

Meeting Notes

Regional Transit Master Plan Technical Committee Meeting

March 8, 2013

9am-11:30am

Redmond Public Works Training Room, 243 E. Antler Redmond

Attendees:

Joni Bramlett (ODOT)
Jim Bryant (ODOT)
Tyler Deke (Bend MPO)
Scott Edelman (City of Prineville)
Karen Friend (CET/COIC)
Pat Hanenkrat (City of Metolius)
Joan Johnson (City of La Pine, OSU-Cascades Student)
RJ Johnson (RJ Johnson Architecture)
James Lewis (City of Redmond)
Eric Porter (City of Sisters/City of Redmond)
Peter Russell (Deschutes County)
Nick Snead (City of Madras)

Staff:

Scott Aycock and Tamara Geiger (Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council)
Scott Chapman, Oren Eshel and Paul Lutey (Nelson/Nygaard)

Introductions

The meeting attendees introduced themselves by name, title and community representing.

Project Update

Scott A. reviewed the meeting agenda. He explained that Nelson/Nygaard would present draft service plans for each community and each TAC member should weigh in on behalf of his/her community. He reiterated that the plans are open to input and are not final. He explained the project timeline included holding a stakeholder and a public meeting in each community over the next two months. Both meetings will provide additional discussion forum for community input, funding, and presentations of more/less aggressive service plan options. The RTMP will be complete by June 30, 2013.

Updated Demand Estimates

Paul began with an overview of current and future transit demand based on the number of people commuting between the major communities. RDM-Bend (current and forecast) commuting is significantly higher than any of the other city connections. Prineville-RDM and Prineville-Bend have high future market potential (a high potential for changes in traffic, not necessarily just for transit). High, Medium and Low rankings were based on the sense of demand relative to each other and relative to the current amount of transit service (potential for growth). Joan contributed that the potential for growth in La Pine is very high because they currently have low service and she hears a lot of demand for La Pine-Bend travel. RDM also stands out as having high potential for change because public DAR service is not serving the demand.

Paul explained the overarching goals and objectives that guide the service planning process and answer the question: Why are you providing transit in Central Oregon? One key finding was the importance of maintaining a regionally integrated system. He explained that the activity centers and employment centers in each community are interconnected and depend on each other and an integrated transit system. Scott included that the already high rate of intercommunity commuting seems to be increasing – not just for trips to Costco in Bend

but also for medical specialists, COCC, OSU Cascades, etc. It is very important for transit to maintain a single integrated system for efficiency.

Paul explained that the current regional transit service is a coverage based system, especially oriented towards those that don't have other transportation options. He explained service planning is executed with two goals in mind: how to improve service for those that don't have options AND to attract new choice riders. He briefly reviewed the proposed service plans for each community (short, midterm and longterm):

- Redmond: fixed-route is feasible in the 3-10 year timeframe
- Prineville and Madras: fixed-route is potentially feasible in mid-longterm, currently not
- La Pine and Sisters: local DAR is sufficient

Jim Bryant asked about the different time frames (short, midterm and longterm). Scott explained that short-term is what should be happening now, midterm is something that could happen but the community would need to get behind it and figure out how to fund it, and longterm is a general sense of where service for each community is headed. Jim suggested that it would make sense in Prineville and Madras to have flex-route as a midterm service, and fixed-route in the longterm. Scott maintained that service expansions will be dependent on funding and demand thresholds. They added that while La Pine, Sisters, Culver and Metolius are being effectively served by DAR, better use of CC shuttles could provide enhanced service in those communities.

Overview of Goals/Objectives

Paul briefly reviewed the Draft Goals and Objectives (Slide 8) and proposed that the TAC should review and send their comments after the meeting (to save time).

The group discussed "Goal 7: Advocate for transit-supportive development practices." Scott explained that COIC/CET is increasingly being consulted in Bend when there is new road construction or are new developments. This consultation is essential to planning strategically, and increases certainty for people who want to site themselves near transit. Karen explained the problem is when developments are built on corridors that don't make sense for transit, and then they request it. She continued that transit needs to be planned for and needs to be considered as a part of measurement for locating a development.

