

**CORVALLIS CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON TRANSIT
MINUTES**

February 9, 2005

Members Present

Scott Carroll
Emily Hagen, City Councilor
Bob Lowry, Chair
Robert Straus
Brandon Trelstad
Lita Verts, Vice-Chair
Robert E. Wilson

Staff

Jim Mitchell, Public Works
Jon Katin, Public Works
Michelle Rhoads, Public Works

Visitors

Linda Elder, Dial-A-Bus
Paul Morgan
Carl Switzer, Corvallis Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization

Absent

Bjorn Warloe

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Infor- mation Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations/Action
Introductions	X		
Approval of Minutes from January 12, 2005 Meeting			Approved, as corrected.
CACOT/Visitor's Comments	X		
Updates to the Draft Master Plan			Comments received from CACOT members will be incorporated
Information Sharing	X		

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. Introductions

Introductions of Commission members, staff and visitors were made.

II. Approval of Minutes- January 12, 2005

The following correction was noted: Page 7, the last sentence on the page should read "CTS would be put into a risk position of carrying costs which may not have been paid for by ASOSU during the current year".

Commissioners Lita Verts and Brandon Trelstad respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission approve the minutes, as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

III. CACOT/Visitor's Comments

Linda Elder, Dial-A-Bus, provided the following update on Dial-A-Bus operations.

Dial-A-Bus services the elderly and disabled population of Benton County. There are now two Sunday routes instead of one. Service has also been added between Corvallis and Albany on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On these days, on average, there are six riders per day. Overall Dial-A-Bus ridership is between 5,000-5,500 per month. The number of volunteers ranges between 35-40 persons per month.

Appointments are scheduled on the half hour. Dial-A-Bus generally does not provide "door through door" service nor do drivers accompany riders into riders' destinations. Dial-A-Bus is, however, insured for this type of service. They are currently considering a route which would consist of one route, one driver, three days per week, dedicated to "door through door" service. Drivers would need passenger safety sensitivity training in order to handle "door through door" service.

Dial-A-Bus, for the first time ever, sent out a solicitation letter which resulted in revenues of approximately \$3,000. There has never been a formal fund raising program but a raffle was conducted at the 2004 Benton County Fair. The raffle yielded approximately \$200.

IV. Updates to the Draft Master Plan

Bob Lowry provided each CACOT member with a copy of his written comments regarding the Transit Master Plan. On the first issue, Lowry said the section on ridership levels should be changed from the stated 4 x to 8 x the current levels in the 20-year span. He said that in the future, fuel will not be available at the level that it is today and this will lead to expansion of public transportation.

Jim Mitchell said this could be incorporated into the "policies" chapter or put into a long-range scenario where the potential outcome would place increased demands on the system. It also could be a statement in the Executive Summary explaining why public transportation is so important.

Lowry said the second issue about the number of spare buses in the system was an issue he has also raised to representatives of the Linn-Benton Loop. He would like to have a future discussion about the spares ratio issue.

Jim Mitchell was asked whether Bob Lowry's comments should be discussed and acted upon by the entire CACOT membership or if Lowry should present the comments as a private citizen. Mitchell said if the Commission can come to a consensus on the importance of incorporating Lowry's comments into a document for review, it could then be determined where best to present the comments.

Commissioners Verts and Straus, respectively, moved and seconded that both of Lowry's comments, the level of transit service expansion needed in the future and the bus spares ratio, should be incorporated into the appropriate section of the draft Transit Master Plan, to be decided by June, 2005. The motion passed with Commissioner Wilson opposing.

Scott Carroll said Ann Steeves of Good Samaritan Hospital has been working on Homeland Security issues for the hospital. The hospital is formulating a regional plan for dealing with a weapon of mass destruction or bioterrorism event. Carroll recommended that City staff begin dialogue with Ms. Steeves to gauge transportation capacity in the event large groups of people would need to be transported during a terrorism event.

Jim Mitchell said this type of issue has been specifically addressed in the Benton County Emergency Management Plan. Part of the Plan identifies evacuation and mass transportation issues, and grants authority and control of a transit system to the incident commander who would work through the City Manager to bring those resources to bear. Katin added the Benton County Emergency Management Committee has met with Ms. Steeves regarding this issue.

Lita Verts stressed the importance of the transit system by stating CTS buses were the sole means of transportation able to navigate the flood waters in 1996 to service residents of Southeast Corvallis.

Mitchell said transit buses would be identified in the draft Transit Master Plan as a resource that would be relied upon during emergency events. The Commission members were unanimous in their approval of this action to be taken.

Jim Mitchell said the schedule for the Draft Master Plan is to present it to City Council in April or May. The Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) has identified March as the time for its review and recommendation to Council on its perspective on the plan. This recommendation will not

have any bearing on the City's 2005-06 budget. Emily Hagen said Council has not had preliminary discussions about the plan. Before the comments were presented to Council, a public hearing would be held. If there were significant changes resulting from a public hearing, CACOT would review the comments, incorporate the concerns, then make a recommendation to Council.

