

Public Transportation Roundtable Meeting Notes
October 14, 2008
Coeur d'Alene Public Library

Attendees:

Pearl Bouchard, Area Agency on Aging
Marv Lekstrum, LHD/KMPO
Toby Ruhs, KMC
Linda Wilhelm, Post Falls City Council
Craig Wilcox, DA Davidson/Post Falls Chamber
Bob Spalding, CDA Tribe
Lee Staker, Targee Regional Public Transit Authority
Alan Eirls, Citylink
Helen Stephens, NICE
Andrew Murphy, Citylink
Al Hassell, City of Coeur d'Alene
Judy Gray, Id. Dept. of Labor
Laurie Hassell, Citizen at Large
Carolyn Mattoon, Dirne CHC
Kelly Brownsberger, PFHD
Jeff Hutchinson, Citizen at Large
Don Davis, ITD
Jim Mangan, WHD/KMPO
Donna Montgomery, Citizen at Large
Monty Montgomery, LHD
John Austin, PAC
Michelle Porter, Americorps/DAC
Tim Kastring, Grace Tree Service
Mike R. Kennedy, Citizen

KMPO Staff:

Glenn Miles
Carole Richardson
Jenny Wash

1. Welcome and Introductions

Pearl Bouchard welcomed attendees and thanked them for attending. Attendees went around the room and introduced themselves.

2. Approval of the July 17, 2008 Minutes

Laurie Hassell made a motion to approve the July 17, 2008 meeting minutes. John Austin seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Public Comments

Pearl Bouchard asked for public comment. Michelle Porter of Americorps stated her organization along with State Independent Living Council (SILC) is working with Moscow on a plan to connect service from Lewiston to Sandpoint. They are

also interested in connecting to Spokane and putting in Park and Rides along US95. Bob Spaulding inquired about this planning effort and advised that he would be available to help Michelle understand Citylink operations. Carole Richardson suggested that Michelle stay for a few minutes after the meeting, to discuss how Michelle's group might plug in to current KMPO planning efforts.

Toby Ruhs stated he is working on a rideshare for hospital employees and wanted to know how to get proper signage at Cabelas for the park and ride service. It is difficult to determine if there is a Park and Ride because of the lack of signs. He also commented on the Pleasantview park and ride as well not having signs indicating there is a park and ride for people to use. Group members advised Toby to approach the City of Post Falls about signing needs.

4. Guest Speaker – Lee Staker

Lee Staker of the Targhee Regional Public Transportation Authority in Idaho Falls spoke to the group on the process and his experience establishing an RPTA. He talked about the history of public transportation before the Targhee RPTA was fully established in Idaho Falls and the process that was involved to become an RPTA. Mr. Staker stated that the legislation says that simple majority vote of the people is required to form an RPTA. Once established, a Board is formed that seats two Board members from each county and one member from each city unless a city has a population over 25,000 then they will have two members on the Board. He suggested talking with the people, county commissioners, mayors and city council members with the idea and the need for forming an RPTA.

Mr. Staker also addressed the funding process involved and the laws that go along with it. He mentioned that there is no taxing authority in the legislation therefore no way to raise revenues other than donations from the cities, counties and other entities. The RPTA is funded through 5311 Rural and Intercity funds and they match the 5307 funds which come from the Federal Government.

If Kootenai County decides to pursue an RPTA, Mr. Staker recommends talking with voters and setting up a program to champion an RPTA by coordinating with the main entities such as chamber of commerce, community leaders, city and county officials, hospitals and the tribe.

Many members asked Mr. Staker questions about his area RPTA, funding sources, local option tax, the importance of taxing authorities, ridership and policy Board functions as well as what the benefits would be to establish an RPTA.

Carole Richardson stated that the KMPO Board would recognize that having local option taxing authority would be a definite benefit and a reason to form an RPTA. Aside from that though, figuring out what other benefits there are for

Kootenai County to create an RPTA is important. She mentioned that there is an item in our work plan to do some research and with the committees permission she offered to put together a white paper for the group that would target advantages to help formulate thoughts before making any recommendations to the Board. Pearl Bouchard asked about the timing of the white paper in coordination with legislation that would look at a local option tax. Carole stated that the white paper would be ready by the next Roundtable meeting in January which would be around the same time that the legislature goes back into session.