James asked whether the plan would be considered for adoption in community TSP or Comprehensive Plans. Scott explained that yes, the goal is to have it integrated into every TSP and potentially Comp plans. Peter Russell asked if CET currently receives notice for land use changes. Paul and Scott explained that one of their recommendations is that CET is better integrated into each community's framework planning. Tyler Deke suggested looking at where the transit corridors are in the future, and defining the priority transit corridor and its area, so that new developments outside the area cannot expect transit service. James and Nick suggested that the RTMP is adopted locally and that a process for land use review/consultation for institutional developments is set up. Jim agreed but noted that its important to scale the amount of transit advocacy based on the amount of transit service, e.g. Bend is already integrating CET into land use planning considerations and Redmond should next. Nick suggested expanding Goal 7 to include adoption at the local level to ensure the plan doesn't just sit on a shelf.

Action Item: Scott A. to send TAC an email reminder to review the Goals and Objectives and send any questions or comments to himself and Paul.

Outline for Transit Master Plan

Paul explained the TMP outline and how they defined potential services and appropriate timelines to introduce services in each community. The short-term plan for services is to restructure to continue to provide the maximum service within the expected funding. Scott and Karen explained that CET is living within a continually changing financial environmental where many sources are cobbled together. Jim asked if the short term service plan is what CET knows they can fund. Scott and Karen explained that nothing is guaranteed. Karen went on to explain that the midterm service plan is supposed to represent what the communities really need, so that CET

can prepare funding asks at the local level accordingly. She urged the TAC to share their feelings on what level of local service should be available at each community level. Communities may choose that they're only willing to fund a certain amount, and CET needs to respond to establish the level of service each community wants and can support.

James responded that it is hard for him to answer any type of policy questions, as far as what city council would be willing to provide for funding. He suggested a mid-point check in with the councils. Scott explained that COIC is in the process of planning stakeholder, public and city council meeting presentations in each community.

Paul explained that the proposed service structures were identified by looking at existing data, trip and stop level, numbers and ridership. There are things within each proposed service that could be prioritized, and for the purpose of the plan, each community should focus on needs rather than costs (for prioritization). He explained that the top priority improvement for community connectors was weekend service and for local public dial a ride was more spontaneous service (same day rides, etc). Eric suggested that the slide titles of survey data be changed to "Rider Input" rather than "Community Input" because the survey data came from riders, not the community at large.

Action Item: Change language from "Community" to "Rider" in all rider surveys.

Paul continued to give an overview of the proposed service plan. Highlights included:

- Cut Community Connector runs that have very low ridership (1-2 riders)
- Restructuring Sisters-RDM Community Connector to operate between Bend and Sisters.
- Better interaction with Drive Less Connect to relieve some needs that transit can't serve
- New community connector trips in mid and longterm plans

Eric recalled parents of students at Redmond Proficiency Academy relying on the Sisters-RDM shuttle. Scott explained that they aren't riding enough to justify the trip and can still get to RDM through a transfer in Bend. Also, Commute Options may be a good resource to plan carpools. Tyler asked about the Bend-Sisters CC that CETr used to run and whether there is ridership data from that time. Karen explained that there used to be a senior bus from Sisters to Bend, but COIC did not have Sisters-Bend Community Connector service.

Jim asked about accurately representing the magnitude of demand between the Bend-Redmond commute vs. the other commutes. While there are 10x more trips than any other corridor, they've only planned four more RT community connectors in the long term plan. Scott explained that while there may be many more trips that doesn't necessarily mean opportunity for more transit.

Tyler added that by not having a direct connection for Prineville-Bend, the system loses the choice riders who could take transit to work in Bend but won't because they have to connect. He also asked why the service between Madras and Warm Springs is not currently included in the plans. Scott explained that it was removed but service will be reinstated in July and Warm Springs is more committed to coordinating their local service with the Community Connector. Nick suggested adding it back into the plan as something to address, Scott agreed.

Action Item: Add Madras-Warm Springs Community Connector service back to the RTMP.

