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C-TRAN BOARD DECIDES ON CORE BUS BALLOT MEASURE IN 2011

Vancouver, WA: At their April 12, 2011 meeting, the C-TRAN Board of Directors approved a ballot measure for the November 8, 2011 general election asking voters to approve a 0.2% (two pennies on a ten dollar purchase) sales tax increase. The additional revenue would preserve existing fixed route service levels and meet the anticipated growth of C-VAN, C-TRAN's paratransit service for medically qualified individuals who cannot ride C-TRAN's regular fixed route system.

During their deliberations, the Board agreed that preserving core bus and van service is crucial for the community. C-TRAN currently collects a 0.5% sales tax, which is the lowest of all urban transit systems in Washington State. As sales tax revenue began to decline with the onset of the recession in 2008, C-TRAN took immediate action in an effort to prioritize maintaining its bus service. Some of those measures included:

- Wage freezes for management and non-represented employees in 2010 and 2011;
- Reduced staff (35 fewer positions in current budget compared to previous budget);
- Increased passenger fares four times since 2005 with a fifth one planned for September 2011 (C-TRAN's farebox recovery is one of the highest in the state);
- Implemented a targeted service reduction in 2010 on the agency's lowest performing routes.

Even with these cost cutting measures and revenue enhancements, C-TRAN is required to spend approximately \$7 million from its reserves to maintain current service levels. The reserves that are helping to pay for existing service are expected to be depleted by the end of 2012 and without additional revenue from the proposed ballot measure, C-TRAN will need to reduce service by more than 35 percent in order to match its revenue and expenditures.

"We appreciate the opportunity to ask our fellow citizens to preserve core bus service and help us meet our obligation to our community's elderly and disabled citizens who rely on C-VAN as their only transportation option," said Jeff Hamm, C-TRAN's Executive Director/CEO.

In a subsequent discussion, the C-TRAN Board also decided to defer a decision to approve a High Capacity Transit (HCT) ballot measure for either August or November 2012 that would ask voters for a 0.1% (one tenth) sales tax increase to fund the operation and maintenance costs only for the Vancouver portion of the light rail line associated with the Columbia River Crossing project, and for the local capital, operation and maintenance for the proposed 4th Plain Bus Rapid Transit Project. The Board is expected to continue their discussion on a potential 2012 HCT ballot measure at its May 10 Board of Directors meeting.

For more information on C-TRAN please call Passenger Service at (360) 695-0123.