

WILSONVILLE

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A South Metro Business Advocate

February 3, 2017

Mayor Knapp
Council President Starr
Councilor Stevens
Councilor Lehan
Councilor Akervall

Dear Mayor and Councilors:

The Wilsonville Area Chamber of Commerce has been an active and engaged Community partner throughout SMART's Master Transit Plan process. We appreciate the opportunity to participate, and we commend city staff for the inclusiveness, transparency, and professionalism of this process.

We support the overwhelming majority of the recommendations found in the City of Wilsonville's 2017 Transit Master Plan Draft. There are, however, two areas of concern which we would like to share with you:

1) Since the very beginning of this Master Transit Plan process and at every public input meeting, one key question has been raised by the Chamber (as well as by employers, employees, and even residents): "How do we arrive at sound transit recommendations withouts having a discussion of revenue and costs?" The answer provided by the consultants and SMART staff to this question was always the same, "Costs and revenues are a very critical component, but we're not there yet. We will get there by the end of the process."

In the 2017 Master Transit Plan Draft documents you will be discussing on February 6th, there are many substantive and consequential recommendations about a Transit Plan for our City of Wilsonville, but there is one key missing ingredient: a financial recommendation. In other words, while we are seemingly at the end of the process we have not yet had the costs and revenues discussion.

Therefore, we would ask City Council before adopting this Master Transit Plan to require city staff and consultants to conduct a robust financial conversation with stakeholders. The goal would be to make recommendations to the Council about how best to meet balanced budget needs, given increased service levels. Our Chamber's goal is to have frank,

February 3, 2017

Page Two

in-depth discussions about important trade-offs and how to create sustainable, fair funding source(s) for SMART moving forward.

We are very concerned that with our current transit budget consisting of approximately 79% payroll taxes, 20% grants, and 1% rider/citizen contributions, SMART faces a very uncertain funding future. If, as is expected, that grant funding will be seriously reduced, then that will leave the only option to be another increase in the payroll tax rate, which will negatively impact jobs.

Appendix F mentions the Corvallis Fee Model. This is one potential solution for a more sustainable and broad based equitable funding mechanism, and it deserves further study along with other options. Moreover, as part of a robust financial discussion there should also be an analysis of and recommendations about costs. For example, the Draft Transit Plan mentions the very high expense of Dial a Ride and that it should be studied. Why not perform the study/review now?

2) The second area of concern is related to the deletion of the 2X route to the Barbur Transit Center and its realignment instead to the Tigard Transit Center. In reviewing the survey results, there are a large number of rider comments that this move would mean these riders would no longer be using SMART (i.e., due to the addition of a lot more time for a trip from Wilsonville to Portland). Since this represents a major change, would it be possible to forecast how many riders we would lose? It has been 3+ years since the last rider survey was conducted. Does it make sense to conduct a rider survey now before wrapping up the Master Transit Plan so that we at least have up to date information?

Again, our thanks to the Mayor, City Councilors, and staff for your leadership and stewardship of this 2017 Transit Master Plan. In the coming months, we look forward to partnering with you to help finalize this plan. I would welcome the opportunity to answer any of your questions. My cell phone (503-577-7111) is the fastest way to connect.

Sincerely,



Kevin Ferrasci O'Malley, CEO
Wilsonville Chamber of Commerce

8565 SW Salish Lane, Suite 150
Wilsonville, OR 97070
503-682-0411