Innovative Regional Partnerships: Mirage or Reality?

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Oct 17, 2012
Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance CONNECTOR

Regional Transit Innovations

By Elizabeth Mros-O’Hara, AICP
David Evans & Associates, Inc.

Oct 17, 2012
Innovative Regional Transit Program

Partnership between 5 rural transit districts to reduce energy consumptions and promote economic development.

• Improve connections between five rural transit districts for locals and commuters
• Improve transit connections for visitors from population centers in the Willamette Valley and tourist destinations on the coast
• Make transit a preferred choice for travelers.
• National model
Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance

is a Five-Agency Transit Partnership

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<tr>
<th>AGENCY</th>
<th>REPRESENTED BY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia County Rider</td>
<td>Janet Wright, Transit Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunset Empire Transit District</td>
<td>Jay Flint, Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tillamook County Transportation District</td>
<td>Doug Pilant, General Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln County Transit</td>
<td>Cynda Bruce, Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benton County Rural Transit</td>
<td>Sharon Fipps, Director</td>
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How did it the Alliance come about?

- Conversations between friends looking for opportunities to improve the economy on the Oregon Coast.
- Opportunity from new ARRA funds
- Motivated political players, consultants, transit agencies
Regional Transit Program

• $3.5M federal energy grant.*

• 2-year pilot program of strategies and incentives for increasing transit ridership.

• Grant writing assistance, and project facilitation provided by David Evans and Associates, Inc.

*Funds provided by the US Department of Energy through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

This project is the first and only one of its kind funded by the USDOE. Transit programs developed for COMMUTERS and VISITORS will be used as a national model for other rural areas around the country.
August 2010
Grant Award from US Dept of Energy

April 2011
Intergovernmental Agreement creates NWOTA

June 2011
DEA team hired.

Summer 2012
Agencies begin implementing DEA recommendations

August 2013
END OF GRANT.
Vicinity Map

5,000 Square Miles
Population and employment concentrations
Intermodal Connections
Transit Alliance 4 Tasks

1. Improving connections between communities.
   - commuters, visitors

2. Branding and marketing transit service in all five counties as a single seamless service.

3. Developing transit as an asset for economic development.

4. Implementing sustainable funding strategies for continued transit system development.
Barriers to Integration

• Different fare systems
• Long distances
• Competing local and regional interests
• Limited funds
• Territorialism
Route and Service Coordination
Focus Areas

- Connections across county lines
- Serving population/employment clusters and tourist attractions served by existing routes
- Connections to transportation hubs (PDX, Amtrak, TriMet)
- Commuter and visitor markets
- Fare policy
Service Gaps

• Transfer locations/timing (rural/wait time)
• Fare collection
• Weekend service
• Late/early service
• Trip planning across districts
• Connections to PDX, Amtrak, TriMet
Improving Connections Between Communities

Poor Transfer Locations

New fares with each transfer
Early Successes

Tillamook/Lincoln County

- Was: Otis, Oregon
- Now: TCTD goes into Lincoln City and agencies share cost of the extended run

• Connections across county lines
Still some challenges with inter-county connections

• Not all partners are comfortable allowing other providers to extend routes into their counties.

• In some cases, competition for funding continues to be a political deterrent to improving partnerships.
Visitors Market

• Large number of visitors currently choose private automobile for trips (84%)

• Interest in “Green Tourism”

• Alternative transportation is a small portion of current leisure overnight trips

• A small shift to transit use would create a significant number of new transit rides
  (1% = 100,000 new annual rides)

Source: Longwoods 2009 research
Regional Fare for Visitors

• Market Analysis tells us that a regional visitor pass program could be successful!

• Three-day and seven-day visitor passes will be offered.

