

**CORVALLIS CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON TRANSIT
AGENDA**

**Wednesday, January 10, 2007, 8:15 a.m.
City of Corvallis Madison Avenue Conference Room
500 SW Madison, Across Madison from City Hall**

- I. INTRODUCTION

- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES -December 13, 2006 CACOT meeting

- III. CACOT/VISITOR'S COMMENTS - Items not already on agenda

- IV. OLD BUSINESS
 - Citizen request for quarterly evening meeting days/times - Discussion; dependent upon Council appointments to commissions

- V. NEW BUSINESS
 - Public Process for Fare Increases and Major Service Reductions - Staff report included; action requested
 - Commissioner Harrod suggestion to hold CACOT/City and Laidlaw staff cookout - Discussion

- VI. INFORMATION SHARING - Written report distributed during meeting

- VII. ADJOURNMENT

Future Meetings:

**Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2007, 8:15 a.m., Madison Avenue Conf. Room
Wednesday, Mar. 14, 2007, 8:15 a.m., Madison Avenue Conf. Room
Wednesday, Apr. 11, 2007, 8:15 a.m., Madison Avenue Conf. Room**

**The Madison Avenue Conference Room is accessible to the public.
Please contact Michelle Rhoads at (541) 766-6916
if you will need special accommodations to attend the meeting.**

**CORVALLIS CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON TRANSIT
MINUTES
December 13, 2006**

Present

Scott Carroll
Stephan Friedt
Joe Harrod
Bob Lowry, Chair
Brandon Trelstad
Lita Verts, Vice-Chair
Robert E. Wilson

Staff

Lisa Namba, Public Works
Michelle Rhoads, Public Works

Visitors

David Coulombe, City Attorney's Office
George Grosch, City Councilor
Stewart Wershow, City Councilor

Absent

Kenyon Solecki, ASOSU

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations
I. Introductions	X		
II. Approval of October 18, 2006 and November 8, 2006 Minutes			Approved
III. CACOT/Visitor's Comments	N/A		
IV. Advertising on Corvallis Transit System Buses			Approved the draft policy
V. Operating and Maintenance Facility	X		
VI. ADA Paratransit Service Fare Review	X		
VII. Information Sharing	X		
VIII. Adjournment	X		

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. Introductions

Introductions of Commission members, staff and visitors were made.

II. Approval of October 18, 2006 and November 8, 2006 Minutes

Commissioners Friedt and Trelstad, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission approve the October 18, 2006 minutes. The motion passed

unanimously, with Commissioner Wilson abstaining because he did not attend that meeting.

Commissioners Wilson and Friedt, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission approve the November 8, 2006 minutes. The motion passed unanimously, with Vice-Chair Verts abstaining because she did not attend that meeting.

III. CACOT/Visitor Comments

There were none.

IV. Advertising on Corvallis Transit System Buses

Commissioners Wilson and Friedt, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission approve the draft policy for advertising on Corvallis Transit System buses.

Discussion ensued regarding the motion. Vice-Chair Verts asked Ms. Rhoads if CTS had been approached to advertise any material which could be deemed inappropriate in nature. Ms. Rhoads said that long ago there was an incident in which it was necessary to suggest that the original proposed artwork be redesigned. Recently there was another situation in which a political candidate advertised and some citizens voiced concerns that it looked as though the City was endorsing that candidate.

Mr. Coulombe said the draft policy is a combination of input from the City Council and additional language culled from policies of other local transit jurisdictions. He was asked about distinctions on religious advertising. He said the City intend to create a commercially-oriented advertising policy, not to create a public forum. Ads that support or oppose a particular religion, belief, or viewpoint would not meet the intent of the policy.

