



## REGIONAL TRANSIT DIALOGUE

### Joint Meeting of the Governance, Finance, Technical/Land Use and Public Outreach Subcommittees

May 5, 2009 – 1:30 p.m.  
ACOG Board Room, 21 E Main St., Suite 100  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104

### MEETING SUMMARY

#### Governance Subcommittee Members Present

William Bleakley  
Guy Henson  
Bob Kemper  
Dick Lee  
Hon. Turner Mann  
Hon. Bill Nations  
Hon. Meg Salyer  
Dean Schirf  
Michael Sokoff

#### Organization/Entity

Tierra Media Group  
City of Midwest City  
Northern Flyer Alliance  
COTPA Board Member  
Midwest City Councilmember  
Oklahoma House of Representatives  
Oklahoma City Councilmember  
Greater OKC Chamber of Commerce  
University of Central Oklahoma

#### Finance Subcommittee Members Present

Hon. Rod Cleveland  
Steve Commons  
Hon. Doug Cubberly  
Terry Hawkins  
Tom Sherman  
Hon. Russell Smith

#### Organization/Entity

Cleveland County Commissioner  
City of Edmond Tom Sherman  
Norman City Council  
Phillips Murrah P.C.  
Norman Chamber of Commerce  
Midwest City Mayor

#### Technical/Land Use Subcommittee Members Present

John Bowman  
Joe D. Bryant  
Hans Butzer  
Susan Connors  
Randy Entz  
Shannon Entz  
Billy Harless  
Larry Hopper  
Grant Humphreys

#### Organization/Entity

Oklahoma Department of Transportation  
Ultrathin Medals and Ribbons  
OU College of Architecture  
City of Norman  
City of Oklahoma City  
City of Edmond  
City of Midwest City  
Central OK Transp. & Parking Authority  
The Humphreys Company

Technical/Land Use Subc. Members Present (Cont.)

Marion Hutchinson  
Hon. Kathy McMillan  
Kyran Mish  
Cody Ponder  
Mark Seibold

Organization/Entity

ONTRAC  
Moore City Councilmember  
University of Oklahoma  
Cleveland Area Rapid Transit (CART)  
City of Choctaw

Public Outreach Subcommittee Members Present

Debbie Anglin  
Jeff Bezdek  
Dave Burnett  
Kris Glenn  
Pam Henry  
Autumn Radle  
Veran Randle  
Kim Searles  
Amanda Spencer  
Linda Terrill  
Tim Tillman  
Blake Wade  
Ann Way  
Sarah Welch

Organization/Entity

Anglin Public Relations, Inc.  
MTP – Modern Transit Project  
Midwest City Chamber of Commerce  
Cleveland Area Rapid Transit  
Mayor’s Comm. on Disability Concerns  
City of Oklahoma City  
COTPA Board Member  
Downtown OKC, Inc.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Advertising  
Center for Children and Families  
University of Central Oklahoma  
OK Business Roundtable  
Sarkeys Foundation  
City of Oklahoma City

Welcome and Introductions

John G. Johnson, ACOG Executive Director, welcomed everyone to the joint meeting of the Regional Transit Dialogue (RTD) subcommittees, and provided a brief background of ACOG. He advised that there are four subcommittees that will provide input to the RTD Steering Committee, and ACOG staff will provide more information on the RTD structure and process as part of today’s meeting. He asked the members to introduce themselves and the organization that they represent.

Group Exercise – Red Light, Green Light

Jerry Church, ACOG Director of Media and Public Relations, showed the group a series of images related to transportation modes and land use and asked them to hold up a green card if they liked the image and a red card if they disliked the image. He called on various participants to discuss the aspects in the images that did or did not appeal to them.

Presentation on the Regional Transit Dialogue Purpose and Structure

Doug Rex, Director of ACOG Transportation Planning & Data Services Division, thanked everyone for their participation. He explained that the Regional Transit Dialogue has been initiated in response to recurring questions from ACOG local government members and the general public about regional planning for a more comprehensive public transportation system in Central Oklahoma.

Mr. Rex provided an overview of the RTD process, saying that it was anticipated to take approximately 12 months and is modeled after a similar process used in the Kansas City area. He reviewed the RTD

committee structure, which began with the creation of a Planning Team to assist ACOG staff in setting up the logistics of the process. He said that the planning team includes staff from the Cities of Oklahoma City, Midwest City, Edmond and Norman, COTPA, CART, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce, the Norman Chamber of Commerce and ACOG.

Mr. Rex advised that the RTD is being led by a Steering Committee, which held its first meeting on April 2, 2009. He stated that the Steering Committee is comprised of elected officials from various local governments within the region, local business leaders and interest group representatives. He said that the Planning Team strived for equal representation on the committee from the public and private sectors. Mr. Rex acknowledged the Steering Committee members in attendance at the meeting, and advised that several of the members will also serve on the various subcommittees. He stated that the Steering Committee will oversee the entire RTD process and will receive input from four subcommittees. It is anticipated that the Steering Committee will meet every other month, and the subcommittees will provide briefings to them.

