

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING NOTES**  
**May 9, 2011**

**Date:** Monday, May 9, 2011  
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** ODOT-HRC  
2775 19<sup>th</sup> SE, Salem

**Members Present:**

Bob Lowry, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)  
Julie Brown (Vice-Chair), Small Urban Provider, Rogue Valley Transportation District  
Mary Jo Carpenter, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)  
Terry Parker, Large Urban Provider, Lane Transit District (LTD)  
Heather Ornelas, Small Urban Provider, Bend Area Transit District, City of Bend, *via telephone*  
Roxanne Daniel, Transportation Options Group of Oregon  
Tim McQueary, Governor's Commission on Senior Services  
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)

**Members Absent:**

Dennis Dick, Valley Retriever Bus Lines, Intercity Bus Service Provider  
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)  
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service, Klamath Falls  
John Wenholz, Morrow County, Ex-Officio  
Angel Hale, Oregon Commission for the Blind  
David Ritacco, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Claire Potter, TriMet  
Sally Lawson, O4AD

**ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:**

Michael Ward, Administrator  
Robin Bjurstrom, Operations Support Manager  
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Senior Policy Analyst  
Jean Palmateer, STF Program Manager  
PJ Pippin, Executive Support  
Joni Bramlett, Capital Programs Manager  
Arla Miller, Office Specialist  
Marsha Hoskins, Reorganization Program Manager  
Matthew Barnes, Transit Network Program Manager  
Lee Lazaro, Program Analyst  
Sherrin Coleman, Planning Program Manager

**Interested Persons Present:**

Chrislyn Prantl, Oregon Housing and Associated Services  
Gene Schaffer, Oregon Housing and Associated Services  
Julie Wilke, Ride Connection (*telephone*)  
Marty Warner, City of Woodburn  
Julie Stephens, City of Sandy (*telephone*)

**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. Mention was made of Sally Lawson's retirement party on May 19 and that O4AD will suggest a replacement for her representation very soon.

Meeting notes from the March 7, 2011, PTAC meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Mary Jo Carpenter to approve the notes, Bob Lowry seconded the motion and the notes were unanimously approved by Committee. **(Handout A)**

[ITEM B](#)

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

Chair Parker asked if there were any Public Comments. There were none.

[ITEM C](#)

1:15 p.m. **Public Transit Administrator Report**

- **Flex Fund Program**

Michael Ward gave an update on the new Flex Funds Program.

In May, the Flex Fund Program Advisory Committee met to review and consider improvements to selection criteria and process that was used for the first year of the new program. Flex Committee provided good feedback and minor changes were incorporated. In general the committee was satisfied with the program and process; and with the criteria used. Adjustments were made to make it clear that some of the money could be used for planning and pre-construction. The committee liked the idea of having a floor and a ceiling on the amount of the project request. Committee discussed adding flexibility to the program by adding an emergency component to the program. If there was an urgent situation and a project fell outside of the program, the project application could be still be reviewed and discussed.

The next Flex Fund Committee meeting will be on Monday, May 16, from 9am-4pm in the HRC building.

The other task the OTC directed to the Flex Fund advisory committee was to review the other programs receiving Flex Funds (TDM, Bicycle/Pedestrian, Transportation Safety, Public Transit) and ensure there was a consistent set of goals and objectives. The Flex Advisory Committee will receive presentations on these programs in July and August.

ODOT Public Transit was successful in obtaining Flex Funds for two projects. One was for \$575,000 to provide intercity bus service in the I-5 corridor, between Portland and Eugene.

Part of the project is to research and identify where the service gaps are in the transportation network, what time of day they occur and any other inconsistencies.

Public Transit also received a grant for \$2.1 million to create a statewide TDM program; building the infrastructure, what strategic investments, etc. Projects that come from this Flex Fund grant will be to build an alternative transportation program for ODOT employees; create a statewide van pool program; and the Drive Less Save More (DLSM) program will receive \$500,000 in an effort to market a program statewide, and go beyond the Portland Metro Area.

