

GUNNISON VALLEY RTA TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE
FIRST PUBLIC WORKSHOP – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11TH, 2008
GUNNISON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ROOM, 6:00-7:30 PM
PRIORITY ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

The Gunnison Valley Rural Transportation Authority (GVRTA) and its consultant conducted two workshops on June 11th and June 12th, 2008 in support of the Transportation Plan Update. These community public workshops were held on consecutive nights in Gunnison and Crested Butte. The meetings were conducted by the GVRTA's consultant, Charlier Associates, with staff support and attendance from the GVRTA, County Commissioners, local government staff, transit operators, concerned citizens, and other transportation partners.

The objective of both workshops was to identify and prioritize key transportation issues, challenges, opportunities, and values that the planning process should address. The project team will use this input to guide the project's technical and policy focus and to develop prioritization and evaluation criteria.

After introductions by GVRTA Executive Director Scott Truex and an overview presentation by Jacob Riger of Charlier Associates, Jacob and his colleague Scott Burton led participants through an informal discussion using an index card exercise.

Participants were asked to fill out three color-coded index cards with the following information:

- Three high-priority transportation concerns or issues in the study area;
- Three possible solutions to the most important issue identified, noting which solution should be implemented first, and
- A creative mobility opportunity that would most contribute to their long-term vision for the community.

The following documents the major outcomes of each index card exercise. Given the small attendance, each comment received is incorporated in the discussion below.

PRIORITY ISSUES

Based on the conclusions of the workshop exercise, the following issues seemed to resonate most broadly:

- Initiate stand-alone bus circulator service within Gunnison
- Separate regional truck and delivery traffic from Gunnison and Crested Butte through bypasses or other means
- Emphasize regional bus service to/from Denver, Grand Junction, etc.
- Construct neighborhood-oriented park and ride facilities

- Increase and stabilize transit funding; broaden potential funding sources
- Assess the transit “supportiveness” of new development as a condition of entitlement approval
- Ensuring smooth traffic flow within Gunnison and connections between travel modes
- Considering the economic aspects of changing transportation industry trends (fuel costs, etc.)

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

After identifying priority issues and concerns, workshop participants identified the following potential solutions:

- Circulator bus within Gunnison: Participants suggested that the City of Gunnison could develop the circulator, it could be developed in partnership with the RTA, or it could be provided by a private entity. Such a circulator should provide convenient access to downtown, attract sustainable ridership, and connect seamlessly with RTA service up valley.
- Transit funding: Participants suggested re-prioritizing current revenues, increasing the local sales tax, or finding grants and other revenue streams.
- Traffic flow within Gunnison: Participants suggested identifying the potential demand for a separate Gunnison circulator. Such an effort should involve the City of Gunnison staff and City Council and identifying funding sources (look at all alternatives).

It should be noted that potential solutions were not identified for all priority issues discussed previously. Rather, the potential solutions noted above were those identified and discussed during this portion of the workshop exercise.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT MOBILITY OPPORTUNITY

Finally, participants were asked to identify the most creative mobility opportunity that would help make the study area a better place to live and work. These ideas were not meant to be cost or otherwise constrained, but rather to provide a sense of core values and special aspects of the region that the community treasures. Ideas identified were:

- Design and implement a traffic flow pattern that connects people to places within Gunnison
- Provide more attention to bicycle and pedestrian travel, particularly safety (such as grade-separated crossings and other strategies)
- Emphasize an extensive trail system for residents and visitors
- Implement a paved multi-use pathway along the water bodies between Gunnison and Crested Butte

WORKSHOP EVALUATIONS

Workshop participants were asked to complete an evaluation of the workshop and to offer suggestions for improving future workshops. One participant of the five who attended completed the evaluation form. The form asked for rankings on several topics on a scale of one to five (strongly disagree to strongly agree):

- The location for the workshop was convenient and accessible.
- Workshop materials were clear and easy to understand.
- There were many opportunities to offer personal input.
- The staff and consultant were receptive to input from participants.
- The exercises were useful and will provide good input for the plan.
- The experience was enjoyable and informative.

On the one evaluation form received, the responses were very positive in all categories. The issue of attendance was discussed by those attending, with the consensus being that low attendance, while unfortunate, is somewhat typical during this time of year; attendance is also often low at local meetings where more controversial issues are debated. There was agreement that the attendance was lower than desired but that the resulting discussion and input was very beneficial and comprehensive.

Suggestions for Future Workshops

The majority of suggestions were to increase attendance with more widespread publicity.

Public Outreach Strategies for Workshop

The majority of workshop attendees learned of the workshop through contact with staff or in the local newspaper.