Mr. Rex stated that the Governance Subcommittee will be responsible for researching various regional transit governing structures in place throughout the country and other parts of the world, explore the advantages and disadvantages of each, and hopefully provide at least three examples of the structure a regional transit authority could take for consideration by the Steering Committee. He introduced Meredith Williams as the ACOG staff support for this subcommittee, and advised that Midwest City Manager Guy Henson will serve as its chairman.

Mr. Rex explained that the Finance Subcommittee will research the various funding mechanisms to support the capital and operating portions of a regional public transit system by exploring all federal, state and local funding options. He said that, similar to the Governance Subcommittee, the Finance Subcommittee will be asked to provide the Steering Committee with several options that seem viable for this region. He introduced Kara Chiodo as the ACOG staff support for the Finance Subcommittee, and advised that Bob Rader has agreed to chair the committee.

He stated that the Technical/Land Use Subcommittee will research land use planning policies that can be put in place at the local level to further transit supportive development. He stated that we are fortunate to have the Fixed Guideway Study to serve as the foundation for the RTD, which is a benefit that this region has over others that have undertaken similar endeavors. The subcommittee will review the FGS corridors and make some recommendations concerning prioritization. Mr. Rex introduced Ryan Billings as the ACOG staff support for the committee and Shannon Entz, who will serve as the committee chair.

Mr. Rex stated that the final subcommittee is the Public Outreach Subcommittee which will develop a comprehensive public involvement plan and recommend methods on how we approach the public with this concept. He said that this is a very important part of the process because it will ultimately be the public that will decide, through their votes, whether a more comprehensive public transportation system will be developed. He introduced Jerry Church as the ACOG staff contact for the committee and Jeff Bezdek, who will serve as the chair.

Mr. Rex emphasized that the RTD is a strategic planning process that will answer a number of important questions that this region has never been able to answer before. He said that the hope is that we will reach consensus concerning an appropriate governing structure and appropriate funding options in order to move forward with a more regional transit system if that is where the citizens of Central Oklahoma wish to go.

He announced that the next Steering Committee meeting will be held on June 17, and ACOG encourages each subcommittee to meet at least twice prior to that meeting in order to provide a status report on their efforts to the Steering Committee. He also advised that an RTD website is being developed, which will be used to post information for access by all committee members and the public. It will include meeting agendas, meeting summaries, a link to the Regional Fixed Guideway Study and other relevant information.

#### Presentation on 2005 Regional Fixed Guideway Study for Central Oklahoma

Rick Cain, Administrator of the Central Oklahoma Transportation & Parking Authority, provided a brief overview of the Systems Planning Phase of the Fixed Guideway Study (FGS) that was completed in December 2005. He stated that Carter::Burgess<sup>1</sup> was hired as the consultant firm to perform this study, which lasted about 18 months. He said that the FGS was led by a Steering Committee and various methods of public outreach were utilized including several rounds of public meetings, a dedicated website and a newsletter on the study.

Mr. Cain explained that COTPA partnered with ACOG to identify future land uses and travel patterns forecasted for the region, which resulted in the identification of eleven potential fixed guideway corridors. He said that six technologies were initially considered, but two were eliminated early in the process due to their costs – heavy rail and monorail. He said that there were three fixed guideway technologies that were considered feasible for this region. The first was commuter rail, extending from Edmond on the north to Norman on the south, with a leg to the east providing access to Midwest City and Tinker Air Force Base. The second technology was bus rapid transit (BRT), which was identified in the study along Northwest Expressway, along Reno west to Yukon, down Meridian from Reno to Will Rogers World Airport, and along SW 59<sup>th</sup> Street from I-35 west to the airport and FAA Center. He said that modern streetcar was identified as the third technology, servicing the greater downtown area.

He said that commuter rail is designed for long distances with very few stops, and examples of this technology are the Trinity Express in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and the Rail Runner Express that connects Albuquerque with Santa Fe. Mr. Cain stated that BRT is a relatively new technology that was developed as an alternative to light rail due to its costs. BRT can operate in dedicated right-of-way or in mixed traffic. He said that modern streetcar is designed for areas, like a downtown, where you have tighter turning radiuses and need to make frequent stops. Mr. Cain said that the core piece that's needed for any of these technologies to be successful is a comprehensive bus system since it is unlikely that the rail or BRT will stop at your final destination. Thus, a rubber tire connection is needed between connection points.

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<sup>1</sup> Carter::Burgess was acquired by JACOBS in November 2007.