• Pass will allow one round trip to/from the I-5 corridor, and unlimited travel in the coastal counties.
Visitor Regional Pass

- Low technology
- Other grant requirements -- 5311(f) bus funds constrain use of fares
Transit Alliance 4 Tasks

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Branding and marketing

- Integrated **Website** nworegontransit.org
  - Trip planning
  - Rider alerts, news, and advertising
  - Carbon calculator
  - Links to agencies

- Consistent look on materials, signs, shelters
  - Easy recognition and wayfinding
Home page has regional trip planning info for riders, news, meeting notices, video, etc.

In the future, home page could also be used for regional pass sales, and to generate advertising revenue.
Capital Improvements

- Branded signs, shelters, decals, and kiosks are being installed at key locations in all five counties.

- Make it easy for travelers to recognize the regional service and raise awareness.
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
Drawings are intended to demonstrate branding component schemes for WOCITA evaluation and development of production cost estimates.
Do not use for final artwork or construction documents.

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"
Transit Alliance Task 3

1. Improving connections between communities.
   - commuters, visitors

2. Branding and marketing transit service in all five counties as a single seamless service.

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4. Implementing sustainable funding strategies for continued transit system development.
Strategic partnerships

Alliance is working with *Major employers*

- Programs to encourage employee ridership
- Subsidized bus passes, tailored service

**Visitor-based businesses**

- Brochures/schedules
- Incentives
- Service
Tribal Partnerships

- Tribes have access to funding from federal environmental and energy programs.

- Casinos are large employers.

- Connecting customers and workers to casinos has advantages for tribes.
Transit Alliance Task 4

1. Improving connections between communities. -commuters, visitors

2. Branding and marketing transit service in all five counties as a single seamless service.

3. Developing transit as an asset for economic development.

4. Implementing sustainable funding strategies for continued transit system development.
“North by Northwest Transportation Foundation”

- New non-profit 501(c)(3) foundation

- Separate from, but closely aligned with, the public transit partners

- Foundation board: Representatives from business, higher-education and tourist/travel organizations.
Foundation’s Role

• Fundraising from private, charitable resources
• Work toward endowment funding
• Work with transit agencies to promote transit programs
• Too early to gauge success
Leveraging Regionalism

- Higher Profile
- More Political Clout
- Greater advertising dollar potential
- Power in numbers
Federal Grants

• New multi-modal emphasis at federal level.

• Strength in numbers! Joint applications carry more weight.

• Collaborate instead of compete.

• First joint funding application in November 2012:

  “CONNECTOR Regional Pedestrian-Transit Access Project”
ODOT Advertising Assistance

- ODOT has offered to assist the Alliance with advertising dollars as part of their intercity bus advertising.

- Regional service is seen as desirable by the state.
What’s next

- Build on success
  - Improved ridership
  - Oregon Transit Alliance 2012 Innovation Award

- Implement regional fares

- Adjust routes/schedules to optimize ridership
What’s next (cont’d )

- Foundation pursues grants
- Implement employer/business strategies
- Role out advertising campaign
- Spread the word
Why is it working?

- New influx of money - $3.5 million increases funds for all five agencies
- The players – Transit directors and politicals see this as in their best interest
- Long ramp up time allowed transit directors to develop trust
- Early successes are building excitement, pride, and ownership
Lessons

- Be creative to take advantage of opportunities
- Pursue early wins. Fosters trust and enthusiasm
- Develop multiple alliances with public-private-political personalities that will push.
- Go outside of your comfort zone. “Be brave.”
- Go out to coffee with your friends.
To learn more
Email us:
info@nworegontransit.org
Innovative Regional Partnerships: Mirage or Reality?

