

## Meeting Report

**PROJECT:** Fixed Guideway Study,  
Central Oklahoma  
Transportation and Parking  
Authority (COTPA)

**PROJECT NO.:** 023144.010.001

**PRESENT:** See attached sign-in sheets

**DATE:** October 11 – 13, 2005

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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.

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The third series of public meetings was conducted at various locations dispersed across the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area over a period of three days, from October 11 – 13, 2005. The purpose of these meetings was to present the public the initial ridership and cost data for the fixed guideway alternatives (enhanced bus, high occupancy vehicle lanes, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, and light rail streetcar), and outline the next steps of the study.

### Warr Acres Public Library

Tuesday, October 11, 2005 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM

Tom Shelton, Project Manager for Carter & Burgess, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for coming. A slide show was presented by Mr. Shelton and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner for Carter & Burgess, providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

- C: Light Rail in Houston gets in the way of normal traffic flow and should be elevated.
- C: The east/west commuter rail alignment along the Union Pacific railroad should be along Reno.
- C: Railroad companies do not want to deal with passenger rail service because of liability reasons.
- C: Light rail should be located on the IH 40 bridge.
- C: Enhanced bus and other fixed guideway technologies should go where the riders are.
- C: Weekend transit service needs to be increased not decreased.
- C: Each suburb should have its own transit station.
- C: In determining the future transportation needs for Oklahoma City, the transit options need to be more practical.

Q: On the animation, there was green space in the median; is this how it would look?

R: That is one option; this is an urban design treatment.

Q: Why is light rail so expensive?

R: The main reason why light rail (LRT) is so expensive is because of the electrification and the relocation of utilities.

Association of Central Oklahoma Governments  
2030 OCARTS Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)  
Tuesday, October 11, 2005, 3:00 PM

Leonard West, CAC Chairman, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and asked each attendee to introduce themselves. Mr. West then introduced Tom Shelton, Project Manager, and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner, from Carter & Burgess. A slide show was presented by Mr. Shelton and Mr. McAnelly providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

Q: How did you factor the trip figure?

R: This was based on infrastructure that's in place today and what is planned for the future. It shows total person trips, not trips by mode.

Q: In the enhanced bus option are you looking at suburban areas that currently aren't served like Moore?

R: Yes, we are looking at the entire region and where people work and live. We are not constrained by what METRO Transit serves today.

Q: What is paratransit?

R: Paratransit is an on-demand service that is federally required. This service is currently being served by METRO Lift.

Q: Why was the line to the airport not analyzed?

R: Within the model it is difficult to capitalize the ridership to and from the airport. Other factors considered in the analysis are trip length, ridership demand and capital costs.

Q: Why didn't we use the old inter-urban routes?

R: The scope of the study is to stay in the OCARTS region.

C: The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) route would need double-tracking in some areas and an operations agreement with the BNSF.

C: Light rail in a freight right-of-way would need three times the spacing than commuter rail. Commuter rail is FRA compliant while light rail is not.

Q: Does the commuter rail cost estimate include the construction of additional track?

R: Yes, the cost estimates assumes double tracking along the entire north/south alignment and the construction of 1,000 foot sidings at stations along the east/west alignment.

- Q: Will the study make finite recommendations?  
R: Yes, the study will create an implementation plan and make funding recommendations.
- Q: What is the federal match?  
R: The current reauthorization bill, SAFETEA-LU, includes an 80/20 split (20% local match). The current administration doesn't support this and wants a 50/50 split.

## McAlpine Center Tuesday, October 11, 2005, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Tom Shelton, Project Manager for Carter & Burgess, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for coming. A slide show was presented by Mr. Shelton and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner for Carter & Burgess, providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

- Q: Are the numbers presented on the bus comparison table existing numbers or for 25 years from now?  
R: They are existing numbers.
- Q: Are you going to compare the existing bus rapid transit and light rail ridership numbers from other agencies to the projected numbers for Oklahoma City?  
R: We do have those numbers, but they are not being shown at this time. The point we are trying to make is how the existing transit service in Oklahoma City relates to peer cities throughout the country. It shows that the demand for transit service in Oklahoma City is greater than the service METRO Transit currently provides.
- Q: Is bus rapid transit susceptible to adverse weather conditions such as rain and snow unlike light rail?  
R: Yes.
- Q: Does bus rapid transit drive economic development like light rail does?  
R: This is a new technology and the jury is still out on the amount of transit oriented development (TOD) that will occur around bus rapid transit (BRT) stations. However, early studies have shown that TOD is occurring around BRT stations, but at a smaller scale than what is occurring along light rail lines.
- Q: Oklahoma City has old track under asphalt from the old inter-urban lines. Would it be cost effective to use these?  
R: Other cities have tried that, but have found it very costly to rehabilitate the old track.
- Q: When calculating the cost effectiveness for each fixed guideway technology, do you quantify the amount of money for what people are spending on auto related expenses?  
R: Those calculations are available, but at this level of analysis we are normalizing the numbers for comparison purposes. The Federal Transit Administration has a more complex cost/benefit analysis that will need to be done if COTPA decides to proceed further into alternatives analysis.

