

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

Date: Monday, March 23, 2009
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Best Western Black Bear Inn
Salem Oregon

Members Present:

Terry Parker, Chair, Lane Transit District (LTD)
Bob Lowry, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service
Julie Brown, RVTD
Mary Jo Carpenter, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)
Sally Lawson, O4AD
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider
Dave Ritacco, Vocational Rehabilitation
John Wenzholz, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)
Lorna Adkins, Salem Area Mass Transit
Peter Shultz, Yamhill County

Teleconference:

Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council

Members Absent:

John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)
Claire Potter, TriMet

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Michael Ward, Administrator
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Policy Manager
PJ Pippin, Executive Support
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager
Sharon Peerenboom, Rural Program Manager
Amanda Owens, PSU Graduate Intern

Interested Persons Present:

Tim Wilson, Interested Citizen

Guest Speakers:

None

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

Chairperson Terry Parker called the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions were made. Meeting notes from the February 23, 2009 PTAC meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Bob Lowry to approve the notes as presented, seconded by Alan Pollock and unanimously approved by Committee.

Amanda Owens, a graduate student at Portland State University, gave an overview of the project she is working to FTA 5311 non urbanized area formula used to distribute general public transit funds for rural areas. Amanda is leading a team of interns on the project. The project will look at what is currently accomplished with the funding formula and possibilities for improvements. The team will look into data collection and different variables. The project will also look at how other states distribute their 5311 funds to program participants. The result will be a report with recommendations about improvements to the formula and how to update it regularly to keep it current. The report is expected to be completed by June 2009.

1:10 p.m. [ITEM B;](#) **Public Comment.** No requests to comment.

1:15 p.m. [ITEM C;](#) **Administrator's Report**

- STF Program Revenue. Mr. Ward reported the number of ID cards issued in the past year has decreased by about 30%. The reduction in sales has resulted in a projected revenue shortfall of approximately \$1.7 million in the STF program for the 09-11 bienniums. There is a proposal for the legislature to increase the ID card fee by \$10. If passed the fee increase will raise approximately \$3.8 million for the STF program in the 09-11 biennium. PTD will adjust for the reduced revenue by reserving \$750,000 as contingency to keep commitments to STF Agencies for the biennium.
- Mr. Ward mentioned the expansion of intercity bus service in Southern Oregon. The Shuttle will begin intercity service from Klamath Falls to Medford to Brookings beginning next month. Previously, the only other service route available was from Klamath Falls to Eugene to Coos Bay to Brookings.
- Legislation was proposed to give local government the ability to raise gas taxes for transportation purposes; however the legislature seems to want sole jurisdiction over raising the gas tax; cities and counties proposal is not fully supported.
- Legislation proposed to raise revenues for transportation has many special interest groups concerned. For example, the beer and wine industry is upset with a tax on bottles because the tax because the tax goes back to manufacturers, not users and reduces their ability to compete in the industry.

1:45 p.m. [ITEM D;](#) **LTD Innovation Project Recommendation**

November 2008 PTAC meeting members did advise that LTD's proposal for an integrated assessment of client ride needs was an "Innovative" project, meeting the criteria established for projects to be funded in that program.

Lane Transit District (LTD) and Ride Connection, Inc. and Lane County DHS Senior & Disabled Services have collaborated to develop an integrated eligibility model, to be used in the RideSource Call Center that serves Lane County. The model combines Medicaid, ADA paratransit and other Transportation eligibility into a centralized function. The purpose is to

create and test an in-person interview approach that uses the knowledge and expertise of human services case managers and transportation specialists to provide information, consultation and assessments to determine transportation options for mobility challenged individuals. LTD and Ride Connection will collaboratively develop the assessment tools and methodology for refining and replicating this approach. The project will create a framework so others can use it and build upon it. The estimated cost of the project is \$44,600.

Ernie Palmer made a Motion to increase the grant to \$50,000 for any hidden costs for the project. Alan Pollock seconded the Motion and the Committee unanimously agreed. Terry Parker abstained from the vote. Final motion was made to fund LTD's Integrated Eligibility "Innovation" project. Ernie Palmer seconded the Motion and Committee unanimously agreed to fund \$50,000 to the project. Terry Parker abstained from voting.

2:30 p.m.

ITEM E: ARRA Update:

Mr. Ward overviewed ODOT and PTD activities to respond to ARRA, the federal economic recovery program that is on a quick recovery timeline. January, Oregon Transportation Commission discussed preparation for ARRA grants to Oregon. ODOT Highway Division began to prepare a program list of ready to go highway projects that fit the criteria for immediate jobs to be created. At February OTC meeting commissioners discussed the idea of incorporating other transportation projects, not only highway. Agreeing that the main role of the ARRA stimulus package is to create more jobs by June 2009 the OTC opened up ARRA funds for non-highway related projects. The OTC requested that all projects must be shovel-ready with ownership in place, if applicable and that they assist economically distressed areas.

