

Meeting Report

PROJECT: 2004-04 Fixed Guideway Study

PROJECT NO.: 022845

Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA)

PRESENT: Committee Members:

Sam Bowman, Ward 2 City Council, City of Oklahoma City
Bernest Cain, State Senator, OK Senate Dist 46
Rick Cain, COTPA
Bill Case, State Representative, OK House Dist 95
Joe Clytus, Oklahoma City Public Schools
Myron Coleman, City-County Health
Mick Cornett, Mayor, City of Oklahoma City
Harold Haralson, Mayor, City of Norman
Lyda Harrell, Traffic Commission Chair, City of Oklahoma City
Steve Jones, Representative of Congressman Ernest Istook
Chris Kauffman, COTPA Chairman/The Insurance Center
Hershel Lamirand, OU Medical Center
David Lopez, Downtown Okla. City Inc.
Rick Moore, Municipal Contractors Association
Gary Marrs, Ward 1 City Council, City of Oklahoma City
Ford Price, Price Edwards & Co.
Robin Roberts, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce
Paula Sanford, Edmond City Council
Dean Schirf, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce
Odell Smith, COTPA Trustee, Smith Printing
David Streb, Oklahoma Department of Transportation
Richard Tanenbaum, Gardner/Tanenbaum Group
Zach Taylor, ACOG
James Thompson, OKC City Manager's Office
Amy Underwood, OKC Beautiful Representative
Mike Voorhees, S. OKC Chamber of Commerce Representative
John Yoeckel, At-Large Planning Commissioner, City of Oklahoma City

MEETING

DATE: 12/14/2004

Project Staff:

Larry Hopper, COTPA Project Manager
Tom Shelton, Carter & Burgess Project Manager
Renzi Stone, Saxum Strategic Communications
Mike McAnelly, Carter & Burgess
Lee Nichols, Carter & Burgess
Sandra Williams, Carter & Burgess

Attendees/Guests:

Scott Barrett, Legacy Engineering
Kay Bickham, COTPA Trustee
Dan Boland, Public Works, City of Oklahoma City

Attendees/Guests (continued):

Todd Butler, TEC
Jim Couch, City Manager, City of Oklahoma City
Randy Entz, ACOG
Ken Hughes, Huitt-Zollars, Project Team
Dick Lee, COTPA Trustee
Holly Massie, ACOG
Diponker Mukherjee, COTPA
Doug Rex, ACOG
Max Wensel, representing Klay Kimker of Devon Energy

The following is our understanding of the subject matter covered in this meeting. If this differs from your understanding, please notify us within five working days.

The December 14, 2004 meeting for the Central Oklahoma Transportation & Parking Authority (COTPA) Fixed Guideway Transit Study Steering Committee (TSSC) Kickoff Meeting was held at the Presbyterian Health Foundation Conference Center located on 655 Research Parkway, Oklahoma City. The meeting began at 4:00 P.M. Handouts made available were included in a three-ring binder: meeting agenda, Purpose and Mission Statement of the TSSC, Guiding Principles for the TSSC, the Steering Committee roster, a copy of the meeting presentation, the Transit Fact sheets (Bus, HOV, Busways, Streetcars, Light Rail, Commuter Rail, Heavy Rail, and Monorail/AGT), a set of figures (Preliminary Study Corridors, 2000 Population Density, 2030 Population Density, 2000 Employment Density, 2030 Employment Density), the Public Involvement Plan, and the project schedule.

