

# **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES**

**Date:** Monday, July 11, 2005  
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** ODOT Human Resources Training Center  
Suite A, 2775 19<sup>th</sup> St. SE, Salem OR.

**Members present:**

Bob Lowry, PTAC Chairperson, National Association of Railway Passengers  
Sally Lawson, Northwest Senior & Disability Services  
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service  
Terry Parker, Lane Transit District  
Clair Potter, Tri-Met  
Terry Thompson, Lincoln County Commissioner  
Dolores Raymond, Governor's Commission on Senior Services  
John Wenzholz, Morrow County Commissioner  
Dennis Dick, Valley Retriever Bus Line  
Raye Miles, Broadway Cab  
Debbie Wert, Department of Human Services  
Gary Boley, Commissioner, Oregon Disabilities Commission  
Jeff Hamm, Salem Mass Transit District  
Jay Lynch, Oregon Transit Association  
Frank Synoground, Oregon State Independent Living Council (SILC)

**Members absent:**

Peter Jacobsen, Rogue Valley Transportation District  
Gail Achterman, Commissioner, Oregon Transportation Commission  
Luis Caraballo, Department of Human Services

**ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:**

Martin Loring, Administrator  
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Operations Manager  
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager  
Sherrin Coleman, Planning Program Manager  
Jean Palmateer, Special Transportation Program Manager  
Lori Hepler, Public Information Representative  
PJ Pippin, Executive Support

1:00 p.m. Chairperson Bob Lowry called the meeting to order. Welcome and Introductions were made.

1:15 p.m. **Items of Interest**

Minutes. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to approve the March 14, 2005 meeting minutes.

Report of Membership. Bob Lowry announced that Frank Synoground was officially approved as a PTAC member by the ODOT Director's office.

Meeting Schedule Update. An updated schedule of PTAC meetings for the remainder of the year was handed out to members.

Training and Events Announcements. Public Transit is committed to developing on-going training so that transit providers can obtain additional skills. Last quarter a national trainer, NTI, offered a planning workshop in Portland. It was well-attended. This week PTD is sponsoring a FTA workshop as well as three STF workshops. Sherrin Coleman is working with the Oregon Transit Association (OTA) to develop an agenda for the annual conference in October, which includes training sessions. Upcoming courses include defensive driving; financial management workshop; DBE workshop; and transit agency policy training.

Martin Loring announced that ODOT Director, Bruce Warner, has accepted the Executive Director position with the Portland Development Commission, an urban renewal agency in Portland. Director Warner was the first ODOT director appointed by the governor. His resignation date is August 1, 2005 and to date no announcement has been made regarding an interim director. Martin will keep the committee updated.

Martin also announced that Public Transit's Public Information Representative, Lori Hepler accepted a position with the Clackamas County Sheriff's Department and her last day is July 15, 2005. Public Transit relied upon her exceptional abilities and she will be missed. She has been a great help to the Division.

Dinah Van Der Hyde brought in copies of the June 2005 Easter Seals Project Action Update newsletter for the committee. The front-page article concentrated on Lane County's new EmX (pronounced m x) Vehicle for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Eugene. LTD was recognized for their innovative and progressive approach to transportation accessibility.

Chair Lowry discussed an item that appeared in the May 27, San Francisco Chronicle. The newspaper stated that a group of 20 transit agencies would offer free rides to the public on smoggy days. The story did not address how the revenue loss would be handled.

After discussion led by Dolores Raymond, Chair Lowry asked Jean Palmateer to be on the next meeting agenda to do a short presentation regarding the Drivers At Risk program.

1:15 p.m.

**Item B**

Report on results of 2005 Discretionary Program Project Selection. Dinah Van Der Hyde reported on the Discretionary Program Project Selection. The Selection committee consisted of Janice Wilson, Bob Lowry, Debbie Wert, Peter Jacobsen, and Linda Lynch. This year's program received 33% more applications than last time. Requests for preservation and enhancement projects totaled \$28,915,936. It was a very competitive process since there was only \$17,606,684 in available funds. Applications were evaluated on preservation and enhancement of existing service structure. Mass Transit requests totaled \$9,028,394 with only \$4,000,000 in available funds.

Frank Synoground asked if there was an appeal process for providers that are dissatisfied with the selection results. Dinah Van Der Hyde informed the committee of the process and that to date she had received a couple of inquiries, but no formal appeals for project reconsideration. She will closely monitor and record the inquiries since they might provide useful information for the next program selection process.

Jeff Hamm noted that it appeared based upon the project selection summary document there were more changes this time in the regions between their request and the amount funded. He asked if that was due to a change in the process or a change in the committee. Martin Loring replied that it was a little of both and that was the main reason for the agenda item regarding policy development for the discretionary program project selection.