5. Old Business

a. Citylink Transit Center – Alan Eirls, Glenn Miles

Alan Eirls reported that Citylink has been asked by John Stone to discontinue park and ride activities at the Riverstone site. A temporary alternate site has been offered, however, Citylink needs a more secure permanent location with adequate lighting. He stated they are looking into other places and have not yet been able to find a place that would work for their buses. He mentioned that the riders will need to be contacted about the change and asked not to park at Riverstone any longer, but they would still provide service through Riverstone and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Glenn Miles stated that in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) KMPO has indicated a need for a Transit Location Study that will be used to create a permanent investment for the Citylink buses. It will be a type, size and location study. He reported that KMPO is expecting Federal Highways and Federal Transit to approve the UPWP within the next 30 days so work on getting a Request for Proposals (RFP) will go out for the study shortly after.

b. Roundtable Coordination with IMAP – Carole Richardson

Carole Richardson explained that she is gaining a better understanding of ITD's program known as "Idaho Mobility Access Plan (IMAP)" as time goes on. In essence, her understanding is that the IMAP process will establish a new way of distributing public transportation funding. ITD's IMAP coordinators are setting up local mobility networks around the state. Those people involved in the local mobility networks will feed information to larger coordination councils and then those coordination councils will make funding recommendations that would ultimately make their way to the Transportation Boards.

Carole mentioned that KMPO staff has shared some concerns with ITD about the process. One concern is the amount of local resources that will be needed to establish the large structure envisioned by ITD for the purposes of prioritizing a small amount of money. ITD has indicated they hope to have a larger pot of money from consolidating transportation funds from various other social service agencies in the state. KMPO staff has asked that ITD obtain a commitment from

those social service agencies prior to launching a large statewide coordination effort. But this has not happened yet.

Carole stated that she, Glenn Miles, Virgil Edwards, Jim Deffenbaugh, John Krause, Don Davis, Susan Kiebert and several others met and discussed the issues last Friday. Not much was resolved; however KMPO staff has concluded from the meeting that once ITD sets up the local mobility networks in northern Idaho, representatives from the KMPO Public Transportation Roundtable should be assigned to participate on the local mobility network. It will be important for the Roundtable to stay in the loop on the state's effort, so that we don't inadvertently stop the flow of funds to our rural public transportation providers.

Glenn Miles spoke about IMAP and stated that he travelled to Boise to speak with Scott Stokes, Randy Kyrias, and Pam Lowe. He agrees that coordination to make all transportation forms efficient is a great goal, but he is concerned about the danger of creating public expectations that may be difficult to meet. He is especially concerned that the public may expect there is more money available when there may not be, and he is uncertain how more efficiencies are going to be obtained when there are no incentives. He stated that he asked the main people coordinating IMAP to have the Governor's office meet with the leadership from House and Senate and the directors of the different departments, to see if there is some fortitude to make IMAP work at that level. Glenn noted that in all likelihood, if it doesn't happen at the Governor's level, it is unlikely to happen. Glenn's position is that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be signed by all the state and social service entities involved, so everyone will know what their responsibilities and financial contributions will be.

Carole Richardson emphasized that it is our responsibility to make sure we are coordinating well within Kootenai County for public transportation. We should also be aware of what is happening outside our borders. She noted that Pearl Bouchard has been working with another group of social service agencies and transportation providers in Kootenai County. Pearl Bouchard stated that this group will be meeting November 6th and if anyone is interested in participating their hope is that by the end of the meeting the coordinated group would be willing to serve as the local area network for Shoshone, Benewah and Kootenai Counties. Carole asked if there was a list of invitees for the November 6 meeting. Pearl advised that Carole could contact Rich Danford who has been coordinating this other group for Idaho Health and Welfare.

c. Fare/Donation Update – John Austin

John Austin reported one of the issues that have come up is that they have no more Federal 5307 funds in Kootenai County because of the contributions of the cities and also because of the large donation of the Tribe. The demand response portion, KATS and KMC, are also matched from the city and hospitals. The question arose on how to grow more money for public transportation. He stated

they have looked at the fare/donation option. A fare is problematic in that fare revenues cannot be used as matching funds for federal aid. Because of the way our funding is structured currently, it would actually cost Citylink more to administer a fare at this time. If Citylink would charge a fare they would have access to less 5307 funding as well have the expense of hiring employees to count and audit the fares which in turn being no net gain. In the future, when our system grows beyond the limits of federal aid funding, a fare may be a useful tool. At this time, however, it was decided that establishing a fare system is not advised.

