Working with FTA and Congressional Delegation

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Rail-Volution
October 21, 2010
Downtown Portland
Increased Congestion
Backlash

In Portland, a backlash forms against a plan for massive freeway building that threatens urban neighborhoods.
Grassroots Movement

- Resistance to large scale development
- Environmental awareness and action
- Progressive reputation and proximity to coast/mountains attracted like-minded new-comers
New Generation of Leaders
Early Rail Planning
$100M+ Shifted To Eastside Light Rail

Portland CBD

Eastside Light Rail

Gresham
Eastside Light Rail

- Region’s first light rail project
- Sec. of State Norma Paulus: “The best thing that could happen would be to leave the keys in it and hope someone steals it.”
- Opens in 1986 and the tide begins to shift
Westside LRT

- Project to run into trouble.
- UMTA stalled for more than a year.
- Would not accept Hillsboro w/o fight
- Even argued over punctuation in the EIS!
3 Building Blocks for Success

1. Bring good projects.

2. Create relationships and trust at all levels.

3. Build political support.
The Process is Hard

- Reagan goal was to stop rail projects
- Created all kinds of bad rules and guidance
- Against all rail projects in the country
Cost-Effectiveness is King!

- New riders was the metric
- Projects are built for all riders
- Ride is faster, more comfortable, and more reliable for everyone
- Just like new highways are built for all users--not just new autos
Almost became a chess game
Good Projects

- Play by the FTA rulebook
- Work extra hard on your forecasting models
- Under intense scrutiny
- Know their rules better than they do!
Early Metro Travel Forecasting Lab
Create Relationships and Trust

- Use a variety of ways:
  - Show your work
  - Meet expectations
  - Keep communications lines open
  - Understand their point of view
Build Political Support

- Local elected officials push project
- Congressman Les AuCoin announces project will go to Hillsboro terminus
- Senator Hatfield “encourages” UMTA to sign FFGA
- Earl Blumenauer encourages grass roots efforts and Rail-Volution
Westside LRT Lessons Learned

Don’t give up even when you show him a deer on the tracks of your very dense urban region!
Applying Lessons Learned

We followed the Westside model again

South/North Corridor:
- 21-mile project--Clackamas to Vancouver
- $2.8 Billion
- FTA loves the project!
Interstate MAX Funding Plan

- Big North/South project falls apart
- Decide to build in phases
  - Red Line to Airport as PPP, without FTA funds, 2001
  - Interstate MAX (Yellow Line)
- Convinced FTA to count the Airport LRT Line and Portland Streetcar as “moral match” for federal funds, making the project 50% FTA funded.
Applying Lessons Learned

- In the early 1990s, Portland argues that land-use is the driving force behind ridership.
- Simple: Rail stations attract development.
- More development around stations--the more riders you have.
- That should count, but it didn’t! (It does now.)
Development Response

- Between 1997 and 2005, over $2.8 billion has been invested within three blocks of streetcar service.

- Over 7,200 residential units built.

- More than 4.6 million square feet of commercial.

Photo courtesy of Portland Development Commission
It’s Working
Perseverance Succeeds

- Bring a good project
- Work closely with FTA and your Congressional delegation
- Offer solutions and strong arguments
- Never give up!
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