

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
March 13, 2006**

Date: Monday, March 13, 2006
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:20 p.m.

Location: 455 Airport Rd, Bldg E

Members Present:

Bob Lowry, Chair, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)
Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
Claire Potter, TriMet
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider
Jeff Hamm, (Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
Ernie Palmer, Rural Transit Service
Terry Parker, Lane Transit District (LTD)
Margaret Yochem, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)
Sally Lawson, O4AD

Interested Persons Present:

Julie Stephens

Members Absent:

Luis Caraballo, Department of Human Services (DHS)
Peter Jacobsen, Rogue Valley Transit District (RVTD)
Raye Miles, Private for Profit Transportation Service Provider
John Wenzholz, Assoc. of Counties (AOC)
Terry Thompson, Assoc. of Counties (AOC)
Janice Wilson, Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Martin Loring, Administrator
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Operations Manager
Jean Palmateer, Special Transportation Program Manager
Sherrin Coleman, Planning Manager
Sharon Peerenboom, Rural & Small City Program Manager
Adam Torgerson, Public Affairs Specialist
PJ Pippin, Executive Support

Guest Speakers:

None.

ITEM A

1:10 p.m. **Welcome, Introductions, Items of Interest**

Chairperson Bob Lowry called the meeting to order. Welcome and introductions were made. Margaret Yochem was introduced as a new member of PTAC, replacing Jay Lynch as the OTA representative.

1:15 p.m. **Items of Interest**

Approval of Minutes. A motion was made (Terry Parker); seconded and unanimously passed to approve the November 14, 2005 and January 9, 2006 meeting minutes.

Training and Events Announcements. Jean explained the current training opportunities:

- Financial Management 3/20 and 3/21 in Salem; scholarships have been made available.
- Willamette Certificate course April & May
- Terry Parker and Jean Palmateer are working with Mobility International USA and SILC group to put on a training event in Eugene the last week of June.
- National conference calls through Easter Seals – Terry Parker will conduct a teleconference on innovative funding practices in small urban and rural communities.
- Stevenson WA training in October 20-25 (Skamania Lodge)
- Fall American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) meeting

A delegate to the OTA conference planning committee needs to be assigned. Julie Stevens and Margaret Yochem volunteered.

ITEM B

1:30 p.m. **Administrator's Report**

Special Transportation Fund (STF) program materials have been made available. The published memorandum provides an update on the status of the program.

At the February OTC meeting, the Commission discussed allocation of \$4 million in unspent grant money. The OTC decided to allocate up to \$2 million to maintain current service levels of specific projects. The Commission also decided against a 10% allocation to offset the rising fuel costs incurred by providers in favor of setting aside \$2 million for a Public

“Transportation Innovation Initiative.” They felt that that it was inappropriate to invest “one-time” money in operating costs.

It was suggested that a committee be convened for the innovative part of the OTC suggestion, such as a handbook for cutting fuel usage, simulator buses, etc. Jeff Hamm, Ernie Palmer, Terry Parker and Claire Potter volunteered for the committee.

A special meeting will be held next month to discuss Connect Oregon projects. The meeting has been set for April 10, 2006.

Two research projects have been initiated:

- paratransit – what is an average age people need to begin use of paratransit services; and
- rural service - quality of service, and on-time performance.

Mr. Loring explained that the Public Transit Division (PTD) is recruiting for two positions: a grant coordinator; and a financial analyst (which was a half-time position that has now been converted to one, full-time position). PTD will, most likely, go to the E-Board to request a limited duration position for planning requirements for SAFETEA-LU.

ITEM C

1:45 p.m.

Action Item: Consider change of formula for non-urbanized area.

Sharon Peerenboom presented information for the Committee to consider change of formula for non-urbanized areas. She stated that the budget has increased and no longer reflects the formula accurately. The question is how to best distribute funds in a cautious and responsible manner while maximizing the benefits of the increased funding levels. The suggestion was made to increase the base amount which will help both small and larger groups. Funding should increase through 2009 from \$5 million to \$11 million including an increase of \$300,000 in reserves vs. 150,000 for new starts. We want to provide the funds as quickly and wisely as we can.

A MOTION was made to support the change by Ernie Palmer, seconded (Dennis Dick); and unanimously approved.

ITEM D

2:00 p.m.

Action Item: Consider policy for discretionary investment in fixed route ADA complementary paratransit service.

A formal request for endorsement was made by federal law to consider the appropriate state role in financing transportation services mandated by federal law, specifically the complementary paratransit to the public fixed-route system requested by the ADA. A PTAC taskforce was formed to

explore the issue. The taskforce agreed that ADA complementary paratransit projects should be eligible for funding in the same manner that other public transportation services benefiting the elderly & people with disabilities are eligible. The task group specifically recommend:

1. Public agencies will continue to be eligible for capital grants to replace and maintain the fleet of vehicles providing ADA complementary paratransit services.
2. Public agencies will be eligible to apply for grant funds in support of operations, planning and capital enhancement projects. Such projects will compete for funding, and project eligibility and priorities related to project selection for funding will be equivalently applied to all proposed grant projects.

