

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
February 23, 2009**

Date: Monday, February 23, 2009
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
Claire Potter, TriMet
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service
Julie Brown, Rogue Valley Transportation District
Mary Jo Carpenter, Oregon Transit Association
Peter Shultz, Yamhill County
Sally Lawson, Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disability
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (Lincoln County)

Members Absent:

John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services
Davis Riccacio, Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation
Terry Parker, Lane Transit District
John Wenholz, at large (Morrow County)
Lorna Adkins, SAMTD

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Michael Ward, Administrator
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Policy Manager
PJ Pippin, Executive Support
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager
Jean Palmateer, STF Program Manager
Sharon Peerenboom, Non Urbanized Area Program Manager

Interested Persons Present:

Tim Wilson, Concerned Citizen
Mark Volmert, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments

Guest Speakers:

None.

1:00 p.m. [ITEM A](#)
Welcome, Introductions, Items of Interest

Chairperson Bob Lowry called the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions were made. Meeting notes from the November 17, 2008, PTAC meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Bill Hall to approve the notes, seconded by Mary Jo Carpenter, and unanimously approved by Committee.

1:10 p.m. [ITEM B](#)
Public Comment

None.

1:15 p.m. [ITEM C](#)
Administrators Report

Mr. Ward noted that on Wednesday, February 25, the House Transportation Committee is holding an open house for public transit in Hearing Room D at 1pm.

On April 21, the Oregon Transit Association will host Transit Day at the State Capitol to promote the need for increased funding for transportation for seniors and people with disabilities. OTA will arrange meetings with legislators, so please RSVP to Kelsey Wilson, Association Manager.

Also on Wednesday, February 25, the House Health Care Committee will meet to discuss HB2122, cigarette tax increase. An overview on tobacco use and history will be presented.

In mid-to-late April, Joint Ways & Means Committee will be meeting on the ODOT budget, and the Governor's Jobs Transportation Act.

Portland State University was been hired to revise and update the Non Urbanized Area program (5311) formula. PTD should have a status report by April 2009 with project completion and findings available by summer. Recommendations will be discussed with the PTAC.

As of March 2009, Bob Lowry has served his tenure as PTAC chair, and Terry Parker will take the lead as the new chairperson.

Mr. Palmer asked how the tumultuous financial situation in Oregon will affect PTD. Mr. Ward responded that there is a freeze on job vacancies; state agencies have been told they need to watch expenditures; the larger general funded agencies, like DHS, are more affected by the downturn in the economy. Management Service and Executive Service employees are required to take furlough days. The number of days depends on position and salary. Management and Executive Service employees may also receive pay cuts.

1:45 p.m.

ITEM D**Economic Recovery & Reinvestment Act: Rural Program Projects**

1. Timeline
2. Selection Criteria and Process

Mr. Ward provided an overview of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which was signed into law on February 17, 2009 by President Obama.

ARRA will provide resources for public transportation projects to help sustain and create jobs. The program is a major effort to invest in America's infrastructure with emphasis on getting work started as soon as possible. PTD will have approximately \$14.6 million available for current participants in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funded Non Urbanized Area program (5311).

The division is finalizing a plan for implementing the project selection process. There will be a two week timeline to turn in applications. Project readiness is identified as primary eligibility criteria. Priority will be given to projects already started and those with anticipated completion within three years. For facility projects, which includes shelters, all public process and environmental requirements must be completed and approved, with local permits in place. Site maps and building plans must be documented with the application. Vehicles must be ready to order and meet FTA replacement requirements. Equipment must be readily available for purchase. PM is an ongoing activity. Mobility Management must be a planned activity and ready for implementation. ARRA may be used for projects not usually funded, such as energy efficiency; security, lighting, fencing, deferred maintenance, bike lockers, diagnostic tools, computers, etc. Providers will need technical assistance from PTD to ensure the process is done accurately and quickly.

The ARRA is a reimbursement program; providers will not receive checks. FTA requires unused funds returned to the federal government.

