

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
SEPTEMBER 8, 2008**

Date: Monday, September 8, 2008
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: ODOT – HRC
2775 19th 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
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
John Wenholz, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)
Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service
Peter Shultz, Yamhill County
Julie Brown, RVTD
Mary Jo Carpenter, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)

Members Absent:

Terry Parker, Lane Transit District (LTD)
Janice Wilson, Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)
John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Dinah Van Der Hyde, Policy Manager
PJ Pippin, Executive Support
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager
Jean Palmateer, STF Program Manager

Interested Persons Present:

Tim Wilson, Interested Citizen

Guest Speakers:

None.

ITEM A1:00 p.m. **Welcome, Introductions, Items of Interest**

Chairperson Bob Lowry called the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions were made. Meeting notes from the July 14, 2008, PTAC meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Ernie Palmer to approve the notes with changes, seconded by Alan Pollock and unanimously approved by Committee.

ITEM B1:10 p.m. **Public Comment**

Tim Wilson: AASHTO has recommended a goal of double transit ridership by 2030. Because of the increase in current public transit ridership due to dramatic rise in fuel costs the numbers could increase more dramatically. AASHTO's trend line is very conservative in current environment.

ITEM C1:15 p.m. **Administrators Report**1. NTD 2008 Requirements:

Rural Program providers are to return data to PTD by the end of September and then PTD will send the information to the FTA by the end of October. PTD has requested training from FTA for providers on how to report in and use the new database.

2. Oregon Streetcar Fund:

ODOT received one application for the Streetcar project. The money was granted to The Portland Streetcar Loop project. Portland Streetcar will get seven cars and it may take two to three years to build up car supply and increase track. The FTA Grant must be awarded before PTD adds funding and then PTD will study job creation. The Portland Streetcar Loop project will be a 3.3 mile extension of the existing track with 18 new streetcar stops.

3. Oregon Public Transportation Conference (OPTC)

The Oregon Transit Conference (OTC) conference has been renamed Oregon Public Transportation Conference (OPTC). The conference will be from October 26-28 in Seaside. Matt Garrett (ODOT Director) will be speaking at the conference as well as Gail Achterman (OTC Commissioner) and Chuck Underwood (topic: Generational Differences). PTAC members are asked to register for the conference online.

4. Governor's Commuter Challenge

The Governor's Commuter Challenge asks state employees on the Capitol Mall to "Save Money, Reduce Emissions and Share the Ride" by choosing not to drive alone to work this summer. The

goal for the Challenge is to reduce carbon by 500,000 pounds. After Labor Day a general survey will be done to measure the reduction in emissions and the savings in dollars over the summer.

Final Commuter Challenge figures will be presented at next PTAC meeting. There were 521 commitments replacing drive alone trips. Out of 8400 state workers, 2500 have bus passes; 460 are newly issued (23% increase).

5. State Price Agreements for Vehicles:

The contracts is expected to be out to bid in October or November. Providers will be able to purchase up to 44-passenger buses. If providers want to use vendors outside of the price agreement contract, PTD may require justification to ensure best price is obtained.

6. OPTIS Update:

The new grant computer system, OPTIS, will be active very soon. Information is being loaded into the system and PTD will run a dual system for three months.

7. Malheur County Update

This service start-up constitutes a remarkable partnership involving local providers, cities, county, and the states of Oregon and Idaho. Ribbon cutting for the new fixed route is September 12. Service will begin on the 15th between Fruitland and Payette, ID and Ontario, OR.

8. Federal DOJ ADA Draft Rule Review

PTAC members were asked to review and give comment on the Federal Department of Justice draft rule clarifying transit's ADA requirement regarding service animals. The review addresses the difference between service animals and comfort/emotional support animals; use of wild animals (nonhuman primates) in service; applicable fees and charges for service animals; certification of service animals.

1:45 p.m.

ITEM D

Governor's Transportation Initiatives

1. Portland State University (PSU) Budget Note report (Handout B)

Legislature finalized 2007-09 DHS budget with a budget note that requires ODOT and DHS work together to identify new funding sources for rural and urban elderly and disabled transportation services. ODOT entered into an agreement with Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) to lead the work necessary for the budget note. AOC contracted with PSU to perform the analysis. The final report from PSU should be completed in three weeks. This report is a unique piece of work, since there has not been a similar study in the US. Other states will be very interested.

Some highlights of the report findings:

- There is no obvious funding source that is readily available except additional cigarette tax. Oregon cannot use vehicle/fuel related taxes for operating public transit, though this is a commonly used source for funding transit in other states. Other states also commonly use sales tax and lottery funds.
- Estimates on cigarette sales tax revenues show that an increase between 14¢ (lowest estimate) and 61¢ (highest estimate) is needed by 2030 to fund and maintain current transit services.

In December, public transit funding will be in the Governors recommended budget.

