

CORVALLIS CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION ON TRANSIT

MINUTES
 March 14, 1996

Members Present

Robert Lowry, Chair
 Joanne Adler
 Caron Johnson
 Craig Anderson
 Tom Meehan
 Paul Amato, ASOSU Rep.
 Mary Christian, Council Liaison

Staff

Bernadette Barrett, Public Works
 Steve Rogers

Visitors

Art Koebel, Home Life
 Tim Rocak, Bonney Enterprises
 Lisa Berkson Platt, Arts Center

Members Excused

Bill Hoffman

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Agenda Item	Information Only	Held for Further Review	Recommendations/Action
Proposed Bus Exterior Painting Project		April Meeting	
Special Transportation Overview	X		
Passenger Conduct		April Meeting	
Ridership Report - Feb.	X		
OSU Survey		April Meeting	
Linn-Benton Loop Commission	X		
Youth Vol. Corps - Food Drive			Endorsed CTS participation
Downtown Terminal Project	X		

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 8, 1996

The minutes of the February 8 meeting were approved as corrected.

II. PROPOSED BUS EXTERIOR PAINTING PROJECT

Lisa Berkson Platt, Corvallis Arts Center appeared before the Commission to provide additional information and answer questions about an Arts Center/Parks and Recreation proposed project to paint a bus. The Arts Center, in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Youth Volunteer Corps, is exploring the possibility of hiring an artist to design a paint scheme

for a bus. The bus would then be painted by members of the Youth Volunteer Corps under the direction of the artist. The goal of the project is to bring arts into our daily lives. A similar project was completed last year with the painting of murals on the First Alternative Coop. The Arts Center would like to paint a City bus and would like the City's permission before pursuing the needed grant funds. Commission members had several questions regarding responsibility and/or expectations for repainting the bus, liability insurance issues, how long the project would take and when it would occur, what is the age group of the children, roadway distraction issues, whether or not the artist would be local, and design concerns.

The Commission unanimously approved a motion to consider the project. Information will be provided by the Arts Center and by staff to respond to the Commission's concerns at their April meeting.

III. SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

Staff presented an overview of special transportation (transportation provided to seniors and persons with disabilities) in Benton County. The information covered the responsibilities of the City of Corvallis under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), described who are the providers special transportation in Benton County and how those services are funded, reviewed the future direction of special transportation in Benton County, and discussed opportunities and challenges.

Staff reviewed the background of the ADA and the requirement that fixed route transit providers, such as the Corvallis Transit System, are required to provide paratransit service to disabled persons who are unable to use the regular fixed route buses. The six service criteria and certification process were described. The service criteria are: service area, response time, fares, trip purpose, hours and days of operation, and capacity constraints. It was noted that the service area required by ADA is 1/4 mile on each side of the fixed routes within the city limits. The City has chosen to expand its service boundary to the entire area within the city limits. Copies of the ADA paratransit certification application, identification card, and handbook were distributed. The partnership between the City and our paratransit service provider, Dial-A-Bus was reviewed. It was noted that the City's ADA paratransit service is in full compliance with ADA requirements, one full year ahead of the required deadline.

The special transportation providers in Benton County are: Dial-A-Bus (the primary provider), the Corvallis Transit System

fixed route service, developmentally disabled residential care providers, developmentally disabled vocational rehabilitation centers, the Linn-Benton Loop, and several specialized services.

Special transportation in Benton County is funded through a variety of sources. One primary source is the Oregon Special Transportation Fund (STF). This fund is financed through a portion of the cigarette tax. A portion of these funds are distributed on a per capita basis to transit districts; and if no transit district exists in the area, it is forwarded to the county. STF monies are dedicated to senior and disabled transportation. The law requires each governing body (transit district or county commission) to have a local advisory committee to recommend how the formula funds are used. The Benton County advisory committee has representatives of the physically disabled, developmentally disabled, Dial-A-Bus, citizen-at-large, and Corvallis Transit System.

Special transportation is also funded by fares, contracts with clients, Oregon Medicaid/non-medical revenues, and Benton County Mental Health monies directed through the developmental disabled community. The fare charged by Dial-A-Bus is \$1.00 per ride; the same fare is charged for ADA paratransit rides. Low income discounts are available. Under the ADA, the City may charge up to twice the adult fare (50 cents) on the fixed route service. ADA recognizes that demand responsive service is much more costly to provide than a fixed route service. The City's Transit Fund also provides funds, including compensation to Dial-A-Bus for paratransit service (all ADA fares collected plus \$15,000 in 1995-96) and the City's contribution to the Linn-Benton Loop (\$10,780 in 1995-96). The Linn-Benton Loop provides a vital link for seniors and persons with disabilities to reach state services located in Albany. The Transit Fund also subsidizes rides provided to seniors and persons with disabilities on the fixed route service. The senior/disabled fare is 25 cents.

