

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
August 14, 2006**

Date: Monday, August 14, 2006
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: 2775 19th St SE, Salem, OR

Members Present:

Bob Lowry, Chair, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)
Claire Potter, TriMet
John Wenzholz, Assoc. of Counties (AOC)
Debbie Wert, Department of Human Services (DHS)
Jeff Hamm, (Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
Margaret Yochem, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)
John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services
Terry Thompson, Assoc. of Counties (AOC)
Sally Lawson, Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging & Disabilities (O4AD)
Terry Parker, Lane Transit District (LTD)
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider

Interested Persons Present:

Julie Wehling, RideConnection

Members Absent:

Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service representing Rural Transit Service
Raye Miles, Broadway Cab, Representing Private for Profit Transportation Service Provider
Janice Wilson, Commissioner Liaison, Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Troy Costales, ODOT Public Transit Division Interim Administrator
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Operations Manager
Jean Palmateer, Special Transportation Program Manager
Sherrin Coleman, Planning Manager
Adam Torgerson, Public Affairs Specialist
Jim Jordan, Fiscal Analyst
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager
PJ Pippin, Executive Support

Guest Speakers:

None.

ITEM A

1:00 p.m. **Welcome, Introductions, Items of Interest**

Chairperson Bob Lowry called the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions were made.

1:10 p.m. **Items of Interest**

- Approval of Minutes. A motion was made by John Wenholtz, seconded by Debbie Wert and unanimously passed to approve the May 8, 2006 meeting notes.
- Final results of *ConnectOregon* Program.

An update was given on the *ConnectOregon* program. On July 20, 2006, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) made its final project selections. Forty-three projects were approved, for awards totaling \$99.5 million.

The next step in the process will be gathering signed contracts. Performance measures will be written into the agreement saying that all monies are contingent upon meeting these measures. ODOT is required to give a report on the status of the *ConnectOregon* contracting process at the November OTC meeting. Initial funds will be available for public sector applicants in September 2006 and for the private sector applicants in February or March 2007.

Mr. Costales said that the division will not be involved with contracting; the Highway Division will be doing the contracting and paperwork directly to individuals. The local program office may be contacted for specific questions on projects.

Mr. Hamm said that it might behoove PTAC to have *ConnectOregon* projects as an agenda item so we can continue to be informed and offer assistance those who have projects in any way possible.

Terry Thompson explained that the Port of Newport project will be part of a plan for a future wave motion power generation site that will provide renewable resources to the county. Lincoln County has control and authority three miles into the ocean. Mr. Thompson stressed the importance of this project for Lincoln County.

- Training and Events Announcements.

Jean Palmateer gave a brief review of upcoming training opportunities. She highlighted two upcoming conferences. The first event discussed was the 17th National Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Conference being held

October 22-25, 2006 in Stevenson, Washington, which will offer a broad range of topics for providers. Brochures are available upon request through the Washington State Department of Transportation. Also presented was the New Orleans, Louisiana conference entitled **Disaster Planning for the Car-less**. This type of planning is becoming more important to the industry. Their website is <http://www.carlessevacuation.org/>.

ITEM B

1:15 p.m. **Final OTA Conference Agenda Input**

The Advisory Committee was asked to review and comment on the 2006 Oregon Transit Association (OTA) brochure and agenda. Positive comments were made about the bright and colorful brochure cover with the bus on the front.

Sherrin Coleman explained the importance of this upcoming conference and the valuable experience it provides to transit. The conference will be held October 10-12, 2006 in Seaside, Oregon. Ms. Coleman expressed enthusiasm about bringing in a northwest bus simulator that will provide 4 hours of classroom driving training and 16 hours Continuing Education Credit for drivers. It will simulate bad weather driving and hazardous road conditions.

ITEM C

1:30 p.m. **Action Item: Meet Troy Costales**

Mr. Lowry introduced Troy Costales, Interim Administrator for the Public Transit Division. ODOT Director Garrett asked Mr. Costales to act as the Interim Administrator, and the OTC assigned projects for Mr. Costales to undertake. Recruitment for the Administrator has been announced. Job description flyers for the position were distributed, and Mr. Costales requested that members publicize the vacancy. Applications will be accepted through September 26. November 1 is the target date to have a new administrator onboard.

