

**Clark County High Capacity Transit System Study**  
**Steering Committee Meeting #6**  
4-6 p.m. Wednesday, November 28, 2007  
WSDOT Southwest Region Office, Conference Room 124  
11018 NE 51st Circle, Vancouver WA

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Members present**

Jack Berkman *for* Don Wagner (WSDOT)  
Bill Ganley (City of Battle Ground)  
Jeanne Harris (C-TRAN)  
Tim Leavitt (City of Vancouver)  
Arch Miller (Port of Vancouver)  
Steve Stuart (Clark County)  
Deb Wallace (State Representative)

**Members absent**

Don Wagner (WSDOT)  
Joe Zarelli (State Senator)

**Staff**

Dean Lookingbill (RTC)  
Dale Robins (RTC)  
Bob Post (URS)  
John Cullerton (URS)  
Sharon Kelly (URS)  
Jack Gonsalves (PB)  
Cathy McCague (EnviroIssues)  
Jeanne Lawson (JLA)  
Kalin Schmoltdt (JLA)

**Others**

Jeff Hamm (C-TRAN)  
David Cusack (Clark County)  
Kyle Johnstone

**Purpose of Meeting:**

- Review the corridor technical analysis for SR 14 and SR 500 Corridors.
- Describe the evaluation approach.

**Welcome/Committee Business**

Dean Lookingbill thanked Arch Miller for his years of service and encouraged him to stay involved. Miller used the opportunity to note that he had recently attended a transit conference in Seattle that highlighted the importance of providing adequate housing and transit in vibrant downtown areas. He emphasized the importance of the HCT Study in supporting this goal. Jeanne Lawson commended Miller as a thoughtful and civic asset to the community.

**Review agenda** – Lawson explained that the committee would hear the results from the analysis of the SR 14 and SR 500 Corridors. Subsequent meetings will discuss the remaining corridors and a summary of the findings before a recommendation is sought. The meeting will also include an introduction to how the evaluation framework will be used.

**Approve of 10/4/07 meeting summary** – There were no comments.

**Project update** – Dale Robins explained that the study team is currently conducting the corridor analysis. Concept routes and station locations had been introduced at the last meeting and interim work has reviewed corridor performance measures such as environmental impacts and travel times. Information on the I-5, I-205, and Chelatchie Prairie corridors will be presented in January. The Steering Committee is being asked to consider which modes and alignments within the corridors deserve further consideration. Changes will be incorporated and a recommendation

will be sought in May for how to move forward into a Clark County system plan. Lookingbill noted that carrying the corridors forward signifies the conclusion of the study process, but selecting priority corridors will set up the initial work for advancing a select corridor into the next round of analysis.

**Public Involvement Update** – Cathy McCague noted that there were over 3,000 hits on the study website in October. The activity is likely due to a new survey and an email notice that the survey is available. The survey asks visitors to allocate funds to particular HCT benefits. Currently, “Convenient stations and park & rides,” “Faster transit system,” and “Predictable transit travel time,” are the most popular. Outreach efforts will increase concurrent with the next Sounding Board. Jack Burkman requested that the survey responses be posted online. McCague noted that the results of the previous survey are available, though the results of the current survey will not be published until the survey ends, possibly in conjunction with a new survey evaluating specific corridors in February. Burkman suggested the possibility that there will be an observable shift in responses based on CRC actions.

Lawson described the committee’s tour of the Eugene BRT system. Jeanne Harris noted that she was surprised at the utilitarian approach taken by Lane Transit District and pleased to see the efforts to make BRT a part of people’s ridership habits. She said it was not what she expected and fostered a more practical view of BRT. Miller agreed, noting that he was impressed with the ridership increases and the possibility of BRT providing an alternative to LRT in low density areas. Harris noted that the lack of completely dedicated lanes was disconcerting, but appeared to work because of careful timing. John Cullerton agreed that single track section does require precise operation. Harris noted the issue of drivers turning left in front of the bus, but noted Thayer Rorabaugh’s suggested solution to move queuing in the adjacent lane back 10 feet. Jeff Hamm said he was generally impressed with the overall process as well as efforts to save trees, create consensus between the jurisdictions, and make it a priority to avoid impacts to traffic, businesses, and property.

#### **SR 14 Corridor Technical Analysis**

John Cullerton explained that the modes and alignments are being evaluated and that the overall corridors are being compared to see if one should continue into the federal process.

Cullerton noted that each facility in the SR 14 corridor functions similarly to how HCT service along those alignments would function. SR 14 would serve a high speed highway function, while Mill Plain would serve an increased access function.

The alignment of SR 14 was adjusted to use Columbia Way because of height clearance issues with the new land bridge. The BRT alignment was similar to that of LRT, but each considered a different connection to a potential HCT alignment on I-205. A rail concept was not developed for use on Mill Plain because of a steeply graded section.

