



WCTS Stakeholders' Meeting No. 2 Stakeholder Input

Date: Thursday, March 8, 2007
Time: 1:30–3:30 p.m.
Location: South Strabane Volunteer Fire Department–Social Hall
172 Oak Spring Road
Washington, PA

There were 26 stakeholders in attendance plus five Study Team members. (PLEASE NOTE: The PowerPoint Presentation and meeting handouts are available for viewing on the project website at <http://www.spcregion.org/wcts/co.shtml>)

►► Meeting Overview

After introductory comments the Study Team provided a brief update of the public outreach activities since the last stakeholders meeting. Next, the Study Team presented the preliminary findings and assessment of existing conditions pertaining to transit in Washington County. The following topics were addressed:

- Community Characteristics
- Transportation Resources
- Institutional Profile

After each topic was presented, the stakeholders were invited to respond with comments and questions in order to provide guidance as the Study Team begins to develop options for improved transit service in Washington County. In particular, they were encouraged to:

- Validate (or critique) the findings
- Identify gaps in the research
- Discuss the implications of the research findings

Stakeholder comments and questions are listed below.

To conclude the meeting, the Study Team discussed the next steps for the project, including:

- Continuing public outreach
- Development of options for improved transit service in Washington County
- A third stakeholders committee meeting in mid-to-late May, when stakeholders will be asked to provide feedback concerning possible transit strategies

►► Stakeholder Input

Community Characteristics



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- Upon viewing the Journey to Work map, a comment was made that it appeared that nobody is going to the airport. The Study Team responded that there may be a number of work trips to the airport from many locations, however there is no concentration of trips from one particular community.
- How did you identify the number of trips presented in Map 7, Journey to Work? The Study Team responded that all the maps use the 2000 U.S. Census data.
- With expanding development particularly in the I-79/Rt. 19 corridor, the availability of transit services in this area needs to be emphasized.
- There has been an increase in the number of industrial sites and they should be taken into consideration.
- McDonald area—justification of the route is not based on the money it brings in. Is it viable, cost-effective? Do not forget this area.
- Rail lines should be included on the map showing existing fixed-route transit service.
- Consider distinguishing between local and regional routes, as opposed to local and commuter routes.
- Map 4 (Trip Generators) does not show a number of significant trip generators in Peters Township, as well as important business areas and populated residential areas.
- Are studies being conducted on the need for elderly Washington County residents to go to Allegheny County for medical care?
- The existing routes into Pittsburgh could link with the "T" @ South Hills Village. Would this be a beneficial option? It could reduce cost for GG&C and MMVTA.
- In response to the finding that unsubsidized paratransit service can be expensive, a stakeholder commented that the per-trip cost of passenger cars is high as well.
- Another stakeholder suggested that the Study Team should develop surveys to target larger companies (with questions such as, "If you had transit service available to you for your daily commute, would you consider using them?") The Southpointe complex would be a good location to provide to survey employees.

Transportation Resources



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- Higher wages over time in the Mon Valley have resulted in fewer people having to use transit. Significant fare increases were also mentioned as a possible cause of lower ridership. MMVTA has had rate increases two years in a row.
- The older more-transit friendly generation is retiring and younger workers want more flexibility in transportation.
- Park-and-ride facilities may be encouraging car-pooling into Pittsburgh, which could draw people away from transit.
- The Study is missing CommuteInfo information.
- GG&C's limited schedule for bus services (8 am–4 pm) is not compatible with most employees' schedules.
- Marketing success—do certain companies provide better services? Do certain areas attract more customers to use transit services? Washington County transit has its challenges in marketing because the service is split among two transit systems and lots of paratransit and use is focused in two different corridors.
- Why doesn't transit exist where people don't have cars? Why is it provided to people only with automobiles? [The Study will target outreach in those areas with households with fewer or no cars.]
- The Study should take into account where the region is going with respect to transit in the next 20 years. The results of the study should be shared with the Port Authority and the State.
- We should look at Washington County being a destination with a casino opening at The Meadows.
- Why doesn't the Washington County Transportation Authority provide services to Pittsburgh?
- Washington County has been reluctant to invest in transportation.
- Existing services don't adequately serve reverse commuters.

Institutional Profile



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- A key institutional issue is the inability of Washington County transit providers to pick up Allegheny County residents along their routes in the county. It was also noted that the real problem is during the trip back from Pittsburgh, when the buses run empty.

Final Comments

- A member of the WCTA board suggested that future meetings be planned to actively involve other key stakeholders, such as representatives of the business community. One way would be to hold joint meetings with other organizations, e.g., at Cal. U. The meetings should not be held in isolation. Customer input should be obtained as early as possible.
- The need for more flexible (extensive?) schedules for bus service to accommodate typical work trips must be addressed.
- Additional suggestions included–
 - Consider a joint meeting economic development and educational institutions
 - Expand the CalU survey
 - Consider an intercept at grocery stores
 - Contact Achieva for outreach