

SKAGIT TRANSIT

Public Meeting Minutes Proposed Fare Increase

July 22, 2008

Mount Vernon Skagit Station

SKAGIT TRANSIT

Dale O'Brien, Executive Director
Motoko Pleasant, Manager of Finance & Admin
Dennis Digges, Operations Manager
Robert Gummere, Operations Supervisor FR
Joe Macdonald, Operations Supervisor DAR
Marylynn Fiscus, Planner
Kelly Borden, Accounting Assistant

PUBLIC

Adarn Rudnick
Ken Peddicord - CAC
John Carlisle
Arla Mae Freeman
Victor Solomon
Mary Woods
John H. Orange
Joann Orange
Jack Tiller
Sharon Tiller
Larry Toskey
Stoney Bird – CAC
Scott Kirkpatrick
Michael Moynihan

Dale O'Brien, Executive Director, opened the meeting at 6:30 pm with introductions of the Skagit Transit staff.

- I. Dale O'Brien gave an overview of Skagit County's public transportation servicing urban and rural areas. He explained the strong population growth by 2020 and the need for a stronger base of local funding to assure positive impact in Skagit County. Service began in 1993 with an emphasis on Fixed Route. Dial-A-Ride was originally grant funded when it was brought in house in 1995. In 1999, I-695 passed reducing Skagit Transit operation funds by almost 50%. In 2001 a .50 cent fare was implemented. A ballot proposal to increase sales tax failed in 2001. Severe cut backs were necessary in November 2002. Efficiency became the priority as Skagit Transit focused on the transit dependant Dial-A-Ride passengers. The majority of increases in service have been Grant Funded. Dale showed a pie chart of the expense budget for 2007 and 2008. Three of the five current operating grants will expire in June 2009. Current Capital Grant Projects currently include: Chuckanut P & R, the purchase of one Dial-A-Ride vehicle, one Fixed Route bus and MDT/AVL's, which is a computer type system used to locate the buses position, which will increased efficiency for Dial-A-Ride. Major accomplishments since 2002 are the operations of 38 vanpool vehicles, fixed route growth, DAR success, Skagit Station as a transportation hub, new fare system, County Connector and the Everett Express. Dale completed his

presentation by welcoming comments, e-mails and letters mailed to him and the Board of Directors.

- II. Dennis Digges, Operations Manager, informed the public of additional service which could be added with the approval of Proposition 1, a sales tax increase of .02 of 1%. This would allow service increases in three phases. Phase one: Fixed Route operating hours would be expanded, Dial-A-Ride service will expand to complement Fixed route service with no additional bus requirements. Phase two would add additional service areas which could begin as soon as additional buses were available. Phase three: includes increased frequency in peak hours in the morning and evening focusing on work commuters. If Proposition #1 is approved Skagit Transit could start collecting the additional sales tax in January 2009, but wouldn't start receiving this revenue until March 2009.

Questions and Comments from audience

1. Request for a fixed-route to service the Heather Village Apartments. Currently there are 28 committed riders wanting for the route. ***That could be included in our Phase I, we will check into this.***
2. Work with Island Transit for better connections with the 90X. ***We are currently working on this.***
3. Who qualifies for a youth fare? ***Any rider 17 years and younger***
4. How does Skagit Transit tax rate compare to other transit agencies? ***Skagit Transit has one of the lowest at .02%, the states allows transit agency to request up to .09%.***
5. Who qualifies for a senior fare? ***Any rider over 65 years of age, shows a Medicare card, or has a qualifying disability***
6. What is the fare for Dial-A-Ride? ***Donation at this time***
7. Isn't the 90X route self supporting? ***NO – the fare covers about 12% of the cost to run the route.***
8. Why doesn't the 90X run departing Skagit Station at 5:10 meet up with any routes in Everett? ***This run was designed to meet up with the Sounder Train leaving at 6:12am.***
9. Skagit Transit Employees seem to go out of there way for people who are unfamiliar with the bus system. It is too bad that more residents don't take advantage of riding the bus, and because of that I don't want anyone to lose service.
10. I have 3 concerns.
 - If the 80X fare gets raised the passengers should have a guaranteed seat to ride. ***We can try our best***
 - Standees need a handle to hold on too in the new commuter buses. ***We will check into this***
 - Is WTA raising their fares? ***NO***
11. Can the schedules be made easier to read? Perhaps an open sheet then all routes can be viewed on the same page? ***We are currently looking at having a different format for our next riders guide.***

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The attending public proceeded to look at the proposed schedule and signed up for increased commuter service, Sunday service, earlier morning and later evening services. Comments and concerns were discussed with Skagit Transit staff.

Prepared by:

Kelly Borden
Accounting Assistant