Blanco said that the plan must include goals and priorities. It was suggested that COACT could serve as the long term body that updates the plan.

The group participated in an exercise to brainstorm transportation needs and priorities:

- Inter-"community" Transportation/connect populations centers e.g. Shuttles between communities, Bend-Redmond shuttle, South Deschutes County shuttle
- Identify "underserved" area (geography) + population (demographics)
- Support/coordinate with statewide "trip-check" + carpool programs
- On going method to address needs among population groups
- Encourage/support multi-modal options
- Educational "commute"
- Sustainable/"environmentally sensitive" options (clean buses)
- Encourage reduction in SOV trips
- Fast, fair, frequent..
- Access to basic services/life skills
- Work commute focus
- Continued support-existing services to clients
- Evaluation process- evaluate effectiveness
- Support for coordination of existing resources (research of options for coordination)
- Clearinghouse of transportation information
- Court ordered group/population transportation services
- Clients needing rides to WIC appointment
- On-going senior/disabled transportation
- Encourage regional coordination resources and services, etc.

Next Steps:

Dan will be assembling a draft plan using the ODOT template and work completed by the group to date. The draft will be presented to the core team at the November 30 meeting to discuss and refine.

Judith will prepare information on the STF/ODOT Discretionary grant programs that are subject to or guided by the plan, including how the funds can be used and who has received funding in the past.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, November 30, 2006
 9:00 AM to Noon**