

The Coalition for Regional Public Transportation



Transit News Report

The goal of the Coalition for Public Transportation is to develop local funding options for regional public transportation with the leadership of Valley Regional Transit, enlist support from companies, business leaders, chambers of commerce, legislators and other interested community organizations and achieve passage of state legislation.

August 2006

Volume 1, Issue 1

Coalition announces its recommendations

Members of the Coalition for Regional Public Transportation braved rainy, overcast skies on Thursday, June 19 to announce its recommendation for funding public transportation on a local basis (for a summary of the proposed legislation, turn to page 2).

The press conference, organized by the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, was held in the front parking lot at St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center, along busy Eagle Road

Coalition co-chairs Dan Stevens from Home Federal Bank and developer Chuck Winder, Coalition co-chairs, addressed attendees. Also speaking to the crowd were Nampa Mayor Tom Dale and Boise Metro Chamber President and CEO Nancy Vannorsdel .

Facts about the draft legislation, page 2

Utah business leaders call for special session to address future transportation needs

The 2015 Transportation Alliance - a broad-based group of business and community leaders and an affiliate of the Salt Lake Chamber, has called upon the governor to convene a special session of the Utah Legislature so that county officials and voters can

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Dan Stevens, co-chairman of the Coalition for Regional Public Transportation, addresses a crowd gathered for a press conference at St. Luke's Meridian Medical Center. Stevens talked about the work of the Coalition and its recommendation for funding transit.

AIC, Boise Metro Chamber voice support for proposed transit funding legislation

The Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) passed a resolution in support of local option sales tax for funding public transportation.

The vote came during the AIC 59th annual conference, held July 14-16 in Lewiston.

Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas, a co-chairman of the Coalition for the Regional Public Transportation, spoke in favor of the resolution at

the conference.

The Board of Directors of the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce also has endorsed the state legislation.

For more information on the Coalition's recommendation, contact Ray Stark, Senior Vice President, Policy and Partnerships, at rstark@boisechamber.org or call (208) 472-5225.

The Coalition for Regional Public Transportation

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More about this newsletter

This monthly newsletter is designed to provide information about the local activities of the Coalition for Regional Public Transportation and transit issues in the region.

The Coalition has completed work on a recommendation for a local funding source for public transportation. Its focus now is to educate Treasure Valley residents and build support for that recommendation.

If you have suggestions for story ideas, or want to help spread the word about the importance a vibrant and comprehensive public transportation system will play in the development of a successful regional transportation network, send an e-mail to: mcarnopis@valleyregionaltransit.org

Facts about the proposed legislation

» 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 [Chapter 21, Title 40, Idaho Code].

» The sales tax referendum can only be on the ballot in November on even year elections to assure a high vote turnout and would pass with a simple majority [Section 40-2111].

» The legislation would authorize not less than 0.1 percent or more than 0.5 percent in the initial referendum. The tax would be imposed in amounts necessary to support adopted plans and budgets. The maximum tax authorized would not exceed 0.75 percent [Section 40-2112].

» The sales tax sunsets after 20 years unless it is reauthorized by voter approval. Reauthorization in a general election may be considered two (2) years prior to the sunset date. The sales tax collections continue until existing bonded indebtedness is retired [Section 40-2112].

» 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 [Section 40-2114 through 40-2118]. Debt service is limited to no more than 20 percent of revenues.

Public transportation regional/national roundup

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decide whether they support a sales tax increase to pay for an expansion of TRAX light rail, commuter rail and other transit and transportation opportunities.

The request for a special session (which was made on June 20) is based on the results of an independent study by national transportation experts that shows that failure to invest in additional highway and transit projects will mean a near tripling in congestion in Utah by 2030. If the new capacity is not added, commute trip times will lengthen significantly.

These significant increases in congestion occur because of an estimated \$21.3 billion discrepancy between expected revenue and anticipation needs.

The independent transportation study, commissioned by the 2015 Transportation Alliance, verified the need for aggressive transportation investment in order to serve Utah's rapidly growing population and even faster growth in travel demand. According to U.S. Census projections, the states of Utah and Idaho will

rank fifth and sixth, respectively, in population growth between 2005-2030.

"It is time to go beyond planning and studying. It is time to act," said Scott Anderson, CEO and President of Zion's National Bank and co-chair of the 2015 Transportation Alliance. "While the price is high, the cost of inaction is much greater."

The Alliance supports letting voters decide, on a county-by county basis, whether a uniform one-cent sales tax for transit and other transportation improvements is desirable. Davis, Salt Lake and Weber County already have 1/2-cent sales tax for transit, so the proposal would add an additional 1/2-cent, with voter approval.

Under this proposal, a three-step process would have to occur before there was any tax release. First, the legislature would need to grant counties the authority to place the sales tax option on the ballot. Second, county leaders would need to authorize that the choice be placed on the ballot. Third, a majority of voters would have to approve the tax.