Ms. Namba raised the issue of Public Service Announcements (PSA), non-commercial expressions, and if there was any risk that they might lead into the establishment of a “public forum” and potentially controversial areas. Mr. Coulombe noted that it was a matter of degree, and that if too large a percentage of ad space was being used for PSAs, it could unintentionally provide a basis for the claim that CTS has established a public forum. If a small percentage of total advertising space were available for PSAs we could avoid that issue. We could also consider limiting PSAs to government entities. Ms. Rhoads noted that “the goal of the policy is to “maximize revenue”, thereby limiting the available space for PSAs. Commissioner Friedt said he would be interested in seeing how other transit agencies deal with this. He said that most PSAs he sees on other systems are inside the buses. Councilor Wershow suggested that staff track the number of requests for PSA ads and report to the Commission if the requests begin to grow in number. Mr. Coulombe noted that the Purpose and Intent section of the policy would help in addressing and constraining the PSA issue.

Ms. Rhoads said another potential source of revenue for the City, as yet unexplored, would be advertising on bus shelters and benches. Mr. Coulombe said the advertising policy could be revisited when, and if, advertising were expanded to bus shelters and benches. Shelters and benches are typically located in public sidewalk areas that have traditionally been considered “public forums”, and that it would necessary to take a closer look at potential issues if we were interested in allowing advertising on those facilities.

On behalf of the Commission, Chair Lowry thanked Mr. Coulombe for his time and effort on this matter.

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Rhoads stated that the recommended policy will be forwarded to the City Council via the usual process of Council Committee review and recommendation; then Council review and approval. She also announced that the City sent an offer to Lamar Advertising to extend the existing contract one year, beginning January 1, 2007. The City retains one additional option year that may be exercised if desired. A copy of the draft advertising policy was sent to Lamar representatives and they responded favorably to it.

V. Operating and Maintenance Facility

The City has identified three sites for a proposed Operating and Maintenance Facility. The sites are: The old mill site on Reservoir Road; the City Public Works site; and the Corvallis Industrial Park in South Corvallis (behind the DMV on SW Deschutes Street).

Ms. Namba reported the City recently held a public meeting to discuss this item. Attendance was light and the consultants will be summarizing the comments received by attendees. The consultants will begin researching the sites in depth by looking at environmental issues, natural and cultural resources, environmental justice, archeological resources, etc. The consultants and City staff will use the criteria matrix approved by CACOT to identify one preferred site. A site design and cost estimate will then be produced and shared with City Council and the public. Commissioner Friedt inquired as to the timeline for completion of the environmental work. Ms. Namba said the schedule has been extended several months and we will likely not have one preferred site by the end of January, 2007, as we had originally hoped.

VI. ADA Paratransit Service Fare Review

Commissioner Wilson, a Benton County Special Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) member, reported the recommendation for an ADA paratransit fare increase from \$1.00 to \$1.50 was reviewed and approved at a public meeting of the STAC. The fare has not been increased in the previous ten years. Dial-A-Bus has established a scholarship fund to offset the cost of fares for economically-disadvantaged riders. The recommendation will be forwarded to a City Council committee and then to City Council. It is anticipated that the fare increase will take effect in February 2007.

