

The Coalition for Regional Public Transportation



The goal of the Coalition for Regional 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.

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Public transit initiatives nationwide do well

On Nov. 7, voters across the nation approved more than \$40 billion in new transportation-related developments. Voters in 13 states approved 21 of 33 transportation ballot measures, including seven statewide initiatives.

Idaho is one of 12 states that does not allow for local ballot referendums asking voters to approve a dedicated funding source for public transportation. The Coalition for Regional Public Transportation supports the pas-

sage of legislation that would give regional public transportation authorities the ability to ask voters to approve a local sales tax dedicated for transit.

In Utah, two transit ballot referendums passed easily. In Salt Lake County, voters approved a quarter-cent sales tax increase that will pump tens of millions of dollars every year into commuter rail, TRAX and road projects to help complete them by the year 2015 rather than the initial plan of 2030.

In Utah County, voters also approved a quarter-cent sales tax increase. About 87 percent of the money generated by the increase will go toward funding and operating the new FrontRunner Commuter Rail Service to Salt Lake County.

Here are the results of other regional transit ballot results:

- Voters in Spokane turned down two ballot measures. Proposition One would have allowed the Spokane

*Please see **Voters**, Page 2*

What's next? A primer on the 2007 Idaho legislative session

With the mid-term election results in the books and its final report and recommendations approved, the work of the Coalition for Regional Public Transportation now focuses on two areas - continuing educational outreach efforts and gearing up for the 2007 Idaho Legislative session.

The Coalition supports the passage of proposed legislation that would allow regional public transportation authorities the ability to ask voters to approve a local sales tax dedicated for public transportation.

Here are two of the major issues to watch for in the coming months:

- **The changing face of the Idaho Legislature.** One area of great interest is who will succeed Bruce Newcomb as Speaker of the House.

The Speaker of the House is responsible for deciding committee assignments and bill priority.

The two frontrunners for the position are Reps. Bill Deal of Nampa and Lawrence Denney of Midvale.

Another big question that remains unanswered is who will replace Rep. Delores Crow (R-Nampa) as chairman of the powerful House Revenue & Taxation Committee. All tax bills originate in this committee. Crow has said that it will be important to show legislators that people use public transportation.

These legislative leadership positions, along with many others, are expected to be filled during a legislative organizational meeting, scheduled for Dec. 7-8.

Two Ada County legislators on the Coalition were defeated in the Nov. 7 election - Reps. Jana Kemp and Janet Miller.

- **The need to garner support statewide.** Coalition members, at their Oct. 27 meeting, reiterated the importance of expanding the discussion on the Coalition's recommendations to other statewide interests. Several state legislators at the meeting stressed the importance of demonstrating how the local option authority can benefit other regions in the state.

Three statewide organizations have passed resolutions in favor of the local option recommendation - the Association of Idaho Counties, the Idaho Association of Cities, and the Idaho Association of Highway Districts.

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Voters (from Page 1)

Transit Authority (STA) to identify regional funding sources, local taxing alternatives and a funding plan for future voter approval of a proposed \$263 million light rail system between the cities of Spokane, Spokane Valley and Liberty Lake. Proposition Two asked voters to approve using existing STA funding to fund preliminary engineering and design for the light rail system.

- A majority of voters in Salem, Ore., approved a five-year property tax increase plan to support expanded bus service and other bus projects, but the measure failed because less than the required 50 percent of registered voters cast ballots.

- King County, WA. voters approved a one-tenth of a cent sales tax increase to fund bus service. Seattle residents approved a \$1.8 billion tax increase to make roadway, bridge and sidewalk repairs and improve transit and bike path services.

Upcoming Presentations

» **Friday, Dec. 1, 7:30 a.m.**, Associated General Contractors, Chuck Winder

» **(Tentative) Thursday, Jan. 18, 2007**, noon, Kuna Chamber of Commerce, VRT staff

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. A main focus now is to educate Treasure Valley residents and build support. 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.

Support list for Coalition recommendations still growing

The following is a list of organizations, businesses and governing bodies that have gone on record in support of the Coalition recommendations (boldface listings are new supporters):

- » Ada County Commission
- » Albertson College of Idaho
- » Amalgamated Sugar Co.
- » Association of Idaho Cities
- » Blue Cross of Idaho
- » Boise Cascade, LLC
- » Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce
- » Boise School District
- » Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC)
- » **Canyon County Commission**
- » CH2M Hill
- » City of Boise
- » **City of Caldwell**
- » City of Eagle
- » City of Garden City
- » City of Greenleaf
- » City of Melba
- » City of Meridian
- » City of Nampa
- » **City of Notus**
- » City of Parma
- » **City of Star**
- » Colliers International
- » Comprehensive Advocacy, Inc.
- » Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)
- » Downtown Boise Association
- » Farmers & Merchants State Bank
- » Givens Pursley, LLP
- » HDR, Inc.
- » Hawley Troxell Ennis & Hawley, LLP
- » Hewlett-Packard Company
- » Home Federal Bank
- » Idaho Association of Counties
- » **Idaho Association of Highway Districts**
- » Idaho Smart Growth
- » Idaho Transportation Department
- » Key Bank of Idaho
- » Living Independence Network Corporation
- » Meadow Gold Dairy
- » Mercy Medical Center
- » Meridian Chamber of Commerce
- » Meridian Development Corporation
- » Middleton Chamber of Commerce
- » MotivePower, Inc.
- » **Nampa Chamber of Commerce**
- » National Federation of the Blind of Idaho
- » Northwest Nazarene University
- » Regence Blue Shield of Idaho
- » Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center
- » St. Luke's Regional Medical Center
- » State Independent Living Council
- » **Stoel Rives**
- » United Heritage
- » U.S. Bank
- » Valley Regional Transit
- » Washington Trust Bank
- » West Valley Medical Center