

## RTC as a Sponsor Agency needs to REMOVE Bus Rapid Transit as the “Locally” Preferred Alternative

It is often times hard to “know” what the Voters want before a vote.... Once they have voted, You Know! When they voted overwhelmingly twice the same way your really know.

Did you sit on the RTC Board in the summer of 2012 when RTC Board voted to support as Locally Preferred Alternative Bus Rapid Transit on 4<sup>th</sup> Plain?

Then you remember how happy everyone was about the passing of 2011 Bus vote! The excitement lead to the RTC Board “decision” to support the BRT High Capacity Transit on 4<sup>th</sup> Plain as the next step.

**Voters rejected** RTC Board decision “ as Local Preference” **and have voted in 2012 and 2013 against BRT.**

This grant process for New Starts and Small Starts Grants takes place **Annually.** Small Starts Grants are a locally driven process to make improvements in an existing or new transit system.

It is time remove not “re-new” the RTC Board support of BRT on 4th Plain

Once the Voters have said yes, that is the time to put in for a grant to construct. There is no compelling reason or urgent need to go against the will of the Voters. As a Republic, representative government, of a voting Democracy, you clearly have your marching orders. RTC needs to REMOVE Bus Rapid Transit as the “Locally” Preferred Alternative, until a vote showing support for BRT by the Voters.

### **Voters say NO twice in 2 votes 2 years in a row.**

**Clark County voters have rejected BRT twice in two VOTES in 2 years, since the RTC Board made their chose of BRT for the Locally Preferred Alternative.**

In 2011 RTC Board Supported BRT as the Locally Preferred Alternative

In 2012, CTRAN held a vote in their district, and every city in the county voted NO on BRT and light rail.

In 2013, The Board Of Clark County Commissioners held a countywide vote on Bus Rapid Transit. Again voters Rejected BRT, AND directed you the Clark County Commissioners NOT to support BRT unless the voters approved first.

**Supporting the BRT in the “summer of 2012” is one thing!**

**Supporting after two years in a row being rejected in a C-Tran service area and Clark County vote is unacceptable behavior.**

RTC as a Sponsor Agency that chose the BRT as the Locally Preferred Alternative, can un-choose and needs to!

Thank you  
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## **Minor Changes in the bus schedule would solve capacity issues.**

Remember: Small Starts Grants are a locally driven process to make improvements in an existing or new transit system. The grant process for New Starts and Small Starts Grants takes place annually.

### **The Bus Rapid Transit on 4<sup>th</sup> Plain, here is what the citizens get.**

Larger buses for one driver, with more people

Fewer stops, providing less access, trying to speed service up.

Removal of current sidewalks to put in newer wider side walks, when much of CTRAN's service area does not have sidewalks, and safe pedestrian crossings. With the upgrading of bus stops to "transit centers" the removal and replacement of current sidewalks.

Removal of service to Portland making the service more reliable and on time by not getting stuck in freeway and bridge lifts congestion.

### **The majority of the money spent in the 4<sup>th</sup> Plain Small Starts Grant is not for direct customer service.**

An upgrade on the "maintenance garage service area"

Removing and putting in new side walks to new Vancouver City Codes.

Purchasing BRT Bus :

CTRAN buses are already acquired by grants and there are extra buses now.

### **Data driven process and not "design" driven process.**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Plain bus line are currently over-capacity at specific times daily and can be handle by additional buses, more frequency and schedule adjustments.

Where are all the alternatives to the BRT to compare what will give us the best service and value?

### **Simple scheduling adjustments by hourly demand**

Add buses during peak congested hours (now every 15 minutes – new every 5minutes)

Add express buses that have fewer stops to save time during congestion

End service to Portland as BRT does making the bus schedule more reliable. 70% of the rides stay in the corridor and bus service to Portland from downtown Vancouver is frequent

\*Currently CTRAN has extra new buses and adding more drivers in Clark Counties workforce is a plus.