VII. Information Sharing

- Ms. Rhoads reported CTS ridership continues on track to set a record for 2006. Although November ridership did not set a record, ridership for both CTS and the Philomath Connection was higher than the prior five-year average. On-time performance for November was lower than in previous months in part because the week the data was gathered included the Thanksgiving Holiday and the Civil War football game. With OSU out of session for the Winter Break, it is anticipated that December on-time performance will improve. Commissioner Lowry reminded the Commission that on-time performance can be affected by unavoidable factors like trains. Ms. Rhoads said it is difficult to build time into routes for train-related delays.
- Ms. Rhoads stated that the potential revision to Route 4, reversing the directional path around the hospital area, is still being discussed. Residents of The Regent have noted that once the buses travel on Elks Drive, they are headed downtown, so people have to first travel downtown before returning to the medical complex. CTS drivers feel that the Route 4 should be reversed because some passengers are confused and waiting on the wrong side of the street. Previously Ms. Rhoads had been asked by the Commission to gather passenger count data among Routes 2, 4 and 7 in the hospital area. The data shows an almost equal passenger count among the three routes, and indicates that the Route 4 stop at the bottom of the hill on Elks Drive has a fairly high level of use. Even considering this, Ms. Rhoads supports the driver recommendation. It is anticipated that there will be further discussion among City staff prior to a decision. Ms. Rhoads does not anticipate on-time performance to be negatively impacted if the Route 4 revision were put into place. CACOT reaffirmed they will leave it to staff to make the determination about changing the direction of Route 4 at the medical complex.
- Commissioner Friedt asked whether it would be possible to use the VIS to access information about on-time performance more often than one week out of a month. He said it would be useful to observe the difference in on-time performance during different times of the day. He stated that in the future, as we evaluate the possibility of route adjustments, he'd like to see more data before changes are made.
- Passenger shelters are scheduled to be relocated starting January 2007.
- Ms. Rhoads continues to be in contact with Luminator, the City's contractor, regarding working out minor glitches in the Auto Announce System.
- Ms. Namba reported that the City was recently awarded a federal Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) through ODOT to expand CTS Saturday service and add one earlier morning run on the Philomath Connection, effective January, 2007. Ms. Namba recently wrote another six grants for the 2007-09 Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) discretionary grant funding cycle. The grant requests were recently reviewed and ranked by the Benton County STAC, and are as follows:
 1. Continue funding for the recently awarded JARC grant to expand service hours for CTS on Saturdays and weekday service for the Philomath Connection.

2. Slightly expand service outlined in #1.
 3. Software for an unlimited license server to enable web-users access to real-time information on bus routes.
 4. Paving of bus pads (area between sidewalk and curb) at bus stops.
 5. Ramps for wheelchair access and missing segments of sidewalks throughout the City
 6. Bus shelter maintenance.
- Ms. Rhoads reported that another grant submitted by the Benton County Special Transportation Program received a high ranking from the Benton County STAC. The request is for operating funds and capital to provide a transportation service between Lincoln County and Benton County on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
 - Ms. Namba reported that since the 2006 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review, the City has met all deadlines for making program corrections and providing deliverables. Two deadlines remain, one in December, 2006 and one in January, 2007.
 - Ms. Namba distributed a transit revenue sources summary. In response to a question from Commissioner Verts, she explained that the Group Pass dollars (including OSU) are considered fares, while OSU Contract Revenue is a direct contribution to the transit service, not a fare. Contract revenue may be used for local match, while fares may not. She explained that approximately one-third of the City's operating budget comes from a federal grant, one-third is local funding required to match the federal grant, and the approximate remaining one-third, referred to as "overmatch", is also local funding. Local funds primarily come from the General Fund (property taxes) and Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) funds. Ms. Rhoads stated that the City transit program has not experienced budget cuts like other City services have the past few years because, in part, the reliance on General Fund money has decreased dramatically. Chair Lowry expressed appreciation for staff's efforts over the years in accessing alternative funding sources. Councilor Wershow said that during his previous tenure on City Council, the transit program was cautioned that an increased dependence on (BETC) funds may not be available in perpetuity and that alternate means of revenue may need to be unearthed in the future. BETC monies do appear to be more stable for now.

Councilor Wershow asked if restructuring the way OSU delivers its payments to the City, i.e. not classifying payments as "group pass fares" would be a more useful way for the City to categorize revenue. Ms. Rhoads said it would be important to proceed prudently in distinguishing fares versus operating support payments as FTA could have some concerns about such a change in revenue distinction.

- Samaritan Health Services, a group pass plan member, is attempting to deal with arrival and departure issues on the Linn Benton Loop for its employees at their Avery Square site on NW 9th Street. Currently, Albany residents must ride a Linn Benton Loop bus and then transfer to a CTS bus to get to Avery Square. Ms. Rhoads worked with a Samaritan Health Services representative to develop a customized "cheat sheet" for their employee

use. She will develop a similar sheet for Samaritan Health Services employees who work on the main campus on NW Elks and NW Satinwood. Chair Lowry suggested a survey of riders who use this service.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Lowry.

NEXT MEETING: January 10, 2007, 8:15 a.m., Madison Avenue Meeting Room