ARRA is being implemented at the same time as the regular PTD discretionary grant programs. Public Transit staff suggest providers take advantage of both programs; overlap.

There was a concern expressed that once so many nation-wide projects get started, we will run out of workers/contractors. How many bus manufacturers are there; and with orders from all 50 states, how many can quickly fill the orders to build hundreds of vehicles. Comment was made that a provider may buy seven new buses but if the service does not have money for driver salary, the bus purchase is useless.

Committee discussion revolved around "permits in place". Small providers don't have much available revenue for environmental tests, blue prints, etc. The comment was made that projects may go faster in rural areas because local contractors are familiar with local conditions. The project development process may not go as quickly for larger providers.

ODOT Public Transit Division – Timeline of events for ARRA activities

Actions Required by Law or FTA Guidance:

Start Date for Clock	21 days after bill enactment	90 days of bill enactment	150 days of bill enactment	180 days after funds apportioned	1 year – Obligate balance of funds	3 years – all projects completed
2/17/2009	3/10/2009 *	6/18/2009	7/17/2009	9/6/2009 *	9/6/2010	9/6/2012
President signs bill	Funds apportioned (FRN published)	Award criteria due within 90 days of bill enactment.	Priority given to projects currently in construction or "able to obligate funds" within 150 days of bill passage.	50% of funds must be obligated – means: TEAM-Web application approved by FTA Region X	Law says funds available until 9/30/2010 to FTA	TEAM-Web grant closed

Actions required by ODOT PTD to Obligate Funds (180-day requirement):

2/23/2009	2/27/2009	3/10/2009 *	3/12/2009	3/27/2009	4/8/2009	4/15/2009	5/30/2009	6/1/2009	9/6/2009 *
PTAC discussion	Distribute info. based on current knowledge	Apportionment published in Federal Register	Send solicitation & post to PTD Web site	Deadline for applications	Publish list of projects – public notice 45 days starts	OTC approves list of projects	45 days public notice ends	Awards based on available funds	TEAM grant awarded (funds obligated)
	Start clock for local public involvement if not already begun	Tweak solicitation			-Provide list to OTC -Create federal grant applic.	-Finalize FTA applic. - Start writing grant agreements & order vehicles			

* Please note: Dates may shift based on Federal Register Notice publish date (earlier—not later).

2/20/2009

2:30 p.m.

ITEM E

Special Transportation Program Revenue Projections

Forecasted revenues for the STF program indicate that the revenue is below the Governor’s Recommended Budget. The STF program is funded by three sources of revenue: the cigarette tax, the Transportation Operating Fund (TOF or lawn-mower fund), and State ID cards. Currently, there is a 30% drop in ID card revenue. Previous forecasts expected \$3.4 million from sale of the sale of ID cards; it is now forecasted at \$3.1 million. The June 2008 economic forecast showed \$6.4 million TOF available; the December 2008 forecast is \$6.2 million. Cigarette Tax revenue forecasts are also declining.

2:45 p.m.

BREAK

3:00 p.m.

ITEM F

Policy discussion on unspent surface transportation program capital funds

Public Transit has \$3 million left over from the “Innovation” grant program. Mr. Ward requested feedback from the PTAC regarding the best use of the funds.

Committee discussion: Ms. Potter recommended distributing the money to STF agencies for transit improvements like vehicle replacement, computer replacement, etc. Mr. Lowry recommended that the funds be used to maintain service levels necessary for sustainable operations. Mr. Shultz discussed the need for a long-term view of public transit and a unified environmental vision.

Mr. Ward thanked the committee members for their recommendations.

3:15 p.m.

[ITEM G](#)

Suggested Topics for Next Meeting and Wrap-up

Elaine Wells and Terry Parker will be doing a presentation at the March OTC meeting. The Oregon Transportation Commission has invited PTAC to present at the April 15, 2009 OTC meeting. Members will plan the discussion and presentation to the OTC during the March meeting.

Next meeting is tentatively set for Monday, March 23, 2008 so it coincides with the OTA meeting.

As Chair Lowry's last action for PTAC, he adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.