Special transportation funds (STF) are typically used by transit districts and other fixed route providers to meet their mandatory ADA requirements. Corvallis has chosen to support Dial-A-Bus's application for these funds directly instead of filing an application for funds.

The direction of Benton County special transportation was outlined in a 1992-93 Benton County study adopted by the County Commissioners in early 1993. The purpose of the study was to improve utilization of current resources in Corvallis and the surrounding area. Secondary purposes were to: 1) identify new funding sources; 2) assist CTS in meeting ADA requirements; 3)

enhance service outside Corvallis. The study recommended that a comprehensive, coordinated, seamless transportation system be developed providing safe, courteous, and efficient service. It envisioned one provider. Since adoption of the study, significant progress has made toward its implementation. A special transportation coordinator was hired, and a coordinated service has been developed. Dial-A-Bus has assumed responsibility as the primary provider of the County's special transportation needs and is currently providing two of the service elements: demand responsive service (requests are made the day before the needed ride and may be made up to 14 days in advance) and contract services (daily rides for developmentally disabled persons to and from work). The third element, a pool vehicle program, is in its infancy and is currently being administered by the STF coordinator. Since 1993, all the STF committee's funding recommendations have been consistent with the study. This has resulted shifting of funding from most special transportation providers to Dial-A-Bus. Janus House and the Linn-Benton Loop have been recommended to continue receiving funding in 1996-97 because they serve clients which cannot be served through the coordinated system.

Art Koebel, noted that STF dollars are based upon the cigarette tax and that revenues are shrinking. He would like to see long-term, stable funding for special transportation. He would like to see funding included in the City's transit levy. He also stated that his clients are confused about who is providing their service since the City and County are both providing services. It was noted that both services are provided by Dial-A-Bus. He would like to see Corvallis assume responsibility for special transportation and operate the service. Tim Rocak agreed with Mr. Koebel's comments. It was noted that the City has increased its involvement in the special transportation program in the last several years, providing assistance to the STF program and Dial-A-Bus in a variety of areas. Mr. Rocak indicated that he felt the service has improved as a result of the City's involvement. Staff noted that the County began contracting with the City to administer the STF program about a year ago. The STF coordinator is a city employee. It is unlikely that Corvallis would actually operate special transportation services. The City currently contracts the operation of its fixed route and paratransit services. This is not expected to change.

Chairman Lowry noted that there are several funding issues. The loss of federal funds is significant (17 percent this year). Additionally, he noted that many people move to the County to avoid City taxes and then expect urban services without having to pay for them. It was noted that the transit system does not have long-term, stable funding, since its primary source of revenue is a special serial tax levy. The levy is voted upon every three years by Corvallis citizens.

Public transportation supporters may have an opportunity to support a state-wide transportation funding effort at the next legislation session. The Governor has begun a Transportation Initiative to implement the Oregon Transportation Plan, which might result in legislative action.

This item was presented for information only. On-going information regarding special transportation, and in particular the City's ADA paratransit service, will be provided to the Commission.

IV. PASSENGER CONDUCT

This item was continued to the next meeting.

V. INFORMATION SHARING

- A. **Ridership Report - February.** Staff distributed the ridership report showing that 33,899 rides had been provided in February. Another new all-time monthly ridership record was established. Staff projects that if ridership continues at the monthly average, we should reach a new annual ridership record sometime during May.
- B. **Linn-Benton Loop Commission.** The Linn-Benton Loop Commission met February 28. Chairman Lowry reported that the meeting focused on the budget. He noted that Linn County has withdrawn its support of the Loop. The Loop is now funded by contributions from the cities of Corvallis and Albany and Linn-Benton Community College at \$10,780 each in 1995-96, and Benton County at \$7,100 (\$4,000 STF and \$3,100 General Fund) in 1995-96. He also noted a marked increase in personnel services (14 percent). The Loop revised and promoted its pass program last year in hopes that new riders would be attracted to the system. Fare revenues indicate that those persons who were riding the bus on a regular basis have taken advantage of the pass but no or very little new ridership has occurred. Therefore, revenues have decreased. The Loop is considering raising its pass rate.
- C. **Status of ODOT Grants.** It was reported that the 1995-96 ODOT operating grant and a 1995-97 capital grant to purchase and install bus stops signs have been accepted by the City Council.
- D. **Youth Volunteer Corps - Food Drive.** CTS staff was contacted by a representative of the Youth Volunteer Corps requesting permission to post flyers in City buses announcing their food drive, scheduled for a Saturday in mid-April. It is our policy to not allow flyers unless they are for transit purposes. Staff suggested that CTS support the food drive by becoming a partner and allowing customers to pay the regular fare or

contribute a can of food on the same day that food is collected. CACOT endorsed the concept. Staff will work out the logistics.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 11, 1996, at 7:45 a.m. in **the Senior Center Conference Room.**