

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE**

**November 15, 2001**

**Coquille Room**

ATTENDEES: Bob Jones, Courtney Hight, Chris Jones, Julia Heydon, Dorene Steggell, Jessica Rose, J.R. Gaddis, Anne Forrestel, Dean Livelybrooks, Greg Stripp

### **Transportation**

Q & A Session with Rand Stamm from the Department of Public Safety.

**Question 1: Could you provide us with some background on the Transportation Resource Center ("TRC")? How did it come to be? Whose idea was it? What was its intended purpose/scope? What was its intended mode of operation (staffed vs. self-serve; online or just printed resources)?**

*Answer:* In 1999, EIC's recommendation to develop the TRC ultimately went to Facilities Services, and George Hecht authorized the funds to build and equip it. Dusty Miller offered space in the EMU. In Feb. 2000 it became DPS's responsibility and Rand Stamm drafted a proposal in June 2000.

### **Operations Proposal**

Purpose: To provide an information and outreach resource center for all types of visitors and transportation information and options to the campus community (faculty, staff, students, visitors, prospective students, parents, etc.) from a centrally located space. In this particular instance, this would be a project utilizing the new TRC location in the Erb Memorial Union.

Management: The center would operate as part of the Department of Public Safety, under the direct supervision of the Parking & Transportation Division. We would work with Student Academic Affairs, Admissions, and EMU Scheduling to ensure that, along with transportation information, event and visitor information would be readily available to be provided to all users. (these departments eventually decided not to commit to the TRC). Annual budget \$18,1888.

The staff of the Transportation Resource Center (EMU) would basically have the following functions:

1. Host the center, providing a broad range of information and resource referrals for the myriad of transportation options available to our community, both to and around the UO campus. This information would include, but not be limited to, information on LTD services and routes, parking options and information (including the sales of temporary permits and the issuance of visitor permits), bicycling information (maps, routes, safety tips, etc.), pedestrian options, Project Saferide info, DDS info, Tandem Taxi and Pedicab info, Amtrak schedules, etc.
2. Individual transportation counseling. Help individuals identify the various transportation options available to them - taking in to account where they live, their schedules, life circumstances (children to daycare, job after school, etc.).

**Question 2: How is it staffed now? During what hours is it staffed? How does it function when it is not staffed?**

*Answer:* It is staffed 11AM to 8PM, Monday through Friday, 10AM to 4PM, Saturday. Staffed by student employees of DPS. When unstaffed, place to pick up brochures, maps, other written material.

**Question 3: Besides providing information pertaining to transportation alternatives, what services (if any) does the TRC provide?**

*Answer:* None -- other than as a courtesy (the staff's most frequent contact is people trying to get directions).

**Question 4: Can you buy parking passes at the TRC or other kinds of DPS or general university business, such as pay parking tickets, or register your car or your bike?**

*Answer:* Can pick up the forms to register bike there -- need to be brought to DPS to finish. No permits bought or citations paid at this location (financial transactions are not safe for the staff).

**Question 5: Are there other DPS or other university functions that could happen there?**

*Answer:* TRC is run and funded by the self-supporting auxiliary of Parking & Transportation. Other functions are possible if funded and staffed (or at least assist with staffing) by other UO entities. Offer was made to the ASUO and UO Admissions for this purpose with no real interest or response.

**Question 6: It seems like the TRC space isn't being fully utilized. Does the TRC have sufficient space to provide more services?**

*Answer:* See # 3 above.

**Question 7: Do staff people periodically remove unrelated materials (Craft Center newsletters, employment guides, discarded newspapers and flyers, etc) from its extra shelves to reduce distractions from its primary mission?**

*Answer:* We straighten the area up. Other flyers and information are not authorized for this area and we do not take responsibility for its placement or removal -- other than we try to keep it neat and non-transportation related materials should be removed from the location.

**Question 8: Is the TRC part of a larger strategy to encourage alternatives to single occupant automobile transportation?**

*Answer:* Yes and no. The UO policy emphasizes use of alternative means of transportation.

**Question 9: What aspects of the TRC or other related transportation strategies have been the most successful? What have been problematic?**

*Answer:* It is of very limited success or value. Location is poor to address transportation concerns. Lack of cultural and educational support for alternative transportation options works against such an entity as the TRC.

**Question 10 - Part 1: Do passersby seem drawn to the TRC to check it out, or does it seem to blend into the background?**

*Answer:* Quite visible and noticeable -- but only of interest if one has an interest in the subject matter.

