



Ensuring Oklahoma's Rail Transit Future

December 22, 2009

Mr. Doug Rex
Division Director
Transportation Planning and Data Services
Association of Central Oklahoma Governments
21 E. Main Street, Suite 100
Oklahoma City, OK 73104

Mr. Rick Cain
Director of Public Transportation and Parking
Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority
300 SW 7th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73109

Re: Commuter Rail Transit Hub Study

Gentlemen:

On September 15, 2009, the City Council of Oklahoma City unanimously passed a resolution directing the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, in coordination with the Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority and other area entities, to conduct a Commuter Rail Transit Hub Study for the purposes of evaluating the engineering and other technical requirements for developing an effective intermodal rail transit hub in downtown Oklahoma City to service a future commuter rail transit system for the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.

As the principal public interest organization in the Oklahoma City area whose purpose is currently focused on the development of a rail transit system for the Oklahoma City metropolitan area, including a central intermodal rail transit hub, OnTrac strongly supports the effort to undertake a technical rail transit hub study and offers its assistance to ACOG and COTPA in that process. We believe such a study is critically important to the proper development of an intermodal rail transit hub, which is the cornerstone of an efficient and effective rail transit system.

We understand that ACOG and COTPA are in the process of preparing the Scope of Services as part of a Request for Proposal for the study, which will be contracted out to a professional engineering consulting firm with expertise in rail transit systems. As it is critical that the Scope properly address all of the necessary technical requirements for development of an effective rail transit hub, OnTrac would like to offer the following for consideration as part of the Scope:

Purpose of Study

Determine connectivity, infrastructure and site requirements for development of an effective and efficient intermodal rail transit hub for servicing the current and future needs of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.

Elements of Study

A) Current Rail System Requirements

Determinations based on servicing current passenger rail operations and rail transit system proposals set forth in the COTPA Fixed Guideway Study, OKC MAPS 3 Project and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation High-Speed Rail Initiative, including:

1. Commuter Rail – Oklahoma City to Edmond
2. Commuter Rail – Oklahoma City to Norman
- 3) Commuter Rail – Oklahoma City to Midwest City and Tinker AFB
- 4) Commuter Rail – Downtown Oklahoma City to OKC Adventure District
- 5) Light Rail (Modern Street Car) System – Downtown Oklahoma City
- 6) Amtrak – Oklahoma City to Fort Worth
- 7) High-Speed Rail – Oklahoma City to Tulsa and Fort Worth

B) Future Rail System Requirements

Determinations based on servicing future rail transit system expansion, including:

1. Commuter Rail – Oklahoma City to Yukon
2. Commuter Rail or Light Rail – Downtown Oklahoma City to Will Rogers World Airport
3. Light Rail – Downtown Oklahoma City to Northwest Oklahoma City
4. Commuter Rail – Extension of service – OKC to Shawnee, Guthrie, El Reno and Purcell
5. Amtrak – Extension of service – Oklahoma City to Kansas

C) Revised Rail Ridership Forecasts

Determinations based on new and revised current and future rail transit system ridership forecasts using up-to-date modeling and statistical information

D) Rail Terminal Capacity and Demand Analysis

Determinations based on technical capacity and demand analysis of current and future rail transit system, including terminal track and platform service simulations

E) Rail Terminal Size and Location Considerations

Determinations based on consideration of important technical elements, including:

1. Effectively link all existing potential primary commuter rail transit corridors
2. Effectively link commuter rail system to light rail modern street car system
3. Maximize direct through service
4. Minimize stub-end, back-in and back-out operations
5. Maximize transfer efficiency (i.e. optimum number of side-tracks and platforms)
6. Minimize transfer time and distance (i.e. bi-level terminal)
7. Maximize passenger safety (i.e. sizeable platform areas, no track crossings, covered areas)
8. Minimize freight rail traffic conflicts (i.e. multiple bypass tracks)
9. Minimize distance from Transit Center and parking facilities
10. Minimize distance to primary destination areas (i.e. CBD, Bricktown, Ford Center)

F) Transit Center Size and Location Considerations


Determinations based on consideration of important technical elements, including:

1. Minimize distance to rail terminal area
2. Maximize parking facilities
3. Maximize metro and intercity bus service connectivity
4. Maximize service efficiency (i.e. bi-level facility, multiple concourses)
5. Maximize support facilities (i.e. terminal lobby, waiting areas, baggage hold, rental cars)

The Oklahoma City metropolitan area has a tremendous opportunity to develop a first class regional rail transit system in the coming years. To effectively service the rail transit needs of Central Oklahoma, now and in the future, it is critical that a properly sized, located and designed intermodal rail transit hub is at the heart of that system. It is imperative that we not repeat the same planning mistakes made by other cities when developing their hub facilities, including limitations on future rail connectivity, the underestimating of future system service needs, the undersizing of hub facilities and the inability to expand the hub to meet future systems requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments concerning this very important study. We hope to continue to be involved as the process moves forward. Please let us know if you have questions or need assistance.

Sincerely,



Marion F. Hutchison II
President, OnTrac

Cc: Mayor Mick Cornett, City of Oklahoma City
Councilmember Sam Bowman, City of Oklahoma City
Councilmember Pete White, City of Oklahoma City
Councilmember Meg Salyer, City of Oklahoma City
City Manager Jim Couch, City of Oklahoma City
Mayor Cindy Rosenthal, City of Norman
Mayor Russell Smith, City of Midwest City
Mayor Patrice Douglas, City of Edmond
Mr. David Streb, Director of Engineering, Oklahoma Department of Transportation
Mr. Jeff Bezdek, Director, Modern Transit Project