

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
MARCH 17, 2008**

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

Location: ODOT – Transportation Building
355 Capitol St NE, Salem, OR

Members Present:

Bob Lowry, Chair, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)
Claire Potter, TriMet
Terry Parker, Lane Transit District (LTD)
Lorna Adkins, Salem Area Mass Transit
Sally Lawson, O4AD
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
John Wenholz, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)
Mary Jo Carpenter, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider
Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)

Interested Persons Present:

Tim Wilson, Interested Citizen
Tony Bryant, TriMet

Members Absent:

Janice Wilson, Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)
John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Michael Ward, Administrator
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Policy Manager
PJ Pippin, Executive Support
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager
Matthew Barnes, Intercity Program Manager
Cassandra Garrison, Intercity Assistant
Alison Wiley, Transportation Options Manager

Guest Speakers:

Peter Schultz, Yamhill County Transp./Westerlook

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

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

Approval of meeting notes for January 2008, February 2008, and ConnectOregon II Modal Review meeting. A motion was made by Dennis Dick to approve the notes, seconded by Dennis Dick and unanimously approved by Committee with one noted correction to Sally Lawson's title and name of employer (change title from 04AD to O4AD and employer from Mid-Willamette Valley Senior Services to Northwest Senior & Disability Services).

John Wenholz thanked Michael Ward, Matthew Barnes and Alison Wiley for visiting Morrow County.

ITEM B

1:10 p.m. Public Comment

None.

ITEM C

10:20a.m. Administrators Report

DHS Budget Note

Portland State University (PSU) has been engaged by Public Transit to do transportation research projects. PSU representatives talked about what kind of research they will be doing. The Steering Committee will be interacting with PSU. There are many volunteers to do research (graduate students and two PhDs have volunteered) and work with Public Transit. They will not be creating new data; using data already available for transit projects. Public transit needs will be addressed in the 2009 Oregon session. Findings will be presented to the Oregon Transportation Commission in August and LFO in September.

ConnectOregon II

We documented our comments from the meetings. The economic benefit issues have been raised and given to the policy committee. Comparison charts between committee determination of economic benefit and the economist's determination of economic benefit were in the committee member packets. Projects will be presented to the OTC in June.

Oregon Streetcar Rules

On Friday at 2pm in Salem a public hearing of the Oregon Streetcar administrative rules will be conducted in the Transportation Building at 355 Capitol St NE, Rm 122. \$20 million in lottery-backed bonds (to be sold in 2009) will be used to purchase and operate streetcars from an Oregon-owned and based company. The item goes to the Oregon Transportation Commission meeting in April.

Training & Events

- Willamette University, Transit and Community Transportation Management Certificate Program, April 7-11, 2008 and May 12-16, 2008
- March 26, 2008 11-12: Project Action from Easter Seals, Fixed Route Driver Responsibilities Under the ADA, by David Knight, FTA (audio conference)
- June 1-6, Community Transportation Association EXPO in New Orleans

Mr. Ward recently returned from Washington, D.C. where he attended the APTA conference. Sessions focused on the future of public transit, building transit coalitions, climate change, and the role of public transit. Mr. Ward also attended a special workshop on SAFETEA-LU New Starts/Small Starts program. Members of Congress spoke on issues affecting public transportation including the reauthorization of several federal transit programs, appropriations, the budget process and legislation dealing with transit security. Increased funding levels were of great concern and a long-term solution is necessary. Mr. Ward was able to speak with Defazio's transportation staff person regarding public transit in Oregon. Mr. Pollock added that Oregon was well-represented by key-note speakers.

State Price Agreements for Vehicles

Price agreements will be available on the DAS ORPIN system for vehicles varying in size from a minivan to 44 passenger buses. The new system has a qualified list of vendors (with a drop-down list); and the transportation provider can go into the ORPIN system and select a bus, choose a vendor, and other options and specs available. Vehicle specification document is out for review to ensure it meets the needs of transportation providers. An evaluation committee will meet to review bids and recommend vendors and vehicles that qualify. PTAC members are asked to offer someone (expert from their system) to sit in on evaluation committee meetings beginning in May/June. Washington DOT will be involved in the evaluation of this process but experts with the technical experience are needed to ensure success.

PTAC Comments: More information needs to be shared with applicants regarding realistic life of each bus in addition to the minimum standards for replacement. Federal average replacement cycle is 8 years or 115,000 miles. A comment was made that it gives people unrealistic expectations. Clarifying information will be put in the discretionary package.

1:45 p.m.

ITEM D

Hybrid Vehicle Innovation Project Presentation

TriMet made a request for and was awarded a \$150,000 innovation grant to purchase a tow-truck and bucket truck used on the light rail lines. However, after more research, TriMet used an existing truck and had it retrofitted which saved about \$250,000. TriMet no longer needed the tow-truck or the bucket truck. Today, TriMet is asking permission to reallocate grant money from the old project to the new project which is based on hybrid shuttle buses (cutaway buses) provided by West Start/Calstart.

West Start/Calstart is a nonprofit dedicated to reduce fuel emissions and make fuel efficient and develops new technologies for the transportation sector, especially in the heavy-duty truck industry and develops vehicle technologies.

