

**CITY OF BOULDER
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: March 14, 2016

AGENDA TITLE: Staff briefing and TAB input on the HOP Transit Study Update

PRESENTERS: Michael Gardner-Sweeney, Interim Director of Public Works for
Transportation
Kathleen Bracke, GO Boulder Manager
Natalie Stiffler, Transportation Planner, GO Boulder

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a briefing to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) on the status of the HOP Transit Study. The HOP study is an action item of the Transportation Master Plan. The purpose of the study is to review the existing HOP service operations and identify potential opportunities to enhance connections with Downtown, 29th Street, Boulder Junction, University of Colorado (CU), and University Hill and improve overall customer experience.

TAB ACTION REQUESTED

Key Questions for the TAB:

1. Does TAB have any questions and suggestions regarding the HOP transit study scope, public engagement process, and/or timeline?
2. Does TAB have any interest in designating a representative to participate in the HOP study stakeholder meetings?

BACKGROUND

Boulder is celebrating 21 years of the city's flagship Community Transit Network (CTN) route, the HOP. City staff kicked off the first phase of the HOP Transit Study in October 2015 with a week-long HOP 21st birthday campaign. The week-long campaign provided an opportunity to engage with current riders and agency partners to celebrate the accomplishments of the HOP over the last two decades. It also allowed an opportunity to let people know that the HOP Transit Study would begin in 2016 to begin to explore opportunities to improve the HOP for the future.

The purpose of the second phase of the HOP Transit Study is to continue to build upon the success of the HOP to enhance customer experience and address changes in land use and transportation options over the last two decades. Based on the operational analysis and public engagement, the HOP study

planning process may lead to a route and service redesign, enhanced wayfinding and branding, as well as other potential refinements. The HOP Transit Study will build on the tradition of a community driven process that the city's relied upon over the years to design the CTN.

Plan Purpose

The HOP Transit Study is an opportunity to revisit the goals and objectives of the service, ensure the alignment of these goals with community objectives, and the ability to accommodate important activity centers over the next few years as well as for the longer term future. This will help maintain and enhance the HOP as a cornerstone of the CTN in service for the Boulder community.

The key project objectives are:

- Enhance connectivity between downtown Boulder and Boulder Junction by providing direct, reliable, and frequent service
- Maintain high quality service and customer experience
- Support Boulder's Climate Commitment by pursuing low or no emission vehicles
- Identify potential opportunities to enhance connections to Chautauqua
- Provide improved service to University Hill and CU-Boulder
- Integrate with other existing and future transit routes as identified in Boulder's Renewed Vision for Transit developed as part of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP)

Planning Process and Timeline

The HOP Transit Study will be based on robust transportation planning process, including extensive public outreach and stakeholder engagement as well as collaboration with agency partners, including Via Mobility Services, Regional Transportation District (RTD), University of Colorado – Boulder (CU), and Boulder County.

In March 2016, staff and agency partners will develop and conduct an on-board passenger survey. The purpose of the survey will be to collect HOP service and performance data as well as customer feedback. The survey methodology will target a minimum of 350 responses, which will result in a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, and meet the national transit industry standard for on-board survey response rates.

In April 2016, before CU students' summer break, staff will host pop up events on CU campus to engage students in the planning process. This outreach effort will take place at student gathering spaces on campus such as the University Memorial Center and high usage HOP transit stops. This is an important outreach strategy for engaging students that may be less likely to attend a public meeting but may have a few minutes to discuss the transit study with staff as they wait for the bus. This will give staff an opportunity to gather feedback about existing HOP service performance.

In addition to the on-board survey and pop up events, staff will host a public meeting in June. Staff will present the Existing Conditions and Choices Report, as well as the Conceptual Alternatives that will be developed based on stakeholder, TAB, and Council feedback.

Also, city staff is organizing a group of stakeholders that will include representatives from the University Hill Business District, Downtown Development Authority/Downtown Business Inc.,

Downtown Management Commission/Downtown Business Association, Boulder Chamber, Boulder Junction Access District, 29th St. Mall, Google, CU Student Government, Chautauqua Neighborhood, Boulder Housing Partners, and Boulder County's Local Coordinating Council. It is anticipated that three stakeholder workshops will be conducted throughout the planning process, as well as public meetings at key milestones.

- In Stakeholder Meeting #1, the group will be guided through an interactive exercise to explain fundamentals of transit operations and trade-offs. The project team will review the Existing Conditions and Choices Report that describes the current transit service, its performance, and the context in which it is operating. The committee will also be polled on their goals for transit generally, and for the HOP specifically, which will help determine the evaluation criteria. Meeting #1 will present an opportunity to introduce the project to the stakeholders and provide an opportunity to understand stakeholder interests before beginning developing alternatives.
- In Stakeholder Meeting #2, a set of Conceptual Alternatives for the HOP will be presented, and stakeholders will be polled on their reactions to the alternatives, and how the alternatives perform against evaluation criteria.
- In Stakeholder Meeting #3, there will be a presentation of a service concept(s) that is designed based on Meeting #2, public outreach, and TAB and City Council feedback. The stakeholder committee will have an opportunity to make comments that will be reflected in the final report.

As part of the alternatives design process, the project team will develop a set of Conceptual Alternatives to illustrate how different choices for the HOP would have different outcomes. These alternatives will be illustrated with maps, supported by tables showing service parameters (such as frequency, span of service, speed, stop spacing, and any other factors we consider changing), and how the Conceptual Alternatives perform according to the TMP's Renewed Vision for Transit goals and the HOP study evaluation criteria.

If there is general stakeholder and public agreement on the alternatives, a set of potential preferred alternative(s) will be presented to TAB and City Council for consideration and input in May 2016. If more time is needed for stakeholder engagement and analysis of alternatives, staff will present the alternatives for consideration as part of the TAB meeting in August and City Council Study Session in September, and adjust the project timeline as needed.

In addition to the full study report, the project will also include developing a Fleet and Implementation Plan, which will take into account Boulder's Climate Commitment goals and detail foreseeable funding plan for managing/updating the HOP vehicle fleet over time. The plan will also recommend phasing and implementation for the Preferred Alternative, including on-going collaboration among the city and agency partners.

See Attachment B for a complete project schedule.

NEXT STEPS

- March 2016 On-board Survey for boardings and transfer data collection
- Continue ongoing monthly coordination with Via, RTD, CU-Boulder, and Boulder County
- Stakeholder Meetings (April/May 2016)
- Public Meeting and City Council Study Session update (May 2016)

TAB ACTION REQUESTED

The TAB is requested to provide input on the HOP Transit Study. Specifically:

1. Does TAB have any questions and suggestions regarding the HOP transit study scope, public engagement process, and/or timeline?
2. Does TAB have any interest in designating a representative to participate in the HOP study stakeholder meetings?

Attachments:

- A. Map of Existing HOP route
- B. HOP Transit Study Timeline

Visit <https://bouldercolorado.gov/goboulder/HOP-transit-study> for more information.

Attachment A

Map of Existing HOP Route



Attachment B HOP Transit Study Timeline

