

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NOTES
July 9, 2007**

Date: Monday, July 9, 2007
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: ODOT – Human Resource Center
2775 19th St SE, Salem, OR

Members Present:

Bob Lowry, Chair, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (OPRAC)
Frank Synoground, Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
Claire Potter, TriMet
Terry Parker, Lane Transit District (LTD)
John Helm, Governors Commission on Senior Services
Lorna Adkins, Salem Area Mass Transit
Sally Lawson, O4AD
Ernie Palmer, Rural Transit Service
Terry Thompson, Assoc. of Counties (AOC)

Interested Persons Present:

Mark Volmert, Linn County
Aaron Deas, TriMet
Kelly Stoner, PacWest Communications
Peter Schultz, STF Member
Tonya Saunders, Yamhill County Transit
Dan Schwanz, Hood River Transportation

Members Absent:

Debbie Wert, DHS
John Whittington, Salem Area Mass Transit District (SAMTD)
Steve Dickey, Oregon Transit Association (OTA)
John Wenholz, Assoc. of Counties (AOC)
Janice Wilson, Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)
Dennis Dick, Intercity Bus Service Provider

ODOT Public Transit Staff Present:

Michael Ward, Administrator
Dinah Van Der Hyde, Policy Manager
Jean Palmateer, Special Transportation Program Manager
Sherrin Coleman, Planning Manager
PJ Pippin, Executive Support

Joni Bramlett, Capital Program Manager
Maile Boals, Administrative Specialist 1

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.

April, May and June Meeting Notes were unanimously approved with noted changes by PTAC Committee.

Training Announcements:

- July 24-25 ODOT will be hosting Coordinated Mobility training at VA auditorium.
- OTA conference is October 22-24, in Seaside. Deadline to register is October 5.

[ITEM B](#)

1:15 p.m. **Overview of 07-09 Discretionary Grant Selection Process**

Results of 07-09 Discretionary Grant Program. 246 projects were approved; approximately \$30 million in funds.

There is approximately \$500,000 left to spend for rural and special needs vehicle preservation projects. In September PTD will bring a recommendation for additional projects.

OPTIS Update. Mr. Ward gave a brief OPTIS update on the status of developing the new management information system for PTD. The project has been delayed. It should be implemented the first of October. September will be the month PTD tests the application.

Legislative Update. Mr. Ward gave a brief summary of final legislative decisions affecting transportation.

- The funding package for raising cigarette tax submitted on behalf of Oregon Transit Association did not pass. It was overshadowed by the Governor's cigarette tax hike for healthy kids.

- Oregon law pertaining to definition of commercial vehicles was amended. CDL's will no longer be required for drivers of vehicles under 16 passengers or weighing 26,000 lbs. or less for transit districts organized under ORS 267.
- Trimet received \$250,000,000 in government backed bonds for light rail expansion needs.
- \$100,000,000 for ConnectOregon2. Criteria for evaluating projects has been changed which may make transit projects more competitive. OTC is looking for "shovel-ready" projects.

ConnectOregon2 Update. It was suggested that PTAC review the rules of the process prior to starting the ConnectOregon2 review process. Committee agreed that at the Consensus Committee level the rules, politics, etc. interfered with the process. Local political committees plus special groups (rail, highway, aeronautics, public transit) provided a different environment. ODOT is aware of the problems. Mr. Ward will try to make sure public transportation needs are heard. The ConnectOregon2 schedule is to start reviewing applications in December/January and have final OTC approval by June/July 2008. PTD will provide resources to help with technical review of ConnectOregon2 applications.

ITEM C

1:30 p.m.
Learned.

07-09 Discretionary Grant Selection Process: Lessons

PTAC members presented ideas and comments for next biennium's discretionary grant selection process. The public was invited to participate. The following comments were collected:

- Service preservations are more important than service enhancements.
- Process for final selection was outstanding.
- Timeline and schedule should be modified; there was not enough time in the schedule for making applications.
- A project summary does not provide enough detail for the committee; suggestion made to divide the review into five region processes.
- Suggestion made to put applications online; more detailed information on projects could be added.
- Criteria for vehicle replacement need refining.
- Concerning vehicle replacement: not enough spread in value to determine priority.
- Vehicle replacement definitions need to be clearer.

- Vehicle replacement: FTA guidelines set at 7 yrs for small vehicles; reality is that vehicles are not replaced until years 15-23; guidelines should be based on reality not necessarily on FTA guidelines.
- People are expecting vehicle replacement at FTA rules (7 yrs), but this is not happening.
- Replace vehicles at 20 years; prioritize maintenance.
- Suggestion made to address projects that carry over; make carryover part of the process.
- Documents posted on the web need to be made viewable for people with vision impairments. Suggestion made to use low-vision software; necessary for TriMet.
- Perhaps there's a way for PTD to set aside a small amount of money for engine rebuilds/transmission rebuilds. These funds could be made available during biennium instead of only at beginning of process.
- Engine rebuilds should be classified under maintenance.
- An emergency fund would be a good idea. In one year, a provider had two engine/transmission replacements. They had enough money for one replacement but they needed assistance for the second replacement.
- Preservation should have highest priority.
- Since all projects approved during this discretionary cycle will need to be maintained in the next cycle, sustainability should be considered a high priority in discretionary investment.
- Maintaining capital should have priority over operations.
- More consideration should be given to the local ranking of projects.
- Policy on equity consideration should be determined before the next discretionary cycle.
- Local STF projects priority: process could be improved since the local priority was weighted with other items. Revisit weighting of local priorities so that small communities can get fair share of state support even at the expense of a larger system.
- Place more value on local priorities and on coordination.
- Since tribes projects have same weight as others even though their process is different, their projects have an unfair advantage. Revisit this issue to ensure fair and open process for all.