Central Puget Sound’s Growing Transit Communities Partnership

Ben Bakkenta, AICP
Program Manager
Puget Sound Regional Council

October 17
10-11:30 AM
Central Puget Sound Region

- 4 Counties
- 82 Cities and Towns
- Urban & Rural

Our Members

- Cities, Counties, Ports and Transit
- State Agencies and Tribal Governments
PSRC – What We Do

- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Regional Growth, Economic & Transportation Planning
- Federal transportation funds to priority projects
- Regional data and forecasts
- Forum for regional issues
PSRC Governance

- Interlocal Agreement
- Executive Board and General Assembly decision makers
  - Elected officials appointed by member jurisdictions
- Business, labor, civic, environmental seats on advisory Policy Boards
Transportation 2040

Regional Economic Strategy

VISION 2040

— MULTICOUNTY PLANNING POLICIES —
— REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY —
— ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK —

DETAILED FUNCTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN
— COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY —
VISION 2040 – Growth Strategy

- WA State Growth Management Act
- Designated Urban Growth Area
- Compact communities & centers connected by fast, frequent public transportation
- Focus growth in Metropolitan, Core and Larger Cities
- Minimize incompatible rural development; improve regional jobs-housing balance
HUD Sustainable Communities Grant

$5 million, 3-year effort

Scope & Components

- Implement regional plans
- Long-range light rail transit corridors
- Corridor Action Strategies
- Regional Equity Network
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Catalyst Demonstration Projects
Ad Hoc Working Group – 6 Months

ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing)  Cairncross & Hempelmann, P.S. (ULI)  Cascade Land Conservancy  Chuck Wolfe, LLP (ULI)  City of Bellevue  City of Everett  City of Kent  City of Lynnwood  City of Mercer Island  City of Mountlake Terrace  City of Redmond  City of Renton  City of SeaTac  City of Seattle  City of Seattle Office of Housing  City of Tacoma  Enterprise Community Partners  Equity Partnership  Futurewise  Homesight Housing Development Consortium  Housing Consortium of Everett and Snohomish County  Housing Resources Group  King County  King County Department of Transportation  King County Housing Authority  Kitsap County  Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council  Lorig (ULI)  Mithun (ULI)  Pierce County  Puget Sound New Energy Solutions  Puget Sound Partnership  Puget Sound Regional Council  Seattle & King County Public Health  Seattle Housing Authority  Snohomish County  Sound Transit  Tacoma Housing Authority  Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department  ULI Seattle  UW Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies  WA Department of Commerce  WA Department of Transportation
Equity Partnership

- Partnership organized for strong social equity focus
  - Community Development Collaborative & Impact Capital

- Community development organizations, public health
  - Create a Regional Equity Network
  - Ensure equity framework used throughout program
  - Communities at decision-making table
Big Tent Consortium – 38 Partners

- Cities
- Counties
- Transit Agencies
- Public Health & Human Services
- Public Housing Authorities
- Funding Institutions
- Developers (Non-profit & For Profit)
- Regional Groups
- Educational Institutions
- Environmental & Transportation Advocates
- Housing & Community Advocates
Parallel Organization

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE

NORTH CORRIDOR TASK FORCE

NORTHGATE CATALYST PROJECT WORKING GROUP

EAST CORRIDOR TASK FORCE

DECISION COMMONS WORKING GROUP

SOUTH CORRIDOR TASK FORCE

EQUITY NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

TACOMA DOWNTOWN - SOUTH CATALYST PROJECT WORKING GROUP
Corridor Task Forces

Community Interests
- Affordable Housing
- Community – Regional
- Neighborhood – Local
- Social Equity

Public Agencies
- Cities
- Counties
- Public Health
- Public Transit
- Washington State DOT

Business, Educational, Environmental, Philanthropic
- Economic Development
- Educational Institution
- Environment (regional/local)
- Financial Institution
- Local Business/Employer
- Non-Profit Organization (regional/national/local)
- Philanthropic Institution
- Property Owners
- Real Estate Development or (regional/local)
Building a Regional Equity Network

- Ensure **equity framework** used in all aspects of Growing Transit Communities
- Low-income communities, communities of color have **real voice in decision-making**
  - Small grants program
  - Capacity building, training, and peer network
- **Policies** that support equitable development and meaningful community engagement.
Community Equity Grants

