

Central Front Range Transportation Planning Region Transit Working Group #1 – Meeting Minutes

Date: July 26, 2013
Time: 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
Location: Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments Building
3224 – A, Independence Road
Canon City, Colorado

Meeting attendees:

Courtney Stone – The Independence Center
Achini Wijesinghe – The Independence Center
Ted Schweitzer – City of Cripple Creek
Craig Casper – Piles Peak Area Council of Governments
Connie Cole – Chaffee Shuttle
Frank Holman – Chaffee County
Norm Stern – Teller County
Mark Dowaliby – Park County
Shelly Penkoff – Rotary Van Service
Judy Gilkerson – Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Judy Lohnes – Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Vickey Casey – Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments
Jim Wiles – Golden Shuttle
Shirley Donahue – Golden Shuttle
Gary Howard – Freemont Cab
Mary Howard – Freemont Cab
Robert Lovegrove – Starpoint
George Sugars – Freemont County
Adam Lancaster – City of Canon City
Ted Borden – Community of Caring
Wendy Pettit – CDOT Region 2
John Valerio – CDOT Division of Transit and Rail
Cally Grauberger – Transit Plus
Ralph Power – TransitPlus

Welcome & Introductions

John Valerio from CDOT kicked the meeting off and asked that all participants introduce themselves.

Project Background

Mr. Valerio provided an overview of the planning processes for the Statewide Transit Plan and for the Regional Transit and Human Service Coordination plans.

Mr. Valerio then distributed the meeting packet, which included: public involvement and agency coordination for the planning processes, review of the Statewide Transit Plan goals and objectives, guiding principles for transit planning at CDOT, what will be included in the Statewide Transit Plan, the key elements of the Local Transit and Human Service Coordinated Transportation Plans, and an overview of the project schedule.

Public Involvement Approach

Mr. Valerio reviewed the strategy for public involvement for both the statewide transit plan and the local coordinated transit plan. The schedule at present includes a public open house in the fall of 2013 and a second open house in the spring of 2014. Input was solicited as to the best approaches and locations for public meetings in the Central Front Range region.

Public meeting input/strategies:

- Links on the Upper Arkansas Council of Governments website
- Flyers at human services agencies, libraries, schools. Flyers should also be in Spanish.
- Notice in the school newsletters
- A small 4-question survey that could be given to riders of the transit systems.
- For the mailing list, include Blue River Shuttle and the Park County Senior Coalition

Key Elements of a Coordinated Transportation Plan

Ralph Power, Senior Transit Consultant for TransitPlus, Inc., reviewed a handout that covered the basic components of a coordinated transportation plan. Some of the key elements of completing a coordinated transportation plan include the following:

- Provide a forum for transit providers and human service agencies to discuss issues
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination (reducing cost inefficiencies)
- Create a list of priorities and projects
- Satisfy requirements of MAP 21.

Regional Planning

Mr. Power reviewed the demographic materials that have been created to date by the consultant team. The following maps/information was presented with a request for participants to provide comments:

- Major Activity Centers and Destinations

Comments

Attendees were asked to look at the list and send back comments on any missing agencies or activity centers to update the map. Potential issues were identified as:

- There was a comment that the 50 + employers may not accurately reflect the size of employers in rural areas. It was explained this information was to be used to show a picture of employers for the Statewide Transit Plan. The team will take the concern back to the state.
- Boundaries from the 2008 Summary page are wrong on the lower half of the map, particularly for UAACOG.

- Golden Shuttle is listed but not shown on the map.
- Percent of Households with No Vehicles - The map was presented to little discussion, which was centered on the link between no vehicle households and poverty.
- Employment – There was much discussion on the reality of the job growth shown by the State Demographer’s Office. The numbers appeared high to most of the participants and the consulting team agreed to review all data.
- Population 65+ - discussions centered on part-time residents and those with RVs who spend their summers in various communities. Craig Casper from PPACG stated that the Census only includes the primary residence so the second home would not be reflected in the Census. The county may have some numbers about the temporary residents.
- Veteran Populations – Custer County does have a high number of veterans in the county. Throughout the TPR, there is a need for VA trips to Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo and Salida. The VA Clinic in Salida should be added to the list of activity centers and the map.
- Minority Populations – Fremont County’s high percentage of minorities may be related to high percentage of prison inmates. There may be a need to extract the prison population so a true number of transit riders can be defined. Also, the area in red may be including the military bases in the PPACG area. Need to check data.
- Commuter Trip map – Everyone in the meeting felt that the data was shifted, even PPACG. They would like to see the consultant review the data and make sure the geo-referencing is accurate and resend the map for comment.
- Poverty Level – There was a concern that the data may again be reflecting the prison populations as part of the data. If so, the prison population needs to be removed to accurately reflect those who would use transit. UAACOG uses the “Kid Count” data from the Department of Social Services to look at poverty levels in their counties.
- Make sure that the data and modeling remove Woodland Park area because it is part of PPACG.
- There was no inter-city service map prepared for the meeting. Need to send out this map for comment.