- **Sunset Empire Transportation District (SETD)**

Mr. Ward summarized the current status of SETD difficulties from a document that was prepared for Representatives' Brad Witt and Deborah Boone, and Senator Betsy Johnson. He briefly discussed some of the problems Presented in the SETD audit report. The report had a dozen findings with several issues. A couple of the issues were that they were clearly in violation of charter regulations, there were ethical questions raised about their decision to provide free service to some companies and not others, and SETD had co-mingled general funds with funds for the Medicaid brokerage. After investigation, SETD's budget showed a deficit of approximately \$350,000; with \$750,000 in short and long term debt. To address the budget problem, SETD has severely reduced service and layed off 37 employees. The District now has 16 employees, 10 of which are drivers. SETD is in the process of downsizing its fleet. They are working with banks and special Districts to restructure debt. SETD didn't have match for the ConnectOregon III project to construct a transit center in Seaside and withdrew that request. They withdrew match from a Flex Funded City of Astoria street and bus shelter improvement project. The city was able to pick up the additional match so the project will continue.

PTD has provided long-term grants and loans to get through the end of this fiscal year so that the company would not fold and can continue to provide service. There is a huge infusion of money into the Astoria community in the summertime when the cruise ships dock (1,000-2,500 passengers per ship).

Dan Schwanz, Executive Director for the Hood River Transportation District, agreed to serve part-time as the SETD interim Executive Director.

Members briefly discussed similar problems they have faced and concluded that transit providers need continued training and Board development is necessary to help avoid this type of issue. FTA has free training available. FTA Triennial review will include new questions such as how to verify how subrecipients are monitored.. Mr. Lowry brought up the idea that quarterly reports could be submitted to the Board of Directors. Mr. Ward said he could be compiling a "lessons learned for elected officials". PTD has been allowed to hire an auditor to work for PTD to work on specific aspects of provider issues. This will be a good tool in the future.

- **RideShare OnLine (RSO) Project**

OTC approved a significant amount of money to invest in a partnership between Idaho and Washington in the implementation of a statewide program called RideShare OnLine which is type of a carpool, vanpool database and includes lots of features plus incentives, reporting, selection, volunteer module, etc. It is structured so that a rider can be selective in their ride partner; such as riding only with a particular church group, company, or soccer league.

RideShare OnLine should be thought of as a local partner even though it will be available throughout the Pacific Northwest. Participants should contact their local partner (such as METRO, LTD, Cherriots, RVTD) with questions, not the PTD.

Chair Parker asked if and how brokerages could benefit from the RideShare technology. Mr. Ward said to his knowledge, there's no reason why a brokerage company could not set up a RideShare account and use the tool to coordinate rides or manage a vanpool. This should be a huge benefit to the rural community, too. Since there are very few providers in the rural areas, rural communities will be able to coordinate long distance trips.

Ms. Daniel explained more about RideShare OnLine. She said that every segment of the database is built in a module (such as vanpool module, purchasing module, brokerage module). A certain number and type of module can be purchased depending on how much there is to spend. Ms. Daniel said the Brokerage module is in development and can be made to be as robust as one wants to financially invest. She also said that an interstate database was necessary because riders needed to travel from Vancouver, WA to Portland, OR, for example.

Chair Parker said this was an important item to bring up at next brokerage meeting and see whether there is interest in using this as a tool.

Oregon wished to personalize the name "RideShare" so chose iGO. Unfortunately iGO is a trademark owned by a nonprofit Chicago car-share company. PTD is exploring the options for use of the "iGO" brand.

2:00 p.m.

#### [ITEM D](#)

### **2011-2013 Discretionary Grant Recommendations (Handout D)**

#### **Older Adults and People with Disabilities Federal funds (Attachment A), State funds (Attachment B)**

Joni Bramlett gave a brief presentation on the grant process for the Older Adults and People with Disabilities program (OA&PD). Concern from the Committee was a perception that there was a huge spike in vehicle purchases which will create a replacement problem when vehicles all "come of age" around the same time. Staff agreed that this pattern will need to be watched but the number of vehicles purchased annually has stayed approximately constant so a very big spike is not likely.