• Up to $15,000 to nonprofits in transit corridors
  • 24 grants, $270,000 in two rounds

• Eligible grant activities
  • Education and Outreach
  • Research and Recommendations
  • Community Organizing and Engagement
  • Involvement in the program

• Highlighting community knowledge
  • New voices to the table
  • Identifying priorities and needs
Lessons Learned

Capacity building for long-term engagement

• Educating partners – multiple worlds converging

• Equity grantee & representatives workshops
  • Planning 101
  • Regional convenings
Lessons Learned

• Administrative complexity
  • 8 partner contracts; 6 consultant contracts
  • 24 equity grant contracts
  • Technical assistance
  • Sub-recipient monitoring

• Communication & framing
  • General vs. partner communication
  • Communication Platforms (10 audiences)
  • Website, eNewsletters, publications
Challenges

• Relevance

• Having a wide regional conversation
  • Long range nature of project
  • Competing regional priorities

• Familiarity of topic

• Coherence: many moving parts
  • What are we working on? What is central goal? Who is doing what?
Challenges

- Sustained private sector engagement
  - Institutional partners at table
  - Periodic entry points

- Sustainability of partnerships
  - Funding
  - Interest
  - Institutionalizing methods and relationships
For more information

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www.psrc.org
Corridors of Opportunity

Mark Vander Schaaf
Director of Regional Planning
Metropolitan Council
(Minneapolis-Saint Paul Area)
October 17, 2012
“Transitway corridors will guide our region’s growth, vitality and competitiveness. Development along transitways will create distinctive places and strengthen local assets while increasing ridership and expanding access to jobs, affordable housing, and essential services for residents of all incomes and backgrounds.”
What is Corridors of Opportunity?
A partnership that seeks to make current and future transitways in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Area better places to live, work and play for all.
Synopsis of Presentation

Corridors of Opportunity is similar to Seattle’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant project, with the addition of major foundation involvement, providing:

- Cutting edge leadership
- Direct program focus and funding
- Indirect program focus and funding (via funded government and nonprofit projects)
Seizing the Opportunities
HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

Living Cities Integration Initiative

Corridors of Opportunity
Central Corridor (Green Line, Phase 1)
CoO includes many activities by many partners advance one vision

- Over $20,000,000 of grants & loans
  - HUD: $5M planning grant
  - Living Cities: $2.7M grant; $10M commercial loans; $3M PRI

- 2 dozen discrete “projects”

- Planning, research, demonstration projects, real estate development & small business expansion

- Learns from and builds on work of Central Corridors Funders Collaborative
Partners from all sectors seek to develop a new way of doing business.

Corridors of Opportunity

State, Regional and Local Government

Business Groups

Non-Profits

Foundations
CoO seeks to advance several types of systems change

• Greater participation and more inclusive decision-making

• Integration of planning and implementation
  – Across disciplines
  – Across geographic boundaries

• Organizational change among consortium partners

• Institutionalizing best practices as standard practices
Corridors of Opportunity Activities

- Partnership & Policy
- Engagement & Planning
- Technical Assistance
- Direct Investment
- Demonstration Projects
Working Group Process

Working Groups
- Gov’t, Nonprofit, Business, Advocates
- National best practices
- Local conditions
- Action Plan

Process
- Convene
- Learn
- Strategy
- Implement
- Measure

Policies, Programs, Projects, Indicators

Partnership & Policy

Rail-Volution: Building Livable Communities with Transit
Equitable Development – Development that creates healthy vibrant communities of opportunity where low-income people, people of color and people with disabilities participate in and benefit from systems, decisions and activities that shape their neighborhoods.
Metropolitan Council
• $32M Transit Oriented Development Grant Program (One-Time)
• Ongoing $5 million annual TOD grant program being created
• New TOD unit being created & strategic plan developed

Hennepin County
• New Corridors of Opportunity Challenge Grant