No major traffic impediments were found for either alignment. The land use analysis revealed that SR 14 alignments serve lower density, less pedestrian friendly areas with limited opportunities for land development around stations. Mill Plain has higher density, a variety of land uses, and better pedestrian environments near stations. Jeanne Harris asked what is meant

by “limited opportunities.” Cullerton explained that they had accounted for potentially available large parcels that could be used as park and rides that are accessible from the surrounding area. Harris asked whether there were existing parking areas that could be enhanced to become park and rides in the future. Cullerton said that they had considered shared uses, most of which would be difficult fits for large park and rides. The practicality of using such areas for parking structures would be dependent on land values.

Cullerton explained how the land use evaluation methodology considered the area within ½ mile of each alignment. The proportion of the area served by the stations was determined by the percentage of the area along the corridor within ½ mile of a station. The Mill Plain alignment lends itself to more station locations and covers its corridor more completely than SR 14. Miller asked about the use of ½ mile. Cullerton explained the assumption that 80% of walking occurs within ¼ mile, but will probably be farther for HCT. Stations would be approximately ½ -1 mile apart. Sharon Kelly added that ½ mile is the federal standard and allows consideration of possible federal transit funding scenarios.

Cullerton noted that the employment density on SR 14 is much less than on Mill Plain which also has more high density residential land. Bill Ganley noted that the land use percentages did not add to 100% in the graph. Kelly noted that parkland, open spaces, and industrial lands had been left out because they were not major contributors to transit ridership. She noted that greater amounts of low density housing are not generally transit supportive. Burkman asked about transit supportive services such as hospitals and schools. Cullerton and Kelly agreed that those influences should be included.

Cullerton noted potential challenges related to the floodplain, historical resources, habitat, schools, and the hospital. Jeanne Harris asked about impacts to trees along the alignments. Cullerton said that Jack Gonsalves was confident that many trees can be preserved.

Jack Burkman asked how noise impacts were being captured. He noted the possibility of noise issues affecting housing facing SR 14. Bill Ganley asked whether LRT or a hybrid bus would be noisier. Cullerton said that noise levels would depend on the vehicle speed and curves in the road, though potential noise from HCT would likely be masked by the freeway. Kelly said that diesel would probably be noisier than LRT in a noise sensitive environment.

Cullerton explained the speed and access considerations for each alignment and the corresponding service to through and local trips. Ridership estimates are based on modeling LRT on SR 14 and BRT full and BRT lite on Mill Plain. The modeling is limited to a reasonable set within each corridor. There is no difference in the supporting bus services for each of the three modeled concepts.

Cullerton described projected ridership by mode and destination. He reiterated that the estimated figures were for daily travel in 2030 and included bus service adjusted to serve the HCT system. Bill Ganley confirmed that LRT would connect to downtown Portland. Cullerton said it would connect at the Expo Center. Ganley asked whether Portland’s system has adequate capacity to handle the additional trains. Cullerton said that reconciling the headways had not yet been analyzed.

Ganley said that he would like to see transit remain within Clark County and facilitate transit within the community. Lawson noted the group's charge to look at travel needs within Clark County, but questioned whether that would include trips that cross the county and end up in Portland. Facilitating such travel would have the effect of reducing travel demands on the roadway system. Jeanne Harris noted that previous efforts to build LRT had been defeated because of the out of county emphasis, and agreed that her personal preference would be to keep the most people within the County. Miller encouraged looking at the transportation system as a whole, noting that it can serve all needs.

Cullerton noted that the \$47 million/mile capital costs for LRT on SR 14 is less expensive due to the general availability of right of way. Portland's system cost \$50-60/mile. Robins noted that the costs for BRT lite on SR 14 were somewhat higher because of exclusive right of way between I-205 and Fisher's Landing.

Miller suggested thinking of BRT full as a step towards an eventual upgrade to LRT. Ganley confirmed that a BRT lite alignment couldn't be upgraded to BRT full on Mill Plain because it is on the wrong side. Cullerton agreed, noting that cost and amenity assumptions for BRT tend to be less elaborate than for LRT. Lawson noted that the final result is unlikely to be like any of the current alignments.

Cullerton emphasized that the operating cost methodology is simplified and not directly comparable to CRC assumptions. He noted that they are assuming the same level of background bus for each concept and that each mode provides an equivalent level of peak capacity. (For example, six LRT trains would require 17 BRT buses to match capacity.) Lookingbill noted that the options have not been optimized and serve as comparisons only. Operating costs assume a high level of service. Because SR 14 LRT is faster than the Mill Plain alignments, the speed drives lower costs compared to BRT full on Mill Plain.

### **SR 500 Corridor**

Cullerton noted that an SR 500 alignment assumes additional structure to support BRT full or LRT. Neither alignment would create major traffic impediments, though SR 500 creates pedestrian access issues with median stations. Development along SR 500 is similar to development along Fourth Plain. Both the SR 500 and Fourth Plain alignments serve a mix of uses and have limited park and ride opportunities. The conceptual station locations along Fourth Plain would serve nearly the entire area. Cullerton noted that employment density along SR 500 is projected to remain essentially the same according to the 2030 figures.

