

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
May 11, 2009**

Date: Monday, May 11, 2009
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: HRC
Salem, Oregon

Members Present:

Terry Parker, Chair, Lane Transit District (LTD)
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service
Julie Brown, RVTD
Mary Jo Carpenter, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)
Sally Lawson, Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disability
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider
Claire Potter, TriMet
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC) via telephone
Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) via telephone
Bob Lowry, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)

Members Absent:

John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services
John Wenzholz, Ex Officio
Lorna Adkins, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
Peter Shultz, Member at Large

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Michael Ward, Administrator
PJ Pippin, Executive Support
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager
Sharon Peerenboom, Small City and Rural Program Manager
Sherrin Coleman, Planning Program Manager
Jean Palmateer, Special Transportation Program Manager
Robin Bjurstrom, Operations Support Manager
Matthew Barnes, Rural Intercity Bus Program Manager

Interested Persons Present:

Tim Wilson, Interested Citizen
Sharon Fipps, Benton County Transit

Guest Speakers:

None.

ITEM A

1:00 p.m. **Welcome, Introductions, Items of Interest**

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

ITEM B

1:10 p.m. **Public Comment**

None.

ITEM C

1:15 p.m. **Report on Meeting with Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)**

PTAC was invited to address the OTC for the second time since the committee was established in 2000. Julie Brown, Alan Pollock, Terry Parker, Peter Shultz and Sally Lawson were the PTAC representatives and had a fairly informed conversation with the OTC. PTAC representatives were given a chance to present comments and answer questions from the Oregon Transportation Commission. The OTC was receptive and aware of transit needs and challenges. PTAC representatives will follow-up with a “thank you” letter which will reinforce the message. The committee agrees there is a need to have a presence when it’s appropriate and keep OTC engaged and informed on transit issues in the future.

1:30 p.m. ITEM D

Administrators Report

- Intercity bus pilot. A change in FTA rules allowed Public Transit to begin putting together an intercity pilot match project about a year and a half ago. Congratulations to Matthew Barnes, Intercity Bus Program Manager, for the new service that opened on April 20 and provides daily service from Klamath Falls through Medford to Brookings. The new service has received good press coverage.
- Legislative session. Mr. Ward has been attending weekly lunches with OTA and others at the Capitol, and has been tracking legislative efforts that affect public transit.

Legislative session can be challenging. The Governor’s Jobs in Transportation Act was modified into HB2001, which with 14 amendments, is currently modified into HB2001A.

Connect Oregon III, proposed at \$100 million available, will continue as a viable fund source for transit infrastructure. We have asked ODOT for clear guidelines on the economic aspect of Connect Oregon criteria. Please submit an application if you have a project that fits the Connect Oregon criteria. Public Transit considered applying for Connect Oregon dollars to use the grant money to purchase vehicles for rural areas. We’re checking to see if Public Transit is qualified to apply for state funds. Rolling stock is a bonding issue not a Connect Oregon issue. Selling 20yr bonds on a vehicle with a 10 yr life expectancy is questionable although the Bonding Group of ODOT has a process called “Laddering” in which they can sell bonds with different expiration dates. This

helps synchronize the bonds with the asset life and make shorter life cycle vehicles eligible.

Jobs in Transportation Act (HB2120) started with \$44 million allocated to non-hwy projects; this number has changed; now it's at \$14 million. (note that this proposal section was subsequently amended from the bill) No one is sure how much the legislature will apply to increases in title fees, registration fees, ID card fees, etc. As of May 5, the amount lines are not filled in. The legislature is not extending the session so there's only about six weeks to finalize the bills.

Some are proposing a six cent raise in gas tax. This increase will provide over \$1 million increase to "Lawnmower" fund, of which Public Transit will receive some of these funds. An increase from \$25 to \$50 in the cost of custom plates raises money for the passenger rail fund.

There is a \$4 billion shortfall in the general fund budget. General funded and lottery funded agencies have been asked to prepare 30% budget cuts. DHS is preparing 30% budget cuts as well. Medical transportation funds will be cut. This will have a huge impact on clients.

Oregon Transit Association (OTA) said that HB2120 had an amendment to it that would allow for increase in ID card revenue to take into account the reduction in card sales and the increase in cost to administer the program. The OTA is working diligently to remind everyone that the amendment was originally in HB2120 and that changes in the ID card requirements created a decline in revenue for public transit.

The Governor's cigarette tax bill (HB2122) increases cigarettes by 2.5 cents. The cigarette tax is not as popular since the federal government just increased cigarettes by 61 cents. Overall, depending on the legislature decisions, revenue could go down for public transit.