John indicated that donations are handled differently than fares in the eyes of FTA. Donations can be used to match federal aid funds. A donation program should be explored further.

6. New Business

a. Advertising on Buses – John Austin

John Austin stated that he had a request by outside entities to advertise on the outside of the Citylink buses and he brought the issue before the KMPO Board. He reported that the Board is reluctant to have advertising on the outside, but would consider looking at advertising on the inside.

There was some discussion on the concern of advertising on the outside of buses and a motion was made.

John made a motion to prohibit all advertising on the outside of Citylink buses. Linda Wilhelm seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

b. Discussion of Complimentary Paratransit / Deviated Fixed Route for Citylink – John Austin

John Austin reported that following the triennial audit, FTA asked PAC to come up with a plan on how contractors can comply with ADA using our new fixed route system. We are now required to provide complimentary paratransit for our fixed route system. This means during the hours when Citylink is in operation, we need to have the ability to pick up anyone within a half mile of the route and deliver them to the closest bus stop. If we do not have paratransit available, then FTA will accept a deviated fixed route system where the bus deviates from regular route to pick up individuals qualified for that purpose.

Currently KATS does not operate after 7pm, so we need to address paratransit during the hours of 7pm to 2am when Citylink is running. John has been in contact with KATS, KMC and Citylink on the issue. He proposes that Citylink operate a deviated fixed route between the hours of 7pm and 2am and on

weekends. KATS and KMC will assist with dispatch. If the plan is feasible it would be given to the KMPO Board and FTA for review.

Following questions by group members, John asked if the group would support a recommendation to submit a plan at the November KMPO Board meeting and then ultimately submit it to the FTA for approval.

John Austin made a motion to recommend to the Board a plan for a deviated fixed route system from 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. and weekends where Citylink will run the buses during these hours as well coordinate with KATS and Kootenai Medical Center on scheduling/dispatch. Marv Lekstrum seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Helen Stephens made an announcement that her Board has decided to end their contract with Greyhound Lines Inc. for financial reasons.

c. Citylink Bench Project – Craig Wilcox

Craig Wilcox representing the Post Falls Chamber stated he is working on a PR Campaign to come up with incentives for businesses to buy materials for building benches in the area. The Boy Scouts, the Panhandle Kiwanis and the Post Falls Chamber have endorsed the project.

Tim Kastring showed interest in providing benches on behalf of his company, but stated that it is not feasible without some type of marketing advertising on the benches. He also stated that there was a company that was interested in potentially providing benches at all of the stops within Citylink, but without marketing for the company it would not be feasible to them.

Al Hassell emphasized that the sign ordinance says no to advertising on benches and Linda Wilhelm reiterated that signage or advertising on bench ordinance is not going to change.

Bob Spaulding expressed the need for benches at bus stops and started a discussion on why not provide a plaque for the company who donated the materials for the construction of benches.

The members discussed many options for providing benches and John Austin suggested forming a subcommittee to discuss this issue further and report back to the PT Roundtable in January.

John Austin made a motion to have a subcommittee formed to further continue the discussions on the need for benches for bus stops and come back to the PT Roundtable with a recommendation. Carole Richardson clarified that Craig Wilcox would chair this subcommittee. Craig Wilcox seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Craig Wilcox will Chair the subcommittee and Bob Spaulding would be willing to be involved in the meetings. It was suggested that anyone interested in participating in this subcommittee contact Craig Wilcox.

7. Good of the Order

Glenn Miles noted the group today heard a little snippet of coordination between three entities who have a stake in regional public transportation operations, (KATS, the CdA Tribe and Kootenai Health), about trying to make it work productively inside Kootenai County. He pointed out that the state's IMAP initiative is trying to do is this on a much larger scale, and he again noted the challenges with the state's proposal.

Craig Wilcox asked if anyone is interested in being on the subcommittee please contact him after the meeting.

Carole also mentioned that Greyhound is shopping for a new ticketing agent and if anyone is interested in picking up the Greyhound items and providing this service she has the contact information.

8. Action Items for Next Quarter

Carole Richardson reviewed the action items that will be addressed next quarter:

1. KMPO will prepare a white paper on the possibility of a RPTA
2. By next quarter KMPO should have a consultant for that Transit Center Site Location Study
3. A motion and recommendations were made that will go to KMPO Board next month:
 - a. Advertising on buses
 - b. Paratransit Service/Deviated Fixed Route
4. Group members interested in participating on the bench and shelter subcommittee should contact Craig Wilcox.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.45.