

4. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

4.1. Public Involvement Process

In an effort to gain current perspectives and needs regarding transit services in Fort Collins, input was gathered from the community at a series of public meetings. Key public outreach activities that have been conducted for the Transit Strategic Plan (TSOP update) study include:

TSOP Update Public Open House Forums in Fort Collins

- Public Meeting #1 – July 31, 2008
- Public Meeting #2 – December 17, 2008
- Public Meeting #3 – April 9, 2009

Poudre School District Forums

- High School Principle Interviews – June 24, 2008
- Fort Collins High School Open House – August 21, 2008
- Poudre High School Open House – August 27, 2008
- Rocky Mountain High School Open House – September 10, 2008
- Fossil Ridge High School Open House – September 24, 2008

Input was also received by email, phone and postal mail. Information and results from the 2008 Transfort Bus Rider Survey and the Community for Sustainable Energy (CFORSE) surveys were referenced to acknowledge other information contributed from the public, and to compare issues, concerns and recommendations.

Stakeholder Briefings/Interviews

Transfort and City staff held over 30 stakeholder meetings to gather input on issues, concerns and benefits related to the current transit services. A list of these meetings can be found in **Appendix C**.

4.2. Council Briefings and Presentations

Project updates were provided to the Fort Collins City Council as follows:

- July 11, 2008 status update memo to Council
- October 30, 2008 status update memo to Council
- Fort Collins City Council Work Session – February 10, 2009
- Fort Collins City Council Work Session – May 12, 2009
- Fort Collins City Council Regular Session – August 18, 2009

4.3. Summary of Comments and Issues

Based on input received and previous studies, public comments for the TSOP update study have been organized by topics, including general feedback, service coverage, service design, bus frequency and hours of operation, and methods to encourage ridership. Comments were also organized by their relationship to local service, Poudre School District and regional service where applicable. Specific public comments received can be found in **Appendix D**.

4.3.1. General Feedback

The current Transfort system seems to generally meet the needs of riders who live along the routes and students who attend public schools, including passengers to/from Colorado State University (CSU). Bus operators were acknowledged as being helpful and professional, and for making efforts to keep an on-time schedule. Feedback regarding each service type is provided below.

Local Service

- Route 1 (College Avenue service to CSU campus) is a valuable service.
- Downtown and CSU Transit Centers are clean and safe.
- The accommodation of bicycles on buses is important and becoming more popular. Provide more capacity for bikes on buses and bike racks at transit facilities.
- Many benches and shelters are difficult to access, especially in snow.

Poudre School District

- PSD transportation serves the students well, but more efficiency and collaboration between Transfort and PSD is needed.
- Transfort routes seem to do a reasonable job serving many schools.
- The current collaboration between Transfort and the Poudre School District as part of this planning effort is well recognized.

Regional Service

- FoxTrot is a very valuable and needed service.
- The regional focus for the study and efforts regarding collaboration between Fort Collins and Loveland transit agencies is supported.

4.3.2. Comments on Service Coverage

Many comments provided by the community state that good transit coverage is provided for most areas within the study area. However, some comments indicate that other areas within Fort Collins and regional areas are in need of expanded transit service. A general suggestion was to provide a maximum half-mile walk distance to a route and

connect to the perpendicular direction at every major intersection. Specific comments regarding service coverage are listed below.

Local Service

Suggested areas of new coverage include:

- The west side of Fort Collins except for areas closest to campus, south Fort Collins area (Shields and Trilby Road; Lemay and Trilby Road), and northern areas (Highway 1, Douglas Road, Anheuser Busch, north Shields Street).
- Along primary east-west and north-south streets (Overland, Shields, Laporte, Mulberry, etc.).
- Service along Harmony which does not require changing buses to access Front Range Community College (FRCC), and allow people to get between the Mason Corridor and I-25 for car pooling.
- Lower income (e.g. Bull Run) and senior service housing complexes plus medical facilities (e.g. Center for Orthopedic Rehabilitation and Exercise).

Suggested extensions of current services include:

- Route 17 along Timberline to also serve Horsetooth, Ziegler, and Harmony. Provide service on Harmony to Hewlett Packard gate.
- Expand Mason Corridor further north and connect south end of Mason Corridor to old Wal-Mart at Harmony.
- Route 8 to Riverside Drive between Lemay and Prospect (high density area).

Poudre School District

- Transporting children and youth to/from non-school hour activities, filling a gap in our community where they're supervised and kept safe.
- Connections between PSD and charter schools, and between Thompson School District and Poudre Valley School District.
- Coordinate school buses and city buses better.

