

**Clark County High Capacity Transit System Study**  
**Steering Committee Meeting #1**  
3-5 p.m. Tuesday, October 24, 2006  
WSDOT Southwest Region Office, Conference Room 302  
11018 NE 51<sup>st</sup> Circle, Vancouver, WA

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Members present:**

Arch Miller (Port of Vancouver)  
Bill Ganley (City of Battle Ground)  
Tim Leavitt (City of Vancouver)  
Jeanne Harris (C-TRAN)  
Deb Wallace (State Representative)  
Don Wagner (WSDOT)

**Staff:**

Dean Lookingbill (RTC)  
Dale Robins (RTC)  
Bob Post (URS)  
John Cullerton (URS)  
Jeanne Lawson (JLA)  
Kalin Schmoltdt (JLA)

**Members absent:**

Steve Stuart (Clark County)  
Joe Zarelli (State Senator)

**Welcome & introductions, Meeting purpose & agenda overview**

Dean Lookingbill called the meeting to order, thanked everyone for coming, and led a brief round of introductions. He described this process as an historic event and noted that it has been almost 12 years since the community has held a discussion on high capacity transit (HCT). He talked briefly about the history of the community relationship with HCT and noted the failure of the light-rail funding measure in the mid 1990's. He expressed hope that the next eight meetings will lead to a plan for an HCT system.

Lookingbill described the consulting team: URS, Parsons Brinkerhoff, Jeanne Lawson Associates, and EnviroIssues. He noted that Jeanne Lawson will be facilitating the Steering Committee meetings in addition to helping with community involvement.

Don Wagner noted that focus groups in association with the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) have consistently recognized better transit as a solution to transportation problems. He emphasized that although the ballot measure failed ten years ago, many of those people might not be around anymore, and he encouraged the group to be aware of other conversations.

**Study schedule & Steering Committee Meetings**

Because a Committee member had to leave early, there was some advance discussion of schedule. The group agreed on holding the next two meetings on Thursday, January 4th and Thursday, April 5 from 4-6 p.m. There was further discussion of scheduling restraints due to the legislative session and other factors.

**Project overview**

Dean Lookingbill summarized the reasoning behind the RTC initiation of the study. The study is timed to correspond with the need to plan now for long-term transportation improvements that can help to accommodate the growth that is forecast for Clark County, as well as the availability of Federal funds, and C-TRAN's financial stability. He pointed out that the study will have a county-wide focus, although there will be an emphasis on the most productive transit corridors and will be coordinated with the CRC. He noted that the study will coordinate with individual jurisdictions with regard to land use issues and transit elements, and specifically how each piece plays into the long range plan for C-TRAN. He said that the goal of the study is to gather community and governmental support for HCT policies, and provide a

launching point for identifying the highest ranking corridor, and get started on a federal New Start alternatives analysis.

Bob Post introduced the work scope summary that defines the role of the consultant team and the steps for the study. He noted that the actual scope is more in-depth, and available on request. The first eight tasks are in play right now, while the 9th task would work to position a priority corridor to begin a Federal alternatives analysis.

### **Study Purpose**

Dean Lookingbill directed attention to the study purpose draft. He noted that the consultant team has tried to establish the context for a study purpose statement. He noted that references to Federal funding refer specifically to “fixed guideway systems,” but added that such a system doesn’t mean steel, and could include Bus Rapid Transit or other options.

Lookingbill explained that the first section is trying to be simple: addressing growth; economic prosperity; and high levels of travel demand which have outpaced transportation investments. He noted the inclusion of language that incorporates transit and non-roadway options as well as the likely expansion into new transit markets.

Arch Miller asked whether there is more than one urban center in Clark County. Lookingbill responded that they will be looking at emerging urban centers and high development areas over a 20+ year timeframe. He acknowledged that they may need to specify “future” for clarity. Jeanne Harris urged that activity centers also be included.

Don Wagner asked for clarification regarding whether HCT requires a fixed guideway. Lookingbill said that it should have *some* fixed guideway elements in it. Wagner then asked whether the study would look at how Battle Ground feeds the fixed guideway system, Lookingbill said it would.

Wagner asked how the timelines line up for the C-TRAN, WSDOT, and CRC work and how to avoid confusing the public. Lookingbill responded that C-TRAN will be looking at a different time frame, but will be able to share information with the HCT study. He noted CRC is on it’s own course, and the HCT System Study will be plugging itself into the CRC at appropriate times. Jeanne Lawson assured the group that the consultant team will be communicating with CRC. She noted that the CRC will develop ahead of the HCT study on the political level, and the HCT study will proceed as informed by their decisions. Lookingbill addressed the calendar and where CRC will be over the next couple years, noting that as the CRC moves towards a selected mode, the study will be moving towards selecting a corridor. Lawson added that they believe that the political discussion will be easier with good community discussion.

Don Wagner expressed concern about WSDOT “driving this bus” in terms of selecting a High Capacity Transit mode.

Deb Wallace asked about the modeling used for the transit system. Lookingbill said it will be the same 2030 land-use modeling and will include analysis from the CRC.