James asked about trip origin data. He explained it would be essential to demonstrate to the city councils that they are being asked to pay for trips that their constituents are making (not paying for people from smaller communities to come to RDM for example). People migrating in may be spending money at businesses, but it we will be (eventually) proposing a property tax measure, then you need to prove to homeowners that it's a valuable service locally. Peter also proposed including data about the % capacity the vehicles are currently running. Scott explained that this data will be more carefully framed (community specific) and slowly built out

for the stakeholder, community and council meetings. Karen also emphasized that each city will only be paying for what it thinks is appropriate, they will get the service that they want. The TAC also suggested a funding pie-chart.

Action Item: Include a pie-chart visual of funding (what % is grant funding, etc), % capacity data and trip origin data for each stakeholder meeting.

Short-Term Service Plan

Paul explained the short-term service plan, including Community Connectors on an 80 minute cycle time connecting to fixed-route in Bend (on 40 minute pulse). Highlights included:

- Net elimination of 4 Community Connector trips in the region (includes Sisters-RDM)
- Propose a local fare for the DRW stop (La Pine-Bend Community Connector)
- Southbound Redmond-Bend CC stop at Cascade Village Shopping Center (can't add a northbound because of existing infrastructure)
- Suggestion for a local public bus to serve destination of every CC bus

Karen gave an update on the flex fund grant that was awarded to do improvements at the RDM transit center including shelters, covered bike corral, sidewalks, signage, security cameras. COIC is still working through process to receive the funding from FTA and have hit a road block with historic building designation paperwork. James suggested having the library designate the transit area as public right of way so its not technically on their property, and can avoid the historic building designation issues.

Action Item: Scott to discuss potential "public right of way" designation with James.

Mid- and Long-Term Plan

Paul explained the mid- and long-term plans. He highlighted the potential to add Community Connector mid-day trips so that people who have short errands/appointments can get back home without having to wait all day. This plan would bring the La Pine shuttle back on the pulse and make connecting with OSU/COCC easier (a complaint Joni had raised). Jim expressed his concern that the penalty for missing a transfer when on the pulse system is pretty great, and that delays are intolerable to choice riders. It also forces you to leave the origin at sort of inconvenient times just to meet up with the pulse. Scott explained that they are looking into adding local stops to the CC's as a middle ground to more direct routes that the system can't afford. Eric also noted that in the mid-longterm plan a Sisters-RDM route would be reestablished in addition to Sisters-Bend.

Paul explained that it's important to consider community priorities to plan for fixed-route service. Options include a 40/80 headway system, with two buses that could provide good coverage or with 4 buses providing the same coverage but better service. Paul explained the switch from DAR to fixed-route needs to consider the % of current DAR riders that will be able to access the new fixed-route ("access" requires that the line run within .25 miles for convenience). Karen related that when Bend switched to fixed-route it was hard for many seniors who don't qualify for paratransit but couldn't walk to the bus stop. Scott explained that the next step is to refine the concepts, cost them, and have pros and cons listed. The group discussed the previous notion of a flex-route, and how the current high DAR ridership allows CET to go straight from DAR to local fixed route.

Paul skimmed the last slides due to time constraints, and the TAC agreed to review them on their own.

Action Item: TAC to review slides, send feedback to Scott A. and Paul.

Next Steps

Many of the TAC members weighed in for their communities:

- Redmond – James cautioned that the plan should not get ahead of the Redmond TMP, and that more conversations need to be had locally. He emphasized that Redmond needs to make decisions for Redmond, not have decisions made for it by the region. James, Karen and Scott agree that they need to work through the Redmond TMP before formally adopting the RTMP.
- Prineville – Scott E. believed that Prineville and Crook County would support the short term approach because small cuts will be seen as financially conservative.
- Madras – Nick emphasized including local land use review in the plan and the need to identify primary centers where transit will be focused. Also, that Jefferson County needs to get involved, maybe the smaller communities (ex. Metolius) can't pay but Jefferson County can.
- TAC agreed that the plan needs to reference unincorporated communities – including Terrebonne, Crooked River Ranch and Juniper Canyon. Also, the communities with high populations living outside city limits (Sisters, La Pine)

Scott thanked the TAC for their service and reminded them of the upcoming community stakeholder meetings to discuss the proposed service plans and funding.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.