C: In Oklahoma City the need for transit is greater than what is currently available. COTPA needs better funding to serve the transit needs of Oklahoma City. Cities dedicated to transit have created an independent regional transit authority with dedicated funding.

Q: How will the east/west and the north/south commuter rail lines connect?

R: This connection will be made by the creation of an intermodal center where the two lines cross.

Q: What is the time line for completion and phasing?

R: Complete build-out of the system would occur in 25 years. The consultant team will develop a phasing and implementation plan at the end of this study.

C: The modern streetcar route is in agreement with what was discussed by St. Anthony's Hospital and the Health Science Center.

C: Other cities seem to have more of a sense of community than the OKC metro area.

Q: Are you thinking a way to pay for this would be MAPS 3?

R: Yes.

## Norman Public Library

Wednesday, October 12, 2005, 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM

Tom Shelton, Project Manager for Carter & Burgess, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for coming. A slide show was presented by Mr. Shelton and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner for Carter & Burgess, providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

Q: What is the distinction between home based work (HBW) and home based non-work (HBNW) trips? Why is HBNW so much greater than HBW in the Norman Corridor?

R: HBW trips are trips people make from home to work. HBNW are trips people make to the store, drop kids off at school, etc. We've made the same distinction about the large amount of HBNW trips being so much greater than the HBW trips in the Norman Corridor. We have asked ACOG for clarification on the matter. It should be noted that these trips include school trips and trips through the corridor.

C: The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) mentioned that no federal money can be spent on high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes.

R: We are not aware of that comment from ODOT, and federal money may be used for HOV projects.

Q: Is low transit ridership in Oklahoma City due to the lack of service or the people of Oklahoma City?

R: It is due to the lack of service in Oklahoma City. METRO Transit is provided the best service possible with the amount of funding it receives. If METRO Transit was properly funded the service would increase and as a result the ridership would increase.

- Q: How do other transit agencies get money?  
R: Regional transit agencies across the country receive a dedicated funding source through tax revenue or other funding sources. This study will look at how funding can be provided.
- Q: Is COTPA a regional agency?  
R: No, it's a department within the City of Oklahoma City that receives its funding out of the cities annual budget.
- Q: What happened in Dallas?  
R: First, a state level action was initiated to allow a regional transit agency to be created. Once approved by the State a referendum occurred to let voters decide to be a member city of DART and impose a 1% sales tax.
- Q: Was DART bus ridership poor before the light rail (LRT) system was built?  
R: Dallas' bus service wasn't properly funded, like Oklahoma City is now, and they couldn't provide the proper service the City needed.
- C: Light rail induces ridership and increased density.
- Q: Why would you want a bus to act like light rail?  
R: Cost is the primary reason. With the cost of light rail approaching \$50 million per mile it is difficult for cities to meet the federal requirements for federal funding. Bus Rapid Transit is a transit technology that can carry as many or more passengers then light rail and at a fraction of the cost. Because of the low cost it is easier to qualify for federal funding.
- C: Siding the commuter rail line and making the commuter rail wait for passing freight trains would kill the route.  
R: The schedules would be coordinated so no delays would occur.
- C: The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad would benefit from double tracking of the railroad.
- Q: \$50 million per mile for light rail doesn't seem right, what does this cost include?  
R: The cost estimate includes electrification, stations, vehicles, lying of track, and utility relocation. Right-of-way costs are not included in this estimate.
- C: The presentation is boring and you should be doing more "selling" of the project.
- Q: Union Station and the rail yard are not usable in this study. Does the cost estimate take into account a new rail hub?  
R: The cost estimate for commuter rail includes double tracking of the entire north/south route, 1,000 foot siding track along the east/west route, stations, and vehicles. Right-of-way costs is not included in the cost estimate.
- Q: How would the Santa Fe Station be ADA accessible?  
R: Renovation would need to occur to provide elevators and/or escalators and other improvements to bring it up to federal requirements.

Q: What is the current bus ridership in Oklahoma City?

R: Around three million riders per year.

Q: Would you have to build a second track for commuter rail?

R: The determination will come in further analysis of that corridor. However, in the cost estimate we assumed double tracking the entire north/south corridor and placing 1,000 foot sidings at stations along the east/west corridor.

Q: What is the cost per Modern Street Car Vehicle?

R: Approximately \$1.3 million.

Q: To what extent are you free in your report to convey your ideas and how are you constrained by politics and not able to express your expertise?

R: No constraints have been expressed, except our professionalism.

## Edmond Public Library

Wednesday, October 12, 2005 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Tom Shelton, Project Manager for Carter & Burgess, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for coming. A slide show was presented by Mr. Shelton and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner for Carter & Burgess, providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

Q: Does the ridership projection include where people go and their desirability of mode of transportation?

R: Yes, it has been seen across the country that people are more likely to ride rail than bus. Convenience and reliability makes rail more appealing.

Q: Current ridership in Oklahoma City is low, so increasing service will increase ridership?

R: Yes, that is true.

Q: What difference would a rider see from bus rapid transit (BRT) and modern streetcar?