Bob Lowry suggested that CACOT members review the changes and report any comments to Michelle Rhoads no later than February 16, 2005.

Jon Katin said most public hearings are conducted by the commission directly involved. With comments sent to Rhoads by February 16, a public hearing with CACOT could be set by early March, 2005. At the close of the public hearing, if there were no significant changes to the Master Plan, CACOT could make a statement that the draft would be presented to Council. Rhoads said if the public meeting were held as part of the March CACOT meeting, the meeting time would need to be moved to a late afternoon or evening hour. Mitchell added the document should be available to the general public for review before the public meeting takes place.

Staff and CACOT members agreed to report any comments to Michelle Rhoads by February 21, 2005. Assuming no major changes need to be made to the plan, staff would schedule a public hearing to take place before the onset of OSU's spring break starting March 21, 2005. A full document would be made available for the general public in advance of the public hearing.

Bob Wilson asked when the full document, including revisions made by Nelson Nygaard, would be made available to CACOT members. Rhoads answered early in the week of February 13, 2005.

Commission members agreed to have a public hearing separate from the March CACOT meeting.

V. Information Sharing

Jon Katin reported that he and Robert Straus went to the Associated Students of Oregon State University (ASOSU) Incidental Fee Committee meeting. Katin distributed four pages of a ten page document showing CACOT's "argument" why the transportation fee increase was necessary. Straus presented the City's information to the ASOSU Committee.

The presentation showed that 43% of 2004 CTS ridership consisted of OSU students, while students account for only 6% of revenue to CTS. CTS's ridership during FY 03-04 was over 511,000. Using full-fare figures and factoring in discounts, the OSU program should reimburse CTS \$115,000 for 2005. Last year's figure was \$105,000.

Robert Straus said the Incidental Fee Committee in the future would like CACOT and the City to be more visible and involved on campus. The committee's vote was a 3-3 deadlock with the chair, Casey Schaufler, voting to approve the fee increase. Thus, the fee increase was recommended for approval. The "no" votes from representatives centered largely around the issue of students already paying their fair share for transit service. The students pay incidental fees, pay through taxes as most live in rented housing off campus, and indirectly pay OSU's lump sum to CTS through tuition.

The next step is going to the ASOSU Appropriations and Budget Committee and then to the student senates. In response to Straus' earlier appeal to CACOT to be more visible on campus, Katin said the budget does not allow for a lot of advertising and recruiting. Michelle Rhoads pointed out that Robert Straus arranged for a CTS bus to come to the campus quad as part of an advertising campaign for transit service.

Lita Verts said if ASOSU insists on not signing a contract if fees are raised, CACOT must demand a reconciliation clause at the end of the contract.

Jim Mitchell said if CACOT were to take direction from the Incidental Fees Committee and not increase transit fees, combined with the anticipated reduction in the number of students paying the fee next year, it would have been impossible to recover in 2006 what was recovered in 2005. There is a difference in the student fee amount and the contract amount.

Robert Straus said the fees committee wasn't completely sure that the OSU student ridership figure was accurate. The ridership figures are acquired in January. Katin said he was comfortable saying that figure is accurate because ridership remains steady from January through June. A figure that is difficult to acquire is the percentage of OSU students which ride the bus, i.e. whether 10% of OSU students make up 43% of ridership or whether 40% of OSU students make up 43% of ridership. Michelle Rhoads said student ridership surveys are done in January in order to be consistent from year to year.

Rhoads distributed transit system ridership information.

There was a new all-time January ridership record for both CTS and Philomath routes for the month of January 2005 at 50,854 rides for CTS and 1,423 rides for Philomath. CTS's on-time performance during January 2005 was 92%, which is consistent with prior months when OSU is in session. Route 2's route change is helping keep the Route 2/Route 5 pairing on time.

Routes 3, 6 and 8 are experiencing delays in the afternoons. Lita Verts asked if it is possible to allow certain routes additional minutes to complete their routes during the busiest times. Rhoads answered CACOT has considered this in the past but it was never acted on because the routes which would undergo a time change are paired with other routes. For instance the Route 3 may be paired with the Route 5. If the Route 3 is 5 minutes later than currently scheduled, it would be impossible for a rider to transfer to another route.

Jim Mitchell said there are two alternatives available. One is to change the schedule to recognize the current reality of some routes being late. The second is to try to change the route to meet the schedule. Mitchell said the wayside passenger information signs, soon to be implemented, will help riders to know exactly when buses will arrive at a given location.

VI. Adjournment

Commissioners Wilson and Straus, respectively, moved and seconded that the Commission adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Future Meetings:

Wednesday, March 9, 2005, 8:00 a.m., City Hall Conference Rm. D
Wednesday, April 13, 2005 8:00 a.m., City Hall Conference Rm. D