



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 12, 2010 Project #: 9260.0
To: State Street Transit and Traffic Operational Plan Technical Advisory Committee

From: Andy Daleiden, PE, and Katie Pincus
Project: State Street Transit and Traffic Operational Plan
Subject: Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Minutes

The following is a summary of the State Street Transit and Traffic Operational Plan (TTOP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting #1 on April 19, 2010. The meeting began around 9:30 a.m., ended at approximately 12:15 p.m., and was held at the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) Auditorium. The meeting minutes are summarized by key topics presented at the meeting followed by the TAC discussion and a conclusion of that discussion in *italics text*.

ATTENDEES

Don Matson, MaryAnn Waldinger	COMPASS
Shawn Martin, Sabrina Anderson, Jim Larsen	ACHD
Kathleen Lacey	City of Boise
Kelli Fairless, Mary Barker	VRT
Fred Kitchener	McFarland Mgmt.
Jeff Lowe	City of Eagle
Kevin Sablan, Mark Wasdahl	ITD
John Cullerton, David Zagel	URS
John Ringert, Andy Daleiden, Ed Myers, Katie Pincus	KAI

Ed Keener (Northwest Neighborhood Transportation Committee) and Jenah Thornborrow (Garden City) were not in attendance for this meeting.

PRESENTATION TO TAC

KAI and URS presented the following information at the meeting.

- TAC Purpose and Expectations
- Plan Purpose, Goals, and Objectives
- Current Conditions on the Corridor

- Preliminary Future Conditions on the Corridor
 - Transit Route and Alignment in Eagle and to the Downtown Boise Multimodal Center
 - Transit Oriented Development Locations
 - 2035 Travel Demand Model and Analysis Scenarios
 - 2035 Traffic Volumes
- Introduced “How Transit Can Work” Simulation Video
- Next Steps

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The following key items and comments were discussed by the TAC members during the presentation.

Plan Objectives: Introducing Light Rail Transit?

Kathleen – We should not mention Light Rail Transit (LRT) when explaining the goals for the study. We should focus on High Capacity Transit (HCT) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) instead to keep our options open.

Sabrina – Audiences will only focus on LRT once it is mentioned.

Jim – ITS is also harder to coordinate with LRT than BRT. It essentially requires pre-emption and gates at major crossings.

Mark – LRT also differs from BRT in its running way. LRT is usually in a separate lane in suburban and rural areas and in a shared lane in urban areas.

Ed – We should keep LRT as part of the conversation for the possibility of phased implementation in the future.

Kathleen – BRT will lose support if LRT is brought up to Boise City Council or any politicians.

Kelli – We cannot talk about options at this point. If we apply for federal funding, we will have to do a detailed alternatives analysis anyway with all the options open. We are not at an alternatives analysis yet, so we cannot pre-suppose BRT either.

Sabrina – We can focus on “transit-friendly roadways,” which include options for BRT that can be accommodated on the existing ROW. We need to emphasize that increased transit will be phased in as ridership increases.

Jeff – Using the term “High Capacity Transit” leaves the options open.

Don – Bringing up rail systems like the streetcar polarizes people.

Kelli – We are using the transportation system to manage capacity through whichever methods work in various segments of the corridor. This project is about finding the right combination of traffic and transit improvements to manage capacity.

The discussion concluded with Kelli's comment, with which everyone generally seemed to agree. LRT will be discussed as a high capacity option but will not be specifically focused on in this study.

Plan Objectives: 2004 State Street Corridor Study

Sabrina – The transit scenario cross-section from the 2004 State Street Corridor Study should now be modified based on ACHD's Transportation and Land Use Integration Plan (TLIP). The cross-section changes include wider bike lanes and a narrower buffer between the vehicular roadway and the sidewalk.

Shawn – The State Street ROW and Alignment Study is using a 120' ROW. The rest of the cross-section is still to be determined.

John Ringert – The transit scenario cross-section is for an urban section and therefore does not accurately illustrate what might be constructed in the rural sections of SH 44.

Kathleen – The State Street Corridor Study was adopted before TLIP. For this project, we need to have an ongoing discussion with ACHD about the cross-section.

This discussion highlighted the issue of consistency between the State Street Transit and Traffic Operational Plan and the ROW and Alignment Study that is currently being conducted by ACHD. The project team will address the concern through ongoing communication with ACHD for the duration of the project.

Current Conditions: Traffic Operations

Jim – New a.m., p.m., and weekend signal timing plans will be implemented next week (week of April 26, 2010) on State Street from Saxton Drive to 23rd Street. ACHD will provide an updated Synchro model with the new timings. They expect changes in travel times as well and plan to post videos on their website of traveling down the corridor before and after the signal retiming.

