

Coalition for Public Transportation- Joint Leadership Meeting

Meeting Date: Friday, April 27, 2007

Time: Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Location: Hilton Garden Inn, Boise

Meeting Notes:

Co-chairs Chuck Winder, Dan Stevens and Mayor Garret Nancolas welcomed the group. Introductions were made.

The Coalition's Recommendation and House Bill 246

Ray Stark provided a recap of the development of the proposed local tax initiative and what happened in the 2007 Idaho Legislative Session. He discussed the sideboards put into place in the proposed legislation to help with its passage. He explained that House Revenue & Taxation Committee became a House leadership committee with the inclusion of Reps. Mike Moyle, Gary Collins and Scott Bedke. He said there was some optimism that House Bill 246 would make it out of the committee. The committee voted to print the bill. A week later, following a two-day merit hearing, committee members voted to kill it. Two of the five Treasure Valley legislators on the committee voted against holding the bill in committee.

Rep. Nicole LeFavour said a lot of pressure was placed on some committee members to vote a certain way. She said there were one or two legislators on the committee who voted "no" who probably wanted to vote "yes." She said she thought part of the reason the bill failed is that there was a lack of understanding among legislators about what the proposed legislation did. She said there needs to be a continuing effort to help legislators understand why this legislation is needed and why it would work.

Ray Stark talked about the unsuccessful effort to lower the percentage of voter approval (from a two-thirds supermajority to 60 percent) required to approve a taxing district for a community college in southwest Idaho. He explained that if legislators won't let you go down on the required majority for passage, then you have to go up.

Rep. Marvin Hagedorn said the issue before legislators was how to fund transit improvements. He suggested that funding for transit could come from a reduction in operations and maintenance budgets (cost savings) at the Idaho Transportation Department. Chuck Winder said there would not be enough in cost savings to help transit in any significant manner.

Other comments:

- The federal government has indicated that there will be no money available for new roads and highways by 2010 or 2011.
- If you don't allow the Treasure Valley to solve its transportation problem, then the whole state will have to solve it.
- There is some understanding among legislators that we have to do something about transportation issues in the Treasure Valley.
- It would take a vehicle registration fee of \$100 a car to raise the same amount of money as a half-cent sales tax increase. It would be difficult to get voters to approve

a vehicle registration fee increase in Ada County because residents already pay an additional \$20 a year to help fund the Ada County Highway District.

- Several statements made by members of the Idaho Chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business before House Revenue and Taxation Committee members were inaccurate. One example cited by NFIB members is that small businesses would have to write a lot of small checks to the state for any additional sales tax collected.
- Rep. Ken Roberts of Donnelley has suggested a “head tax,” which is a tax of a uniform, fixed amount per individual.
- The Coalition should consider a “bundled” funding plan that includes monies for both roadways and public transportation.
- Legislators should be told about the citizens’ initiative. They should be told that if they do not pass enabling legislation with a 60 percent majority requirement, then the citizen’s initiative would set a simple majority necessary for passage.
- Rep. David Langhorst said he is in favor of bringing the legislation back. Rep. Hagedorn said he would like to see other funding alternatives explored. Sen. John Andreason said that the rural areas of the state work against the Treasure Valley in the State Legislature.
- The Coalition has to continue to be aggressive to change the attitude of the public and legislators. Legislators need to hear from their constituents.
- The proposed legislation, as written, does not impact the rest of the state. However, some legislators have been told otherwise.
- The legislation is the truest form of democracy – check or vote “yes” if you want to pay for this.

Members talked about the possibility of a citizens' initiative. About 75,000 signatures would be needed in order to ensure that the required 50,000 valid signatures are collected.

Dave Bivens explained that in addition to a citizens initiative, there are two other options on how to proceed: bundle public transportation with highway projects, or work harder to get the legislation passed during the 2008 session.

Co-chairman Winder told Coalition members that a decision would have to be made by May or June on a ballot initiative because of the time required to collect the required signatures.

Following the discussion, those present voted on three options to pursue:

- Option A is to develop a transportation funding package that includes both roadway and transit projects. (10 yes votes)
- Option B is to work with legislators to try and get the transit local option funding legislation passed in 2008. (21 votes)
- Option C is to continue to work on the existing legislation, but to also have a parallel track with an alternative course, such as a citizens’ initiative. (24 votes).

Wrap-up

Another Coalition meeting will be scheduled after the Coalition’s Legislative Resource Group has had the time to discuss and research the suggested options.

Coalition members in attendance

Co-chair Chuck Winder, The Winder Co./Idaho Transportation Dept.

Co-chair Dan Stevens, Home Federal Bank

Co-chair Mayor Garret Nancolas, City of Caldwell
Sen. John Andreason, Dist. 15
Dave Bivens, ACHD
Jim Books, City of Eagle
Bob Bruce, CH2M Hill
State Rep. Sue Chew, Dist. 17
Rep. Brandon Durst, Dist. 18
Rep. Marvin Hagedorn, Dist 20
George Iliff, Colliers International
Rep. Bill Killen, Dist. 17
Sen. David Langhorst, Dist. 16
Rep. Nicole LeFavour, Dist. 19
Terri Sackman, Meridian Chamber of Commerce
Kâren Sander, Downtown Business Association

Legislative Resource Group members in attendance

Brian Ballard, HTEH
Ken Burgess, Veritas Advisors
Mark Carnopis, Valley Regional Transit
Elaine Clegg, City of Boise
Kelli Fairless, Valley Regional Transit
Dale Higer
Steve Purvis, City of Boise
Ray Stark, Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce
Matt Stoll, COMPASS

Others in attendance

Dana Ard, Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Mayor John Betchel, City of Wilder
Sabrina Bowman, Ada County Highway District
John Cunningham, COMPASS
Linda Funaiole, Idaho Press Tribune
Pete Friedman, City of Meridian
Shauna Gamache, The Idaho Statesman
Don Kostelec, Ada County Highway District
Eddie Kovsky, Idaho Business Review
Joel Perasall, NNU/Nampa chamber of Commerce
Fred Riggers, National Federation for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Nick Taylor, HTEH
Ramona Walhof, National Federation for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Courtney Washburn, Idaho conservation league

Next meeting: TBA