John Wenzholz asked about funding operations costs in the discretionary program. Martin Loring explained that operation costs were funded when it was for the purpose of expanding services.

Ernie Palmer expressed his thanks to the committee for their good work.

Dinah told the committee that the discretionary program applicants would be contacted and asked to complete a survey to help Public Transit with their needs and ways to improve the review selection process.

1:45 p.m.

**Item C**

**Action Item:** Select committee members to help develop policy for discretionary program investment in two new areas:

- Fixed Route ADA complementary paratransit service
- Client specific transportation services

Policy Development #1: ADA Complementary Paratransit Investment: PTD Staff is recommending that the PTAC committee formulate an appropriate policy

to guide ODOT's role in funding ADA complementary paratransit services. Chair Lowry asked the Committee to identify interested members to work with staff on an expert task group to analyze this issue and recommend appropriate policy guidance. Jeff Hamm, Terry Parker, Ernie Palmer and Debbie Wert volunteered to serve on the task group. It was suggested that in addition to the committee members a representative from DHS contracts and Ride Connection be invited to participate.

Policy Development #2: Client-Only Transportation Investment: PTD Staff is recommending that the PTAC committee formulate an appropriate policy to guide ODOT's role in funding transportation services where the benefit is limited to the clients of the agency requesting discretionary grant assistance. Chair Lowry asked the Committee to identify interested members to work with staff to analyze this issue and recommend appropriate policy guidance. Claire Potter, Debbie Wert, John Wenzholz and Raye Miles volunteered to serve on the task group.

2:15 p.m. **Item G**

Gail Curtis, ODOT Planner, reported on the progress of the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP). Gail explained the OTP policy analysis process and the challenges of identifying investment strategy. The goal is to adopt a plan that identifies investment strategies for both local and state. She stressed that the steering committee still has to review her presentation before it is presented to the Oregon Transportation Commission. One of the opinions is that higher fuel prices, which translate to higher fares, will result in more users of public transit. Gail will attend the next PTAC meeting to give an update on OTP.

2:45 p.m. **Item D**

**Action Item:** Joni Bramlett gave a brief presentation on the changes and additions to the State Management Plan (SMP). The purpose of the SMP is to be a guidebook for providers of state policies and explain how to administer federal programs. Staff identified some policy changes and additions to the plan to better comply with federal requirements. PTD Staff is recommending the Committee to approve the changes. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed by the Committee to approve the changes to the State Management Plan.

3:00 p.m. **Item E**

Jean Palmateer gave a brief legislative update to the committee.

- HB 2932 regarding Veterans Affairs, would allow veterans free bus passes. This bill was expanded to include services to veterans in community centers established in exclusive farm use zones. It is pending at the Governor's desk.

- HB 2107 passed the House and is now under consideration in the Senate. This bill requires the operators of a school bus to have passenger endorsement and school bus endorsement. Previously, school bus endorsements were issued by the Department of Education. It also establishes offenses for being disqualified from holding a commercial driver's license; adds offenses that require suspension of CDL; suspends CDL license if convicted of driving under the influence of intoxicants.
- SB 870 passed the Senate on July 8. The bill provides \$8.9 million to preserve the Oregon Project Independence. This program helps the elderly continue living at home instead of an institution.

3:10 p.m.      **Item F**

Report on the Transportation Planning Rule. Martin Loring gave a brief update on the transportation planning rule and the role it plays in state land use requirements. As communities develop, planning for transportation should be coordinated at the same time. He told the committee that equally important is how it is presented to the public. Previously the issue was perceived as public transportation options versus the private, single occupant car. Today the thought is to promote options, such as one day a week using alternative transportation to work, or shopping. That alternative could be a bicycle, walking or riding the bus.

3:20 p.m.      **Item H**

Report on Public Transportation Division Biennial Budget. Martin Loring gave a brief report on ODOT's budget. The budget has been approved with the exception of two items that were to expand services. The first item is mass transit vehicle funding and the second item is the transportation planning project (Trip Planner). Martin explained that the projects were not really declined, but instructions were given to apply for funds from the e-board after the TEA bill is approved and funded.

3:30 p.m.      **Round Table and Wrap Up**

- DHS is hoping to get their 2005-2007 budget approved and a new director.
- LTD started a new 70+ Free Rider program; 500 people have signed up. LTD is encouraging riders to use free fixed route and not paratransit transportation.
- Bob Lowry noted that they have an 80+ Free Rider program and they have 150 people signed up.
- Jean Palmateer asked Terry Parker to send her the policy on the honored citizen program and 1/2 price fare so she could share it with the committee and other transit providers.

3:55 p.m.      Chair Lowry adjourned the meeting.