



Cranberry Area Transit Study Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 26, 2004
Meeting No. 1

Minutes by Jamie L. Brush

The Cranberry Area Transit Study Steering Committee held its first meeting on Thursday, February 26, 2004 from 1:00-3:00 PM at the Cranberry Township Municipal Building. The following people attended:

| NAME | REPRESENTING |
|-------------------------|--|
| John Milius, Co-Chair | Cranberry Township Board of Supervisors |
| Dave Johnston, Co-Chair | Butler County Planning Commission |
| Dan Santoro | Cranberry Township |
| John Paul | Butler Township-City Joint Municipal Transit Authority |
| Carol Uminski | Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission |
| Chuck Imbrogno | Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission |
| Rich Feder | Port Authority of Allegheny County |
| Lynda Conway | Port Authority of Allegheny County |
| Chuck Rompala | Port Authority of Allegheny County |
| Scott Vetere | Port Authority of Allegheny County |
| Greg Kausch | Beaver County Transit Authority |
| Maureen Frumen | Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board |
| John Morgan | Cranberry Township Planning Commission |
| Bob Kuhn | Butler Area Rural Transit |
| Dee Hoffman | Cranberry Township Senior Citizens Club |
| Christine Porter | Cranberry Township Resident |
| Bruce Ahern | Michael Baker Jr., Inc. |
| Max Heckman | Michael Baker Jr. Inc. |
| Carla Santoro | Michael Baker Jr., Inc. |
| Keith Johnson | URS Corp. |
| Lynn Colosi | URS Corp |
| Glenda Murphy | Olszak Management Consulting, Inc. |
| Jamie Brush | Olszak Management Consulting, Inc. |

Presentation

John Milius, Co-Chair welcomed everyone with enthusiasm and with the hope that this study will accomplish something substantial in terms of transit for Cranberry and surrounding southwestern Butler County. The group went around the table and introduced themselves.

Bruce Ahern continued with the meeting agenda, study objectives and study schedule.

- Steering Committee meetings will continue to occur approximately once a month or every month and a half, as needed for the next ten months.

The roles of the Steering Committee and regional stakeholders were reviewed.

- The project team needs the Steering Committee to guide the study and make key decisions at relevant points in the study.
- The regional stakeholders will provide valuable input to the Steering Committee and support the study team on technical and community issues.

Glenda Murphy discussed community outreach efforts thus far:

- The project team presented at two local homeowners associations meetings.
- Surveys were distributed to obtain resident's feedback.
- Dave Johnston asked if area churches had been contacted regarding the study. Glenda asked Dan Santoro for help with those contacts.
- The upcoming community open house will be on March 16 at the Cranberry Township Municipal Building from 11:30-2:00 and 4:00-7:00. This meeting is critical in gathering information from the public.

Keith Johnson provided background information on the study including the study area and the potential service areas.

John Milius: What criteria did we use to choose the study area?

John Paul: Basically, the Seneca Valley and Mars School Districts, because they are the most densely populated areas.

Rich Feder: Why isn't northern Allegheny County included in the study area?

John Paul: The idea for the study came about because of the problems with the park-n-rides and the fact that they were always full. Areas like Marshall and Pine would most likely use transit to Pittsburgh and not to Cranberry.

Carol Uminski: The study area does not include Economy and New Sewickley because that area seemed too rural.

Dan Santoro: There is a significant amount of employment center growth in New Sewickley area that shouldn't be ignored.

John Millius: Including communities in Beaver and Allegheny Counties creates potential for funding from 3 counties.

Carol Uminski: I don't think we should include all of New Sewickley, but instead just the commerce parks/employment centers.

Bruce Ahern: So we're saying we should keep the primary study area, but include key areas and corridors just outside the study lines.

Dave Johnston: What about including Middlesex? If we include Middlesex shouldn't other, more populated areas be included in other counties?

John Paul: Middlesex is included because it is a part of Mars School District. That's not saying that all of Middlesex needs to be included, maybe just the 228 corridor. The reason the City of Butler is not included is because the first task is to identify the study area needs and then in the future connect Butler if needs be.

John Milius: I agree with including Middlesex.

Keith Johnson then broke the group up into four teams to participate in a group exercise using maps of the study area. Keith asked for the group to respond to five discussion questions. The feedback from the exercise follows.

