

Coalition for Regional Public Transportation

Joint Leadership Meeting

Date: Friday, October 5, 2007
Time: 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Location: Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce offices

Meeting Notes:

Co-chairs Chuck Winder, Dan Stevens welcomed the group. Introductions were made.

Statewide Survey on Transportation

Matt Stoll, Executive Director of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS), introduced Bob Moore from Moore Information, a public research firm in Portland, Ore. Moore discussed the results of a statewide survey done in Idaho on transportation issues. The survey, conducted Sept. 11-13, 2007, was commissioned by Valley Regional Transit (VRT) and COMPASS. A total of 600 likely voters in Idaho were interviewed. The survey had a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Moore said the highlights of the survey included:

- Transportation is a major issue concern among voters in the Treasure Valley, but voters elsewhere in the state are much less concerned.
- Tax increases are not popular anywhere in the state.
- A slim majority of voters statewide would support an increase in rental car taxes and development impact fees to fund transportation improvements but majorities oppose a local sales tax, an increase in vehicle registration fees and a fuel tax increase.
- A majority of voters is willing to consider a local sales tax to fund transportation improvements of three quarters of a cent or less
 - A three-quarters-cent sales tax is favored by a margin of 52-46%
 - A half-cent sales tax was is favored 57-41%
 - A quarter-cent sales tax is favored 61-38%
- These sales taxes options are more popular in Ada County than elsewhere in the state, but even in Ada County, fewer than two out of three voters currently support a quarter-cent sales tax.
- Use of local government property tax revenues is opposed by a majority of Treasure Valley voters (55-40%).
- There is plurality support statewide for continuing GARVEE funding, with 49% of respondents favoring continuation, 34% opposing continuation, and 18% having no opinion. This program is significantly more popular in the Treasure Valley than elsewhere in the state.
- 53% of voters statewide say they would be likely to consider using a local public transportation system that was reliable.
- Ada County voters are more willing to consider public transit than voters elsewhere in the state
- The more gas prices increase, the more willing respondents are to consider using public transportation. If gas were \$4 a gallon, 58% would consider transit (versus 53% at today's prices); at \$6 a gallon, 70% are willing to consider public transit.

- A majority of voters (58%) are more likely to support a dedicated funding source for public transportation in Idaho after hearing that most states already do.
- A majority of voters statewide (55%) supports using tax dollars to buy future transportation corridors; in the Treasure Valley, 65% are supportive.

Presentation of the Proposed Legislation for the 2008 Legislative Session

Roy Eiguren, political consultant for VRT, discussed the draft legislation that will be introduced in 2008. His PowerPoint presentation provided information about recent legislative efforts in regards to public transportation; how transportation is funded in six western states; the local costs for roadway and transit improvements; a review of different funding sources and how much each would raise locally; and a review of the draft legislation.

Eiguren said the draft legislation would provide for the formation of a regional transportation authority and that a local sales tax approved by voters could be used for both roadway and transit projects. As the proposed legislation is currently written, a supermajority of two-thirds of voters would be required to approve any local sales tax, which would be capped at 1 percent.

Chuck Winder said the Idaho Legislature is still controlled by rural legislators and that it is important to clearly explain to legislators how the draft legislation will affect all areas of the state.

Several attendees said that if the draft bill included funding only for transit projects, it would go nowhere. Eiguren said the only political option available to the coalition is a local funding source that would benefit both transit and roadways.

Elaine Clegg said she was concerned that the transit-only funding bill is not being considered again. She said she could support a roadway funding component if it was limited in scope. Eiguren said that local elected officials would determine how the local option tax monies would be spent. Mayor Tom Dale said that the proposal can be crafted to fit local needs. David Zaremba said there is a need to have safeguards in place to ensure that the dedicated local funding source would not adversely impact how much the Treasure Valley gets from existing revenues sources.

Winder said that the proposed legislation increases the leverage that transit has because any plan to spend the tax option revenues would have to be well thought out. Dave Bivens explained that the Coalition would have to work with residents of rural areas to educate them about how the bill would benefit them.

Mayor Dale explained that concerns about additional local funding having a negative effect on federal funding amounts are unfounded. Steve Thorson said bus drivers and riders need to have their voices heard in the process.

Dan Stevens said the Coalition needs a more descriptive name to include the whole state of Idaho. Eiguren suggested the name Idaho Coalition for Transportation Funding. Stevens said the next steps are for Eiguren and Ken Burgess to meet with whoever has interest in the legislation in the next 60 days, collect comments from the Coalition and others in regards to the proposed legislation, and complete the final draft of the legislation.

Stevens asked for a show of hands for those who support the direction taken by the draft legislation. A majority of those in the room raised their hands. He also urged the Coalition's Political Action Committee to start raising the additional monies needed to accommodate plans to widen the geographic base of the Coalition.

Community Outreach

Mark Carnopis provided members with a handout outlining local grassroots efforts to educate the public about public transportation .

Wrap-up

The next Coalition is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 29.

Coalition members in attendance

Co-chair Chuck Winder, The Winder Co.	Co-chair Dan Stevens, Home Federal Bank
Dave Bivens, ACHD	Jim Books, City of Eagle
Tom Dale, Nampa Mayor	Kate Kelly, District 18 Senator
Rep. Nicole LeFavour, Dist. 19	Rick Yzaguirre, Ada County Commissioner

Legislative Resource Group members in attendance

Brian Ballard, HTEH	Ken Burgess, Veritas Advisors
Mark Carnopis, Valley Regional Transit	Elaine Clegg, City of Boise
Roy Eiguren, VRT	Kelli Fairless, Valley Regional Transit
Dale Higer	Matt Stoll, COMPASS

Others in attendance

Dana Ard, ICBVI	Mayor John Betchel, City of Wilder
Sabrina Bowman, ACHD	Cynthia Sewell, Idaho Statesman
Brad Carlson, Idaho Business Review	Nick Taylor, HTEH
Matt Ellsworth, City of Meridian	Miguel Gaddi, HDR Engineering
Ethan Delamarter, Tomlinson & Associates	Cameron Arial, Zions Bank
Charlie Rountree, Meridian City Council	Carol McKee, ACHD Commission
Rob Hopper, Caldwell Councilman	Steve Ahrens, S.A Custom Communications
Nancy Vannorsdel, Boise Metro Chamber	Robert Miller, Hewlett-Packard
Susan Bradley, NFBVI	Bill Killen, District 17 State Representative
Gloria Parkvold, Valley Regional Transit	Steve Thorson, citizen
Sara Cohn, Idaho Conservation League	Deanna Smith, Idaho Smart Growth
Paul Woods, Ada County Commissioner	Phil Bandy, City of Eagle Council
Gerry Robbins, M3 Companos	Ramona Walhof, NFBVI
David Zaremba, Meridian City Council	Pam White, Nampa City Council
Michael Ward, Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center	
Patti Raino, Idaho Transportation Department	
Courtney Washburn, Idaho Conservation League	
Matt Beebe, Canyon Co. Commissioner	

Next meeting: TBA