

Appendix A: ROCIP Public Involvement Summary

Introduction

As part of the public involvement for Valley Regional Transit's Regional Operations and Capital Improvement Plan (ROCIP), RBC, Inc. was asked to complete several tasks, including:

- Reviewing and summarizing 11 employer surveys from ACHD Commuteride from 1999-2002
- Reviewing and summarizing seven previous public involvement efforts by Valley Regional Transit from 2001-2003
- Reviewing and summarizing 571 comments from the public and local agencies regarding ValleyRide and Commuteride services from 2000-2004
- Managing a public opinion poll that surveyed 500 residents of Ada and Canyon counties in November 2003
- Arranging, attending and summarizing 29 stakeholder meetings in Ada and Canyon counties between February and April 2004
- Arranging, attending and summarizing two public open houses (one each in Ada and Canyon counties) to present short-term scenarios in April 2004
- Arranging, attending and summarizing four public open houses (two each in Ada and Canyon counties) to present long-term scenarios in July 2004

In all, more than 6,000 people participated in the public involvement for the Regional Operations and Capital Improvement Plan. The results of this outreach, which is detailed in this memo, provided both VRT and Nelson/Nygaard with a range of opinions and insights from public transportation users, community members, elected officials, business leaders and agencies.

Here are summaries of the public involvement tasks completed for this project:

Previous public involvement efforts by Valley Regional Transit, 2001-2003

What it was: Seven documents were reviewed including the Downtown Boise Mobility Study On-the-Street surveys (2003), the hosted meeting summaries from the Regional Transportation Task Force (2003), the Five-Year Strategic Plan interviews (2002), the Five-Year Strategic Plan focus groups (2002), Transportation Development Plan Speakers Bureau (2002), the Transportation Development Plan stakeholder interviews (2001) and the Transportation Development Plan public meeting summary (2001).

What was heard: Common themes emerged in the areas of Service Improvements and Marketing; Government and Funding; Partnerships and Future Needs.

- General perception that current service is lacking; better marketing and public education is necessary to overcome this perception
- Role of government should be to provide funding, subsidies and leadership
- Need the support of the business community/private sector

Employer surveys from ACHD Commuteride, 1999-2002

What it was: 11 surveys conducted by ACHD Commuteride; more than 1,800 people responded

What was heard:

- The vast majority of commuters drive alone to work
- Those who drive alone say they do it for convenience or because they need their cars to run errands
- Many said they would be willing to try riding a bus or carpooling to work

ValleyRide and Commuteride services, 2000-2004

What it was: 571 comments received by ACHD Commuteride and ValleyRide. Most were from the general public. Comments from Boise City Planning and Zoning and the Idaho State Historical Society were also included.

What was heard:

- Positive comments, complaints about rudeness of drivers and complaints about service. This was the largest category.
- Comments from people who want to know more about bus service, complaints about other passengers and comments about reaching ValleyRide offices
- Service-related comments, for example, the need for service in Eagle, more service on Federal Way and increased late-night service

Public opinion poll, November 2003

What it was: A professionally administered public opinion poll of 500 residents of Ada and Canyon counties.

What was heard:

- The vast majority of those interviewed commute alone and drive alone for personal errands
- 2 out of 3 said they would use “convenient public transportation” sometimes
- Most said they would ride the “probably” or “definitely” ride the bus if it stopped closer to their home
- More than 90 percent agreed that the “main purpose of public transportation is to decrease the number of cars on the road”
- 95 percent agreed that curb-to-curb service should be available to people with disabilities

Stakeholder meetings, February – April 2004

What it was: 29 presentations to stakeholder groups that included an overview of the project, comment sheets and maps of the proposed route changes under the ridership and coverage scenarios. More than 500 people attended a meeting, including city officials, Chamber of Commerce members, seniors, school districts, civic clubs and neighborhood associations.

What was heard:

- General support was given for public transportation
- People want to see coordination between transportation agencies – VRT, ACHD, ITD, etc.
- Employers considering locating in the Treasure Valley ask about the availability of public transportation

Public open houses to present short-term scenarios, April 2004

What is was: Two public open houses, one each in Ada and Canyon counties, were held to present the proposed short-term scenarios. 121 people attended.

What was heard:

- The majority of stakeholders were supportive of the ridership scenario, but recognized the importance of maintaining lifeline coverage
- Stakeholders would like to see VRT create a route system that is a compromise between ridership and lifeline coverage with a greater focus on ridership

Public open houses to present long-term scenarios, July 2004

What it was: Four public open houses, two each in Ada and Canyon counties, were held to present the proposed long-term scenarios. 112 people attended.

What was heard:

- The majority of stakeholders were supportive of the both the Low Growth and High Growth scenarios, with most comments especially in favor of High Growth
- Stakeholders liked the increased frequency of the routes with both scenarios and the commuter rail option with the High Growth scenario
- Many said the hours of operation need to be extended later at night and on weekends