

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
DRAFT MEETING NOTES  
NOVEMBER 17, 2008**

**Date:** Monday, November 17, 2008  
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** ODOT – HRC  
2775 19<sup>th</sup> St SE, Salem, OR

**Members Present:**

Bob Lowry, Chair, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)  
Claire Potter, TriMet  
Lorna Adkins, Salem Area Mass Transit  
Sally Lawson, O4AD  
John Wenzholz, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)  
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider  
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)  
Peter Shultz, Yamhill County  
Mary Jo Carpenter, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)  
Terry Parker, Lane Transit District (LTD)  
Julie Brown, RVTD

**Members Absent:**

John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services  
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service  
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)  
Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)  
Davis Ritacco, Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services (OVR)

**ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:**

Michael Ward, Administrator  
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Policy Manager  
PJ Pippin, Executive Support  
Robin Bjurstrom, Operations Support Manager

**Interested Persons Present:**

Tim Wilson, Interested Citizen

**Guest Speakers:**

Tony Bryant, TriMet, Bus Maintenance  
Chris Bakken, Rogue Energy (RE)  
David Boyd, Synkro Motive  
Allison Hamilton, ODOT Innovative Partnerships Project Director  
Travis Brouwer, ODOT Federal Affairs Advisor

ITEM A  
1:00 p.m. **Welcome, Introductions, Items of Interest**  
Chairperson Bob Lowry called the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions were made. Meeting notes from the September 8, 2008, PTAC meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by John Wenholtz to approve the notes with changes, seconded by Dennis Dick and unanimously approved by Committee.

ITEM B  
1:10 p.m. **Public Comment** None.

ITEM C  
1:15 p.m. **Administrators Report**  
Robin Bjurstrom, ODOT Operations Support Manager, was introduced to the Committee. Robin was a major force to getting OPTIS onboard, securing better financial controls in place, and has been effectively organizing the clerical staff.

1. November 2008 Oregon Transportation Commission Transportation Meeting Presentation

Transit Division hosted invited speakers and a panel presentation on Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Transportation Options. Invited speakers were Paul Mennet, (speaking on innovative rideshare concepts) and Cathy Silins Deputy Administrator of Public Transportation for Washington State, (speaking about TDM at WSDOT). After the speakers a panel of Oregon Transportation Options coordinators and ZIPCAR representative, gave the Commission overview of the TDM strategies currently at work in Oregon communities. The Oregon Transportation Commission came away with a better understanding of TDM.

2. Oregon Public Transportation Conference (OPTC):

This year's conference was a great success with two hundred-fifty (250) people attending, RTAP scholarships assisted 112 rural attendees to participate. Highlights included the Generational Differences module by Chuck Underwood and the Small Operator Roundtable which is being hosted by Curry County to continue as an online discussion. (Contact Joanne Wasbauer, Curry County Public Transit, for more information.) The Committee was encouraged to complete the Oregon Transit Association's survey monkey evaluation of the conference. Terry Parker provided a lesson learned for next conference. She mentioned that the OPTC preliminary agenda did not have enough detail about topics so her staff did not understand the relevance to their work, did not attend and missed some good training.

3. Bus Price Agreement

This has been a long process; over two years meeting with various groups and divisions. The final DAS contract should be in place by February 1.

4. Discretionary Grant Program

PTD staff, Jean Palmater and Joni Bramlett, have been on-the-road conducting Discretionary Grant Program training. So far, 75 people have attended the workshops. Trainings have been scheduled in Salem, Portland, Springfield, Pendleton, LaGrande,

Redmond, Roseburg, and Medford. The Discretionary Grant application forms will be available on the PTD website soon.

5. OPTIS Update:

ODOT Public Transit has been testing OPTIS, the new PTD financial tracking system by running dual systems (OPTIS and manual) to ensure the OPTIS system is working properly. In January, ODOT will abandon the manual process and use OPTIS for all tracking and processing. A next step will be training to assist state transit providers to use OPTIS directly is a spring goal.

6. New Chairman:

Bob Lowry, PTAC Chair, will be retiring as chair January 1, 2009. ODOT will be selecting a new chair. The Committee was asked for chair recommendations to be sent to Michael.

1:30 p.m.

ITEM D

**PTD Current Needs Assessment Work:**

1. Governors Transportation Proposal

PTD attended the November 10, 2008 Joint Transportation Legislative Committee meeting. At this meeting the Governor announced his Jobs and Transportation Act initiative. The Governor proposed a 2.5 cent cigarette tax increase for Special Transportation Program and the provision of estimated \$44 million of FHWA Surface Transportation Funds for multi-modal use. This opportunity would become available if there is new revenue for highway and bridge work through first time title fees, increased license fees, etc.

