

Public 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: July 7, 2005

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 second series of seven public meetings concluded with this meeting held on Thursday July 7, 2005 from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM at the McAlpine Center located at 428 W. California, in Oklahoma City. Six meetings were conducted previously on June 14-16, 2005 at various locations around the metropolitan area. The purpose of the public meetings was to provide an update about the Fixed Guideway Study and to obtain input regarding alternative fixed guideway transit alignments for each of the corridors. The following handouts were made available to meeting participants: Meeting Agenda, *Pathways* May 2005 newsletter, and Comment Card. Draft alignment maps of commuter rail, bus rapid transit, light rail streetcar and downtown alignments were displayed on the wall and laid out on each meeting table for review and comment by the attendees.

The meeting began at 6:30 PM with an open house where participants were able to get refreshments and view the displays. Mike McAnelly, Senior Planner for Carter & Burgess, called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants and introduced other community officials. A slide show was presented that provided an update of the Fixed Guideway Study. Mike reviewed the results from the June 14 – 16, 2005 public meetings. He reviewed the revised delineation of concept corridors, evaluation criteria, projected future travel patterns, and applicable potential fixed guideway technologies for the corridors. On each of the table tops, maps were displayed that depicted the alignments for further study for commuter rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), and light rail/modern streetcar alignments. Meeting participants were encouraged to provide comments and mark up maps to show their comments and ideas for the technology preferences and potential alignments. The following comments were received.

- How will the planned IH 40 Crosstown Relocation affect the study?
 - IH 40 would affect both HOV and commuter rail. The design of Crosstown IH 40 would potentially accommodate an HOV lane. Currently the project is in final design and ODOT plans to leave one or two of the existing rail lines in place on the south side of Union Station, which could accommodate commuter rail.
- How will the results of this study affect rural transportation needs?
 - Whether a fixed guideway alternative is applicable in a corridor or not, improved bus service will be a system-wide improvement as a result. All fixed guideway technologies should include a feeder bus system that will transport people to and from the transit station, serving the surrounding area. All service will be in

compliance with ADA regulations. Rural areas with low population density are typically served by rural transportation providers, including demand responsive service. This is a specialized service for rural areas that can be provided by various different service agencies with federal and state assistance. It can be coordinated with METRO Transit service to provide convenient transfers.

- Why isn't the current METRO Transit service better?
 - It's all about funding. The question that needs to be asked is "what are people willing to pay in order to obtain better transit service?" One of the results of the study will be to provide METRO Transit with recommendations for fixed guideway transit service and funding options to pay for it.. With more funding, better service will be available.
- What is the role of the Steering Committee?
 - The steering committee was appointed by COTPA and consists of community leaders from around the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. The goal of the steering committee is to be the advisory board for the Fixed Guideway Study. The steering committee members are listed on the back of the *Pathways* Newsletter
- Are there any hybrid transit technologies that can operated at a lower cost and still spur economic development?
 - BRT is a good example of this. It is a rubber-tired vehicle that operates like light rail transit. It has a lower cost and a high level of service, and has a distinctive quality of "not just another bus." BRT vehicles have low floors, wide doors, big windows, off-board fare collection, signal preemption, and other passenger amenities more typical of rail passenger vehicles than buses. BRT operates on a fixed guideway that can be a dedicated lane on a highway, or a separate right of way.
- Can BRT vehicles share the road with cars or do they have to operate in a separate guideway?
 - The answer is both. BRT vehicles can operate in existing traffic or in their own dedicated guideway. It's all a matter of design and the desired level of service.
- Have you studied the affect of ridership depending on appearance, i.e. advertising on buses?
 - Lots of research has been done regarding this issue. Advertising on buses is a source of revenue for transit agencies and is in common practice around the nation.
- Vehicle designs that are more modern with low floors and large windows are more attractive.
- Will the stations have areas for taxi pickup and will they be accessible for the disabled?
 - Stations will include areas for transfers to buses, taxi's and personal vehicles. All stations are required by federal law to be ADA compliant.

- Will a ramp or elevator be provided at the stations to provide access to the platforms?
 - Yes, if the station design requires these. The platforms must be ADA accessible.

- What environmental factors will you be looking at?
 - Environmental issues considered will include features such as air quality, jurisdictional waters (include lakes, streams, wetlands), impacts to low income and minority populations, impacts to parks and historical structures. For a system feasibility study like this project, the environmental analysis is just sufficient to establish that there is not a “fatal flaw” for the recommended improvements. Before a project can be built, a full environmental analysis would need to be completed. This would be accomplished by preparing either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. All environmental studies will follow the guidelines set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other pertinent laws and regulations.

- What about the storm impacts of tornados to the overhead catenary lines for light rail vehicles?
 - Potential wind shear and other impacts would be considered in design of any future facilities. This technology is used throughout the world and is successful in a variety of climatic settings.

- Harrah, in the Midwest City/Tinker Corridor, is a growing area and deserves a station.

- With all the changes taking place downtown, would BRT be a better option because you could change the routes?
 - Both BRT and LRT/Streetcar are being analyzed to determine which technology, if either, would be a better fit for downtown Oklahoma City. BRT is sometime considered as a first phase of fixed guideway service, to be followed later by Light Rail or other improvements when the ridership demand increases to warrant a higher level of service.

- Commuter Rail seems to go where there are existing railroad lines. Would you consider building additional lines?
 - Commuter Rail is designed to operate within existing freight rail corridors. New track may be built as a parallel track to existing freight lines or to provide short connectors. It is generally cost prohibitive to acquire new right-of-way and build new rail.

- How willing will the study be to include stops at community colleges, i.e. Oklahoma City Community College and Rose State?
 - Community colleges are major destination points and will be looked at for the potential of fixed guideway service.

Mike McAnelly thanked everyone for coming out and providing their input. He reminded attendees that comments and information are also available on the website at okfgs.org. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.