



## REGIONAL TRANSIT DIALOGUE

### Steering Committee Meeting Summary

June 17, 2009 – 3:00 p.m.

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) Board Room  
21 E. Main Street, Ste. 100, Oklahoma City, OK 73104

#### Presiding

Hon. Mick Cornett

#### Organization/Entity

City of Oklahoma City

#### Steering Committee Members Present

Jay Hannah

Pam Henry

Danny Hilliard

Grant Humphreys

Dean Jackson

John G. Johnson

Hon. Willa Johnson

Dick Lee

Bob Rader

Hon. Cindy Rosenthal

Terry Taylor

#### Organization/Entity

BancFirst

OKC Mayor's Committee on Disability Concerns

University of Oklahoma

The Humphreys Company

United We Ride Governor's Council

ACOG

Oklahoma County

COTPA (Proxy for Chris Kauffman)

Capital West

City of Norman

Oklahoma Health Center Foundation (Proxy for Hershel Lamirand)

#### Steering Committee Members Absent

Hon. Patrice Douglas

David Herbert

Klaholt Kimker

Steve Kreidler

Tom Love

Tom McDaniel

Hon. Kathy McMillan

Jim Roth

Hon. Russell Smith

Blake Wade

#### Organization/Entity

City of Edmond

Midwest City

Devon

University of Central Oklahoma

Love's Travel Stops

Oklahoma City University

City of Moore

Phillips Murrah P.C.

City of Midwest City

Oklahoma Centennial Commission

Guests

Jeff Bezdek  
Rick Cain  
Hon. Rod Cleveland  
Shannon Entz  
J. Guy Henson  
David Holt  
Larry Hopper  
Bob Kemper  
Hon. Turner Mann  
Autumn Radle  
Dean Schirf  
Mark Seibold  
Mark VanLandingham

Organization/Entity

MTP / Public Outreach Subcommittee  
COTPA / Finance Subcommittee  
Cleveland County / Finance Subcommittee  
City of Edmond / Tech-Land Use Subcommittee  
City of Midwest City / Governance Subcommittee  
City of Oklahoma City  
COTPA / Tech-Land Use Subcommittee  
Northern Flyer Alliance / Governance Subc.  
City of Midwest City / Governance Subcommittee  
City of Oklahoma City / Public Outreach Subc.  
OKC Chamber of Commerce / Governance Subc.  
City of Choctaw / Tech-Land Use Subcommittee  
OKC Chamber of Commerce

ACOG Staff Present

Douglas W. Rex	Transportation Planning & Data Services (TPDS)
Holly Massie	TPDS
John Sharp	TPDS
Andrea Weckmueller-Behringer	TPDS
Pong Wu	TPDS
Kara Chiodo	TPDS
Meredith Williams	TPDS
Ryan Billings	TPDS
Daniel Fazekas	TPDS
Jane Sutter	Deputy Director
Jerry Church	Director of Media and Public Relations
Steve Willoughby	E911 and Public Safety
Susan Yingling	Admin. Assistant

Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Cornett welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the RTD Steering Committee and asked the members and guests to introduce themselves and the name of the organization or entity they represent. He thanked the committee for participating in this regional effort and encouraged them to share information about the RTD with others. He also advised that Oklahoma City is considering a MAPS III vote by the end of the year and anticipates that transit will be a major component. Mayor Cornett stated that the Steering Committee will hear from each of the subcommittees on the tasks they have been working on.

Doug Rex advised that since the first Steering Committee meeting, all four subcommittees have been formed and a joint meeting of the subcommittees was held on May 5 to introduce the members to the RTD purpose and process and to receive a presentation on the 2005 Fixed Guideway Study. He said that since then, each subcommittee has met twice, and the chairs of those subcommittees are here to provide a brief summary of their efforts to date.

### Status Report from RTD Governance Subcommittee

Chairman Guy Henson reviewed the purposes and goals of the Governance Subcommittee, which are to research advantages/disadvantages of forming a regional transit authority, review the governing structure of existing regional transit agencies, explore at least three potential governance frameworks, and determine the enabling legislation that would be required to establish a regional transit authority (RTA) in Central Oklahoma.