One of Mr. Costales' main assignments is to help the Director, the OTC and transit stakeholders to understand the division's goals, finances, and grant activities. A business plan will be developed, outlining the division's role and answering the above questions. Currently, the division is working on the 2006-07 Business Plan. A copy of the table of contents was included in the committee packet. The Plan will set the calendar for 2007-09 of which PTAC plays an important part. The 2006-07 Business Plan will be presented to the OTC at its October meeting, while the 2007-09 Business Plan will go to the OTC in March of 2007.

The Business Plan will answer the questions: What is the division's statutory responsibility? What are the division's state and federal revenues? The plan will be brought to PTAC at the September meeting for review, approval and adoption.

Mr. Hamm asked if the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) came out sooner, and where is transit in building the governor's budget? Mr. Costales answered that all divisions were required to provide a budget by March 15, 2006, including Transit. The GRB is published on December 1, 2006, includes the divisions' recommendations. Then, in January, the Ways and Means process begins. Ms. Parker thanked Mr. Costales for explaining member role in PTAC.

An internal audit of the division was to be completed, but there will not be a need for an audit any longer since the Business Plan process should provide the information sought by the auditors.

Ms. Wert asked if there was funding for more positions within the division. Mr. Costales replied that there is one Full Time Equivalent position (FTE) requested within the Governor's Recommended Budget.

ITEM D

2:00 p.m. Status Report on Implementation of Local Coordinated Plan Process and other SAFETEA-LU requirements

Jean Palmateer presented information about several training sessions designed to inform stakeholders about Oregon's Special Transportation Program Plan and the FTA's Public Transit/Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan). Attendees were provided with information and technical assistance. A day was spent crafting an outline for their coordinated process for their community. The FTA requires Coordinated Plans by July 1, 2007.

The first event was called Promoting Independence through Accessible Transportation: Creating and Improving Access to Public Transit. This event was co-hosted with Mobility International USA, Lane Transit District and the FTA's Office of Civil Rights.

Public Transit has scheduled two additional workshops to discuss transportation coordination, the coordinated transit/human service transportation plan requirements and techniques for developing the plan.

Ms. Wert spoke briefly about the value of having multiple groups with different focuses participating in this training. The diverse participants share best practices as well as infuse energy. She noted that rural areas continue to create magic out of rubber bands and bailing wire, and should be acknowledged and assisted.

Ms. Coleman discussed the current FTA notices to comment on interim rules. The FTA website provides information on how to comment.

ITEM E

2:15 p.m. Update and discussion: 2007-09 Discretionary Grant Cycle

Mr. Costales requested PTAC’s endorsement of two items:

- The general direction of discretionary program for 2007-09
- The associated calendar.

August 06	Discussion of policy and timeline with PTAC.
September 06	PTAC Endorsement of policy and timeline
October 06	<p>OTC action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTD presents Business Report to OTC • OTC Endorses biennial investment program • OTC Endorses Process for discretionary program • OTC Identifies process for Innovation <p>PTD Release Discretionary Application Packet PTD conducts application workshops for participants</p>
January 31, 2007	Project applications due
March 07	<p>Project Selection Committee meets to select projects. Adoption of Transportation Priorities for 2007-09 funding allocation. Release recommended list of projects and programs funded with available revenues. Develop grant agreements</p>
April 2007	PTAC endorsement and Public Involvement
May 2007	Information submitted to Oregon Transportation Commission. Grants awarded.
July 2007	Agreements for July 1 projects in place.

During October and November, the division will hold workshops to help assist people on how to fill out the application packet. In January, applications will be due.

The 2007-09 discretionary cycle continues many features from the previous cycle. However, with additional federal revenue and OTC support, there will be significant new opportunities and guidance.

- Local coordinated planning is mandatory before projects are developed.
- “Innovations” and “New Freedom” categories of projects are added to activities eligible for funding.
- Jobs Access Reverse Commute projects are also eligible through the state program instead of federal earmarks.

To address these changes, the discretionary applications will be solicited as usual and then will be sorted into like groupings for priority of funding. Priorities

remain essentially intact with one exception: the OTC has emphasized a priority for seeking innovation.

Funding Decisions:

(In Millions)

\$28	Total available, all sources
- 4	Mass Transit (those not selected do not compete for remaining funds)
24	Balance
- 7	Projected for fleet replacements – all funded if qualified (could be more or less)
17	Balance – <i>Up to \$4 million is targeted to be spent on innovations projects from this \$17m balance.</i>
- 1	Vanpool (those not selected do not compete for remaining funds)
16	Balance
- 2.4	Intercity (those not selected do not compete for remaining funds)
\$13.6	Estimated balance for continuing service and other enhancements

Members had several questions about the new vanpool category and proportional equity of discretionary awards. Ms. Potter asked about source and use of vanpool dollars.

