



Rochester City Council

Community Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Elaine Lauterborn, Chair
 Donna Bogan, Vice Chair
 Tom Abbott
 Jeremy Hutchinson
 James Gray

Meeting Date:	Monday, May 13, 2019	
Members Present:	Donna Bogan James Gray Jeremy Hutchinson Elaine Lauterborn	Members Absent: Tom Abbott
Guests/Staff:	Julian Long, Rochester Community Development Coordinator Rad Nichols, COAST Executive Director Michael Williams, COAST Director of Operations	

Councilor Lauterborn called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Motion was made by Councilor Gray and seconded by Councilor Bogan to approve the April 8, 2019 Community Development Committee minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT	There was no public input.
COAST PRESENTATION – System Performance	<p>Mr. Nichols told the committee members that COAST has developed a tentative operations plan and system redesign as a result of its comprehensive operations analysis of 2018 and 2019. COAST's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding associated with the 2012 Little Bay Bridge construction mitigation project is coming to an end June 30, 2020, which will result in just under a \$1.4 M revenue cut to COAST's current operations. This represents about 25% of COAST's current funding.</p> <p>With the anticipated FY 2022 federal funding levels, COAST would both need to cut 60% of current route services and increase local funding requests. COAST anticipates that such an approach would quickly lead to a downward spiral of cutting services, leading to loss of even more funding, while result in further cuts to services, etc. Mr. Nichols noted that COAST has seen substantial increases in provided Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) services for riders with disabilities. Councilor Lauterborn asked if the federal government provides funding for ADA services, and Mr. Nichols replied that the federal funding doesn't cover the actual cost of services.</p>

Over the previous nine months, COAST held a series of public forums and surveys with riders, stakeholders, business leaders, and the general public. Mr. Williams stated that in this feedback, certain repeated themes emerged. The public indicated that long transit times deter potential riders from using COAST services. The proposed system redesign would include both express routes and local routes. Mr. Williams presented a brief overview of the new proposed express and local routes for the cities of Portsmouth, Dover, and Somersworth.

Councilor Gray asked about the current expedited route from Rochester to the Pease Development Authority and Portsmouth shipyard. Mr. Williams replied that COAST has heard from Pease employees that they need midday travel options, which the new proposed routes will provide. The new routes will also allow for travel for employees who work staggered shifts or overtime hours. Mr. Nichols added that many Pease and shipyard employees are Rochester residents.

The proposed express and local routes will run hourly from about 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 or 10:00 p.m. The express route linking the City of Rochester with the cities of Dover and Portsmouth would begin from the Lilac Mall. The proposed local routes for the City of Rochester would preserve access to the Granite Ridge business development and Wal-Mart but cut off Wakefield Street/Farmington Road transit at the Lilac Mall. The proposed new routes would also eliminate transit services to East Rochester, as these services were funded through the Little Bay Bridge mitigation funding and have seen little utilization.

Mr. Williams mentioned that the new proposed routes would provide better transit services for the proposed new location for the Homeless Center for Strafford County. Currently, that location only receives twice daily transit to the Pease Development Authority, but the new routes would provide hourly service to the entire COAST system. Also, the goal is to have all local routes run about an hour to provide better synchronization citywide, which should provide easier and more efficient transfers between routes.

Councilor Hutchinson asked about the City of Somersworth's proposed new routing, and Mr. Williams explained that it would

	<p>still travel largely down High Street. Mr. Nichols explained that any additional services and associated costs would be funded by Somersworth. He also added that the City of Rochester's proposed new routing would result in more miles traveled, which would come with increased costs.</p> <p>Councilor Hutchinson asked if these changes would affect COAST's FY 20 funding request. Mr. Nichols answered that it would not. The earliest funding request to be effected would be the FY 21 funding request.</p> <p>Councilor Lauterborn asked if the new proposed transit system saves money. Mr. Williams replied that the new system would reduce costs by about 11% or 12%. However, there would be a total increase in requested local funding of about \$810,000. COAST is hoping to use CMAQ funding to offset some of the costs, so the increase in requested local funding would be reduced to about \$120,000. Other potential revenue opportunities, according to Mr. Nichols, could include transfer of Boston urbanized area Federal Transit Administration 5307 funds, state funding, new municipal or agency partners, and local option fee increase (HB 409).</p> <p>Mr. Nichols stated that the timeline would be to meet with the individual communities' governments in May, meet with the public in scheduled public forums in June, and to refine and respond to feedback throughout the summer. In autumn, COAST hopes to obtain verbal commitments regarding the redesigned system and funding, with finalization of the service plans to be implemented in winter. Transition to the new redesigned system would begin in July 2020.</p> <p>Councilor Lauterborn told the committee that the Rochester public forum is scheduled for June 11th at 6 p.m., to be held at the Rochester Public Library.</p> <p>Councilor Hutchinson requested demand response data for the City of Rochester. Mr. Williams replied that he could obtain that data for the councilor.</p>
PROGRAMS REPORT – CDBG Projects, JOB Loan Program Report, Other Grant Projects	<p>Mr. Long explained that Community Partners has not expended CDBG funds for quarter 2 and quarter 3. Councilor Lauterborn asked Mr. Long to review Community Partners' records to ensure the funds are being expended on Rochester residents who truly</p>

	<p>need the rental assistance funds. Mr. Long stated that he would review the records in depth at the annual on-site monitoring for Community Partners.</p> <p>The committee also discussed the proposed 2020 Census changes to Rochester census blocks and census tracts.</p>
OTHER BUSINESS	Councilor Gray discussed COAST's current Route 33 and its funding relationship with Strafford County.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Next Meeting – Monday, June 10, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in Isinglass Conference Room in City Hall Annex (33 Wakefield Street)

Topics – Projects Program Report