West Start/Calstart uses the military, commercial trucks, buses and packages them together for greater funding and commercial application. In particular, the military must spend a lot of money and a great need for fuel-efficient vehicles; gasoline is the 2nd most expensive product to deliver to military, water is the only item more expensive. If they have to air-lift fuel into the battle field it is \$700/gallon.

Need to Define performance and requirements for a common truck/bus chassis (HTUF - Hybrid Truck Users Form) probably a cutaway bus or school bus. It works on a parallel system (electric/hydraulics system). There are 30 transit providers around the country that want to buy this type of vehicle. If they develop, we will buy; savings in quantity purchase. Paratransit vehicles are one of the fastest growing areas; not circulator shuttle buses. The plan is to cut fuel costs; increase brake life; reduce tire wear; reduce wear/tear on transmission parts, etc.

Currently, they are searching for funding programs (state programs); looking for committed buyers; seeking financial help in developing this technology and road-testing the product (TriMet has volunteered to be part of the pilot project). Educating the customers of both economic and intangible benefits of hybrids (10 year life span+) is important as well.

Mr. Palmer pointed out that rural bus companies don't usually have the dollars to try new things; have trouble purchasing regular buses. Mr. Schultz said that the vehicle can work in any environment.

A Motion to reallocate money was made by Ernie Palmer; seconded by Dennis Dick; Committee unanimously agreed to reallocate the \$165,000 from the old project to this new innovation project.

2:15 p.m. **ITEM E**
Discretionary Grant Workgroup and Timeline

Dinah Van Der Hyde asked for volunteers to participate in a subcommittee to question and examine the discretionary grant program; what do we want to accomplish. Terry Parker and Claire Potter had previously volunteered to assist on this subcommittee. The subcommittee will review "lessons learned" and help create clear instructions and applications and streamline the process. The grant process needs to be simplified. Note was made that transit system operations should not be supported through the discretionary grant program. Work needs to begin immediately.

A decrease in state tax for funding the discretionary grant program (cigarette tax, ID cards, lawnmower tax) must be considered. The Federal side gets a 5% increase each year.

A Discretionary Investment Timeline was distributed to members.

2:45 p.m. BREAK

3:00 p.m. **ITEM F**
Request for Comment; Intercity Pilot Project

Matthew explained the difference between long distance, intercity service (Greyhound) versus regional, local service (commuter service, etc.).

Matthew discussed regional service funding. A new federal policy regarding match was mentioned.

There are three policy documents that support intercity service:

1. FTA 5311 circular that clearly pushes us in the direction of long distance service rather than regional service.
2. Public Transit's Biennial Report 2001 provides justification for providing regional service (Greyhound provided more long-distance runs).
3. PTD's State Management Plan clearly covers both regional and long distance intercity service.

Public Transit has identified three "Corridors of Interest". Population densities were looked at and public needs were defined.

1. Portland down the coast to Florence
2. Walla-Walla/Pendleton/Hermiston
3. Bend/Klamath Falls/Crescent City

Service selection criteria

1. Estimated subsidy per ride.
2. Intercity network connectivity (How well integrated is the proposed route with existing intercity network?).
3. Population characteristics (income, age, etc.).
4. Existing service on the corridor does the proposed service complement existing transit service.

Based on expected cost of service there is a budget for 500 service miles, 7 days a week plus marketing in one of the three corridors. Exact areas and service types will be determined later.

A well-defined service contract to ODOT contracting should be completed by May. The type of vehicle will be written into the RFP.

The comment was made that "If a service meets peoples' needs it will survive."

Matthew Barnes was presented with an ODOT "Driving Force" award for all of his exceptional work in supporting two programs before the new TDM manager was hired.

3:30 p.m.

ITEM G

PTAC Membership

Committee made suggestions for new PTAC members.

- Work Access Representative
- Small Urban Transportation Provider
- Local Road/Highway Planner. Discussion on the need to have a planner on the committee was held. Some believed that there was a need to get public transit and planning together; make sure roads are wide enough (large turnarounds, shelter, ADA accessible, etc.) through contact through planning department. Try to ensure that public transportation is considered when planning is done. FTA dollars are provided through transit planning. Build a relationship with right person on planning issues and get a different perspective and influence planning to ensure transit is considered. Many new Care facilities are not built near transportation; no accessibility to transportation. The comment was made that there are already county commissioners on PTAC that are involved in planning.

- Private Sector Representative. Get someone from the private sector with a background in public transit.
- Recommendation for League of Oregon Cities representative.
- Tribal representative – Grand Ronde has buses with connections to Yamhill County.
- Highway/Bridges representative was suggested to serve on PTAC. Mr. Ward will check with Doug Tindall, Highway Division, for a recommendation.

4:00 p.m.

[ITEM H](#)

Meeting Adjourned

Mr. Lowry informed the Committee that the Corvallis Transit had an 11% increase in ridership for January and a 25% increase this month.

Topics for the next meeting will include “Innovation” grants. Michael will be meeting with Janice Wilson on a straw model of the revised application process. Discussion on the new Medicaid transportation program changes will be discussed at the next meeting as well.

The next PTAC meeting is May 12, 2008

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