Group 1

1. How can transit help the community?

- Connect commuters with workplace
- Shuttle type service for shopping
- Help congestion
- Accommodate lower income workers
- Connect regional type trips with local attractions
- Create a town center / Main Street area

2. What activity center should be served by transit?

Map with activity centers included Tri-County Industrial Park, Zelienople, Evans City, Callery, Mars, and residential areas east of I-79

3. What specific corridors should be served?

Map with corridors included Route 19, Route 228, I-279/HOV corridor

4. What types of transit vehicles should be used?

- No light rail
- Small commuter buses to circulate within the community
- Bus Rapid Transit for commuters
- Small Transit Vehicles (STV)
- HUB system to accommodate different types of vehicles based on route
- No large buses which may disrupt the character of Cranberry

5. What are your concerns with transit?

- Cost
- Implementation
- Sustainability
- Reliability (don't provide a route and then take it away a short time later)
- Accommodate non-traditional work hours
- Perception of public safety issues
- Policy & service representation
- Who will operate the service?

Group 2

1. How can transit help the community?

Transit could help the community by reducing traffic, benefiting the environment, giving it a Main Street feel, connecting people with life, offering more convenient choices, encouraging walking, biking and other modes of travel, increasing mobility, increasing ridership for Port Authority, helping seniors and youngsters, bringing workers to businesses, supporting land-use.

2. What activity center should be served by transit?

In addition to the activity centers identified on the map, college branch campuses including the community college, schools and major employers should be served by transit.

3. What specific corridors should be served?

Corridors were drawn on the map provided.

4. What types of transit vehicles should be used?

Types of transit and transit vehicles should include bus lanes and transit priority signaling, 30-foot buses, low floor buses, the highest quality vehicles no matter what type, but should not include small transit vehicles because they are too noisy nor should it include rail because Cranberry's needs are immediate.

5. What are your concerns with transit?

The group's concerns include noise, wondering if the community is prepared for buses, wondering if the businesses are prepared for buses, paving thickness, pedestrian and sidewalk amenities, funding sources, wondering if there is partnership or consensus from leaders, keeping the community informed, identifying population densities and gathering enough supporting evidence to sustain the system into the future.

Group 3

1. How can transit help the community?

- Improve quality of life for rural elderly by providing better access to medical care, Pittsburgh, other attractions
- Reduce congestion
- Reduce commuting costs for people who pay for parking in Pittsburgh
- Provide better access to Cranberry's activity centers, jobs, etc. from surrounding communities (Zelienople, Harmony, Evans City, etc.)

4. What types of transit vehicles should be used?

- Mix, primarily use small vehicles in neighborhoods to feed bigger commuter vehicles
- Paratransit vehicles, could also feed shuttles or commuter vehicles
- Long-term, consider light rail via I-279 corridor

5. What are your concerns with transit?

- Big buses in residential areas
- Existing developments (shopping centers, office parks, etc.) are poorly designed for transit access – difficult to get buses in and out or circulate through adjacent developments.
- Existing “car mentality” – need to educate public about benefits of transit.

Group 4

- 1. How can transit help the community?**
 - Connectivity; Connect communities; regionalism
 - Large service loop – Cranberry, Mars, Callary, Evans City, Zelienople, back to Cranberry
 - Some people like to go to Butler, County seat
 - Preserve existing transit corridors – Preserve HOV lane along I-279 to Pittsburgh for transit

- 2. What activity center should be served by transit?**
 - Schools
 - Retirement homes
 - Shopping
 - Access to County offices in Butler for seniors
 - Employment is #1

- 3. What specific corridors should be served?**
 - Corridors were drawn on the map provided.

- 4. What types of transit vehicles should be used?**
 - Shuttle buses for loops
 - Long buses for longer trips like Pittsburgh
 - Coach buses with reclining seats etc. for trips to Pittsburgh

- 5. What are your concerns with transit?**
 - Is there enough ridership?
 - May not be able to complete the network at one time – may need to build system gradually
 - Perception that transit riders are second class
 - How much will it cost to ride?

Bruce reiterated that the project team needs the Steering Committee to help identify audiences for public outreach and to help add to the list of regional stakeholders. He reminded the Committee to mark their calendars for the March 16th community open house.

John Milius offered the Cranberry Township Municipal Building for the site of the next Steering Committee meeting, tentatively scheduled for early April. Then he concluded the meeting by reminding the Committee not to focus on the negatives, but instead to concentrate on what can be done.

Next Steps

- The project team will continue to schedule community outreach meetings and complete the needs assessment phase of the study.
- The Steering Committee will reconvene in early April.