Mr. Cain commented that many people are surprised to learn how little revenue is generated from the fares that are collected for riding public transit. COTPA did a review of 13 peer cities and found that the average percentage of revenue generated from fares among those cities was 15 percent. He said that the costs included in the FGS are somewhat dated, but they did try to use numbers that were conservative. He said the largest capital expense associated with any of the technologies is the cost of right-of-way.

Mr. Cain showed a slide of the prescribed federal process that is required if a region hopes to receive any federal money. He said that the process can run anywhere from 7 to 10 years and that assumes that you have the money to pay for each phase. He said that the entire process includes Systems Planning (the FGS completed in 2005), Alternatives Analysis, Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Review, Funding Grant Agreement from the FTA (once environmental clearance has been secured), Final Design, Construction and Operation.

He said that COTPA is currently undertaking an Alternatives Analysis (AA) for the central downtown corridor. He explained the various analyses that will be a part of the AA, including development of an operating plan and ridership forecasts, which will lead to the eventual selection of a locally preferred alternative. He said that this corridor was selected because it involves only one jurisdiction and all of the other corridors emanate from this central system. There are a number of issues that have to be resolved in order to implement a transit system in a multi-jurisdictional setting.

Mr. Cain mentioned the Federal Transit Administration funding source called New Starts/Small Starts. He said that this is a highly competitive funding source and currently most regions only receive 50 percent federal funding, with some areas providing an even greater local match to improve their federal funding chances. Some cities are even opting to use 100 percent local funds to pay for the first leg of a transit system and then seek federal funds for subsequent phases after the initial system has had the opportunity to prove itself.

#### Subcommittee Breakout Sessions

Mr. Rex asked each of the subcommittees to meet briefly as separate groups to get better acquainted, select a member to serve as the vice chair and to set the date, time and location of their next meeting or two. Following is a summary of those breakout sessions:

##### Governance Subcommittee:

- The committee began by going around the table and introducing themselves and their background with transportation/transit.
- Bill Nations was selected to serve as the Vice Chair of the committee.
- The committee chose their next two meeting dates;
  - Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 – 1:00 in the ACOG Annex
  - Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup> from 11:00 – 1:00 in the ACOG Annex
- The committee began discussing the mission, purpose, and goals of the Governance committee. Four main tasks were discussed:

- 1) Research and identify the advantages and disadvantages of forming a regional transit authority.
  - 2) Provide a comprehensive review of the governing structures of regional transit agencies/organizations both nationally and internationally
  - 3) Provide a detailed exploration of at least three potential frameworks for the organizational and management structure of regional transit authorities
  - 4) Explore the type of enabling legislation that would be required to set up a regional transit authority in Central Oklahoma.
- The committee decided to start with Task 1 and begin identifying the advantages and disadvantages of RTAs. The group will do literature and web searches in preparation for the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was decided that the group would send all their materials to Meredith Williams by May 15<sup>th</sup> so they can be compiled before the meeting.
  - Preferred contact information was collected.

#### Finance Subcommittee:

- Introductions - ACOG staff member Kara Chiodo introduced herself. Ms. Chiodo mentioned that Bob Rader, the subcommittee's chair, was not able to be present. Ms. Chiodo introduced Russell Smith, who had previously volunteered to be a temporary chair for this breakout session. The finance subcommittee members went around the table introducing themselves.
- Selection of Vice-Chair - The subcommittee decided to postpone election of a vice-chair until the next meeting. They felt that they should wait until the permanent subcommittee chair was present before selecting a vice-chair.
- Discuss Meeting Schedule - Russell Smith led discussion of future meeting dates. The subcommittee set two future meetings, both to take place before the next Steering Committee meeting. The meetings were set for Wednesday, May 20, at 1:30 p.m. and Tuesday, June 2, at 1:30 p.m. Both future meetings will be held at ACOG.
- Subcommittee Mission/Purpose - Ms. Chiodo reiterated the subcommittee's goals. The subcommittee members decided to create a mission statement during the May 20 meeting. A general discussion of Central Oklahoma's existing transit system and funding ensued, until it was time to reconvene with the other subcommittees.

#### Technical/Land Use Subcommittee:

- Introductions - Shannon Entz welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation and expressed that this was a working group with a lot of work to accomplish. Everyone introduced themselves and provided a bit of background information.
- Selection of Vice Chair - Randy Entz nominated Mark Seibold for Vice-Chair. Mr. Seibold accepted and the committee approved.
- Discussion of Meeting Schedule - Next two meetings will be held May 18<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30 pm and June 11<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30 pm.
- Task for next meeting – Mission/Purpose Statement

Public Outreach Subcommittee:

- The committee began by going around the table and introducing themselves and their background and personal interest with transportation/transit.
- Jeff Bezdek introduced himself as chair and discussed the importance of the RTD project.
- The group nominated Sarah Welch, with City of Oklahoma City, as vice-chair.
- The committee scheduled its next meeting for May 14, at 1:30 p.m.

Adjourn

The subcommittees reconvened in the ACOG Board Room. There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.