Mr. Ward said that the Division had reserved \$500,000 FTA 5310 funds to use for program improvements that are beneficial to the statewide transit system. Some of these funds will be used for a bariatric vehicle pilot. Several transit agencies and DHS have requested information and help on procuring specialty vehicles or vehicles capable of transporting people who exceed weight and size limits for standard equipments. These specialty vehicles accommodate larger devices and heavier weights than required by the ADA.

#### **Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) (Attachment C)**

Ms Palmateer said that the 5310 and STF programs are administered as together and that they are both allocated at the local level in a population-based formula. Ms. Palmateer said that grant selection for JARC and New Freedom projects was criteria driven and selected on scoring. A PTAC Review Committee was formed to assist Ms. Palmateer in reviewing and scoring the JARC

and New Freedom program applications. The Review Committee consisted of Mary Jo Carpenter and Roxanne Daniels. Ms. Palmateer said she sent the applications and score sheets to the members to review and complete. The completed score sheets were reconciled on April 22; results were discussed. Individual member scoring on each project was very similar and final results were easily obtained.

The JARC program is divided into rural and urban monies. Unfortunately, the urban monies are very limited. The City of Corvallis, Bend Area Transit (COIC) and RVTD are all three projects that were ranked within 1 point and all important to fund. Available revenue was distributed evenly between these projects.

Rural projects were ranked and scored. There were three rural projects not funded. All projects were good. The City of Woodburn project was the last project to be funded. It received less money than requested as the last project on the list to be funded. Ifs more dollars come in it will be applied first to this project.

### **New Freedom (NF) (Attachment D)**

The New Freedom program had \$1.2 million available and had \$1.5 million in requests. Unlike JARC, prior year unspent New Freedom funds can be carried forward. Ms. Palmateer said that two small urban projects were not funded, and there is a small contingency in urban dollars.

The rural program had a new applicant, Mental Health Association of SW Oregon. They applied for \$800,000 but were only awarded \$20,258. This was the amount left at the end of the process. This application was prepared by a private sector company for the provider and because of inexperience did not reflect the eligible activities for the project. Reviewers looked at the intention of the project, which was to buy taxi tickets when transit service is not operating, the concept was good and Ms. Palmateer provided assistance so they could try this project.

City of Canby received slightly less and PTD will try to add more funding if available later. This project was for operating a demand response service outside the fixed route service.

### **Transit Planning Grant Program (TPGP) (Attachment E)**

Ms. Coleman said that there was a small amount of money available for planning projects and PTD received seven applications for planning projects. A small project for Douglas Co. specialized survey materials will be included.

Ms. Coleman pointed out that she was excited to see more coordination projects and rural areas like Wheeler and Eagle Point applying for the first time for transit planning.

### **Intercity Bus (Attachment F)**

Matthew Barnes reviewed the Intercity discretionary grant selection information on Attachment F with the Committee. The spreadsheet shows grant dollars requested and recommendations. All of the preservation projects were funded as first priority, expansion of service requests were very limited. There were 28 projects that represent ten agencies.

2:30 p.m. [ITEM E](#) BREAK

3:00 p.m. [ITEM F](#)

### **PTAC Membership, Roles, Responsibilities**

Chair Parker reminded members that at the last meeting there was discussion around PTAC membership and the role and responsibilities of the Committee. The creation of a work plan and discussion about roles and responsibilities may drive conversation about membership as these are interrelated.

The Statement Management Plan and Oregon Public Transportation Plan (1997)\* may be used as a guiding documents in further defining PTAC roles and responsibilities.