Central Front Range TPR 2008 Plan Summary

Mr. Power walked through the list of projects in the back of the packet for the 2008 Transit Plan. Each project was reviewed to identify what projects have been implemented; if the projects should continue for this transit plan update; and, if there were any new projects. A new list will be prepared and sent out for final comment. Comments can be sent to Ralph or John or to their e-mail addresses or phone numbers. Below is a list of additional comments.

- Review of number of bus/van replacements – it was stated that a survey would be going out in the next few weeks to each provider asking for this information. Chaffee County does need three or four 4-wheel drive vehicles to reach their clients on the dirt roads in their county. However, for the time being, a general statement on operating and capital needs would be included in the list.
- Intercity and Regional bus needs will be proposed as part of the CDOT study

- Park-n-ride activities currently occur at Walmart in Canon City, the Airport, and the Quick-stop in Penrose. No agreement was reached at this time on the need for a more formal park-n-ride area. This will need to be identified in the plan.
- A Question was asked about veteran transit services. Several attendees stated that there was a need for more veteran type transit services, including Canon City and Park County. Chaffee County does have help from the American Legion to transport veterans and shares in the cost of transport.
- There was a question asked about developmental disability clients and their needs. There is a need for services in eastern El Paso County to Colorado Springs and Denver. Courtney Stone is new to the Independence Center and will need to get back with the consultant regarding other needs and program benefits.
- Regional transit service with stops in Cripple Creek, Divide, Woodland Park and Colorado Springs is needed.
- Florissant may need operating and some capital. Vehicles are 10 years old with some vehicles over 200,000 miles. They will need 10 vehicles over the next 5 years.

Immediately following the discussion of regional needs, a side discussion on the general need and merit of transit in rural communities as well as funding opportunities took place. Key topics addressed in this discussion included:

- The funding opportunities that may be available through MPACT 64. There was concern expressed regarding RTD's share of the funding pot.
- The need for rural public transit and its impact on private transit providers such as taxi cab companies was discussed.
- A discussion on the Qualitative vs Quantitative aspects of rural transit ensued. The discussion focused on farebox recovery and passenger subsidy, with Teller and Park County Commissioners questioning the value of transit services, stating that adding passengers simply added cost. Mr. Power explained that through coordination and promotion, more people would be grouped in vehicles, thereby creating economies of scale.
- Lack of funding and maximized resources emerged as a consistent theme.

Regional Transit Needs, Projects, and Priorities

A portion of the first Transit Working Group meeting was used to discuss project needs within the Central Front Range TPR. A "Project List" was developed based on the 2008 Transit Plan and "other" CDOT plans to be used as a reference and starting point for the discussion. The projects were discussed using the following categories: operating, capital and coordination. The discussion outcomes are below.

Capital Projects and Needs

- Park County Senior Coalition – vehicle replacements
- Starpoint – replacement and expansion vehicles
- Wet Mountain Rotary – replacement vehicles
- Golden Age – replacement and expansion vehicles
- City of Cripple Creek – replacement vehicles, shop equipment
- Vehicles for Penrose/Canon City/Pueblo Service
- Formal park and ride facility in Canon City

Operating Projects and Needs

- Need for more operating funds on an ongoing and consistent basis; systems are reaching their capacity; more funds for regional connections
- Maintain existing services (Upper Arkansas Area Agency on Aging, Park County Senior Coalition, City of Cripple Creek)
- Starpoint seeks to expand services as current services are nearing capacity
- Intercity connections

Coordination Projects and Needs

- Creation of multi-modal commuter connections
- Joint grant applications through UAACOG
- Vehicle and resource sharing
- Analyze public-private partnerships and contracting opportunities

Next Steps

The meeting closed by discussing what we need from the Transit Working Group and what they can expect in the months to come, including:

- All project correspondence and information will be distributed via email and online
- Feedback on demographic data/maps – send any comments to Ralph Power (see contact information below)
- Transit Provider and Human Services Surveys to be distributed in mid-August
- Next Transit Working Group Meeting – October 7, 2013
- Please send Ralph Power (email below) any contact information of people that should be included in the Transit Working Group

Adjourn

John Valerio of CDOT thanked the group for attending and reiterated the value of their participation and that we look forward to working with them over the next several months.

PROJECT CONTACTS:

CDOT DTR Lead: Scott Weeks, scott.weeks@state.co.us
Work: 303-757-9771

Lead TPR Planner: Ralph Power, ralph.power@transitplus.biz
Work: 303-728.4582

Project Web Site: <http://www.coloradodot.info/programs/transitandrail/statewidetransitplan>