Tim Leavitt noted that the use of the term “design” in the purpose statement could lead the public to misunderstand the goal of the project. Lookingbill acknowledged that the use of the term is not in a civil engineering context and said there were reasons for including it. Lawson noted that many in the group had asked questions about the width and breadth of the study, and noted that perhaps more clarity is needed in the purpose statement. She then asked for any suggestions. Leavitt said that “conceptualize” might work better than “design.”

Lawson clarified that this is not a NEPA purpose statement and is only intended to focus the study and ground the participants in a common goal.

Don Wagner noted that the purpose statement seemed to include cross-river. Lookingbill agreed that was the intent, as they are trying to stay neutral. Jeanne Harris asked whether they included other communities on I-5. Lookingbill said yes, there could be feeders.

Wagner noted that there was no explicit reference to Clark County in the purpose statement.

Harris pointed out that a fixed system is a large part of the goal, but appears to be understated in the purpose statement. Lawson asked the group whether they wanted to design a system to the color of the money or look into options where there currently is no funding. Harris noted her preference to keep the scope broad so the study isn't driven in any one direction. Lookingbill noted that they had specifically referred to a *systems* analysis to maximize the usefulness of the study. Deb Wallace agreed that breadth is necessary, and asked whether a dedicated busway could be included. Lookingbill said it could. Wallace then asked to see how the FTA defines the funding language. Lookingbill offered to include a ten minute primer on understanding the FTA qualifications at a future meeting.

Lawson summarized the requested changes to the purpose statement.

### **Steering Committee, Purpose & Protocols**

Jeanne Lawson noted that the meeting protocols were taken from the Corridors Visioning process. The protocols describe the process by which the group agrees to work together. She highlighted several key items, noting that it will be important to agree on accessibility to the public, as the Steering Committee is formed to do work—not conduct hearings. She noted that the public will have other opportunities to be engaged.

Lawson also noted the subject of contact with the news media—noting that members are welcome to speak their own feelings, but should refrain from speaking for the group unless asked to do so.

Deb Wallace asked to include language to the effect of promoting open communication about the study without allowing it to become a political football. She added that the group will be more productive if they have candid discussions. Jeanne emphasized the “support the group process” bullet and offered to find some wording. Wallace noted that she was delighted with the makeup of the group.

Lawson reminded the members of the committee that they should be constantly communicating with their constituents. She explained that their goal is to achieve consensus—which doesn't necessarily mean uniform enthusiasm in the choice—but rather acceptance of a viable choice for the group as a whole.

Jeanne Harris asked whether representatives need to get consensus from their constituents or whether representatives have the authority to make decisions on their behalf. Lookingbill explained that the steering committee will decide what goes on to the RTC board, but added that there is the possibility for further discussion before RTC approval. Jeanne Lawson added that committee members should be adequately informed of the issues and choices beforehand so that each can communicate with their constituents and incorporate their opinions.

The Steering Committee approved the protocols.

### **Decision structure & public process, committee charges, and committee makeup.**

Jeanne Lawson explained the decision structure, noting how the decision process sits within a broader public conversation. She explained that because of the history of extreme viewpoints on the subject of HCT, there has been hesitancy to hold the public conversation in traditional venues.

The Task Force will be comprised of diverse points of view and will ensure that any recommendations address a broad range of viewpoints, while providing links to constituents to build credibility.

Lawson noted that it would be impractical to represent all neighborhoods, though the team wanted to make sure there is was avenue for broad participation. To that end, the Sounding Board will provide input and feedback to the task force and will be comprised of neighborhood leaders, business leaders, and others who aren't on the Task Force.

Lawson noted that there is a lot of misinformation to dispel, and said that there will be a quiz/survey to help build public understanding while developing an understanding of values upon which to build the evaluative framework.

Don Wagner pointed out that the steering committee is not comprised exclusively of elected representatives as noted.

Lawson passed out copies of the Steering Committee Role and Task Force Charges for the group to review. Deb Wallace noted the reference to the Transportation Corridors Visioning Study which should refer to the HCT Systems Study. **Lawson said she would correct the sentence.**

Bill Ganley asked about "inter-jurisdictional consensus." Lawson explained that the wording may not be the best, but it was used to imply that what is developed by the Steering Committee should be acceptable across a wide range of groups. There was some discussion of how to support the smaller entities.

Doug Ficco expressed concern about what the task force was being asked to do. He noted that the charges seem to misrepresent the power of the Task Force. Dean Lookingbill responded that the Study's Task Force is not the same as for the CRC's. Rather, the Task Force members are holders of community values and the Task Force provides an opportunity to register those values. They are not charged with making a project recommendation. Jeanne agreed that the charges should perhaps be further watered-down.

Jeanne Harris further inquired about the nature of the Task Force. Lookingbill explained that their purpose is not to make a recommendation for a specific HCT system, but rather to express their values within the context they are provided. Lawson noted that the Task Force will be going back to the goals and objectives, and indicating whether they are met or not. Lookingbill added that they had not intended to drag the Task Force through lots of transportation analysis, though their decisions will be informed by the results of such analysis.

