

**BEFORE THE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RESOLUTION 08-12-12**

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENDORSING THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE FOURTH PLAIN TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AND AMENDING THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR CLARK COUNTY, 2011 UPDATE.

WHEREAS, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Clark County, and

WHEREAS, RTC as the MPO is responsible for the development and adoption of the long-range regional transportation plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Clark County; and

WHEREAS, the MTP is a part of the required federal transportation planning process and represents the collective strategy for developing a regional transportation system to provide mobility and accessibility for person trips as well as freight and goods movement; and

WHEREAS, the transportation plan is based on the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan for Clark County and supports local land uses and the region's economic development

WHEREAS, in 2008-09 RTC conducted the Clark County High Capacity Transit System Study that identified the Fourth Plain Corridor as the HCT priority corridor; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 RTC amended the MTP to identify the Fourth Plain Corridor for project development under the Federal Transit Administrations New Starts Alternatives Analysis process. The MTP identifies future travel needs, recommends policies/strategies, projects, and identifies implementation programs to meet future transportation needs; and

WHEREAS, Fourth Plain is C-TRAN's highest ridership route and will experience increases in overall transportation demand of up to 40 percent by 2035 causing added overcrowding; and

WHEREAS, C-TRAN's 2030 Transit Development Plan identified Fourth Plain as the agencies priority corridor for developing a high capacity transit project; and

WHEREAS, C-TRAN has conducted a Federal Transit Administration Alternatives Analysis that examined a range of alternatives and included many community and transit stakeholders in the corridor who discussed and helped to evaluate the transit improvement alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the Fourth Plain Transit Improvement project's Corridor Advisory Committee was comprised of key community stakeholders along the corridor; and

WHEREAS, the findings of the Fourth Plain Transit Improvement project demonstrate that a BRT project will provide a higher level of service that is more reliable, will reduce travel time, will cost less to operate and maintain than the existing service, and will significantly increase passenger usage along the corridor compared to existing bus service, and compared to an enhancement of current bus service; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) reviewed and gave their technical recommendation for the Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project's Locally

Preferred Alternative at their May 18, 2012 meeting; and

WHEREAS, the LPA has been recommended by the Vancouver City Council at their May 21, 2012 meeting; and

WHEREAS, RTC Board action on this Resolution will meet the federally-required LPA adoption by RTC as the MPO for Clark County; and

WHEREAS, RTC Board action on this Resolution will meet the federally-required MTP amendment.

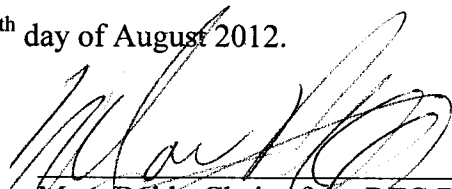
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, based on the information findings and public comment, this resolution finds that the RTC Board supports a locally preferred alternative for the Fourth Plain Transit Improvement project as follows:

- Transit Mode – Bus Rapid Transit in primarily mixed traffic.
- Project Termini - The project would extend from downtown Vancouver with an eastern terminus in the vicinity of the Westfield Vancouver Mall Transit Center. Future BRT Corridor extensions should consider extending the corridor easterly to the vicinity of 121st Avenue and/or to 162nd Avenue.
- Alignment - The alignment being proposed would follow the Columbia River Crossing LRT route in downtown Vancouver then travel north on Fort Vancouver Way and turn east on Fourth Plain to serve the Westfield Vancouver Mall area and Transit Center with future Fourth Plain Corridor eastern extensions to 162nd Avenue.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RTC Board supports the amendment of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Clark County, 2011 update, to include the Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project Locally Preferred Alternative description.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the RTC Board endorses the Locally Preferred Alternative and amends the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Clark County as stated herein.

ADOPTED by the RTC Board of Directors this 7th day of August 2012.



Marc Boldt, Chair of the RTC Board


ATTEST:



Dean Lookingbill, RTC Transportation Director

Attachment: RTC Board Staff Report

**STAFF REPORT**

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM:  Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director
DATE: July 31, 2012
SUBJECT: **Locally Preferred Alternative for C-TRAN Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project and Amendment of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2011 Update)**

ATA GLANCE –Information and Discussion

Action is requested on the attached Resolution 08-12-12, which recommends a Locally Preferred Alternative for the C-TRAN Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project and recommends concurrent amendment of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The proposed LPA action and MTP amendment are Federal Transit Administration requirements for approving C-TRAN's application to seek federal funding for project development and construction.

INTRODUCTION

At the May 1, 2012 meeting the RTC Board was presented with details of C-TRAN's Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project Alternatives Analysis and at the June meeting the Board was presented with a recommendation for a Locally Preferred Alternative. The RTC Board opted to defer its LPA action until after C-TRAN completed work on the project's finance plan and the C-TRAN Board took action to adopt the LPA.

