

**CORVALLIS CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON TRANSIT
MINUTES**

March 10, 2004

Members Present

Craig Anderson, Chair
 Bob Lowry, Vice-Chair
 Chris Godwin, ASOSU ex-officio
 Robert Strauss, ASOSU ex-officio
 Lita Verts
 Bjorn Warloe
 Stewart Wershow, City Council
 Robert E. Wilson

Staff

Steve Rogers, Public Works
 Jon Katin, Public Works
 Michelle Rhoads, Public Works

Visitors

Paul W. Morgan
 Roy Severin

Members Absent

Scott Carroll, Unexcused

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Inform- ation Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations/Action
Minutes- January 14 and February 11, 2004			Approved as submitted
Visitor Comments	None		
City Council Financial Strategies & Transportation Funding Alternatives Task Force		X	
Modify CACOT Membership and Discuss Length of Monthly Meetings			Recommendation to modify CACOT membership to add two voting positions, one each for OSU and ASOSU
Passenger Fare Pricing and Fare Box Recovery		X	
CAMPO Public Involvement Framework		X	
OSU & ASOSU Group Pass Program	X		
Advertising on Buses	X		
Routes, On-Time Performance, Designated Stops, Bus Shelters	X		
Ridership Reports	X		
School and Transit Discussions	X		
Dr. Seuss's 100 th Birthday & National Read Across America	X		
Get There Another Way Week	X		

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTIONS

None.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 14 and February 11, 2004

Lowry made a motion to approve both the January and February meeting minutes as submitted. Wilson seconded the motion. A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

III. CACOT/VISITOR COMMENTS

None.

IV. CITY FINANCIAL STRATEGIES & TRANSPORTATION FUNDING ALTERNATIVES TASK FORCE (TFATF)

Rogers reported the City Council's strategy for the FY 04-05 budget. It will remain substantially the same as FY 03-04 therefore there will not be any reduction in transit services. The FY 04-05 budget includes staffing for Fire Station 5. There will be a process implemented during the next six (6) months for the purpose of prioritizing City services for potential budget and/or service reductions in FY 05-06. These processes are still active:

- A) TFATFT
- B) Law Enforcement Restructuring
- C) Acquisition of the City's street light system

Anderson inquired what the difference is between the Council's pending prioritization process and the service prioritization process from approximately two (2) years ago. Rogers responded that most of the cuts recommended in the previous process were implemented except those identified for transit. Transit cuts did not occur because actual FTA funding for FY 03-04 was more than originally anticipated, which allowed the City to maintain service levels.

According to Rogers, the list developed during this new process will identify significant cuts needed to address the next anticipated budget shortfall of approximately \$2 million. There will be opportunity for public input and outreach. Wershow added that the Council's potential reduction list for FY 04-05 was developed because the Council thought it would be necessary to

institute major reductions. The list will be used to help identify areas of potential reductions in future years.

Highlights of the draft TFATF Phase I report were introduced by Rogers. He noted that TFATF members had not yet seen or approved the report, which will be presented to TFATF during its next meeting Wednesday, March 24th, at 5:00 p.m. at the Public Library Main Meeting Room, 645 NW Monroe Ave. There is opportunity for public comment at the beginning of the meeting. After TFATF approval, the Phase I report will be presented to the City Council's Urban Services Committee on May 4th, and then to the full Council on May 17th.

It is expected that the Council will take some action in response to the TFATF report and recommendations. One of the results of this process may be a reduction in transit service levels and/or reductions in other types of transportation services provided by the City. Verts stated that cuts in transit services are unacceptable because it severely impacts the City's most vulnerable citizens.

Warloe asked if the Council has taken formal action to state to the Oregon Legislature that the City wants a transit district. Rogers responded that the actions required to form a transit district are in the control of the local voters, but that the City has made numerous attempts over the years. Recently the City attempted, but was unsuccessful, in a legislative process to make it possible for municipal-operated transit systems like Corvallis's to have access to the "in-lieu-of" property tax funds received by transit districts.

Wershow added that the City Council would have become the governing body of the transit district in that situation. According to Rogers, in-lieu-of funding for municipal systems is an issue of equity. The City attempted to get the number of governing body board members to match the number of Corvallis City Council members. Lowry stated that OSU influenced the legislature to not support the proposed legislation because it would increase OSU's operating costs.

Rogers reminded the group that OSU student, faculty, and staff ridership now comprises almost 50% of CTS ridership. Recognizing this development and with encouragement from Senator Frank Morse, OSU administration has recently informed the City that OSU will increase its annual contribution to support CTS services. This year, OSU is paying a contracted amount of \$20,000 for faculty/staff rides and it is anticipated that the funding level will increase to \$150,000 for FY 04-05. There is also the potential for future increases based upon ridership and the

projected value of in-lieu-of property taxes. This news was welcomed by CACOT members.