Variations of this above alternative to BRT were not studied during this process. Attached is an alternative to the 4th Plain BRT that I think would provide excellent tailored service to CTRAN clients. Where are the range of alternatives?

### **Grants for newer bus stops do not require BRT**

### **Small Starts Grants can be extending existing service in transit area. (see map)**

In talking with transit user on the CTRAN system. Many user pointed out that CTRAN has very spotty service in it's service area, limited times, not in evening and some no weekend service at all. Many users of the system stated completing the system before upgrades in a well service area was their preference.

Submitted by ①  
Margaret Tweet  
7/1/2014  
4 pages

**From:** Tweet [mailto:tweetfamily@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 01, 2014 3:43 PM  
**To:** RTC meetings  
**Subject:** Fwd: For the RTCBoard meeting July 1, 2014

For the RTC board please

**From:** "Tweet" <tweetfamily@comcast.net>  
**To:** "Clark County Commissioners" <boardcom@clark.wa.gov>, "Commissioner Tom Mielke" <Tom.Mielke@clark.wa.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 1, 2014 3:39:37 PM  
**Subject:** For the RTC meeting July 1, 2014

**NO to unnecessary BRT, YES to honor the votes against BRT**

**In 2011**, CTRAN passed a public vote stating in the ballot measure fact sheet,

*"This measure is asking voters for the .2% sales tax increase on Nov. 8, 2011 to fund bus and CVAN service only. The CTRAN Board of Directors have stated their intent to ask voters in August or November 2012 to fund High Capacity Transit Projects"*

**In 2012**, CTRAN held a vote on high capacity Bus Rapid Transit(BRT) and Light Rail, which every Clark County city rejected. The ballot measure did not pass in spite of busloads of taxpayer funds used to distribute info in support of it.

**In 2013**, voters again rejected BRT and light rail in Clark Countywide advisory votes by strong majorities.

In complete disregard of the votes, CTRAN statements, and policies, the CTRAN board majority voted for contracts for both light rail, and BRT in 2013. (CTRAN Board members Connie Jo Freeman-Washougal, Bill Ganley-Battleground, and County Commissioners Madore and Mielke, did not vote for the contracts.)

The CTRAN Board should revoke the light rail contract, and not contract for BRT this July. BRT 60' bendable buses cost over \$1 Million each for little benefit. BRT does not require articulated busses either. The plan to run BRT busses more often during peak times can be performed by the existing fleet, if higher demand materializes. **According to CTRAN data, standard 40'busses are rarely at capacity.** CTRAN should not unnecessarily divert \$Millions to voter-rejected light rail and BRT.

### **Are Bigger 60' Bendable Buses Better?**

In 2011, C-Tran began evaluating transit alternatives for the 4<sup>th</sup> Plain Corridor from the Vancouver Mall via 4<sup>th</sup> Plain to downtown. A new route that combines the 4<sup>th</sup> Plain routes #4 and the express #44 is proposed. The current #4 and #44 buses take different routes to downtown, then go on to Jantzen Beach and the Delta Park MAX light rail station in Portland. The Federal Transit Administration funded \$1.7 million and C-tran \$426,000 as the local match to fairly identify, evaluate, and select a

Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). An additional \$500,000 from C-Tran is for an expert review panel on the financial plan for Bus Rapid Transit and the Columbia River Crossing Light rail project.

Three alternatives were studied and reviewed by the C-tran board and the SW WA Regional Transportation Council. The alternatives are:

- 1) **No Build**-maintaining existing bus service levels,
- 2) **Traffic System Mangement**-Low cost improvements such as signage, lighting, priority signals, crossings or more frequent regular bus service. **Estimated costs= up to \$12 Million.**
- 3) **Bus Rapid Transit(BRT)** - BRT can include bigger 60' bendable buses, bigger bus stops with ticket machines (and fewer stops), built up sidewalks, island bus stops, and priority signals. Federal funding guidelines require running buses every 10 minutes during peak hours, and every 15 minutes in off-peak hours. Initial federal funding hopes of 80% have been downsized to a possible 70%, if available.