Also proposed was a *ConnectOregon III*, with \$150 million available for projects. The question was proposed on, how the Public Transit Division can help transit providers be more effective in the competitive environment of *Connect Oregon*. Committee responses were:

- The language and process is more “tuned” to highway needs.
- We need to try to make Public Transit fit into the picture.
- Possibly Public Transit could assist in economic assessments of transit projects.
- A suggestion was made to submit a PTD submitted application for transit fleet needs in a combined application.

Members noted that ODOT *Connection II* staff was more organized in *Connect II* than in the past. Kudos to *ConnectOregon* staff Michael Buffalino and Teddy Baker for responding to PTAC suggestions.

2. TO Program Expansion Concept

Governor’s Vision Package advocates for greater use of alternative fuels and acceleration in their development. The Governor asks to give Oregonians an early introduction to the next generation automobile innovation while maintaining Oregon’s reputation for protecting our natural resources and quality of life. So the Governor has directed ODOT and other key agencies to begin working with utilities to develop a pilot program for creating a battery charging infrastructure and at the same time expand this public private

partnership to develop an associated smart grid in this region. The Governor's Office has asked for a description of activities.

### 3. PSU Special Needs Report and Key Findings

The first fourteen pages of this 315 page document is a good summary of unmet needs, projected ridership increases, increased operating costs, facility/vehicle depreciation, etc. In short, it's a good report (available on the Public Transit website). House and Senate said the report was well done. Other topics for research were identified. PTD is considering funding further research.

Committee comments:

Some discussion of Community based care and the necessity of transportation to make it work. Oregon has more DHS program waivers for state in the nation. Medicare costs are huge. There is a possible future decrease in monies by 40%. Coordination is very important. Public Transit can manage Medicare transportation costs better than Medicare.

There has been talk about a statewide coordinated council; using a Washington model and how it works. Mark Volmert is heading the effort.

### 4. Rural and Urban Needs Survey (Handout D)

A survey of transit providers was conducted with the assistance of the Oregon Transit Association. The survey was to obtain information about fleet needs in Oregon and the facility needs of rural providers. The survey showed that urban providers experienced 11% growth in cost of required ADA services. Both urban and rural transit providers expect at least a 9% increase in trip demand beginning in 2010. (For further information see Handout D at [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT).)

### 5. Assessment of Attitudes and Public Support for Transit Project

ODOT is thinking of engaging a contractor to do a survey to find out public views on Public Transit. How much support does the public have for public transit?

2:00 p.m.

### ITEM E

#### **ODOT Transit Reauthorization Recommendation (Handout E1)**

#### **Transit Earmark Recommendations (handout E2 & E3)**

Travis Brouwer, Public Affairs adviser. (Reauthorization of Safetea Lu)

SafeTea-Lu expires on 9/30/09 with negative balances in highway side. The new funding package will have a new name.

There is a robust agenda for Oregon in the next reauthorization legislation. Congressman DeFazio, Congressman Bloomenauer, and Senator Wyden, are well situated to understand Oregon transportation needs and to assist the Congress to improve federal transportation policy and programs.

ODOT Request for Earmark Funding:

- Oregon is seeking pilot funds to supplement existing public transit on I-5 to provide additional capacity, add additional transportation options, and reduce congestion on I-5.

- There is an earmark request for rural transit vehicle replacement. Rural transit has grown substantially and providers have a hard time sustaining operations and capital requirements.

Travis presented concepts for the next reauthorization in a position paper: His goal is to look at larger issues and offer ideas for new solutions to congress. A core premise is that rapid growth in demand will continue for public transit. The question is how to finance public transportation to best use this public infrastructure? More resources are needed to be dedicated to public transportation (cigarette tax, lawn mower tax, ID tax, highway trust fund, general fund, carbon-pricing, etc.) to best achieve the potential for reducing congestion, dependence on petroleum and improving mobility. Transit has traditionally received the “scraps off the highway table” in public financing.

Transit investment priorities should be substantially increased in the next authorization bill to preserve current service and build new operating capacity in both urban and rural areas. The increasing senior population is also a great concern for public transit. We need to provide additional resources to transit providers who must meet the increasing demand for transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities.

2:45 p.m. **BREAK**

3:00 p.m. **ITEM F**

**Presentation of ODOT Solar Highway Project**

Allison Hamilton, renewable energy, The Oregon Solar Highway, Office of Innovative Partnerships & Alternative Funding

The Office of Innovative Partnerships & Alternative Funding is spearheading the project to build the first solar highway in Oregon. Currently ODOT runs on: electricity, 41% from coal; 42% from hydropower; 10% in natural gas. Senators Smith and Wyden put in an earmark for the solar highway program. Solar Way LLC (made up of four Oregon companies) was used as the third party developer in this project. With the program, a third party developer will own, purchase, and obtain BETSY energy tax credits.