V. MODIFY CACOT MEMBERSHIP AND DISCUSS LENGTH OF MONTHLY MEETINGS

Rogers distributed a memorandum that recommended expansion of CACOT membership to include an ASOSU designated representative and a University designated representative. Support for this recommendation includes:

- A) Increased levels of CTS ridership by OSU students, faculty, and staff;
- B) The anticipated increase in funding from OSU; and
- C) Opportunity for a direct voice and vote from both ASOSU and OSU to help address their needs

Rogers recommended that CACOT consider a recommendation to the City Council to expand CACOT voting membership. Verts commented that membership would give the two groups a vested interest in CTS services and would maintain interest in continuing CTS financial support. Anderson noted that the current CACOT by-laws stipulates six (6) voting members. Wilson received confirmation that OSU and ASOSU would appoint their respective representatives.

Wilson made a motion to accept staff's recommendation to expand CACOT voting membership to include one member each from OSU and ASOSU. Lowry seconded the motion. Godwin noted he was surprised when he recently learned that ASOSU didn't already have a voting CACOT position. He asked what OSU currently pays to the City for staff and faculty rides. Rogers replied that at \$20,000 per year, OSU is actually "over-charged" for the 6% of CTS rides currently utilized by OSU staff and faculty. The OSU funding agreement is different than the ASOSU funding agreement that is based upon "pre-paid" rides.

A vote was called and the motion passed unanimously. Rogers will forward the recommendation to the Council's Urban Services Committee.

Rhoads stated that she has received a couple of comments from CACOT members expressing concern about the extended length of recent CACOT meetings. Recently there have been agenda items warranting significant discussion, such as potential budget/service reductions and schedule/route changes, but it is important for the group to be aware of the impact this is having on some people. Anderson and Rhoads have discussed this issue and will take steps to prioritize agenda items and to monitor time during CACOT meetings, but CACOT member assistance is requested to help address this issue. Lowry suggested that "Information Sharing" items be provided in written

form so as to not take time during the meeting. Rhoads will implement this idea.

VI. PASSENGER FARES PRICING AND FARE BOX RECOVERY DISCUSSION

Rhoads distributed preliminary comparative data of other Oregon transit systems regarding two topics that will be discussed during the coming months: 1) Percentage Revenue Share from User Fees; and 2) Passenger Fare Structure. These are two separate, yet interconnected, topics. The City Council has directed that these issues be explored to determine where the City fits within the service industry and to assure an appropriate level of funding is being collected from users of the services. This process may result in development of a policy on one or both topics.

Currently 11% of CTS revenues are comprised of user fees, including OSU contract revenue. Ali Bonakdar, Director of the Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), commented to City staff that a goal of 14-15% in user fees is considered "aggressive" in the transit industry.

Warloe asked about the "elasticity" of passenger fares that a transit service can charge for a ride and still maintain system ridership. If the fare is too high it will result in a reduction in ridership so the revenue share goal is still not reached. Rogers offered that when CTS fares were increased by \$0.10 in 2000 there was virtually no impact on ridership. The City employed an elasticity model during that fare review process, and will do so again this time.

Lowry noted that it is important to consider service levels when making comparisons between transit services. Further, that during the passenger fare review it would be important to educate the riders about the fully allocated cost of operating a single occupancy vehicle (SOV) including taxes and subsidies used to build and maintain the roadways. Wilson added that inflation and the rising cost of fuel should also be part of the comparison and education process.

Rhoads asked CACOT members what other types of data they would want to be in a position to discuss these issues and take action, beyond the data already listed in the preliminary comparison reports distributed during this meeting. Warloe suggested the following:

- A) Cost per ride
- B) Type of ride (single trip versus a day pass)
- C) Services levels (hours, days)

Other CACOT members concurred with the proposed list. Rhoads will research and report the data. There was discussion about the timing of the review process. It was agreed that it is important to conduct the review during the Spring to permit ASOSU participation and that any changes to passenger fares would be implemented in the Fall.

VII. CAMPO PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK DRAFT REPORT -

Copies of the draft CAMPO report were distributed to CACOT members. The report will be discussed during the April 14 meeting, and any CACOT input will be forwarded to CAMPO. CACOT members may also provide input as individuals, and that input should be issued directly to CAMPO. Rhoads will provide CAMPO contact information. It was noted that the FTA 5307 transit operating funds being used by the City comes through the MPO. The MPO Executive Committee directs how those federal funds are utilized within the MPO area.