**Question 10 - Part 2. The "People Powered Fridays" poster on the back wall caught my eye. Do you think that additional eye-catching motivational posters extolling the benefits of fresh air, the beauty of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the societal costs of petroleum dependency,**

**or the like might inspire people to pursue the possibilities of alternative modes of transportation?**

*Answer:* No. We live in the single most educated time in history, with more information on all elements of our existence available in many different ways to every single member of our society regardless of educational background or social and economic status. The benefits of fresh air, natural beauty, dangers of pollution, cost of fossil fuel dependency, etc. comes at every one of us from every angle -- from our radios and TV's and newspapers and magazines and billboards and posters and flyers...

We regularly place posters and flyers and informational material about alternative transportation in DPS, in the TRC, in the Kiosk at 13th & Beech. We have run videos at the TRC extolling the virtues of the coming Bus Rapid Transit System. We pay LTD so all faculty & staff can ride LTD for free, we give great price reductions on carpool parking permits, we send alternative transportation information to every dept. when it comes time to look at parking for the new year, we send out regular campus wide e-mails about special alternative transportation events and services (frequently being told by folks that they don't want our "spam" or to take them off our mailings).

Lack of information is most definitely not the problem.

**Question 11: Would you be concerned that such devices might be considered too political?**

*Answer:* There has been that accusation on occasion.

**Question 12: How would you assess the effectiveness of the TRC (based on your own observations, feedback from its staff, and/or feedback from its users)?**

*Answer:* Extremely limited value. Very little use -- mostly, people seem to like the idea of it and the fact that they can point to it and show that we are doing something of this nature, but in regard to real concrete results, it has very little actual use. For the volume of hours it is open, very few people actually stop by and use its services (in spite of the sheer volume of foot traffic through the EMU). The UO as a whole, on the other hand, does an incredibly good job (often over-looked by our own community) in the sheer volume of folks that use alternative modes of transportation. The bus ridership programs for both students and faculty staff are quite heavily used, hundreds and sometimes thousands of folks ride their bikes each day in an environment whose weather is not optimal for such an activity. A tremendous number of our students walk to and from campus every day. We have an outstanding relationship with LTD, bringing on-line new and valuable programs all the time (Breeze shuttle, BRT).

**Question 13: What do you think it would take to encourage more people to car pool, take the bus, bicycle, ...? Are there ways that other departments of the University could support your efforts to encourage alternative transportation?**

*Answer:* Extend the teaching of classes from 8AM in the morning until 8PM-9PM at night. Schedule classes 5 days a week during the hours just mentioned. For example, on Centennial Blvd., LTD buses sometimes pass right by people at stops because the bus is already full to the limit with students all heading for their first class mid-morning. If some of those students had bussed in earlier for an 8 or 9 a.m. class then this problem might be avoided.

Make transportation education a mandatory, required part of everyone's schooling -- beginning in grade school and carrying it on through the University. Increase the cost of parking so that alternatives become not only environmentally and socially more attractive, but economically as well.

**Question 14: What future plans do you have for the TRC or any similar projects? Would a carpooling database be useful, particularly if it could be integrated with the work done by the city of Eugene in this regard?**

*Answer:* Guaranteed-ride home program for faculty/staff to encourage them to use alternative modes. More information going out on carpooling (looked at the carpool database idea and found it would not be as effective -- and also redundant -- to that already maintained and operated by LTD, which they make available to UO folks as well). Work with LTD on such things as the Breeze shuttle, BRT, event shuttles, etc.

**Additional discussion:**

A 1998 study found that 80% of students walk/use alternative transportation. Most parking complaints come from faculty and staff.

A guaranteed ride home program will begin winter term. If someone has bused, biked or car pooled and an emergency comes up they can get a voucher from DPS which would pay for taxi fare.

Covered bike parking is built whenever possible. DPS works with Fred Tepfer. Secure bike cages are also available.

There are only 17 car pool groups on campus this year. These permits are cheaper with parking spaces available on 13th. Reserved spaces are half the cost for car pools.

Alternative transportation information is sent to departments every year, it's presented at orientation and student weeks, also publicize through e-mails, ads and desk calendars. They've considered making a video which could be run on public access channels.

Rand feels that a partnership with other departments would increase use and help to make the TRC more valuable. He welcomes additional suggestions and ideas.

Due to time constraints, the meeting was wrapped up quickly. No conclusions or decisions were reached about the future of the TRC.

**The next Environmental Issues Committee meeting is Thursday, December 13,**

**2:00 - 3:00 p.m. in the Facilities Services conference room**