He stated that the reasons for a regional approach are to develop a seamless transit system, develop dedicated funding sources, ensure coordination and integration of transit services, improve regional congestion and air quality, and to integrate transit and land use development. Mr. Henson reviewed some of the typical powers of an RTA, and stated that some of the advantages include a direct role for multiple city and county governments in transit decisions and improvements, a streamlined planning process, greater coordination among all transit providers, and the ability to generate funding for transit. Some of the hurdles to overcome will be the time and effort required to form an RTA and to establish its governing body and appropriations process.

Mr. Henson said that the subcommittee looked at a recent study from the Charlottesville, NC area that evaluated the pros and cons of the following regional transit organization types: regional transit authority, regional transit coordinating council, joint powers agency, joint powers board, transportation district, and service district. He said that the subcommittee concluded that the regional transit authority appears to be the best model for Central Oklahoma to focus on because it provides the widest range of options and fewest limitations, provides for a true regional and legal entity with the necessary powers to operate and expand transit services, and is based on strong regional consensus and enabling legislation.

Mr. Henson said that the next steps for the Governance Subcommittee are to evaluate regional transit entities that involve multiple jurisdictions and have policy and fundraising capabilities, and to examine current State legislation to determine changes needed to establish and operate an RTA.

### Status Report from RTD Finance Subcommittee

Chairman Bob Rader advised that the mission of the Finance Subcommittee is to recommend a flexible, robust funding system, covering both capital and operating expenses, for a regional transit authority in Central Oklahoma. He stated that finding an ongoing funding source to operate a regional transit system is even more challenging than funding the capital expenses. He said that there are two types of transit riders – those who depend on transit for their transportation and those who have a choice about whether to ride or not, and the challenge is to find a way to appeal to those choice riders and gain their support.

Mr. Rader said that the subcommittee has learned that, on average, revenue generated by fares only covers about 15 percent of a transit system's operating costs. He stated that the subcommittee will also look at sales taxes, property taxes, the federal New Starts Program, other federal grants and loans (part of new Administration), state funds, county sources, and other local sources (such as general funds, parking revenues, tax increment financing (TIF), bonds, university contributions, hotel/motel fees, etc.). Mr. Rader said that the subcommittee also plans to investigate the administrative costs

associated with farebox collections and compare them to farebox revenues to see if it is cost effective to charge a fare because a fare-free system could have great appeal and boost ridership.

Mr. Rader reviewed the Fixed Guideway Study modes and mileages and the capital and annual operating costs associated with each mode. He stated that the subcommittee also looked at some peer cities and plans to look at their funding mechanisms and revenues more closely.

Mayor Cornett asked John Johnson if the State of Oklahoma has enabling legislation that allows the creation of a transit district with its own taxing capabilities. Mr. Johnson replied that it does with respect to capital expenses. Mayor Cornett stated that a regional transit system would be unique from other elections that have been held in Oklahoma in that it would derive taxation from several jurisdictions with the benefit of the system to multiple jurisdictions. He suggested that another possible revenue source could be naming rights for stations, and he encouraged the subcommittee to think creatively about funding sources that haven't been used elsewhere in addition to traditional methods. Mayor Cornett requested that a committee (Governance Subcommittee) investigate whether adequate enabling legislation exists or would have to be created.

Grant Humphreys commented that transit stations along fixed transit lines generally lead to transit-oriented development within about a 10 minute walk of those stations. These areas may not be suitable for a TIF district, because that requires the presence of blight, but they may be suitable for a business improvement district or some other type of special district that operates similar to a TIF.

Rod Cleveland suggested consideration of a funding mechanism where a portion of future sales tax revenue within such districts could be carved away from future transit-related development and used to help fund the system. That way a new tax wouldn't have to be created.

Mayor Rosenthal stated that there needs to be a blend of revenue sources. She said that a gasoline tax is a common source for increasing transit funding, as well as a surcharge on car tags and surcharge on drivers' licenses.

Dick Lee asked if the Finance Subcommittee will be making projections about the amount of revenue that could be generated from various potential revenue sources. Mayor Cornett said that he did not think that would be necessary since the purpose of the RTD is to determine how the overall structure could be put in place and not to focus on individual routes and modes. Mr. Lee expressed concern that a lot of time could be spent on recommending specific revenue sources, but the committee would still not know if the sources will generate an appropriate amount of revenue.

#### Status Report from RTD Technical/Land Use Subcommittee

Chairwoman Shannon Entz stated that the mission of the Technical/Land Use Subcommittee is to explore and introduce land use and planning policies that encourage transit and mobility-oriented development throughout Central Oklahoma. The subcommittee will also review and recommend corridors and technologies that support a regional approach to public transportation. She said that the subcommittee is utilizing the 2005 Fixed Guideway Study as a tool for looking at each of the transit modes and corridors that were recommended, and that they are also looking at how bicycle, pedestrian and automobile travel ties to public transportation for an overall multimodal system.

