



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 Transit Technical Advisory Committee
FROM: Martin W. Loring Administrator
Public Transit Division

File Code:

SUBJECT: Agenda Item F: ConnectOregon

The Public Transportation Advisory Committee has been charged with helping prioritize transit projects for the new ConnectOregon program. We will discuss review options and take a first look at project requests in the March meeting.

To assist members to prepare, information is provided in the following areas:

- 1) ConnectOregon grant and loan applications received and review process.
- 2) A summary of transit grant project applications received by the ConnectOregon deadline. No transit requests for loans were received.
- 3) PTAC application screening process

1. ConnectOregon Applications and Review Process

By the February 17th deadline, ODOT received 110 requests for \$238,676,097 in funding from the ConnectOregon program. Ninety five of the applications requested only grant assistance. Seven requested both a grant and loan, and one application asked for a loan only. All applications will be competing for funding from this \$100 million lottery bond-backed initiative passed by the 2005 Legislature.

These applications will be screened for completeness and technical feasibility by a consultant. After that, starting about March 20th, they will be reviewed by four advisory committees (air, rail, freight and public transit) and the Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTS) to ensure a wide and comprehensive discussion of which projects to recommend to the Oregon Transportation Commission.

Applications will be evaluated by these groups based on specific considerations defined in the legislation (SB71):

- (a) Whether the project reduces transportation costs for Oregon businesses;
- (b) Whether it benefits or connects two or more modes;
- (c) Whether it is a critical link in a statewide or regional transportation system;
- (d) How much of the cost can be borne by applicants;

- (e) Whether the project creates construction and permanent jobs in the state; and
- (f) Whether the project is ready for construction.

Recommendations from the modal committees and ACT's will go to a consensus committee. This group hasn't been formed yet, but will likely include about 20 people; about half from the modal committees and half from ACTS. The consensus committee will be asked to meet several times and craft an allocation recommendation for the \$100 million available. They will also suggest a supplemental list of projects for future investment if those recommended don't proceed or other funds become available. This recommendation must provide at least \$15 million to each of the five regions, and may not include any projects eligible for highway funding.

Current plans call for the Commission to hold a public hearing on the investment recommendation at their June meeting, and then act on the recommendation at the July OTC meeting.

2. Transit Grant Applications Received

Attached is a table summarizing 17 ConnectOregon grant applications received that involve transit. Fifteen of them are bus related, and two involve light rail or street car projects. These last two are within the purview of the Rail Committee, but PTAC may want to review them as well.

3. PTAC Review Process

The ConnectOregon work of the PTAC needs to be completed early in May. To meet this deadline, the PTAC needs to discuss and settle on a review process at your March 13th meeting. Individual project applications are supposed to be available March 20th, but we will try have them available at the March 13th meeting. We will also have process options to discuss. You would then review the applications between the March and subsequent meeting.

One key decision is whether or not to provide applicants with the opportunity to discuss their project or projects with the PTAC. Because of the magnitude of these projects, we recommend providing an opportunity for applicants to pitch their project or at least answer questions that the PTAC may have. Presentation, discussion and a ranking decision on each project would likely take at least 30 minutes per project. If so, this means an all day-long meeting would be required to deal with 17 projects.

Staff recommends scheduling a special all-day PTAC meeting in April. We would plan it to last from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (or split it into two half days) with a morning break, lunch break and afternoon break. If you could conclude the April meeting with a consensus recommendation, that would be great. If more time is needed, then we would schedule the PTAC vote for the May 8th PTAC meeting.