**Estimated cost= about \$55 Million.** Comparison of Eugene's BRT vs current C-Tran buses:

Parsons Brinckerhoff is the lead outside consultant for the project and explained that the bulk of the study time and funds were spent on the BRT option. Chuck Green was hired as C-Tran's BRT Project Manager in 2011, and previously worked as a transportation planner for Parsons Brinckerhoff for 13 years in Portland.

Public records detailing ridership on the Rt 4 and 44 were withheld from the public for about 2 months during a review period. The records do not show high demand, or a need for even larger busses.

**EmX BRT in Eugene www.ltd.org**

- \* 60' articulated bus=. \$ 960,000
- \* Capacity- 44 seats, 100 with standing
- \* Wheelchairs /bus- 2
- \*Level Boarding via raised sidewalks
- Ramps for mobility devices, carts etc
- \*Bikes/bus- 3 inside bus
- \*Larger, covered bus stops
- Island bus stops in middle the road
- \*Ticket machines at each bus stop, honor system May be asked to show ticket.
- Exact change or card payment.
- Machines subject to breakdown & vandalism

\*Enter or exit thru front or back door,

If ramp is needed, back door used

**Current 40' C-Tran buses**

\*40' standard diesel bus=\$395,000

\*40' Hybrid low-floor bus= \$617,000 each

\* Capacity- 39-47 seats, 50-65 with standing

\* Wheelchairs /bus- 2

\*Low boarding via bus kneeling to curb

Ramps on hybrids or lifts on standard bus

for mobility devices, carts, or a boost

\*Bikes- 2 on outside rack

\*Covered & uncovered bus stops

Curbside, some pullouts for bus stops

\*Ticket sales w/ cash or pass on the bus

in order to board

(About 20% of fares purchased on bus, mainly passes are used)

Federal grants possible for onboard fare boxes

\*Front door to enter (and exit if ramp or lift)

Back door to exit

According to C-Tran studies, it takes about 23 minutes to go to downtown Vancouver 7<sup>th</sup> and Broadway from the Vancouver Mall. BRT is supposed to cut minutes off of travel time. For example, buying tickets from machines in advance could save time. However, in Vancouver, about 80% of riders use discounted passes provided by an employer, school or social services and already board quickly. The few who pay cash are usually prepared, albeit a few waste seconds digging for change deep in a backpack. A no-cost time saver would be for able riders to follow the directions to exit out the back door instead of exiting out the front door and blocking the entrance for riders waiting to board. The hop-on/hop off style of BRT (like TRIMET MAX) has resulted in major fare evasion in some areas, saving seconds perhaps, losing \$ per fare dodger.

The new C-Tran hybrid 40' buses used today have low floors and kneel quickly to the curb, then a ramp is extended for mobility devices, carts, or disabilities if needed. This is comparable to the level

boarding and ramp used by the larger bendable buses and far more flexible. Kneeling busses can lower to any curb, and no special sidewalk buildups are needed.

Bike loading on C-Tran outside bus racks with 2 spaces is fast, around 20 seconds. King County uses 3-bike racks, an affordable way to add capacity. Inside bike storage on proposed 60' bendable buses is very costly.

<http://www.c-tran.com/how-to-ride/learning-center/bikes-on-c-tran>

Elderly or disabled riders are supposed to seated at the front of the bus, but the system isn't always followed, and not all busdrivers work to keep the seats for those who need them most. Our citizen observations of 30 roundtips along the route in spring 2012 observed no riders rejected, and heard of one. One bicyclist found no room for his bike, and rode off.

Cost saving predictions based on the year 2035 appear unrealistic. There is no need to rush Bus Rapid Transit ahead of rider demand. Otherwise, taxpayers may be taken for a \$55 Million ride on bigger, bendable buses that are not often full and take about the same time per trip as today, give or take a minute.

Margaret Tweet, 2715 NW 34<sup>th</sup> Circle, Camas, WA 98607 for RTC meeting July 1, 2014