Tim Leavitt asked about who will be on the Task Force. Lawson passed out a list of potential membership groups. She reminded the group that anyone who doesn't isn't named to the Task Force can participate in the Sounding Board. She noted that the handout lays out commonly mentioned groups and categories for consideration to be included on the Task Force. Bolded groups were those with enough apparent momentum for representation. Lawson noted that they were looking for two more member groups.

Jeanne Harris encouraged the inclusion of the Housing Authority and others who are more likely to use transit.

Deb Wallace recommended adding C-VAN as a User category, and WSU Vancouver under Education. Bill Ganley noted the School District as a large employer. Wallace asked about school-based transit.

Wallace emphasized a balanced geography of representatives, and encouraged including a representative from the east and north. Harris noted that representatives could exist for multiple categories.

Lawson noted the difficulty of selecting only twelve representatives and encouraged the group to focus on the absolute bottom line. The group seemed to think it would be good to include someone from east and west of I-205 as well as from central Vancouver.

Don Wagner noted the absence of representation from the environmental justice community, Native American groups, and questioned the reference to “light rail opponents.” Lookingbill said that EJ issues will be addressed. Lawson noted that it will be important to include an opponent group by whatever name, and noted that the larger the group gets, the less likely that it will function as a consensus builder.

Deb Wallace asked about some duplicate groupings. Lawson said that the groups listed were those that were mentioned most frequently.

Lookingbill suggested identifying a business owner through the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce. Bill Ganley encouraged selecting individuals with multiple connections.

Pete Capell expressed concern over north-end representation. The group proposed WSU and Legacy as potential representatives. Lookingbill noted that WSU has a broader focus than Legacy. Tim Leavitt recommended identifying representatives to correspond with the corridors as Lookingbill suggested.

Lookingbill noted fifteen interest groups that he thought might be appropriate, and offered to pass the list back to the group for more ideas. Deb Wallace noted that CTC is also a developer. Jeanne Lawson noted that the Clark County Youth Council was not included. Lookingbill responded that they were initially included so as to have some next generation representation. The committee opted to not take them off the list yet.

Deb Wallace commented on the language for the Task Force Charges bullet 2. The group discussed revising the bullet to clarify the role of the group. The group also recommended changing the first bullet from “provide formal recommendations” to “Advise...” Don Wagner and Jeanne Harris emphasized making the Task Force responsibilities clear.

Jeanne Lawson said that the revised version will be circulated prior to forming the Task Force.

### **Branding**

Jeanne Lawson passed out some branding ideas with logo themes. Dean Lookingbill noted that the committee can mix and match the options.

After some discussion, the group indicated that they liked the Option C design, but with the Option A text and including the title of the study as in Option B. The group discussed color. The green was selected to create a look distinct from the blue RTC website.

Deb Wallace asked whether the logo could incorporate a more vibrant shade of green.

Lawson noted that the choice demonstrated a key message, and indicates choices.

### **Study Schedule and Steering Committee Meetings**

Bob Post noted mileposts and decision points over the 18-19 month schedule. The schedule corresponds with tasks in the abbreviated work scope. He noted that current focus is on the first milestones—looking

at corridors and modes in play. Post noted a tentative second meeting scheduled during the corridor analysis process in case alternatives needed further discussion. He acknowledged the potential for adjustments, adding that he thinks the schedule is reasonable, but flexible.

Dean Lookingbill reiterated that they will be emphasizing county wide travel analysis and then narrowing the focus to one corridor.

Deb Wallace asked about public meetings and emphasized the importance of giving the public the opportunity to hear how the narrowing will be done. Jeanne Lawson noted that there will be four Sounding Board meetings. Dean Lookingbill clarified that the study could encompass multiple corridors and they will be evaluating each corridor individually and as part of the overall system. At the end of the study they will be trying to pick the *first* corridor to move forward in the Federal process.

Don Wagner requested that Doug Ficco overlay the CRC work on the same schedule so it will be easier to coordinate. Doug Ficco noted that Bob Hart has done much of the work, so there won't be too much doubling up.

Jeanne Harris asked about how long the study will last and whether the group can agree that the study will be used. Lookingbill said that the intent is there, but they will have to see how the study resolves itself. Jeanne Lawson added that key issues are how firm the teeth are, the continuity of the decision makers, and community consensus. She noted that it can be frustrating to deal with the same group of people over and over, but said it is critical to involve the continuous members of the community.

Deb Wallace requested that the C-TRAN study also be reflected on the timeline.

An audience member noted that "corridor" is not explicit in the purpose statement, and that "system" has other implications. Jeanne Lawson agreed that it should be clarified. Dean Lookingbill noted that discussion of "corridors" can open the door to funding.

### **Final Wrap-Up and Close**

Jeanne Lawson said the team will circulate all the changes from this meeting, and some issues will be discussed over email. She noted that the team will send out material before each meeting, and offered to keep the material folders and update them. She thanked all for coming, noting that that this has been a significant kickoff.