

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING NOTES  
March 14, 2011**

**Date:** Monday, March 14, 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)  
Ernie Palmer, Basin Transit Service, Klamath Falls  
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)  
John Wenzholz, Morrow County, Ex-Officio  
Heather Ornelas, Small Urban Provider, Bend Area Transit District, City of Bend  
Roxanne Daniel, Transportation Options Group of Oregon  
Tim McQueary, Governor's Commission on Senior Services  
Angel Hale, Oregon Commission for the Blind – *via telephone*  
David Ritacco, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services – *via telephone*  
Claire Potter, TriMet – *via telephone*  
Sally Lawson, Oregon State Area Agencies on Disabilities, NW Senior and Disability Services (NWSDS)

**Members Absent:**

Dennis Dick, Valley Retriever Bus Lines, Intercity Bus Service Provider  
Bill Hall, Assoc. of Oregon Counties (AOC)  
Allan Pollock, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)

**ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:**

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  
Cary Greenwood, Technical Assistance Program Manager

**Interested Persons Present:**

Mark Volmert, Linn County STF Coordinator, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments  
Chrislyn Prantl, Oregon Housing and Associated Services  
Gene Schaffer, Oregon Housing and Associated Services  
Karen Friend, Small Urban Provider, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) - *via telephone*

**Guest Speakers:**

Travis Brouwer, ODOT Federal Affairs  
ODOT Public Transit Division

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 December 13, 2010, PTAC meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Heather Ornelas to approve the notes, Tim McQueary 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**

- **Legislation/Funding Outlook (Handout C)**

Travis Brouwer, ODOT Federal Affairs, updated the committee on current federal funding picture. The good news is that President Obama has put forward a very positive transportation proposal that would provide transit with a 120% increase in funding and a 40% increase in highway spending. We are hopeful this proposal will move forward.

The President's proposal does not yet identify the revenues necessary for implementation and has a one quarter trillion dollar revenue placeholder. At this time the revenue available in the federal highway trust-fund has declined. Gas and diesel taxes, the main traditional source of funding, have not been raised since 1993 and in the last few years the high price of gasoline and economic downturn have reduced taxes flowing into the highway trust account. The highway account and the mass transit account will soon be exhausted if current spending continues without an increase in revenue. Congress has had to infuse about \$35 billion into those two accounts on several occasions. Things look okay through 2012 although there is concern that high gas prices could drive revenue down.

The current budget debated in Congress is for Federal FY 2011. So far, transportation has emerged unscathed mainly because Congress is focused on domestic discretionary spending; and transportation is still considered dedicated funding at this time. A Rule Change that was passed in the house makes future authorized funding levels no longer guaranteed; and the Appropriations Committee could significantly affect future amounts for transportation.

The Mass Transit account is in real trouble by 2013. The Mass Transit account is 43% short in revenue and without congressional action the affect on transit, especially small rural services, will be detrimental. PTAC may wish to let members of congress know what the consequences for their community will be if programs are seriously reduced.

Both the House and Senate plan to release bills around Memorial Day. The House bill will likely have substantial cuts. Since the only choices are reduction in funding and/or increased

taxes, the bills will likely be pushed into 2013 to avoid a painful rural service reduction discussion during a presidential election year.

Reauthorization themes congress will consider:

- consolidation and streamlining of human services and transportation related to reducing costs (potentially combining 5310, 5316, 5317 programs)
- transit safety plans
- funding best investments
- reduction of New Starts and Small Starts programs

Members asked if the 45% shortfall reduction would be assessed to all programs or if specific programs would be affected. Mr. Brouwer thinks congress will try to keep core services programs and reduce or eliminate special programs and discretionary programs.

- **Flex Funds Program**

Jerri Bohard, ODOT Interim Deputy Director, gave an update on the new Flex Funds Program. She said that the Commission approved 28 projects; 14 transit and 14 bike/pedestrian. There was \$21 million for the entire Flex Funds program. Sixty% of the funds went to bike/pedestrian projects, and 40% to transit. Intergovernmental Grant Agreements are out for the Bike/Pedestrian projects. On the Transit side, Ms. Van Der Hyde said that projects were moving forward. The division and urban recipients must make applications to the FTA as well as develop the grant agreements. Some projects will be a joint effort between the Highway Division and Public Transit.

Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) raised questions to help improve the program for the next round. The Flex Fund Advisory Committee will be reviewing “Lessons Learned” to make improvements for the second round of \$24 million available for projects. The next Flex Advisory Committee meeting will be on 4/5/11 to revisit the program criteria. Flex Fund applications should be available this summer and the second round process should start around September 2011, with an OTC decision on funding by February 2012.

Ms. Bohard said that there are three areas the Flex Committee will consider in depth:

- Project Readiness: This can have a different meaning when considering transit, TDM and. Bike/Pedestrian projects.
- Review the selection process (Internal/External) for possible streamlining and improvements.
- Selection criteria definitions for project prioritization. Especially of concern were reviewers notice in differences in the value of core modal projects, the “bread and butter” projects needed to sustain in comparison to new and improved facilities.

OTC asked the Flex Committee to look in the future at programs that receive STP funds and see if they can be brought together into one program coordinated with the STIP process. After analysis of the different programs the information will be taken back to the OTC. Another goal is to display modal projects through mapping to examine a larger picture of what we are doing for the public so we can see the direction we are going; connecting modes; community visions. More information is available on the ODOT website.  
<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/FlexFunds>

- **Preventive Maintenance Pilot**

Ms. Bramlett reported that PTD is conducting a pilot review of the new Preventive Maintenance Guidance requirements developed by the division to assist agencies to carry out and documenting the appropriate maintenance of their vehicles. The pilot consisted of PTD contacting five agencies and requested information in order to conduct preventive maintenance desk reviews on two vehicles from each of the five agencies. From the information gathered, it appears more communication is needed in order to get the information needed to complete the five pilot reviews.

The goal is to review vehicle preventive maintenance compliance on as many agencies as possible to get on a three-year cycle of reviewing all participants. The analysis will be complete before the next federal review so that we can show improvement in compliance.

The Transit Provider handbook is on the PTD website (<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT/PROGRAMS/CAPITAL/Capital-Vehicle-PM-Handbook.pdf>). The handbook currently contains preventive maintenance information and capital requirements. The FTA website has a “Best Practices” section that can be helpful.

- **New Staff**

Robin Bjurstrom introduced Marsha Hoskins, Reorganization Project Manager, for the Public Transit Division. Ms. Bjurstrom explained that PTD hopes to reorganize to a more efficient and productive department by developing customer service managers vs program managers. The plan is to have current program managers handle provider needs in an area or region of Oregon instead of a program (5310, 5311, etc.). This should result in a closer relationship with transit providers and create easier access for providers to gain PTD assistance. Marsha’s top priorities will be fact finding, data gathering, interviewing, finding out provider priorities; exploring what federal and state requirements are and how to streamline; and recommending potential changes in organizational structure and, how to get there.

It was also announced that PTD has hired Melody Taber as Financial Coordinator for PTD, and Geneva Hooten was hired as a part-time employee to assist with the Transit Network (Intercity) program.

1:45 p.m. [ITEM D](#)

**PTAC; Work Plan, Membership, Roles, Responsibilities, Next steps. (Handout D)**

The State Management Plan has information on public involvement requirements for such groups as PTAC. It was suggested that members review the information.

Sally Lawson spoke briefly about the history of PTAC. She said that PTAC was started because it was involved with ANTS (a stakeholder advocacy network group). This advocacy group was a human services (particularly Areas on Aging) attempt to engage public transit to work together for funding for older adults (seniors) and people w/ disabilities.

Committee identified some questions that need to be discussed at the next PTAC meeting:

- Is the meeting time good?

- How often should PTAC meet?
- How many members should be on PTAC?
- What is the Committee's role? (PTAC is the public involvement group in the ConnectOregon process.)
- Should there be a charter or by-laws?
- Are the right groups represented correctly on the committee? Julie Brown pointed out that the brokerages should be represented at PTAC.
- Is there a work plan or items that come up regularly so PTAC can plan future agendas?
- Is PTAC the liaison between transit providers and legislators?
- What is expected of the committee?
- What is PTAC's mission? Vision?