R: Not sure at this time. BRT and modern streetcar are both less than five years old and statistical data is not yet available. The potential for transit oriented development exists for these technologies.

Q: Is there a next phase or step that will look at outside areas such as Guthrie?

R: The current priority is to focus on the ACOG area. A follow up study needs to be done in the future that includes outside communities such as Guthrie. Some of the technology best addresses the longer commutes of rural citizens. Rural citizens need to voice their opinion on the need for the technology to reach rural areas.

## South Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce

Thursday, October 13, 2005 7:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Tom Shelton, Project Manager for Carter & Burgess, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for coming. A slide show was presented by Mr. Shelton and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner for Carter & Burgess, providing an overview of the Fixed

Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

- C: The rail line that runs east to Remington Park is not completely abandoned. It is leased from METRO Transit by Union Pacific and the Railroad Museum.
- C: The streetcar alignment that runs along 10<sup>th</sup> to Walker needs to be looked at possible running along 13<sup>th</sup>. 13<sup>th</sup> has tracks embedded in the asphalt that could be reused. The old Capitol line could be put back into use. 10<sup>th</sup> street is a very congested street. Visibility is better on 13<sup>th</sup> than on 10<sup>th</sup> after you cross the BNSF railroad.
- R: The streetcar route is not fixed, but shows the needs of tourists, residents, employers, etc. to circulate downtown.
- Q: Why is the Capitol Hill bus circulator not being used anymore?
- R: Due to lack of funding and declining ridership METRO Transit felt it would be best to discontinue the Capitol Hill bus circulator.
- C: All of these methods seem to have a great economic impact.
- C: This is a good study, you are appealing to both the blue and white collar workers.
- C: Need transportation from the fairgrounds- Rock Island line, had a street car to fairgrounds good to run for conventioners.
- C: In El Reno when they did the trolley system, they had to re-do the track.

**Association of Central Oklahoma Governments  
Intermodal Transportation Technical Committee (ITTC)  
Thursday, October 13, 2005, 10:00 AM**

Doug Rex, Program Coordinator with ACOG, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and asked each attendee to introduce themselves. Mr. Rex then introduced Tom Shelton, Project Manager, and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner, with Carter & Burgess. Mr. Shelton and Mr. McAnelly gave a brief presentation providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Due to time constraints comments and questions were not able to be solicited.

**Midwest City Public Library  
Thursday, October 13, 2005, 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM**

Tom Shelton, Project Manager for Carter & Burgess, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for coming. A slide show was presented by Mr. Shelton and Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner for Carter & Burgess, providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

- C: Northeast Oklahoma City is currently underserved, but right now there is no major call for mass transit.
- R: Leadership needs to be vocal and proactive. It is possible that in a phase II or III outlying areas may be served.
- C: Midwest City Draft Comprehensive Plan meeting is next Thursday (October 20, 2005). Anything that comes along Midwest City is a willing participant and political leadership is backing it.
- Q: Does the lane for BRT have to be the same size as a car lane?
- R: It has to be a minimum of 11ft.

## Urban League

Thursday, October 13, 2005, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Larry Hopper, Senior Planner METRO Transit, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for coming. A slide show was presented by Mr. Hopper providing an overview of the Fixed Guideway Study objectives, technology alternatives, and preliminary cost and ridership data. Subsequent to the presentation, comments and questions were invited from the participants. The following comments/questions were received.

- Q: The cities that spend four times more on public transportation, are they on the coast or up north?
- R: No, actually even Texas to our south does spend a lot more on transit.
- Q: What is a corridor?
- R: A general direction people want to travel, a long strip of land.
- Q: Could we go to Stillwater?
- R: There are no plans extending to Stillwater at this time.
- Q: Do other cities operate (bus routes) 24 hours a day?
- R: Yes, many cities around the country operate 24 hour transit service.
- Q: Is this why they spend more?
- R: They do spend more by at least three times.
- Q: Is there a city with both underground & above ground public transit?
- R: Yes, Dallas, Boston, New York, and Atlanta for example, but underground is expensive and we have no plans for that here.
- Q: Was light rail the track remains I had seen somewhere near (Villa from the 60's)(not clear)
- R: Yes, there was a rail toward (19<sup>th</sup>)
- Q: How would I get to Bethany?
- R: There is already some service that comes near Bethany. The enhanced Bus option would go there. The funding & public support would have to be there. We might need Bethany to help pay for it or develop a transit portion of community government that would cross jurisdictions and manage the funding.

Q: What about Guthrie?

R: What makes public transit work best is population density. Guthrie does not have the population at this time. Future studies will determine if transit is feasible in this area.

Q: What about Stillwater?

R: There is a bus that runs from Quail Springs Mall or the 122<sup>nd</sup> and I-35 park & ride lot to OSU. You would have to look on OSU's website to find out details about that.

Q: Will our system help Katrina victims?

R: If they move close to busy bus routes they will be helped.

Q: I am wondering about something similar to "MetroLift"?

R: "ParaLift" is the national term; enhanced bus service is especially designed to be helpful.

Q: What about Enid?

R: We cannot go that far as a municipality. Still, there is actually another service to there that is not too expensive.