UPDATED INFORMATION SINCE JUNE BOARD MEETING

On June 29, the Expert Review Panel (ERP) issued a final report which generally supports the decision-making process and financial planning for the BRT project. The ERP supported C-TRAN's opening year forecast of a 30% increase in ridership with BRT as reasonable. The ERP made a couple of recommendations which were included in C-TRAN's High Capacity Transit Financial Plan: develop three alternative financial scenarios (pessimistic, optimistic and realistic) based on varying farebox recovery ratios, and include in the Financial Plan a consideration for the Federal Transit Administration covering 70% of the capital costs of the Fourth Plain project instead of 80%. C-TRAN's HCT Finance Plan includes these recommendations. C-TRAN intends to submit a Small Starts application for 80% of the capital cost to FTA in September.

C-TRAN developed a High Capacity Transit Financial Plan based on the Fourth Plain Alternatives Analysis findings regarding the Locally Preferred Alternative, the Expert Review Panel input and recommendations, and a potential High Capacity Transit funding ballot measure. The Financial Plan concluded that the Fourth Plain LPA would reduce C-TRAN's Operations and Maintenance costs for transit in the Fourth Plain corridor (and overall within the bus system) and that with passage of the ballot measure, there would be sufficient funds to support the local match of FTA Small Starts and other federal funding for capital costs. C-TRAN intends to seek other local and state grant funding to reduce C-TRAN's local funding requirements.

On July 10, the C-TRAN Regional Policy Committee and C-TRAN Board met. At the July 10 meeting, the C-TRAN Board took action to approve the Fourth Plain LPA, adopt the System and Finance Plan and called for a November 6, 2012 HCT ballot measure.

FOURTH PLAIN TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: BACKGROUND

The overall analysis process for the project has included the input and participation from citizens, business owners, Vancouver City Council, the C-TRAN Board, and the RTC Board over the last year and a half. The process has narrowed a wide range of alternatives down to a set of three transit improvement alternatives that underwent a detailed analysis in compliance with the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts AA requirements. These alternatives and their findings were presented at the May 1 RTC meeting and are listed below for reference.

- No-Build-This alternative includes the continuation of existing service with planned improvements.
- Transportation System Management-This alternative would provide low-cost enhancements to the current bus system. The TSM alternative includes operational improvements to the system, such as more frequent bus service, transit signal priority, queue jumps, and other low-cost enhancements.
- Bus Rapid Transit-This alternative was developed by considering various Bus Rapid Transit options including curbside and center running both operating in mixed traffic. Bus Rapid Transit provides faster, more efficient service than an ordinary bus line. This is accomplished by using a combination of high capacity-low floor buses, improved frequency and/or longer hours of service, pre-boarding fare payment, level boarding platforms, specialized travel lanes, signalization, station spacing, branding, and other features.

All of the alternatives were evaluated against a set of criteria that were developed based upon the project's adopted Purpose and Need Statement as well as the Goals and Objectives. The Goals and Objectives reflected the community's values and issues collected through feedback received at public meetings, online surveys, and from the Corridor Advisory Committee.

PROPOSED LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE AND MTP AMENDMENT

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that prior to the project development phase the MPO Board (in this case RTC) must adopt an LPA. The second part of the requirement includes amending the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for Clark County. The Board may recall that back in December of 2010, the recommendations of the Clark County High Capacity Transit Study, along with designating Fourth Plain as the first priority corridor, were amended into the MTP. The LPA that results from the C-TRAN Board's action and proposed RTC action will replace the previous Fourth Plain Transit Project MTP description included in the MTP update adopted in December 2011. The MTP amendment is proposed at this time in order to complete the federal New Starts project development requirements. Project development includes preliminary engineering, final design for all related improvements, and final cost.

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The Corridor Advisory Committee, composed of neighborhoods and businesses in the Fourth Plain corridor, took action on their LPA recommendation on May 2, 2012. Their action recommended BRT as the transit mode, an alignment in mixed traffic, and a terminus at 121st Avenue. Since their original recommendation, additional financial and ridership information has shown that a terminus at the Westfield Vancouver Mall Transit Center would be more cost effective.

The City of Vancouver Council approved their LPA resolution on May 21, 2012. Vancouver's LPA recommendation addressing mode, termini, and alignment are exactly the same as proposed here. As addressed in the previous section, the C-TRAN Board also took action to adopt the same LPA on July 10.

The RTC Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project's proposed Locally Preferred Alternative is listed in Resolution 08-12-12 as well as below. The LPA's purpose is to broadly describe a recommended project mode, termini, and alignment. This LPA definition sets the guideline for the far more detailed project design.

- Transit Mode – Bus Rapid Transit in primarily mixed traffic.
- Project Termini – The project would extend from downtown Vancouver with an eastern terminus in the vicinity of the Westfield Vancouver Mall Transit Center. Future BRT Corridor extensions should consider extending the corridor easterly to the vicinity of 121st Avenue and/or to 162nd Avenue.
- Alignment – The alignment being proposed would follow the Columbia River Crossing LRT route in downtown Vancouver then travel north on Fort Vancouver Way and turn east on Fourth Plain to serve the Westfield Vancouver Mall area and Transit Center with future Fourth Plain Corridor eastern extensions to 162nd Avenue.

ACTION REQUESTED

The action proposed is to adopt Resolution 08-12-12 for the purpose of endorsing the locally preferred alternative for the Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project and amending the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for Clark County, 2011 Update, to include the LPA description.

ATTACHMENT: Resolution 08-12-12