Sabrina – There is a cost-share agreement for improvements at the Linder Road/Chinden Boulevard intersection that may affect traffic at Linder Road/SH 44.

Kathleen – Why is there more directionality of traffic during the weekday p.m. peak than during the weekday a.m. peak?

Andy – In the a.m., about 70% of traffic is traveling eastbound and 30% is traveling westbound. In the p.m., about 60-65% of traffic is traveling westbound and 35-40% is traveling eastbound.

John Cullerton – There is usually a higher proportion of commuter trips in the a.m. peak than in the p.m. peak, and non-commuter trips (such as retail trips) may not follow the same directional patterns as commuter trips.

The project team will coordinate with ACHD to include the new signal timing plans in the traffic analysis.

Current Conditions: Travel Time and Origin-Destination Study

Shawn – How many MAC readings were captured?

Andy – The capture rate was approximately 2% of the ADT.

Mary – Why was SH 16 chosen as the terminus for the origin-destination study? What are the travel patterns to the west of SH 16?

Andy – SH 16 was set as the terminus by the scope of the project. However, we are including transit to the west in the future conditions.

John Ringert – With the extension of SH 16 to US 20/26 in the future travel demand model, SH 16 is a key point of change for traffic on SH 44 so it would remain the critical intersection to study even if the transit extended to Star.

Mary – Do we have data for origin-destination off of Eagle Road? This would be useful from a transit planning standpoint.

John Cullerton – We do not have origin-destination data once the trips turn from SH 44 onto Eagle Road, but we can get a good idea about that from the travel demand model data.

When responding to the question of service planning beyond the State Street corridor, the project team explained that the origin-destination data collected for this study does not extend to a regional level. However, the future conditions analysis will address the different options for transit at SH 44/SH 16, particularly with the long-term plans for an interchange at that location. The project team will consider how transit may work with a route terminus at SH 16 as well as a route continuing to the west.

Preliminary Future Conditions: Alignment Choices in Eagle

Don – In the model, is there a transit stop on SH 44 in Eagle? There is currently no access on that segment of SH 44. Also, the alignment on old State Street would not create turning issues for the buses traveling westbound.

John Cullerton – There is currently no access on the roadway for vehicles or pedestrians but a TOD was identified.

Kevin – ITD did not buy into having a stop on SH 44, even if it is just in the model.

MaryAnn – We did not model an access point there.

Kevin – Even identifying an access point or TOD location can give people ideas.

Kelli – We are not identifying a solution in this study. We are just planning and do not want to preclude any options. We are identifying issues but looking at the best options for transit in this study. We are looking for the optimum solution even if it is not feasible now.

Kevin – Even if the SH 44 option seems to be desirable from a transit perspective, there are potential costs.

Kelli – The federal government is taking a more integrated approach to transportation now, looking at highway, transit, and land use needs together.

Kevin – Is the area identified as a potential TOD currently built-out?

Jeff – The area is not built-out now.

Kevin – A TOD may be possible south of SH 44 near Edgewood Lane.

John Ringert – Does ITD consider “access” to only be a street for vehicular traffic?

Kevin – A transit stop or pullout could potentially work on SH 44.

Mary – Vehicles could access the back of the TOD off old State Street, and transit could access the TOD off of SH 44.

John Ringert – A bus pullout does not seem like access, as it is just a transit stop. We would also need a pedestrian overpass in a high capacity transit environment to connect to the south side (Eagle River Development).

Mark – ITD is concerned that if the possibility of access is in the plan people will think there is access.

Fred and Kelli – We need to add a footnote on the map addressing this concern.

Kelli – We have an obligation to look at the options in as complete a way as possible.

Sabrina – In a similar situation, we are modeling the alignment to downtown Boise on 11th and 12th Streets, but that alignment has ROW impacts and the community will have concerns. Also, the Eagle comprehensive plan has a TOD location there. It is important to have dialogue between the jurisdictions. ITD should check the language about “access.” Are we running a model test scenario with the BRT on old State Street instead of SH 44?

John Cullerton and MaryAnn – The model includes feeder buses on old State Street, but we do not have a scenario with the BRT on old State Street.

Mark – This access issue is different than the alignment to downtown Boise. This issue went to the governor, and local money is needed to break the agreement. We need to address these issues up front.

Sabrina – There is a new federal push towards livable communities. We should keep our options open since things can change in the long term by the time this plan is fully implemented.

Kelli – For a HCT analysis, this all needs to be on the table anyway. Nothing is going to be adopted yet. The construction is very long-term.

Kathleen – We need to put a footnote on the map to identify the issue.