Discussion of roles began with some members expressing their displeasure with the structure of PTAC meetings and confusion with their role as an advisory member. Some members felt that a main function of their position was only to listen and "rubber-stamp" issues presented by PTD. General agreement was that improvements need to be discussed and made.

Committee discussion about their role continued and members agreed that advocacy needs to stay a priority. They want to ensure PTAC processes are fair and equitable. Ms. Palmateer said she believed that PTAC should be a partner to PTD and transit agencies, with a statewide perspective. "PTD doesn't do transit, the providers do transit," she said. PTD needs to know what's going on out there in Oregon transit world (technologies, funding issues, etc.) and PTAC can help.

Members said that PTAC has been asked by PTD to make decisions about programs (the 5311 issue was used as an example) without any knowledge or training on the subject. All programs are interrelated and members do not know how the changes may affect other programs. Members said that not enough information is provided to PTAC members and not enough time is provided to review the information to make intelligent decisions. Several members reminded the committee that past policy work has been very successful, especially when using small work groups that report back to the whole committee.

This led to a good discussion of what preparation would be better and what the committee could work on. Members offered suggestions for committee work and role:

- Concentrate on what is important...Transit providers and funding.
- Work on program level to guide evaluation and resource distribution.
- Use subcommittees. They have been very effective with good products and results.
- Recognize that different administrators have different style in working with PTAC.
- Be knowledgeable of all transit programs and address issues from perspective of whole transit program, acknowledge interrelated effects and relationships.
- Bring in all provider partners and external expertise's when working on an issue.
- The staff and PTAC information are good value. Send it out broadly and in timely way.
- Have an annual plan for working on important topics.
- Reserve time for agencies to place items on the PTAC agenda.

Ms. Daniel shared an example. She said that in December she received calls asking her to vote on the 5311 issue. She wasn't sure committee was going to vote; there was no information provided by PTD to that effect. Mr. Lowry expressed his dismay regarding the 5311 issue at the last meeting. He said it was put on the agenda at the end of the meeting, with no time for discussion. He felt it was a "rubber stamp" request. Committee members again voiced their opinion that they are asked to make important decisions without enough time to review information; and materials are not provided in a timely manner.

Ms. Potter said she feels like many PTAC meetings are purely informational and her job is to relay that information to other people. She feels it would be better just to send out the information directly to a large mailing list. PTAC needs to have materials out in advance. Ms. Potter also expressed her concern that the Meeting Notes are not available soon enough.

Chair Parker suggested that an executive group from PTAC, which will include herself, vice-chair Brown, and ex-chair Lowry, meet to discuss, as a work plan item, a strategy to make PTAC more effective.

A short discussion on agenda creation ensued. Currently, Dinah Van Der Hyde, senior PTD staff to the committee, gathers topics from PTD Program Managers relating to policy and uses them as the agenda items. Committee suggested items come through the PTAC chair as well as using items from the work plan to build the agenda.

Robin Bjurstrom said that PTD will meet and address the issues.

Sally Lawson is retiring in June. She made the comment that all DHS services are contingent on transportation (medical appt, shopping, etc.). Ms. Lawson asked PTAC to continue their fight to provide adequate transportation for Oregonians.

This agenda item (Work Plan, Membership, Roles and Responsibilities) will be added to the May agenda for continued discussion.

2:45 p.m. [ITEM E](#)  
BREAK

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

### **2012 Special Transportation 5310/STG Grant Recommendations**

5310: Joni Bramlett, Capital Program Manager, said that PTD is currently reviewing the applications. PTD expects between \$1 million and \$1.5 million in remaining funding for the 5310 program for various reasons (some because some providers were unable to find enough match, some didn't need the funding because they received JTA funds, etc.), so the additional money is being redistributed. Ms. Bramlett said PTD would provide a list to PTAC of the STF agencies that will receive the funding and how much they will receive.

For agencies requesting non-ADA accessible vehicles, ODOT PTD will propose to the applicant that we provide additional funds to allow purchase of an ADA vehicle where feasible and the agency is willing. In a coordinated system, if a non-profit agency goes out of business or stops providing transportation, it is less likely that a public transportation system can integrate non-ADA accessible vehicles into its fleet for community transportation.