OTC ARRA projects. On March 11, OTC held a public hearing with 90 people signed up to speak; only 84 provided testimony. There were 326 project requests presented, worth half billion dollars. Public Transit forwarded fifteen transit projects (listed below) meeting the OTC criteria to be recommended for funding. The following projects were awarded:

Public Transit Division Program Recipients		
Applicants	Project Description	Project Cost
Albany, City of	new park & ride facility	\$650,000
Basin Transit Service	Pave, Landscape & Fence Gravel Parking Lot by Transit Office	\$26,200
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council	9 Shelters, maintenance; Park & Ride and transit stop signage, project mgmt.	\$122,400
Hood River County Transportation District	2000 Sq. Ft Multi-Modal Transit Center	\$1,000,000
Josephine County (for Josephine Community Transit)	New JCT signs: Scores based on deletion of GIS & equipment portions totaling \$45,000	\$116,355
Lane Transit District (for South Lane Wheels)	Route-Around-Town Signage and Enhancement Project	\$68,000
Lincoln County Transportation Service District	Expand Existing Vehicle Facility for Lincoln County's Fleet	\$771,562
Milton-Freewater, City of	Three Passenger Shelters	\$19,800
Sunset Empire Transportation District	Parking lot paved, Lined and Security Camera Installed	\$125,000
	PTD Grant Total:	\$2,899,317

MPO Direct Recipient Projects:		
Rogue Valley Transportation District	Bus parking Paving Project (* Agency's #1 priority)	\$316,000
TriMet	Foster Road Layover Concrete Bus Pads	\$200,000
TriMet	Milwaukie park & ride facility (* Agency's #1 priority)	\$3,200,000
City of Wilsonville	Expand transit center bldg	\$340,000
		\$4,056,000
	TOTAL APPROVED BY OTC:	\$6,955,317

The ARRA Package has significant reporting requirements for Transportation Providers and the State. Public Transit may need to hire another technical assistant to keep track of the detailed reporting requirements for ARRA.

PTD ARRA Non Urbanized Area Capital Projects. Joni Bramlett, Capital Program Manager, was applauded for her quick response and easy to understand forms that she created for the divisions ARRA package. There is \$14.6 million to divide between 5311 recipients.

The division offered two informative teleconferences for transportation providers to ask questions about ARRA.

Committee members discussed some of their concerns with the ARRA package logistics:

- Construction workers and other laborers that have been laid off may be living in a different place or obtained another position.
- Companies are out of business and cannot simply re-open their doors.
- Cement plants close during the winter and only open weather-permitting.
- There will be a high demand for materials and workers, and larger projects may get contracts first; more lucrative.
- The workforce will be fully engaged and there will be trouble finding contractors and labor.
- Giving construction worker jobs for 3 months but taking away bus driver positions. Sustainability?

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

2:45 p.m. **ITEM F: Discretionary Grant Process Update**

During each biennium, the division conducts a competitive grant solicitation. Public Transit Division staff recommendations are reviewed by the PTAC and are ultimately approved by the OTC. In response to the past program complexities, the upcoming biennium's grant program is being simplified.

Because the ARRA funding decisions may affect the requests for funds that providers will need in 2009-2011, PTD biennial discretionary programs' deadlines have been extended to April 24. Transit program applicants will be able to request their discretionary funding needs more accurately with the ARRA decisions available to them.

3:15 p.m. **ITEM G: New Transportation Options Program**

PTD has requested an additional \$5 million for the Transportation Options (TO) program. Goals and objectives for the expanded statewide program are being discussed with stakeholders. If the budget request is approved the division will convene an advisory committee to get the program launched and guide the TO focus. The advisory group is expected to be selected and in place by fall 2009.

A list of stakeholders was identified by the TO group at their most recent meeting. PTAC were asked if other representative groups should also be considered for the list. Members suggested:

- Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities
- Oregon Transit Association
- The Tribes
- Department Human Services
- People with statewide focus

3:30 p.m. **ITEM H: Preparation for April Conversation with OTC**

On April 15, the Public Transit Advisory Committee will meet with the OTC. In preparation, the Committee had a brief discussion and would like to bring some of the following ideas to the OTC:

- Prepare a handout for OTC
- Present transit past, present, future vision; use history to support where we want to go
- The transit world is in crisis (TriMet in financial crisis, Bend in crisis, Cherriots in crisis, RVTD nearing crisis).
- Need stable funding system; operating money
- Sustainability
- Ridership continues to increase; the public is not turning away from transit; but transit has to turn them away with service and route cuts
- When price of fuel increased, so did ridership. Public transit is important to Oregon citizens
- When fuel prices increased, transit providers had to cut service and routes
- Some states provide operation funding to transit companies
- Losing jobs in transit
- Misconception that if you live in a small town you can walk to wherever you need; you only need a bus for elderly and disabled
- Intercity connections are very important
- Push concept of working *while* on transit; comfort, lighting, WIFI, etc.
- Give transit some options; give us some tools

3:45 p.m. **ITEM I: Suggested Topics for Next Meeting and Wrap-up**

Next meeting is tentatively set for May 11, 2008. Terry Parker adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.