Ideas for list of Work Plan activities for PTAC:

- Prepare for Connect Oregon IV.
- Understand PTD programs and clarify objectives. The point was made that all the programs are interrelated and most use multiple funding sources. PTD could present Program overviews and talk in depth to help inform members how each program works.
- Acknowledge PTAC's role in the Flex Fund Committee. Julie Brown is serving as PTAC's representative. The process has improved due to her involvement. The Flex Fund Advisory Committee agreed that, generally, new projects are preferred over preservation.
- Understand issue and ramifications to projects due to insufficient local match. For example, do Tribes not apply because of lack of match.

Mr. Pollock suggested "surveying" the OTC to ensure that PTAC is meeting expectations. Chair Parker said she thought the OTC said that the purpose of PTAC is to be the advisory group for the Public Transit Division. Division activities have changed in the last 10 years; the funding structure and programs have changed. The inception of the committee structure came out of coordination efforts; there was no infrastructure. (no brokerages yet to make link between DHS & PTD) Additionally, Mr. Ward said that the OTC has changed in how they interact and communicate with the Divisions and committees. For example, instead of having an OTC member attend several committees like PTAC, it was changed to an annual presentation to update OTC on the efforts of the PTAC. The OTC will change again as they appoint two new members of the 5 member commission. For these reasons a review of PTAC membership is timely.

A suggestion was to make additional presentations to the OTC when possible to help keep public transit in the forefront; there can be benefits to a higher profile.

Mr. Ward said that PTAC advice is helpful to the Public Transit Division. PTD uses PTAC as a policy sounding board for suggestions on how to improve the State Management Plan, a policy document describing how PTD programs are administered. Because PTAC advises the division on program policy for grant selection, the committee does not directly select projects unless an individual program requires stakeholder committee selection activities and PTAC is then essential to help the division.

The offer of reviewing the PTAC charter was made by Mr. Ward.

Chair Parker asked for a small work group to meet two to three times and look at membership, roles and responsibilities, and develop a work plan. Volunteers were Heather Ornelas and Mary Jo Carpenter. An email will be sent out to PTAC members to look for more volunteers.

4:00 p.m.

**ITEM G**

**Wrap up and adjourn.**

#### ROUND TABLE Highlights:

- Mr. Pollock said there's a citizen's group that is helping Cherriots determine next steps. The transit mall may still be in Courthouse Square. Next week five of the seven board members are up for election.
- Mr. Lowry said that the Corvallis Transit System went to a fare-less system. There is a fee on water bill to offset the cost of transit. Additional ridership is satisfying but now The Loop has a capacity problem and is running extra buses.
- Ms. Carpenter said she is putting budget together. Baker City will cut Saturday fixed route service. Gas prices have contributed to this cut. Week day service has increased 12% from last year and didn't have to increase employee hours. Did a gas analysis and it showed that cutaway buses don't get better mileage than trolleys.
- Ms. Brown said that the budget process is going well. RVTD's Connect Oregon III project is getting ready to finish.
- Mr. McQuery shared an internet article with the Committee. The title of the article is "What Does Public Transit Say About the Community It Serves". There is a statement in the article that says Generation Y shows a preference for public transportation; automobiles are not considered status symbols any more.
- Ms. Ornelas said that ridership increased 16%; they are ordering seven buses; a special agreement has made with Mt Bachelor. She said she saw a study (Cortwright) saying 20-35 year olds no longer want to live in the suburbs they want to live in the cities.
- Chair Parker made a presentation at the American Society on Aging conference and spoke about elderly transportation issues. Some items they expressed interest in were DHS connectivity, brokerage service, and in-person assessments. Regarding LTD, it is continuing with the EA for West Eugene BRT which has been controversial. LTD is still searching for a new General Manager; currently there are three candidates.
- Ms. Van Der Hyde said she is tracking all legislation. There are no bills directly affecting ODOT. There is a 50-50 chance the BETC will go away (tax out of the general funds). More will be learned at tomorrow's OTA meeting.

#### Items to discuss for next meeting:

- PTD reorganization

Chair Parker adjourned the meeting at 3:40 pm.

**The next meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2011.**

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