1. **Opening Remarks** - The Honorable Mick Cornett, Mayor of Oklahoma City, convened the meeting by welcoming all attendees (committee members and guest). He began by discussing the importance of the TSSC kick-off meeting, conveying to them that this meeting is the beginning of the planning process and is designed to provide them the opportunity to become informed regarding the fixed guideway transit study. He encouraged everyone to ask questions and solicited their input. He also encouraged the committee members to be active members throughout the study process. He then turned the meeting over to Chris Kauffman, Chair of the COTPA Board of Trustees.
2. **Introductions** – Chris Kauffman introduced himself as COTPA Chair and briefly explained what COTPA is. He then reiterated the mayor's welcoming to all in attendance and asked each attendee to introduce themselves and their affiliation. He then introduced, Tom Shelton, Carter & Burgess Project Manager, who continued the meeting by reviewing the purpose and objectives of the study.
3. **Purpose and Objectives of the Fixed Guideway Transit Study** – Tom Shelton also welcomed the attendees to the meeting. He summarized that the purpose of the Fixed Guideway Study and its Steering Committee is to identify, evaluate, and recommend a set of fixed guideway transit investment options that would strengthen the connections to the region's employment and activity centers. He stated that the study would identify unique opportunities for a fixed guideway system that could offer the Oklahoma City area the chance to identify potential transportation solutions to improve connections among the region's growth centers, enhance economic development opportunities, improve mobility, expand transportation options, and improve air quality. He further stated that the purpose of the kick-off meeting was to discuss the objectives and mission of the study, the study process itself, and the guiding principles for the study. He presented a slide show illustrating the Fixed Guideway Transit Technologies, briefly discussing the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Project Implementation Process (including alternatives analysis, environmental documentation, and selection of a locally preferred alternative), reviewed national rail transit

trends, and described transit technologies available, potential funding strategies (federal, state and local match), and the relation between transit and economic development.

4. **Project Schedule** – Copies of the detailed Project Schedule were included in the notebooks. Tom Shelton explained that the study would follow a planning schedule that includes seven tasks for development and completion of the study. This process typically takes 12 months. Public involvement is also included in this schedule and will be ongoing throughout the process.
5. **Role of the Steering Committee** – Tom Shelton reviewed the role and the purpose of the Steering Committee. He explained that the committee members have advisory responsibility relating to the oversight and direction of the study. They are the primary point of contact between the project team and the communities and participating agencies. He emphasized that it is essential that the steering committee members be actively involved in the decision-making process throughout the study. Their understanding of the study, in particular, the range of alternatives considered, is critical to building a consensus for the selection of the preferred transportation solution. He requested the members to review Chapter 4 of the Draft Public Involvement Plan regarding the details of their role.
6. **Guiding Principles** – Mr. Shelton referred the members to the draft Guiding Principles for the Fixed Guideway Study contained in the binder. Tom briefly discussed the six principles, which included: 1) achieve regional consensus, 2) enhance mobility, 3) be fiscally responsible, 4) consider appropriate technologies, 5) consider effects on the corridors, and 6) economic development. He requested that the members -review these draft guiding principles and refer any suggestions or comments to Larry Hopper, COTPA Project Manager. The guiding principles will be utilized later as part of the evaluation of alternatives for the fixed guideway corridors.
7. **Transit Technologies to be Studied** – Tom Shelton stated that an evaluation of transit technologies would be conducted at key points during the study to assist in gathering critical data for identifying the preferred alternatives. He described that the study was about more than just Light Rail. The alternative fixed guideway technologies to be studied will include a range of options as well as the specifications for each: Light Rail Transit (LRT), modern streetcar, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Commuter Rail, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) facilities, Heavy Rail, and Monorail. He told the members that the evaluation criteria for each of the technologies identified would include: 1) operations and service levels, 2) expandability and phasing, 3) availability, 4) capital cost, and 5) operating and maintenance cost.
8. **Overview of the Public Involvement Plan** – A Public Involvement Plan was prepared for the study and is included in the binders provided to the Steering Committee. Active participation among the committee members will be critical to the success of the study project. Mr. Shelton pointed out that the participation and involvement of citizens and interested parties will also be critical to ensure that their contributions and ideas are considered throughout the process as well. He asked the committee to review the Public Involvement Plan and direct any questions and comments to Larry Hopper.
9. **Schedule of Subsequent Steering Committee Meeting** – The next Steering Committed meeting will be held on **March 3, 2005**, at 4:00 P.M., in this same location (the Presbyterian Health Foundation Conference Center located at 655 Research Parkway). Prior to the next Steering Committee meeting, the project team will be conducting a series of public meetings in late February 2005, to inform citizens about the Fixed Guideway Study. Comments and questions received from these public meetings will be summarized at the next Steering Committee meeting.

