



Southwest Transit Coordinating Council

Regular Meeting Agenda

Friday, November 16, 2018, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Carnegie Building 1188 E 2nd Ave., Durango

- I. Introductions
- II. Consent Agenda:
 - 1. September 2018 Meeting Minutes
- III. Discussion Items
 - 1. Implications of election results
 - 2. Public Transportation Forum
- IV. Reports
 - 1. Transit Provider Updates
 - 2. Human Service Provider Updates
 - 3. Grant Updates

Video/Phone Conference Info:

<https://www.zoom.us/j/510934526>

1-646-558-8656 (US Toll), Meeting ID: 510 934 526

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Southwest Transit Coordinating Council – Meeting Minutes
21 September 2018
Carnegie Building, 1188 E. 2nd Ave., Durango, CO 81301

In Attendance:

Matt Nesbitt - Roadrunner Transit: Southern Colorado Community Action Agency (SoCoCAA)
Sarah Dodson - Assistant Transportation Director for the City of Durango
Gordon South - Development Manager at the Southwest Center for Independence
Jessica Laitsch - Southwest Colorado Council of Governments (SWCCOG)
Martina Pansze - Southwest Colorado Council of Governments (SWCCOG)

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m.

II. Consent Agenda

1. July 2018 Meeting Minutes

III. Discussion Items

Roadrunner Transit Update

Matt explained that new operations are still in the early stages but going well. All agencies, including those in Pueblo and Gunnison, are up and running after a few CDOT-related setbacks. At this point Matt is excited to have busses and eager to put the new systems to use, recognizing that a learning curve is inevitable to work through kinks. Roadrunner is already thinking ahead to anticipate seasonal challenges such as avalanches and snowy conditions within the next few months. The agencies are gearing up to prepare for early winter conditions.

Matt reported that riders seem to be happy with the new coaches, which are outfitted with Wi-Fi, DVD players, lavatories, and spacious seating. The busses are electrical and had a few mechanical bugs that needed to be worked out as is expected with new vehicles. Matt said there has been recent traction with the Grand Junction to Telluride route. He also saw potential for a future connection hub in Montrose. The “dead spots” in the region are the routes of Montrose to Gunnison and Durango to Alamosa.

Sarah asked about the connection to Amtrak. Matt explained there was a plan for a collaborative loop from Grand Junction through Amtrak, but that project didn’t come through because of parking space and quick turnaround issues. He said that Amtrak would be a good resource for ticketing but ticketing goes through CDOT. Matt identified a current priority for Roadrunner as establishing an infrastructure plan to build a facility and hire a full-time mechanic.

Matt and Gordon discussed the connection between colder temperatures and housing as well as the potential impact those factors have on busses.

Ballot Initiatives

Jessica outlined two Propositions on the ballot. The council discussed both pieces of legislation during the last Transit Council meeting, but at that point they were still in the gathering-signature phase. The first ballot initiative is Proposition 109, which mandates that the state hold funds up to a certain amount to fix state highways. The second Initiative, Proposition 110, is a 20-year sales tax increase and would be

distributed between CDOT and local agencies. Jessica reminded the council that the full language of each initiative could be found in the meeting packet.

Review Transit Council Goals

Jessica explained that there had been discussion in previous meeting about reviewing the Council's goals. The Transit Council last updated the mission and goals of the organization in late 2015 with the help of a consultant. Members have suggested reviewing, updating, or formally reassessing the goals to make sure the council is moving in the right direction. Jessica said that she was continuing to put that idea on the table and opened the floor for feedback.

Sarah isn't sure that the council needs consultants present, but she sees value as sitting down as a group to discuss goals. She also suggested comparing the results of the assessment to the updates of the CASTA State Management Plan which will be public later this month. The group agreed to table the discussion until a later meeting where more members of the council will be present.

Matt asked where the council stood with Nelson/Nygaard. Jessica answered that they last met with the council in early August. They are soliciting feedback in other states before putting together a final report.

Jessica says that in February they held a steering committee for the initial thoughts of major players, and Jessica would like to get that group back together when Nelson/Nygaard has a draft in the next month or two so the project is wrapped up by the end of the year.

Open Discussion

Gordon asked Matt if any regional gaps have been identified. Matt responded he is trying to keep Ignacio to four or five runs and Bayfield to at least three runs. He explained if you drop below three runs ridership is typically not high. Currently, Roadrunner is trying to solicit funds to continue those routes. He reported everyone seems to recognize the need for the busses and is willing to collaborate. Matt mentioned a potential route to the tech center and identified access to hospitals as an important project benefitting the communities. Although asking for funds is different this year, he is optimistic.