Regional

- More regional services connecting Fort Collins and Loveland to Berthoud, Longmont and Greeley.
- Transit connections to the Denver metro area and Regional Transportation District (RTD) transit system.
- Connections between Fort Collins and Centerra (many Centerra employees come from Fort Collins), including transit services connecting partner hospitals/medical facilities in Loveland and Fort Collins.

4.3.3. Comments on Service Design

There is a high degree of support for route designs based on a grid system. Specifically, comments indicate that grid service should serve most major north/south and east/west arterials such as Shields, Taft Hill, College, Lemay and Timberline. In addition, Mason must interact well with grid system. Other service design comments for the Transfort system include:

- Increase the number of routes that run more continuously along a main thoroughfare, as opposed to routes that cover portions of the roads and then turn off, causing increased transfers and travel time. Provide better timed connections with less wait times between buses.
- Large buses could run frequently on a major grid and small buses/vans could "wander" neighborhoods so a person doesn't have to walk a half-mile to catch a bus.
- Provide service to "off the grid" spots like the Senior Center during off-peak hours. More advanced services for disabled are needed.
- South Transit Center should be near Harmony and College. Move Downtown Transit Center closer to downtown (centralized).
- Need routes named for streets (e.g., "The Shields Route," "The Harmony Route," etc.).

4.3.4. Comments on Frequency and Hours of Operation

Public input regarding transit services called for more frequency in route schedules, and to provide more service on nights and weekends. Specific comments regarding frequency and hours of operation are listed below.

Local Service

- Provide higher frequencies in general on all routes and increase headways during peak hour. Increase frequencies to 10 minutes along enhanced travel corridors. Coordinate schedules with school start times when setting schedules.
- Provide service in early evening, late night and on Sundays for select routes. Service is needed during these hours for non-traditional employee schedules, college students, access to medical facilities and church.
- Increase hours and frequency with real-time arrival and departure information at stops. Routes 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 16, would benefit from higher frequencies.

Poudre School District

- Coordinate schedules with school start times.
- Increase number of trips on Routes 91 and 92.

Regional Service

- Increased frequency (30-minute headways) on FoxTrot.
- Provide more trips for regional connections.

4.3.5. Comments on How to Encourage Ridership

Public input suggests that communicating the culture of the service and marketing is important, especially among students at a young age, so the image of using the bus is improved. Input also suggested more low cost fare options and other payment options are needed to encourage ridership. Specific marketing recommendations are summarized below.

- Provide consistent and visually cohesive route names. Incorporate branding (e.g., Hop, Skip, Jump in Boulder), enforce existing policies, provide less complex maps and encourage drivers to help elderly/disabled.
- Provide incentives to reward and attract new riders (e.g. Transit validation system to give shoppers a free ride). Create fare free zones.
- Educate public about availability of transit and hours of service. Don't just pitch transit as smarter way to go, but emphasize how transit can serve everyday needs. Perception of transit is critical.
- The concept of a regional service partnership and coordination, especially with the school system, has the potential to strongly leverage funding and result in better service to the public.

4.4. Financial Advisory Committee

4.4.1. FAC Purpose

A citizen Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) was organized to support the project. It was comprised of representatives from both Fort Collins and Loveland, with the goal of having open discussions about the investment required to implement the future transit strategies that are under development. The committee was charged with undertaking an evaluation of related funding issues, and to identify options to address those issues. The recommendations of the FAC will be included in the overall TSOP update for Fort Collins and Loveland City Council approval.

4.4.2. FAC Representation

The FAC was comprised of nine representatives from both Fort Collins and Loveland. Members were not asked to specifically evaluate or comment on the development of transit service concepts. The goal of the FAC was to have open discussion about the necessary financial resources that would enable operational recommendations to be implemented, issues with the candidate funding mechanisms and options to address those issues. To enhance creativity during meetings, individuals who represented agencies or constituencies were not expected to restrict themselves to the prior positions held by their agencies or constituencies.

4.4.3. FAC Process

Financial Advisory Committee meetings were held from September 2008 through March 2009 on a bi-weekly basis. The meetings were facilitated and attended by City staff and members of the project team. During these meetings, committee members discussed issues regarding operating agreements, operations planning scenarios, and funding mechanisms. City staff and project team representatives provided study updates, best practice information and financing methods as support during the process. The Committee finalized recommendations on a funding package on April 28, 2009. An update to the City Council of FAC findings and recommendations was held on May 12, 2009.