



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Transportation
Public Transit Division
Mill Creek Office Building
555 13th Street NE, Suite 3
Salem, OR 97301-4179
Telephone (503) 986-3300
FAX (503) 986-4189
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT/

DATE: March 13, 2006
TO: Public Transportation Advisory Committee
FROM: Martin W. Loring Administrator
Public Transit Division

SUBJECT: Agenda Item E (a): New Coordinated Planning Requirements

Discussion Draft: Implementing New Planning Program Requirements

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how Public Transit Division (PTD) proposes to implement the new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs defined by SAFETEA-LU: New Freedom, JARC and 5310 Pilot Program and the 2007 state requirement for a local Special Transportation Fund (STF) plan. Implementation of these requirements will require two related actions:

- **implementing the new coordinated plan requirements (discussed in this paper) and**
- implementing the project selection and funding process (discussed in more in a separate paper).

Planning Program Challenges: Public Transit Division staff began by identifying issues:

Beginning in FY 2007, as a condition of Federal assistance, Public Transit Division must certify to the Secretary of Transportation that projects selected for funding derive from locally developed coordinated plans. Also in 2007, STF Agencies must complete a plan for their STF programs. These two planning requirements are very similar in intent and timing.

Some of the issues include:

- Should there be one plan, or two?
- What is the planning area?
- The FTA requires the coordinated plan to include a comprehensive consultation process with human service agencies, consumers and other non-traditional stakeholders. What local administrative structure will work to organize this?
- What local agency will be responsible to adopt the plan?
- How can we help local agencies to quickly complete the required process steps, collaboration and data collection?
- How can we avoid establishing requirements beyond the management ability of local agencies?

Recommendations:

1. **Unified Plan.** To avoid redundancy, the division recommends a single, unified coordinated plan to include both the state and federal requirements.
2. **Local Lead Agency.** One of the significant policy decisions to address is assigning the lead planning agency. **The division proposes that the STF Agency take the lead in developing the coordinated plan for its area.** STF Agencies have been the division's partners to coordinate transportation for older individuals and individuals with disabilities for the Special Transportation Fund Program and are now required by state law to adopt a plan by June 30, 2007. The FTA allows the state do designate lead agencies for the federal programs. The STF Agency seems to be the logical choice for the local lead agency. STF Agencies may designate another agency to conduct planning process.
3. **Planning Area.** The planning area will be (at a minimum) the county or counties governed by STF Agencies, or the areas served by Indian tribes. STF Agencies will be asked to coordinate their planning with the Metropolitan Planning Areas (MPOs) and transit agencies in the MPO areas, as appropriate.
 - a. Plans may be divided into urban and rural components.
 - b. Regional Plans are encouraged: STF Agencies and MPOs may join with other STF Agencies (and other agencies with similar planning requirements) for mutual benefit for planning purposes
4. **MPO Coordination:** In urban areas the MPO organizations will be consulted and collaborate with the lead agency. Transit Staff is working with each urban area to identify issues and solutions around developing the plan. Coordination with MPO Planning requirements and STF Program planning requirements is emphasized, but we recognize that it will require additional consultation and coordination.
5. **Plan Content:** To meet the requirement for certifying that projects emerge from plans, Public Transit Division is proposing a two-step phase-in planning process.
 - a. **Interim Plans:** In order to identify projects for the 2007-2009 Public Transportation Discretionary Grant Program, interim coordinated plans will need to be completed by the Fall of 2006. These interim plans are required in order for local communities to identify projects to propose for discretionary grant funds, and for Public Transit Division to acknowledge that projects are derived from a plan, as required. For communities with transportation plans, the initial planning effort will allow the community to update their plan to be in compliance with the new requirement. For communities without a plan, the initial plan will allow the community to enter into a dialogue about transportation and to identify initial community coordination goals.
 - b. **Required Interim Plan Elements.** FTA has not specified the required elements of the plans. In the interim, Staff has discussed the expectations of FTA and has received encouragement for the state to move forward to define requirements. The division recommends the following activities and documentation for the interim plan.

- i. A description of the planning area covered and the human service and transportation agencies operating in the area.
 - ii. A list of all participants and the agencies represented on the planning committee – representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation providers, human service providers, and the public all participate to develop the plan.
 - iii. Dates, times and agendas for the meetings.
 - iv. Description of the public involvement process used to develop the plan.
 - v. Description of currently available transportation services.
 - vi. A summary of the group discussions that identifies needs and gaps in service.
 - vii. A description of initial strategies/projects to fill the gaps.
 - viii. Summary of how the community will continue the coordination effort to create a fully developed plan.
- c. **Final Plans:** Once the interim plans are drafted, and the proposed discretionary grant projects are submitted to Public Transit Division for review, the community may spend additional time to fully develop the coordinated plan with the goal of having the plan in place by June 30, 2007. Plan content will include traditional elements for a plan:
- i. Cover at least a three year period.
 - ii. Public involvement process description.
 - iii. Plan review and approval description.
 - iv. Vision Statement.
 - v. An analysis of the planning area:
 - Demographics-current and future.
 - Transportation resources:
 - Transit and human service funds,
 - Program income,
 - Fleet,
 - Providers, and
 - Other community contributions.
 - vi. Current use of resources:
 - Riders,
 - Service availability (area, days/hours, etc.)
 - Fares and passenger eligibility requirements,
 - Other (freight, meals on wheels, etc.)
 - vii. Unique challenges.
 - viii. Service and facility gaps.
 - ix. Short and long range goals and strategies, including for the following:
 - Coordination.
 - Fleet acquisition and deployment.
 - Service (operations).
 - Infrastructure (administration and vehicle maintenance facilities, passenger shelters, other passenger access, etc.)
 - Mobility management.

- Mobility supports (e.g., travel training, marketing, user side subsidies, etc.)
 - Employment transportation for low-income and individuals with disabilities.
 - Technology (e.g., call centers, mobile data terminals, etc.)
- x. Resource evaluation to assess the viability of the strategies.
 - xi. Performance measures.
 - xii. Preferred strategies in priority order.

Additional Considerations: The planning initiative will be coordinated with the division's United We Ride activities and the Statewide Planning Program (§5313). Funds and technical assistance will be made available to assist in developing the plans, starting with the United We Ride coordination grant allocated to ODOT in 2005. The division is working with an interagency United We Ride Working Group to identify recommendations for plan development strategies and technical assistance.