Gordon and Matt discussed the importance of finding folks who don't know they are eligible for benefits, an initiative some Senior Centers are working on. Matt says that because it's impossible to market to every need, you put out what you can and people filter in. Both Matt and Gordon identified word-of-mouth as a primary mode of spreading information, especially in rural communities.

Sarah had the idea to hold a transportation-focused outreach event based on a disability forum she attended that was held by the Southwest Center in the fall last year. She found that the discussion was mainly transportation-focused. She suggested the possibility for an annual transit forum featuring regional providers on hand to solicit feedback and answer questions. Sarah suggested holding the event at an accessible location and offering free rides. She offered to coordinate.

Matt said that the panel may need multiple locations. Gordon agreed and added that rural communities are often left out of Durango-centric meetings, but supported the idea of a forum to strengthen the overall network of service. He suggested that marketing materials be focused on a shared understanding of a transportation network.

The council discussed the importance for collaboration and Sarah suggested a central dispatch center of some kind. Attendees also identified the potential to consolidate marketing efforts such as brochures. Sarah said that in the Front Range communities have the resources to hire “mobility managers” that function as a communications hub. Matt noted a drawback to that system is that bus schedules change frequently and it is easiest to give information if people call.

There was discussion on the potential to include ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft within transportation schemes. This raised logistical questions about subsidies, passenger insurance, and transit agency reimbursements. Sarah said that Boulder had looked into this.

Sarah announced that Roadrunner and the City of Durango have received an Outstanding Coordination Effort award from CASTA (Colorado Association of Transit Agencies).

Matt emphasized the need for acknowledgement and understanding of the rider base. He said that many people don’t use smartphones or credit cards, so marketing needs to go beyond digital.

Sarah brought up the connection between transportation and healthcare. The group agreed healthcare was an important piece of the puzzle and identified challenges with providers regarding communication. Gordon emphasized the accessibility of walk-in appointments for those with unreliable travel.

Sarah and Gordon discussed potential collaboration on an FTA Access and Mobility Grant due by November 13. Gordon asked Jessica if the SWCCOG had history with similar grants, and Jessica responded that the SWCCOG has sought mobility management grants in the past without success. Gordon asked about which other communities are involved in the council.

City of Durango Update

The city is implementing 20 min service rides on the trolley beginning in October. Last year they were awarded the ITS (Intelligent Transit Systems) grant that they will be implementing this fall. The project will include voiceover announcements that will bring the system to ADA compliance and make passengers aware of impending stops. The grant also includes a system for improved data that will track the on and off points and record time of day for each passenger use. Durango Transit will also expand ticketing options to include mobile e-ticketing to open up fare structures and pay systems. Using a separate grant, the city will also be replacing two trolleys.

Southwest Rides Introduction

Gordon described his new position at the Southwest Center for Independence and briefly explained the organization’s ride program, Southwest Rides. Southwest Rides offers free service to individuals who are disabled, over age 55, or veterans. These free services are about 30-50% of the total rides serviced. The organization has three full-time drivers.

Gordon expressed that he feels like the Southwest Ride program is an abyss in terms of marketing and promotion. He asked for advice on what to focus on when the demand is so high. Matt suggested that it can be helpful to identify a specific short-term goal in marketing efforts and expand as time goes on. Matt agreed that marketing is difficult in the field because often people don’t seek out transportation service information until they need to use it. Gordon expressed enthusiasm in continuing to explore the gaps in service to identify need and expand the Center for Independence’s work to adjacent counties. The group agreed geographic isolation is a huge challenge, particularly when it comes to dial ride services.

The attendees identified airports—particularly the Durango/La Plata County Airport—as a major challenge. Matt says in the past Roadrunner offered rides but they lost money and deadheading was unavoidable. The group discussed that taxis generally have a monopoly at the airport, but Uber and Lyft should be legally cleared to pick up and drop off. There are many permit issues that stand in the way of being able to serve the airport.

Gordon asked about the relationship between public and private transport. Sarah answered that she doesn't think the private and public organizations have a contentious relationship, but she thinks riders frequently become accustomed to one or the other. Sarah added that public transit is for public good, but some riders want the rules to be bent for special treatment.

The group discussed the November grant. Sarah said she was working on a proposal and clarified that if administered through the city, the grant could be only operated within the city limits. Jessica suggested potential for finding a regional grant and mentioned that the NWCOG set up a successful transit dispatch center through collaboration with service providers. Jessica stated that November 16 is the next meeting date.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.