Ms. Entz said that the subcommittee participated in a logic model exercise, or brainstorming session, where they looked at connections between land use and transit, as well as between transit and quality of life issues such as health care, schools, employment, trails, etc. She said the exercise helped the group look at attributes and barriers and to build consensus about land use and transit connections.

She said that the subcommittee will continue to explore the Fixed Guideway Study and will look at peer cities to examine their land use practices, ordinances and any barriers they've encountered to achieving transit supportive land use. She emphasized that in Central Oklahoma there will be unique situations within each community and, therefore, land use policies may vary. The subcommittee will make general transit-supportive land use recommendations rather than try to dictate what each city should do.

Doug Rex shared with the Committee a summary of a presentation that he recently heard at a conference by former Denver RTD general manager Cal Marsella about the manner in which their transit system evolved. He said that rather than holding a utopian view that their citizens would completely forego their automobiles in order to use public transportation, the Denver area embraced the fact that the commuter transit trip would start with the automobile and that the regional transit system would involve a number of park-and-ride lots. When their system is fully built out, the Denver area will have approximately 70 park-and-ride lots, and the ones that have been built so far have not had enough capacity to meet the need. Mr. Rex said that at each lot, the City has acquired more land than it actually needs for the park-and-ride lot, so that the excess land can be sold to the private sector to develop mixed-use development that will benefit commuters. He said that the concept is similar to a phenomenon known as "exit ramp suburbs", with development occurring around transit park-and-ride lots rather than highway exit ramps.

#### Status Report from RTD Public Outreach Subcommittee

Chairman Jeff Bezdek stated that the 2005 Fixed Guideway Study included a significant amount of public outreach, and the work of the RTD Public Outreach Subcommittee is at the discretion of the Steering Committee. He said that they wanted to be sure that the RTD has a clear message and to identify other groups with similar interests. They determined that most of the groups are represented in the RTD on one of the subcommittees. Mr. Bezdek said that the subcommittee came up with a mission statement, which states that the RTD Public Outreach Subcommittee will develop dialogue with the citizens of Central Oklahoma to create a vision for a comprehensive, multimodal, and regional transit solution. He said that the subcommittee is not sure what type of public outreach the Steering Committee wants them to do. Mayor Cornett stated that it would be pertinent to know what the outreach would need to be for a future transit entity.

Mayor Rosenthal stated that there was discussion at their first meeting about bringing in an outside expert from another transit system, which would be educational and build enthusiasm about the RTD process and could possibly be coupled with a public meeting. Mayor Cornett advised that he had discussed with ACOG staff having such a presentation in the fall. He said at that point the City may be in a campaign that includes public transit and that would be a good opportunity to promote public transit with the media on all fronts. Jeff Bezdek mentioned that the Urban Land Institute might be receptive to helping organize such a public forum.

Grant Humphreys mentioned that the Fixed Guideway Study is a great resource, but it can be difficult to take it all in. He said that a brief summary of the FGS would be a very useful tool, especially if it is written so that the person on the street can absorb some information about public transit without having a background in it. He said it could also be beneficial in providing information on why someone in a suburb would be interested in transit.

Mayor Cornett asked that the Public Outreach Subcommittee put together about a 2-page summary that speaks to the vision of a regional transit system. Mr. Bezdek stated that they will do that and provide the Steering Committee with a draft for their feedback.

#### Regional Transit Dialogue Web Page

Doug Rex provided information on how to access the RTD web page on the ACOG web site, and said that staff will continue to populate the site as the process progresses by including a calendar of meetings, all committee agendas, committee meeting summaries, and resource information such as the Fixed Guideway Study, glossary of terms, etc.

#### Establish Future Meeting Schedule

Doug Rex mentioned that the next two Steering Committee meetings are scheduled for August 26, 2009 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. and October 28 from 1:00-3:00 p.m., both in the ACOG Board Room. He suggested that the group wait to schedule a meeting for the December-January timeframe since many of the members were unable to attend today due to summer vacations.

#### New Business

Kara Chiodo advised that the Steering Committee members were provided a contact information sheet for use in providing any updates and to let staff know how they prefer to be contacted.

#### Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.