Mr. Hamm responded that SAMTD used some of the money to subsidize seats on the vanpool which will attract more riders. SAMTD will report to the FTA the number of riders and mileage which in turn will generate formula 5307 money and the FTA will give more 5307 dollars to sustain the vanpool program.

Ms. Potter said that they already have good program and was concerned that it wasn't a high enough priority to have the vanpool category included in population percentage share of discretionary money. Portland has 40% of the state's population.

Mr. Costales said that we will strive towards regional equity.

Mr. Thompson commented that the coast has a small population but in the summer the population can quadruple due to tourism. He feels using population numbers can be deceiving.

Mr. Wenholz commented that he sees PTAC working for the betterment of all Oregonians, especially for seniors and people with disabilities. PTAC will continue to support the community and we will work as a team.

3:00 p.m. **BREAK**

Ms. Parker commented that this meeting is making things more clear. Public Transit has always had multiple streams of funding for the Discretionary Program, and it creates a level of flexibility. In her opinion, PTAC's role is not to micro-manage. Some advisory members are also applicants in the Discretionary Program.

PTAC's role is to identify which projects are to be approved; PTD will help decide which funding stream to use for the Discretionary Program.

Ms. Wert reminded the group that framing the needs on the application is very important. PTD will give as much training as possible and will provide workshops to the prospective applicants to ensure applications are completed correctly and thoroughly. Ms. Wert would also like to see an assessment piece built into the timeline.

Mr. Costales said that there were opportunities to review the process in October 2006, when the packet is released or in March 2007 during project selection. The committee can also continue some refining after applications are released but prior to the selection committee. There will be several updates of the funding amounts available before the selection of projects in March.

Mr. Thompson brought up the project example of RideLine Brokers and that they are an important service for seniors on the coast. How do they fit into the discretionary grant program?

Ms. Palmateer described how it would likely fit in the categories of innovations, mobility management, etc. Ms. Parker said that the program allows the use of Medicaid dollars to match FTA dollars. Ride brokerages are a good partner with Medicaid.

Jeff said that the fleet replacement and preservation component is included in the \$7 million. It is a lot of money. Do we want to continue using that much money? Operations is a concern.

Ms. Bramlett stressed the importance of vehicle replacement. Oregon communities' needs are great.

Margaret Wehling asked if there is going to be more than one application. Ms. Palmateer answered that there has to be several applications because of such diverse programs.

Claire Potter brought up the issue of needing bridge funding with JARC. The suggestion of flexing 5311 instead of cutting service was discussed.

Ms Coleman stated that she has started working with the FTA to apply for 2006 JARC and will be able to distribute 2006 JARC funds to existing projects that were developed through a planned and competitively selected process.

ITEM F

3:15 p.m. **Endorsement of 2007-09 Discretionary Program**

Mr. Costales reminded Committee that this motion is not requesting PTAC's endorsement of the dollar amounts. This is to obtain Committee approval that we are headed in the right direction.

A motion was made by Ms. Wert to approve funding direction and calendar for the 2007-09 discretionary cycle, seconded by Mr. Thompson and unanimously approved by the Committee.

ITEM G

3:45 p.m. **Agenda Build and Wrap-up**

Ms. Parker described that the *ConnectOregon* consensus meeting was disturbing because of a comment that was made that transit was over represented. However, out of the 25 people in room, Mr. Hamm and Ms. Parker were only two transit advocates in room. The terminology was not supportive of public transit projects. Mr. Hamm suggested being proactive in influencing the *ConnectOregon 2* program.

Concerns were expressed regarding high gas prices. Mr. Thompson commented that high prices are not going away. With the high gas prices, public support is stepping up for public transportation.

The next PTAC meeting will be on September 11, the agenda will consist of:

- The 05-07 Business Plan will be presented at the next meeting for PTAC's endorsement.
- ConnectOregon will be on the next agenda with brainstorming on current policies emphasizing capital projects and jobs, and potential future policy.

Ms. Van Der Hyde suggested Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) hearing materials be reviewed and have PTAC look at the Department of Energy's recommended rule changes. ODOE will consider additional changes if rules don't meet needs.

Mr. Costales praised the ODOT staff for the good job and meaningful work they are doing. Mr. Wenzholz echoed the sentiments.

4:05 p.m. The Committee adjourned at 4:05 p.m.