2. Public Transit Division Rural and Urban Needs Survey

PTD used a “Survey Monkey” format to request information from transit operators to identify capital needs and to identify how common operating expenditures have shifted in the past biennium. The survey addressed the whole picture of transportation needs: special needs, urban mass transit, etc. The survey also asked questions about paratransit budgets; service delivery; facility needs; how many buses will be purchased and if they will be “green.” The results will identify an estimated dollar amount necessary to fund new vehicles, replacement vehicles and other capital such as facilities. The preliminary results of the survey indicate that the fleet is changing toward larger vehicles. Since the onset of higher fuel costs, ridership has increased and providers need larger buses.

2:45 p.m.

ITEM E

Discretionary Grant Program Implementation

1. Activities and Schedule (Handout C)

PTD will be notifying providers about changes in the discretionary grant program.

Some discretionary grant program changes include:

- STF Agencies (42 agencies) will be eligible for allocation of funds which is based on a formula.
- There is approximately \$13 million in 5310 and \$2.5 million in STF discretionary funds available. (Federal funds are estimates until appropriated by Congress; state funds revenue forecast will be updated in May 2009.)
- FTA 5310 and STF funds will be combined into a single grant solicitation.
- New Freedom and JARC will have separate applications.
- Projects must be derived from the Coordinated Plans adopted by the STF Agencies. Doris Penwell will be identifying consultants to work with STF Agencies to assist in assessing their Coordinated Plans.

- STF money will not require any match and local STF Agencies may use the funds however they want in accordance to Oregon law and grants will be written for projects.
- If the project is extremely large, PTD may allow the deferment of STF money for next biennium.

PTD expressed the need of responsibly maintaining supervision over nonprofit agencies and would like the STF Agencies to oversee these services. A source of technical assistance regarding managing non-profit agencies is a non-profit technical assistance agency called Technical Assistance for Community Services, or “TACS.”

PTAC briefly discussed client-only service, including the requirement for client-only agencies to share the vehicles obtained from the 5310 program.

Other critical issues were discussed related to the level of funding in the discretionary grant program: several agencies will receive less funding then in the current biennium, which will cause cuts to service if additional funds are not found. Yamhill County Transit has connected the entire county with other systems (TriMet, Cherriots, etc.). People are really using public transit in Yamhill County. There is high public demand; standing room only but because of increase in costs service may be cut.

2:30 p.m. **BREAK**

2. Preventive Maintenance (Handout D)

Joni Bramlett presented the amended Preventive Maintenance policy to PTAC. Some important points were:

- Major component replacements (rebuilt, overhaul, body renovations) are eligible in the preventive maintenance. There is a limit of one major component per vehicle.
- There is no longer a limit per vehicle on how much can be spent on preventive maintenance. In the past, it was \$3,000/vehicle.
- Repairs resulting from accidents (above and beyond what insurance covers) are eligible costs as preventive maintenance.

3:00 p.m.

ITEM F

Federal Reauthorization of Transportation Act Policy (Handouts E and F)

The committee reviewed the handouts, and the point was made by staff that policy recommendations from Oregon will have time to be refined. There may be a two to three year period before the reauthorization is finalized by Congress.

Dinah Van Der Hyde presented the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommendations that, once finalized, will be submitted to the new administration. Oregon DOT is participating in preparing the policy recommendations, and will

also submit recommendations to Oregon Congressional delegation independently of AASHTO. American Public Transit Association's recommendations will be brought to the next PTAC meeting.

AASHTO recommends that the Federal Government authorize a guaranteed investment level of no less than \$123 billion over the six year authorization period. A new streamlined and simplified program was also recommended.

Part of the new simplified program structure includes consolidating FTA programs into six major investment areas:

- Operations & Access
- System Preservation & Renewal
- Congestion Relief & Metro Mobility
- Enhancements/Quality of Life
- Research & Planning
- Administration

To help streamline the new program structure 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and 5317 New Freedom Program will be eliminated.

A brief discussion was held on current Oregon needs and future transit needs, including congestion problems; capacity issues. Public transit can reduce the problem.

Alan Pollock, Sally Lawson, Bob Lowry and Claire Potter volunteered to form a committee with Dinah Van Der Hyde to establish and send Oregon's recommendations to AASHTO.

3:15 p.m.

ITEM G

Topics for Next Meeting and Wrap-up

- Public Transit solar facilities
- ODOT Solar Highway Project
- Mount Hood Transit in the Park project; ODOT facilitates funding although it is a federal project. Getting people to work. Dangerous in winter. Looking for alternatives.
- Oregon Public Transportation Plan update
- New System "Start Up" policy improvements
- Reauthorization recap – APTA
- Budget note

Next meeting was to be scheduled for November 10, 2008. However, the date will be changed due to Veterans Holiday on November 11. Please check PTAC website for updates.

John Wenholz moved to adjourn the meeting, Ernie Palmer seconded the motion, and Committee unanimous agreed to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.