

# **Coalition for Public Transportation- Joint Leadership Meeting**

Meeting Date: Friday, April 21, 2006

Time: 12:00 Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Location: Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, Basement Conference Center

## **Meeting Notes:**

Co-chairs Dan Stevens, Chuck Winder and Mayor Garret Nancolas welcomed those in attendance.

## **Preview of previous meetings**

Ray Stark provided a recap of the work of the Coalition since its first meeting in November 2005. The Coalition, at its March meeting, approved a motion to draft legislation in bill form to address the local funding issue. The main purpose of the April meeting was to get feedback on the draft legislation from state legislators.

## **Briefing on activities since the March Coalition meeting**

Ray Stark discussed proposed local option funding legislation for transit. The proposed legislation is a revision of the existing regional public transportation authority (RPTA). Upon voter approval, to levy a local option sales tax for the purposes of financing, constructing, operating and maintaining public transportation systems where there is an adopted public transportation plan.

Proposed additions to the existing RPTA legislation include:

- A sales tax referendum can only be on the ballot on November of even year elections and would pass with a simple majority. Stark said the simple majority should be advocated for the election because of the large voter turnout for general elections.
- The amount of the sales tax starts at 0.25 percent. It could not exceed 0.75 percent. It may only be increased by subsequent voter approval at a November general election in even years in increments of one-fourth of one percent.
- The sales tax sunsets after 12 years unless it is reauthorized by voter approval. Reauthorization in a general election can be considered two years prior to the sunset date.
- The RPTA, upon 2/3-voter approval, may issue bonds, for purposes of financing its public transportation infrastructure. Bond provisions are patterned after typical Idaho bond statutes.

## **Discussion and feedback**

Attendees discussed the proposed additions to the RPTA law and offered suggestions. State Rep. Stan Bastian wanted to know if the retail community would support a local tax for public transportation. Todd Boothe from R.C. Willey said there was only a small increase in sales BEFORE the temporary one cent sales tax was enacted.

Other comments:

- Bob Bruce from CH2M Hill wanted to know if people who come into Ada and Canyon counties to make large-ticket purchases could be exempt from paying any regional sales tax.
- Rep. Mark Snodgrass said the 12-year sunset clause was a concern because it could result in a huge infrastructure that has not funding or a partially complete transit system.

- Sen. Curt McKenzie said legislators like “sideboards,” or short-term restrictions in this type of legislation. He said these restrictions (i.e. sunset clause) would help to sell the bill to legislators.
- Discussion then shifted to the length of the sunset clause and the amount of the sales tax proposal. Rep. Jana Kemp said she was inclined to support 20 years, explaining that 12 years may be a misrepresentation to the voters towards the goal of developing a regional transit system.  
Rep. Kemp also said she would support asking for a half-cent sales tax. She said as a voter she would vote against a quarter-percent sales tax because it would just fund bus improvements. A half-cent increase would provide funding for future development, including purchasing the rail corridor between Caldwell and Boise. Dave Bivens stressed the importance of purchasing the rail right-of-way.  
Rep. Bastian agreed that the 12-year sunset clause is not long enough. He said he could support a half-cent sales tax for at least 20 years. He also says he likes the idea of tying in a tax to the purchase of a motor vehicle, but would support a sales tax if the majority of the people want it.  
Ralph Hallquist also said he supported a half-cent sales tax.
- Tom Ryder said the issue of getting local voters to approve the legislation is misplaced. The important issue is how to get 51 percent of the state legislators to approve the proposed legislation. The Coalition has to consider what is feasible with this legislature.
- Mayor Tammy de Weerd said that the issue is not only attracting new businesses, but also retaining existing businesses.
- Karen Sander from the Downtown Boise Association said long-term solutions need to be incorporated in outreach messaging. Even if someone does not use the transit, they will benefit
- Rep. Nicole LeFavour said the effort to get the bill passed should extend beyond Ada and Canyon counties and there should be an emphasis on how businesses will benefit from an improved transit system. Chuck Winder said this is an excellent opportunity to get urban communities to work together.
- Mayor Nancolas said that if the transit system is efficient and people use it, fare revenues increase and necessary subsidies go down. Kelli Fairless said that the Reno transit system is experiencing a 30-40 percent return from fare boxes because employers see the value of the system.
- Sen. Mike Burkett said one issue to consider is legislation that will fit more communities statewide. He said the quarter-cent sales tax increments might not be appropriate for cities such as Pocatello or Idaho Falls, where a one-tenth of one cent increase may be a better proposal. He said in any proposed legislation should have the flexibility with the authority to fit different communities in the state. Sen. Kate Kelly agreed, saying that the more this proposed legislation can be expanded beyond the Valley, the better chance it has to be passed.

### **Wrap-up**

Following discussion, legislators were asked to assist in the final drafting of the proposed legislation for final review at the May 19<sup>th</sup> Coalition meeting. Reps. Mark Snodgrass and Stan Bastian, and Sens. Curt McKenzie and Kate Kelly volunteered. Coalition members were told that a detailed outreach plan would be reviewed at the May 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Coalition members in attendance**

Co-Chair Dan Stevens, Home Federal Bank  
Co-Chair Chuck Winder, The Winder Co./Idaho Transportation Dept.  
Co-Chair Mayor Garret Nancolas, City of Caldwell  
Rob Miller, Hewlett-Packard Company  
Don Hubble, Hubble Homes  
Rick Yzaguirre, Ada County Commissioner  
Dale Higer, Stoel Rives  
George Iliff, Colliers International  
Clarence Jones, Meridian Development Corporation  
Mayor Dave Bieter, City of Boise  
Bob Bruce, CH2M Hill  
Dave Bivens, ACHD  
M.C. Niland, WITCO, Nampa Chamber of Commerce  
Mayor Marje Dean-Ellmaker, City of Notus  
Mayor Tammy de Weerd, City of Meridian  
Ralph Gant, Canyon County Highway Districts  
Lori Jones, Meridian Chamber of Commerce  
State Rep. Jana Kemp, District 16  
State Sen. Curt McKenzie, District 12  
Kâren Sander, Downtown Boise Association  
Mayor Marge Watson, City of Parma  
State Rep. Stan Bastian, District 14  
State Sen. Mike Burkett, District 19  
Chris Veloz, Northwest Sales and Distribution, Nampa Chamber of Commerce  
State Rep. Janet Miller, District 17  
Joel Pearsall, Northwest Nazarene University  
Ross Borden, Boise State University  
Ralph Hallquist, Meadow Gold Dairy  
Tom Ryder, Downtown Boise Association  
Jean Basom, Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center  
State Sen. Kate Kelly, District 18  
Todd Boothe, R.C. Willey  
State Rep. Nicole LaFavour, District 19  
State Rep. Mark Snodgrass, District 20

**Resource Group members in attendance**

Mark Carnopis, Valley Regional Transit; Kelli Fairless, Valley Regional Transit; Steve Purvis, City of Boise; Ray Stark, Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce; Jon Barrett, Idaho Smart Growth.

**Others in attendance**

John Cunningham, COMPASS, Ken Burgess, COMPASS, Cynthia Sewell, The Idaho Statesman

**Next meeting: Friday, May 19, 2006, 12:00 Noon to 1:30 p.m.,  
St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center**