Cullerton noted the presence of wetlands and hydric soils along SR 500 and a higher concentration of low income and minority populations than the county average. Jeanne Harris asked about that finding. Cullerton noted that Environmental Justice requirements are designed to protect those populations from disproportionate impacts. Such populations may also benefit from higher service opportunities assuming right of way takings are minimal. Cullerton clarified that right of way takings are being considered as existing corridors that do not have adequate room for new facilities.

Cullerton noted that the SR 500 corridor attracts fewer Oregon oriented trips than SR 14.

Jeanne Harris asked about comparing Fourth Plain and Mill Plain. Lookingbill noted that comparisons are currently only being examined within the corridors. Harris noted that she would like to see Fourth Plain and Mill Plain compared as urban service alignments with SR 14 and SR 500 compared as express alignments. Steve Stuart agreed. Lawson noted that the comparisons between corridors would be made after the current step.

Stuart asked about streetcar information on Fourth Plain. Cullerton noted that the information was not fully developed, though capital cost estimates for streetcar are available. He noted that the presentation slide should indicate that BRT lite and streetcar are comparable and would operate similarly. Stuart noted that there are additional benefits from a fixed guideway system. Cullerton explained that they were providing a range of concepts without modeling every iteration. Lookingbill noted that the figures for BRT on SR 500 would be similar to LRT on SR 500. Cullerton noted that figures would vary depending on how each mode interacts with Oregon and whether transfers are needed.

Stuart noted that the HCT Mode Ridership slide should label the blue bar graphs as “bi state trips.”

Cullerton noted that the higher cost of LRT on SR 500 is driven by the need for additional structure. The cost is comparable or higher than the national average.

Deb Wallace asked about the figures used for park and rides. Cullerton indicated that 2,000 spaces were assumed per corridor. Cullerton offered to verify the information and distribute the figures used. He noted that as part of the high-level study, demand was not scaled based on capacity, rather, assumptions were made about supply and the model was allowed to supply the appropriate park and ride trips.

Jeanne Harris noted that the need to facilitate travel to Portland won't be the same in 2030. Lawson noted that while the goal isn't specifically to facilitate travel across the river, there is still a question about how to facilitate existing needs. She noted that a policy choice will need to be made about speed or access for each corridor. Steve Stuart noted that planned business development could be helped by an HCT solution and questions about speed and access are about more than moving people. Tim Leavitt noted the previous discussion of whether economic development or moving people is a priority. Harris noted that she hoped to see increased economic development along Mill Plain or Fourth Plain and that Mill Plain offers opportunities in conjunction with its rezoning. Stuart noted that removing commuters from the roads, even those traveling to Portland, would serve to reduce congestion within Clark County. Bill Ganley noted that both needs can be served, but said that the emphasis should not be on moving people out of the state.

Jeanne Harris noted the importance of keeping travel flowing and avoiding development moratoriums. Bill Ganley asked whether LRT on SR 14 would reduce trips on Mill Plain and the likelihood of a moratorium. Lookingbill noted that the trip types would probably be different for each alignment.

Steve Stuart asked to see ridership by segment within each corridor so as to emphasize mix and match potential. Cullerton said that while there are many such opportunities, such detail would be considered during more specific corridor analysis.

Tim Leavitt noted that the public transit agency would adjust service based on where the potential HCT is placed. He expressed his preference for placing buses on SR 14 or SR 500 that tie into I-5 and stay off of city streets for aesthetic reasons.

### **Evaluation**

Lawson reminded the committee of the adopted goals and objectives at the beginning of the study. Those goals and objectives will be used to form the basis for the corridor evaluation. Cullerton explained the example matrix that laid out each objective out under each goal. The degree to which each corridor satisfies each objective will be measured qualitatively and quantitatively. There will be one matrix for the alignments within each corridor and a general matrix for comparing between the corridors.

Lawson noted that quantifiable data will be used to evaluate the corridors where possible, but some of the objectives are not easily quantifiable and will require subjective assessments. The matrices will be evaluated by the Task Force and will include supporting data. The goal will be to distinguish how well each corridor compares with the others. Cullerton noted that there would be a summary matrix that includes the seven study goals in a consumer-reports style summary, along with a more detailed supporting matrix.

### **Wrap-up/Next Steps**

The I-5, I-205, and Chelatchie Prairie corridors will be reviewed at the next meeting. The following meeting will include a summary of the corridor information and begin the work on forming recommendations. The next round of decision making will result in the Steering Committee helping to remove facilities that should not be carried forward into the system evaluation. The system analysis will look at how each alignment works in conjunction with the others.

### **Close**

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 30, 2008