- Robin Bjurstrom, Operations Support Manager for Public Transit provided a brief update on OPTIS. The system is fully installed and operational. Public Transit is still working kinks out of the system with the vendor's assistance. Staff has been dedicated to developing and training providers on the system beginning July 1. The system is extremely efficient in keeping track of funds. Providers will be testing the system soon.

1:45 p.m.

ITEM E

ARRA Program(s) Update

- 1. OTC Projects**
- 2. Non-Urbanized Area Projects**
- 3. "TIGGER" Status**

Public Transit manages two ARRA programs:

- STP transfer funds (have tight time frames)
- 5311 program

The committee reviewed the ARRA project lists that were approved by OTC on April 15 (Attachments F and G, available on the ODOT Public Transit website www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT).

Mr. Ward pointed out that Basin Transit, Klamath Falls, OR, may have the first completed ARRA project in the state and possibly the nation. Owner, Ernie Palmer, was very effective in planning, processing and acquiring that ARRA grant. Oregon is ahead of the game. We are committed.

Committee continued discussion on ARRA. Clarification on what to do with leftover ARRA 5311 grant money, whether it is \$300 or \$1,000, was requested. Can the money be transferred to city or county for their use? If there is ARRA STP money leftover, providers may use it to improve their project, whether it's clear coating a parking lot or washing windows.

Joni Bramlett said that all ARRA grants have been written and Public Transit will be ordering vehicles (95 ARRA buses) as soon as grant agreements are signed. Public Transit staff is ensuring all ARRA grants comply with restrictions and grant amounts are accurate so that there are not any problems with the federal government review.

Mr. Ward met with ODOT Procurement Office (OPO) and discussed the way the grants were written. There are still issues and wording problem on what can be included and what cannot and there is miscommunication with the Buy America restrictions, etc. Public Transit is trying to ensure all grants are correct and that providers are not trying to buy something that is not ARRA eligible. ARRA dollars are one-time funds; it is not a funding source. If ARRA money is used to create or maintain a service, then the provider must be able to sustain the asset/service. FTA regulations are clear and money must be repaid to the federal government if ARRA rules are not followed.

Transportation Intended for Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction (TIGGER) – Sunset Empire Transportation District, Tillamook County, Columbia County and Benton County, collaborated and are applying for a joint TIGGER grant. This TIGGER proposal will include purchasing alternative fuel/ “green” vehicles, training, maintenance, reporting. The deadline to apply for TIGGER funds is May 22. The FTA will deal directly with providers; funding, reporting, etc., will not go through Public Transit. There is \$100 million available nationwide.

FTA is coming out with guidance that will give details on job creation, etc.

2:15 p.m.

ITEM F

Discretionary Programs:

- 1. Older Adults & Individuals with Disability**
- 2. Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)**
- 3. New Freedom**
- 4. Intercity Bus Discretionary Program**

Last time we wrapped up the 07-09 Discretionary Grant Program a subcommittee was formed to unraveling Lessons Learned. At that time the goals were:

- Simplify the program application process
- Stabilize funding expectations
- Support local decision making and coordination efforts
- Ensure equity including geographical distribution fairness
- Preserve current services and infrastructure
- Leverage STF formula and discretionary funds in matching federal funds

The new process seems to be working well. Committee commented on the new process and in general, PTAC likes the changes. Overall, Public Transit Division liked the outcome, too. The Discretionary Program has been streamlined with easier applications. Also, it was a little confusing handling 5310 and STF so in the future, separate applications will be used.

Public Transit has reviewed the applications and selected the presented projects for the PTAC recommendation to OTC. The recommended project lists were reviewed, discussed and approved by Committee (Attachments A-G).

There is approximately \$200,000 (both STF and 5311) left over in the Older Adults and Individuals with Disabilities Transit Program (Attachment A). Public Transit will wrap up all the remaining funds from the different programs and let PTAC know the total amount available by October. Then, the suggestion is to go through the application process/competitive for rest of the funds. (TriMet takes 55% of total.)

All JARC projects that were submitted were approved. There were 34 New Freedom applications; only 3 were ineligible. Changes were made to the program so that there is clearly no segregation of services which simplifies the process; funding can be made for general public service, too. There were 13 agencies applying for Intercity funding 33 projects were awarded \$1.9 million. A couple of new questions appeared on the application that were confusing to some providers. One question was about working with National Bus Transportation Association (NBTAS) through an interline agreement with Greyhound. The other was about Google Transit feedback. Committee felt that Google needs more practicable service and until recently, they did not have accessible information. The suggestion was made to possibly bundle-up service networks for small providers.