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

A. ASOSU Group Pass Program Presentation

Katin recently made these presentations and the regarding these topics:

- 1) To the ASOSU Senate Appropriations and Budget Committee- The City's request for an increase in incidental fees to be paid by students during FY 04-05 for transit rides. The City requested the increase to realize a more equitable share of financial contribution for CTS services based upon increased student ridership.
- 2) To the full undergraduate and graduate ASOSU Senates- CTS services received during Fall Term FY 03-04.

At this point the City's request for an increase has received tentative approval and will be presented to the full undergraduate and graduate ASOSU Senates on March 30th. Katin noted that one recurring topic of discussion with the students is the Route 1 service schedule. Verts asked what the percentage of Route 1 ridership is comprised of OSU students. Rhoads will research that from the recent survey data and will report back. Route 1 will be a topic for discussion at the next CACOT meeting.

B. Advertising on Buses

Rhoads distributed a copy of a log that is tracking the advertising sales and revenue to the City. CACOT was asked for input on

whether one of the 7 newer buses should be retained for the purpose of installing a "community" based advertisement, or if all 7 buses should be available for ad sales to maximize revenue for the transit service. By consensus, CACOT members supported maximizing revenue.

Verts asked staff to assure the "Yield to Bus" sign on the back of each bus remains visible even with advertisements. Rhoads has been monitoring that closely and has even required Obie to modify some artwork for this reason. Obie is planning an "unveiling" event for the John & Phil's full bus wrap, and invitations to it will be sent out directly by Obie.

C. Routes, On-Time Performance, Designated Stops, Bus Shelters

On-time performance for the month of February was 92% compared to January's 93% performance. There continues to be complaints about the changes to Route 1 implemented in January. The route isn't operating late; rather the schedule is different than it used to be. People riding to school or work at OSU are experiencing difficulty because the bus gets there about 5 minutes before the top of each hour. By the time they walk to their destination, depending on their destination they are late if they are supposed to be at their destination at the top of the hour. A comment was made that the outbound Route 1 may be traveling through the OSU campus earlier than is indicated on the schedule.

A suggestion was made to move the timing of the route 10-15 minutes earlier to address the issue. It was noted that doing so would cause the outgoing timing to change also - to where the bus would be outbound before the top of the hour, which would be problematic for people getting off work at that time. Otherwise the bus would have to sit idle at the Intermodal Mall or do some other service so that it would be outbound after the top of the hour. This wouldn't be an effective use of resources. Rogers offered that a possible solution is moving the Route 1's departure time from downtown to be :30 after the hour. This option will be reviewed and reported back next month.

Rhoads asked for a CACOT volunteer to advise staff in the process of assigning the location of designated stops. Verts volunteered for the assignment.

D. Ridership Reports

Ridership reports were distributed. CTS ridership for February was 46,317 which was the 2nd highest on record for a February. Philomath ridership in February was 1,320, the highest ever for a February.

Anderson noted that there is interest in exploring options to increase Philomath Connection ridership and to possibly increase the frequency of service. Rhoads reported that she has had conversation with interested parties in Philomath and with City of Philomath representatives, and will assist as much as possible within the availability of time in the Transit workload. She cautioned that Philomath will need to consider appropriate factors before expanding services because if the frequency of service is increased so that it becomes a regular fixed route instead of a commuter service, it would trigger a requirement for ADA complementary paratransit service. One way to increase ridership without adding trips is to make the service more accessible to people, such as more frequent bus stops and by generating awareness.

E. School and Transit Discussions

The principal of Corvallis High School initiated contact with staff to discuss traffic issues at CHS and possible solutions related to CTS. Rhoads will explore options. Wershow noted that previous attempts to coordinate the school bell times with the CTS schedule were unsuccessful.

F. Dr. Seuss's 100th Birthday and National Read Across America

Laidlaw staff and Rhoads participated in the event held at Jefferson Elementary School. Youth boarded the Trolley and were treated to Roy Severin's reading of the tale "The Wheels on the Bus."

G. Get There Another Way Week May 17-21, 2004

This is a City-wide, annual event that will be promoted in cooperation with the Alternative Modes program staff.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Verts made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Wilson seconded the motion. By consensus the meeting adjourned.

Future Meetings:

Wednesday, April 14, 8:00 a.m., City Hall Conference Rm. D
Wednesday, May 12, 8:00 a.m., City Hall Conference Rm. D
Wednesday, June 9, 8:00 a.m., City Hall Conference Rm. D