A MOTION to approve endorse the recommendation was made by Terry Parker; seconded by Claire Potter; and unanimously approved by the Committee.

ITEM E

2:15 p.m.

Action Item: Consider proposals for new federal transit program implementation

- Proposal for implementing coordinated planning program
- Proposal for interim JARC/New Freedom Investment Plan requirements.

As a condition of federal assistance, ODOT must certify to the US Secretary of Transportation that projects selected for funding are derived from locally-developed, coordinated plans. Also, STF agencies must complete a plan for the STF program. These two planning requirements are very similar in intent and timing.

Public Transit Division recommends:

- Unified Plan. To avoid redundancy, have a single, unified coordinated plan to include both state and federal requirements.
- Local Lead Agency. PTD proposes that the STF agency take the lead in developing the coordinated plan for its area. STF agencies will ensure that it gets done in a fully inclusive manner.
- Planning Area. The planning area will be the county governed by the STF agency, or the areas served by Oregon Tribes.
- MPO Coordination. MPOs will be consulted and collaborated with the lead agency; and lead agencies will consult and collaborate with MPOs..

- Plan Content. Public Transit proposed a two-step phase-in planning process to meet the requirement for certifying that the projects emerge from plans.
 - ◆ Interim Plans. These interim plans are needed for local communities to identify projects to receive discretionary grant funds, and for Public Transit to certify that projects are derived from a plan, as required.
 - ◆ Required Interim Plan Elements. FTA has not specified the required elements of the plans. In the interim, staff recommends the following activities and documentation for the interim plan:
 - Description of the planning area covered and the human service and transportation agencies operating in the area.
 - A list of all participants and the agencies represented on the planning committee (representatives of public, private and on-profit transportation providers, human service providers and the public) will be provided and all will participate to develop the plan.
 - Dates, times and agendas for the meetings.
 - A description of the public involvement process used to develop the plan.
 - A description of currently available transportation services.
 - A summary of the group discussions that identifies needs and gaps in service.
 - A description of initial strategies and projects to fill the gaps.
 - A summary of how the community will continue the coordination effort to create a fully developed plan.

A MOTION was made to adopt the interim strategy to have a local, unified coordinated plan by Claire Potter, seconded by Debbie Wert, and unanimously approved by Committee

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 2007.

The planning initiative will be coordinated with the Division's United We Ride activities and the Statewide Planning Program 5313.

Jarc money is competitive and open for private non-profit; over 250,000 the governor will select winner; 250,000 or less

Under \$200,000 - Small urban: MPOs are designated consultants and receive JARC money, and delegate monies at their discretion. Populations over \$200,000, the governor decides.

A MOTION was made by Jeff Hamm, seconded by Ernie Palmer and unanimously approved by the Committee to bring the JARC and New Freedoms programs into the state's discretionary program.

2:45 p.m. BREAK

ITEM F

3:00 p.m. **Action Item: Consider *ConnectOregon* program applications and review procedures.**

ODOT received 110 requests totalling \$238,676,097 in funding from the *ConnectOregon* program. Ninety-five of the applications requested grant-only assistance; seven requested both a grant and a loan; and one asked for only a loan. PTAC members are asked to look at seventeen transit-only applications.

ConnectOregon applications will be evaluated based on six specific considerations as defined in the 2005 legislative session (Senate Bill 71):

1. Whether the project reduces transportation costs for Oregon businesses;
2. Whether it benefits or connects two or more modes of transportation;
3. Whether it is a critical link in a statewide or regional transportation system;
4. How much of the cost can be borne by the applicant.
5. Whether the project creates construction and permanent jobs in the statement; and
6. Whether the project is ready for construction.

A discussion of conflicts of interest began. Although the law does not require such, the consensus was that Committee Members should dismiss themselves from discussion of their application if their organization is applying for funding.

Since *ConnectOregon* project recommendations are needed by May 19, a special PTAC subcommittee meeting is scheduled for April 10, at 9:00 a.m. Applicants will be invited to this meeting. A score sheet will be sent to participants in advance of the meeting to score the seventeen transit projects.

Selected Representatives: Ernie Palmer, Terry Parker
Alternate Representative: Jeff Hamm

ITEM G

4:00 p.m. **Wrap-up and Adjourn**

The Committee requested an update on the current status of TripCheck as well as information on Oregon Public Transit Information System (OPTIS). It was noted that OPTIS information was included in the Administrator's Report.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20