Mass Transit has \$304,000 remaining. Committee agreed that the money will go to replace the oldest vehicle(s) applied for. Salem Keizer Mass Transit District has the oldest vehicle (1986) and will be awarded the money to update the fleet. It should be noted that the discretionary funds will not be purchasing as many buses but are buying all biodiesel and hybrids, which are cost more.

Analysis of Estimated Discretionary Funds Available for 2009-2011 Public Transit Division Discretionary Programs

Biennial Fund Source	Revenue			Increase(+) or decrease(-)
	2007-2009 Actuals	2009-2011 Estimates Until Appropriated	Difference for 09-11	
E&D Program				
5310	\$ 2,700,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 300,000	+11%
5310 STP	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ -	0
State	\$ 2,600,000	\$ 2,500,000	\$ (100,000)	-4%
JARC	\$ 1,320,000	\$ 1,320,000	\$ -	0
New Freedom	\$ 700,000	\$ 815,000	\$ 115,000	+16%
Subtotal	\$ 17,320,000	\$ 17,635,000	\$ 315,000	+1%
Special Purpose Programs				
Intercity	\$ 2,700,000	\$ 2,700,000	\$ -	0
Mass Transit	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ -	0
Subtotal	\$ 6,700,000	\$ 6,700,000	\$ -	0
Subtotal Biennial	\$ 24,020,000	\$ 24,335,000	\$ 315,000	+1%
* Additional Spent in 07-09				
E&D 5310	\$ 354,000		\$ (354,000)	
5310/5311 STP	\$ 1,150,000		\$ (1,150,000)	
5311	\$ 1,900,000		\$ (1,900,000)	
Intercity	\$ 395,000		\$ (395,000)	
JARC	\$ 80,000		\$ (80,000)	
Mass Transit	\$ 172,000		\$ (172,000)	
Subtotal	\$ 4,051,000	\$ -	\$ (4,051,000)	
Total Discretionary	\$ 28,071,000	\$ 24,335,000	\$ (3,736,000)	-13%
Blue	07-09 discretionary process, one application and review for all programs			
Yellow	09-11 formula distribution, local selection of projects.			
Orange	09-11 disc. Process, application submitted with the local formula selections of projects.			

* One time fund source: Moneys available from prior years' PTD programs. Are estimated at end of each biennium. Not yet available to be included in current biennium estimates.

2:45 p.m. **Break**

3:00 p.m. [ITEM G/H](#)
5311 “Start Up” Program Review

The Start Up program was designed to help fund general public transportation in rural areas. Public Transit (PTD) has an “open” 5311 program. This means that it allows new providers/services to be funded through the 5311 program. Some states operate “closed” 5311 programs where funding is limited to current 5311 recipients only. In 1999, PTD created the 5311 Start Up program to allow new services and providers to obtain funds through the 5311 program.

New Services means service in an area that did not previously have service and must be open to the general public (Elderly & Disabled service that is open to the general public on an available space basis is not eligible). The new service must be in a coordinated plan.

Committee discussed the New Start Up program. Caution was made that if too many new services come onboard, the funding amounts are divided into too many pieces and the slices are too small to benefit any recipient. Questions were asked like, How will they sustain their service? and When should a new start not be funded? Community support is important. They will vote themselves taxes to support the service if they feel it is important. Commitment from

the local population should be in place to help support the transit service revenue base with taxes (i.e., payroll taxes, dedicated property taxes, etc.). Should performance standards be set?

Committee agreed that most new services begin serving elderly and disabled and then move into general public transportation. City of Lebanon was an E&D start up and expanded into a fixed route intercity service. City of Corvallis was pressured to provide service to Adair but it was at the expense of cutting existing service. In a Lane Transit service area, 48% of the community is seniors; at that point, you are serving the general public and E&D.

Committee agreed that new Start Up systems might need to be required to provide a plan on how they will maintain their service in the future and a needs assessment of the area. The goal for all transit service should demonstrate systematic growth in match levels for ongoing viable service and eventually become self-supporting.

4:00 p.m.

ITEM I

Wrap Up and Adjourn

Suggestions for next agenda:

- State Management Plan
- Election of vice chair
- Legislative Outcome
- 5311 Formula
- PSU report
- Discretionary Grants Lessons Learned

Next meeting is tentatively set for July 13, 2009. Chair Parker adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.