The question was asked why an agency would purchase a non-ADA accessible vehicle. Ms. Bramlett explained that some older adults prefer sedans instead of buses because they are easier for them to get in and out of; and more people fit into a standard van than in an ADA accessible van. Some client-only providers use them if they do not currently have physically disabled adults as clients.

State of Good Repair: Ms. Bramlett said that there was \$3 million awarded in the State of Good Repair program for vehicle replacements. The money was distributed to 12 agencies for 31 vehicles.

5310/STG: Jean Palmateer, Special Transportation Program Manager, said that both she and Joni are reviewing all of the 5310 applications. Jean looked at purchased service, mobility management and operations grants; Joni looked at all the capital requests. These grants are the “meat and potatoes” of transportation providers: preservation of service.

STF: Ms Palmateer said that all the STF discretionary grant applications have been received, except for a few, and logged into OPTIS. They are moving into the grant preparation phase.

JARC and New Freedom: In the JARC program, PTD had \$1.6 million available and received \$3 million requests. The New Freedom program had \$1.2 million available and had \$1.5 million in requests.

A PTAC Review Committee was formed to assist Ms. Palmateer in reviewing and scoring the JARC and New Freedom program applications. The Review Committee will act on behalf of the PTAC committee in approving and selecting the agencies that will receive funding. The Review Committee will present their recommendations, on behalf of the PTAC committee to the OTC. The results will be brought back to PTAC for informational purposes. Members volunteered and were selected based on non-conflict of interest. Review Committee members are Mary Jo Carpenter and Roxanne Daniels.

3:20 p.m.

### **ITEM G**

#### **Jump Start on 2011 Oregon Public Transportation Conference (Handout G)**

Cary Greenwood presented a basic outline of the 2011 Oregon Public Transportation Conference (OPTC) to the Committee. The conference will last four days and will begin on Sunday, October 23. The final day of the conference will be Wednesday, October 26. She asked for suggestions and comments for building the agenda and for the conference theme. Members were invited to provide ideas for speakers and training topics. The following ideas were suggested:

- Transit technology; current technology trends; fare box technology; smart cards; in-vehicle information systems; automatic vehicle location systems
- Service coordination sessions for transportation brokerage managers; customer service assistance
- Aspects of using volunteers to provide transit; manual scheduling
- TDM/transportation options track
- Dealing with difficult passengers/people; public behavior issues; people with mental disabilities
- Security issues; public safety and security strategies

- Front-line supervisor training
- Round Tables with different topics; topics not normally discussed; best practices
- Title VI/Civil Rights

3:40 p.m. [ITEM H](#)

### **Coordination Project**

Ms. Palmateer said that PTD will be working with Association of Oregon Counties to do a coordination study, a portion of which will revisit the 1999 PTD study, “The Coordination Challenge”. The older study identified statewide coordination challenges and opportunities for transportation program. Changes and updates have occurred within the last 15 years and we need to look at what is going on today and identify cost effective coordination opportunities. There will be a technical advisory committee formed to assist in this project. The committee would consist of representatives from various areas such as Department of Veterans Affairs, DHS, and Employment Division. Ms. Palmateer said she would like Chair Terry Parker to represent PTAC on the technical advisory committee.

The project will review the older report, various reports published in the past 15 years, identify the current status of coordination, identify the validity of coordination assumptions and who benefits, identify barriers to coordination that might be alleviated by policy or legal action, focus on evidence based transportation policy and practices that result in coordination. The outcome will help inform the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP) and may be the basis of a statewide coordination policy.

Chair Parker said on the APTA website there is a webinar presented by David Kauffman regarding an analysis of the needs of older adults in transportation. The website provides a spreadsheet to input information into the worksheet for demand analysis for transportation for adults.

**4:00 p.m. Wrap up and adjourn.**

Round table concluded the meeting.

- Ernie Palmer spoke briefly about match issues and partnering with the Tribes to improve transportation.
- Mark Volmert, Cascades West Council of Governments, encouraged PTAC to discuss a work plan.
- Robin Bjurstrom, confirmed that if needed, PTD will send information regarding any contingency plan activities affecting the state if the federal government must shutdown.
- Joni Bramlett said several vehicles have been identified to begin a Veterans transportation pilot program.

Chair Parker adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.

**The next meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2011.**

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