For over 20 years, Germany, Switzerland, and England have been using solar energy for highway needs. The U.S. currently uses solar for certain systems in railroads.

The demonstration project is at I-5 & 205 interchange. The panels, transformers, etc. are on-site. ODOT has signed the first solar energy agreement. The project cost \$1.28 million. The energy is net metered; plugged directly into the grid, there are no storage batteries.

Another new ODOT alternative energy project, The Alternative Fuels Corridor, would provide conveniently located fueling stations along Interstate 5 for liquid and gaseous fuels not commonly sold at gasoline and diesel fueling stations, including natural gas, bio-diesel, ammonia, hydrogen and others as they emerge. These alternative fueling stations would also provide electric charging stations for plug-in and all-electric electric vehicles and possibly electrification for existing truck parking at rest areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from idling. The stations would be located at key rest areas, approximately every 40 – 70 miles, and operated by private sector partners.

This unique proposition solves two growing problems:

- It helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making it feasible to drive electric and alternative-fueled vehicles.
- It provides resources (from private sector partners) to maintain and expand rest areas in a time when funding for highway services is dwindling.



*Potential sites for alternative fuel availability would be located along the I-5 corridor.*

ODOT, CalTrans and WashDOT submitted a request to the Federal Highway Administration in October for approval to bypass regulations that limit commercial operations at rest areas. In the meantime, the group continues in-depth research. Currently, they are establishing a baseline cost analysis that will help determine what a private sector partner would need to do in order to make the station financially feasible.

Under the proposal, private sector partners would provide the capital for development and operation of the Alternative Fuels Corridor at no cost to the Highway Trust Fund. In exchange, the private sector partners would obtain certain development rights to operate concessions for the sale of alternative fuels and other state-approved goods and services on state-owned property and highway right of way. ODOT intends for the revenues from sales to be used for the operation and maintenance of the fueling stations and associated facilities and provide a reasonable return on investment to the private partner developers.

3:15 p.m.

### ITEM G

#### **TriMet Innovation Proposal/Presentation**

TriMet Phase II Proposal; Battery System Beta Bus Test  
Tony Bryant, TriMet, Bus Maintenance,  
Chris Baucken, Rogue Energy (RE)  
David Boyd, Synkro Motive

The industry is using the same system used for 75 years. TriMet has been a leader, for example, electric cooling system is now a national standard. Currently TriMet needed assistance is extending the life of their batteries (set of four batteries in 600 buses being replaced every ten months – high stress, at a cost of \$900/year/bus), and how to manage increased onboard electrical demand. In fact, this is a problem throughout the transit industry.

Research into off-the-shelf products and solutions were investigated but this concept does not exist in the transit industry; none exist. The partnership attended the APTA expo and found that is nothing like this system being used or tried in the U.S. This new product will save TriMet money in battery cost and labor cost.

The Phase II project goal is to demonstrate to TriMet fleet operating cost savings by:

1. The reduction of annual fuel consumption per bus by a targeted average of 3%
2. A reduction in battery replacement and maintenance costs through longer battery operating lifecycles saving \$850 per year.
3. A reduction in CO2 and diesel particulate emissions

Phase II delivery to TriMet will include the development and delivery of two bus systems consisting of two comparative advanced battery strategies with power management and intelligent controller systems.

Features:

- Two prototype battery replacement packs  
BETA (EMP) BUS # 2720 - Ultra Capacitor / Battery Pack  
BETA BUS # 2533 – LiFe-Phosphate Battery Pack

Each Pack will include:

- Battery inrush limiter
- Parasitic load handler (energy used even when the bus is “off”)
- Regenerative charge controller
- Power Balancer
- Wired communications
- Accessories interface

Projected cost of the Rogue/Synkro Solution is between \$8,900 and \$9,500 per bus. Dollar return over five years will be between \$1,200 and \$4,000 per bus depending on fuel costs (assuming Target of 3% Fuel Savings). The fee is \$95,000, inclusive. All designs, circuits, methods, software code and system implementation remain the intellectual property and copyright of Rogue Energy & Synkro Motive LLC and their affiliates unless otherwise stated in writing.

Vote:

Chair Lowry called for a vote to the question, “Is it a Good expenditure of public funds?” Terry parker made the motion to approve funding, John Wenzholz seconded the motion and the committee voted unanimously to provide funding for this Innovative project.

Application of ADA Paratransit (smaller bus) needs to be explored in regard to this new system.

3:45 p.m.

[ITEM H](#)

**Topics for Next Meeting and Wrap-up**

- LTD Innovative Presentation

4:00 p.m.

Adjourn

Next meeting is January 12, 2009. .

Chairman Lowry called to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m.