10. **Final Comments and Questions** – Members of the Steering Committee were invited to make comments and questions regarding the study and Mr. Shelton's presentation:

Comment: What is the current Federal match for funding on transit projects?

Answer: The current Federal match for funding is 50%.

Comment: What are the characteristics of a successful system?

Answer: A successful system has two measures: cost effectiveness and a good ratio of forecast ridership to capital cost. The optimal length for a light rail (LRT) corridor, for example, is 12 to 15 miles with a cost of \$30 to \$40 million-per mile. The primary goal for the transit system is the ability to attract riders.

Comment: Does the Federal government fund operation and maintenance costs?

Answer: Federal funding is available for operations and maintenance for bus systems, but not for rail transit systems.

Comment: Where does the revenue come from? Is a subsidy needed to fund a rail transit system?

Answer: Nationally, approximately 10 to 25 percent of transit operating costs are covered by revenue received from the fare box. Other revenue sources must come in the form of a subsidy such as a dedicated sales tax or other funding source.

Comment: What about cost per rider (?)

Answer: Federal funding for rail transit projects is awarded based on a favorable cost effectiveness ratio of cost per rider, compared to other competing systems. The local share includes capital funds to match the Federal share, plus the operating and maintenance funds. For a feasible project, the region has to figure out how we want to pay for the local share costs.

Comment: What about density?

Answer: Comparative statistics for rail transit agencies around the country will be provided as information at the next meeting.

Comment: Are there any cities operating rail transit without a subsidy? Are there any cities operating without a subsidy that have already built their system?

Answer: No, but all forms of transportation, even roads, highways, and airports are subsidized.

Comment: Areas such as Dallas and Houston have such high traffic issues. We (Oklahoma City) don't have those types of traffic issues. How would rail be justified in this area?

Answer: The answer to that question will be an outcome of the study. The Oklahoma City metropolitan area is a growing area with congestion increasing in the next 10 to 20 years. This study is a proactive approach looking at possible transit technologies to help alleviate future traffic congestion. This study will look at various transit technologies such as bus rapid transit, commuter rail, and light rail. The potential use of the various technologies, not just light rail, will be studied and the feasibility of each technology has to be warranted on its own merits.

Comment: Are there cultural differences regarding public acceptance of rail transit among different parts of the country?

Answer: There used to be, but they are becoming less distinctive. Current LRT projects can be seen in development not just in the larger cities, but all over the country in places such as San Diego,

CA; Denver, CO; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; Phoenix, AZ; and in New Jersey. Competition for Federal funds is very intense among projects in cities all over the nation.

Comment: Is there a website for this project?

Answer: The website is currently under development and the web address will be distributed once the site is complete.

Comment: From an economic development standpoint, those systems considered should be proven very carefully when comparing them to or addressing our area, as it seems the data for places like Oklahoma City is not conclusive.

Answer: When gathering examples for economic development, the consultant team will gather information from cities that are similar in size and stature with the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.

Comment: How would the fixed guideway transit study address sprawl?

Answer: Fixed guideway transit systems encourage development patterns that produce higher densities within the corridors they serve. Rail transit often creates mixed-use development around station locations, referred to as "transit oriented development" (TOD). The study will examine various examples of TOD occurring around LRT stations and the economic development opportunities that might be provided for the greater OKC area. In relation to sprawl, this type of development attracts denser development where people can live, work, shop, and play all with the ability of not using a car. It creates a community where everything is in walking distance. It helps curtail sprawl by creating dense development without the expansive roadways and parking lots.

The question and answer session was closed. Mr. Shelton noted that the corridor map was preliminary and reminded the committee that approximately 85% of fixed guideway trips are work-related. Tom thanked everyone for attending and turned the meeting over to COTPA Chair Chris Kauffman.

Mr. Kauffman commented that this study would be a great tie-in to carry out COTPA's 2001 Long Range Plan. He then introduced Rick Cain, who was recently appointed as the new COTPA Administrator. He then thanked everyone for attending. The meeting adjourned 5:15 pm.

REPORTED BY: Tom Shelton, Project Manager