Kelli – The PMT will discuss how to address the CAC when presenting these issues.

Don – Is there a difference between an access point and a transit stop?

Shawn – It seems that they are different. However, the FHWA rules may say otherwise.

Kevin – A transit stop is probably okay. In Seattle, they have transit-only ramps on roadways with controlled access.

John Ringert – It may depend on the details of a transit center as opposed to just a transit stop.

Kelli – Integration is new to Idaho, but not to other states with constrained capacity.

The TAC members seemed to be in consensus about the importance of conveying the message that the potential TOD location at SH 44/Plaza Drive identified in this planning study does not represent an approved access point on SH 44. The definition of access along SH 44 should be further explored, particularly whether a bus stop or pedestrian connection would be considered access along the highway. The project team should keep these considerations in mind while still being open to various options for transit and other modes along the corridor. A note will be included on the figures that call out “the TOD locations are identified as part of this planning study and the locations of TODs do not represent an approved access point on SH 44.”

Preliminary Future Conditions: 2035 Transit Networks

Shawn – How often are stops located on express routes?

John Cullerton – The model assumes four interim stops on the State Street express route between SH 16 and the proposed downtown Boise multi-modal center.

Mary – Express bus stop spacing can depend on the density of the land uses.

Kelli – Additional stops slow down express service. Some networks with express routes rely on local service in urban areas to maintain quality express service.

Shawn – Is there a trigger for stop spacing? What is the threshold for spacing where a route becomes an express route?

Kelli – Usually the number of stops and the operating speed are the thresholds. A high quality service depends on the speed.

The discussion concluded with Kelli's point about the quality of transit service being dependent on operating speed. This connection is important not only in the travel demand model used for this project but also as the study moves forward into the future conditions analysis.

Preliminary Future Conditions: Transit Oriented Development Station Areas

Mary – What is the impact of having a TOD farther off the route, as opposed to actually on State Street, like the recommended TOD to the north of SH 44 between SH 55 and Horseshoe Bend Road? Can TODs be successful off-route?

Andy – Leland Consulting Group looked at TOD locations within a half mile of a transit stop. Connectivity is needed for pedestrians and bicyclists to support that. This location could be connected via Horseshoe Bend Road with pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Kathleen – Leland focused on multiple possible TOD locations at each site.

Sabrina – The figures in their report highlight the half-mile buffer around each TOD site.

Many of the potential TOD locations identified by Leland Consulting Group include multiple sites that would be able to access a transit stop by at least one mode of transportation.

Preliminary Future Conditions: 2035 Traffic Volumes

Don – The ADTs look similar to those in the SH 44 corridor study. It is congested with two or four lanes.

John Ringert – Clarified that US 20/26 is not widened in any of the travel demand model scenarios for this project.

MaryAnn – Confirmed that US 20/26 is not widened in any of the travel demand model scenarios for this project.

The 2035 traffic volumes seem to be consistent with the SH 44 Corridor Study. Also, US 20/26 is not widened in any of the travel demand model scenarios. The project team will provide the documentation of the future volumes and analysis to the TAC for review and comment.

How Transit Can Work: HCT Video

Kevin – Do queue jumps work when right turning traffic can be in front of the buses?

John Ringert – It depends on the right turn volumes at the specific location.

Don – The queue jump is helpful to see in the HCT video.

Mary – Should show the HCT video at the beginning of CAC Meeting #1 to educate people up front. We want to show how it can work before describing the details related to State Street. This video would also be helpful for elected officials.

Sabrina – Put both videos onto DVDs to send to elected officials.

Andy – The project website will also contain links to the videos.

Overall, the TAC members seemed to think that the high capacity transit video will be very helpful as the project team begins to explain how transit can work along the corridor to the public, elected officials, and other stakeholders. This information is planned to be presented at the beginning of the CAC meeting.

NEXT STEPS FOR PROJECT TEAM AND TAC

At the end of the meeting, KAI reviewed the next steps of the project with the TAC.

- April and May 2010 - The project team will address additional comments received from the TAC on technical materials to date.
- May 2010 – The project team will send out Technical Memorandum #3: Future Traffic Volumes and Analysis to the TAC for review and comment. Additionally, the Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1 will be held on May 20 at the Northgate Shopping Center at 3:30 p.m.
- June – July 2010 – The project team to send out the Transit Operations Memorandum to TAC and perform the traffic and transit operations analysis for the alternatives.
- August 2010 – The next meetings for the TAC and CAC will be held in August. These meetings will be coordinated and scheduled with the groups in May and June.

ATTACHMENTS

- PDF of TAC Meeting #1 PowerPoint Presentation, dated April 19, 2010