Visitors were invited to comment on the discretionary process, not on individual projects.

- Mark Volmert, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, and STF Coordinator for Linn County
 - Process - 95% was good to excellent.
 - Category ranking – For smaller cities and rural areas, suggest three categories instead of two: current services funded, current services not funded, and enhanced service.
 - Application assistance – Appreciated the PTD workshops, but small agencies don't have grant writers; all agencies need to develop their own, reasonable applications. AOC may be able to assist small agencies with their applications more often.
 - Staff review and communications – PTD did not make as many calls as in the past to get clarification on applications. Agencies may have been surprised by the outcome. Suggest more clarity about criteria. Scoring system should be on the website.
 - PTAC review and public process - Using website was very helpful. PTAC review process could be improved. Brief summaries are difficult to make decisions from. Suggest inviting audience to participate in case there are questions.
 - Timing of meeting - Committee had too much to do in time allotted. Suggest two meetings 7-10 days apart, allowing time to gather more information, answer questions, etc.

- Dan Schwanz, Hood River Transportation District
 - PTAC process - process was unfair since visitors were able to speak about their particular projects and “trading” took place. The process was a success in terms of the final outcome. Respect should be given to the needs of existing programs for small agencies throughout the state, not only along I-5 corridor.
 - Program goals listed in the State Management Plan may help clarify questions.

PTAC continued with ideas and comments regarding the discretionary grant process.

- Perception of inconsistent message. Process begins with a call for any and all types/sizes of projects only to then have projects eliminated for lack of funds. Local projects can be constrained at the local level; process seems to have lack of

fairness since there are those who have experienced grant writers and staff, etc. Coordination is very important. Clear criteria needed.

- People were asked to apply for large dollar amounts. Lack of definition about Innovation was an issue. Should have more boundaries. Acknowledged that process was different this time with the addition of JARC, New Freedom, Mass Transit, and Innovation categories.
- Applications should stand on their own merit and should be considered solely on information provided in it. Conflict of interest should be respected. If PTAC members are asked questions to clarify a project application, then all applicants should be given the same opportunity to answer questions about their projects. Clear criteria should be available to all applicants.
- Clear application guidelines are necessary. Don't give false hope. Don't encourage providers to apply if they won't get the money.
- Coordinated environments - All providers are at different evolutionary stages and in different environments; understanding differences across the state is important.
- State transportation services are divided county by county and information about the counties should be laid out during the process.
- Transportation is evolving. People are more willing to get on a bus at a hotel and go shopping.
- Q: How does PTD staff get the paper and information to PTAC for a fair evaluation of the applications? A: Staff spent 2-3 months reviewing the information in order to prepare the information and summaries to PTAC.
- Summaries were good.
- Coordinated plans are now in final adoption stage. Couldn't use plans for this last review. Consider looking at the community at large and not at individual buses, shelters, etc.

- Innovation category caused concern and took the process in a different direction; there was a lack of clarity about what was considered an Innovation project.

2:45 p.m. BREAK

3:00 p.m. **ITEM D**

PTAC – Roles/Responsibilities, Membership, Terms/New

Members

Discussion was encouraged to define PTAC’s usefulness and what the needs are and what changes should be made, as well as expectations of the role of PTAC. ODOT brings issues and policies to this group for advice, recommendations, etc.

Discussion of terms limits began. One of the purposes of term limits is to keep fresh ideas moving. The comment was made that term limits are not necessary, that by its very nature the committee will change. In careers, people come and go; there is a lot of turnover. The suggestion was brought up that if a problem with meeting attendance occurs, the solution should be to talk to the person and make sure they are committed to PTAC and can dedicate the necessary time to the Committee. It was decided that this issue needs to be discussed further and any decisions should be made at another time.

It was agreed that a charter needs to be created and more discussion on membership needs to take place.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Part of PTAC’s role is to give informed opinions to PTD and the OTC, and to be a liaison between ODOT and providers. The meetings should continue to be open and available to the public.

MEMBERSHIP

Committee agreed that membership contained diverse representation with different thoughts and opinions. The comment was made that more rural representation is needed in PTAC.

TERMS AND NEW MEMBERS

The League of cities has contacted PTAC to become PTAC member. More information is necessary. Further discussion on this topic will occur in the future.

4:00 p.m. **ITEM F**

Wrap-up and Adjournment

PTAC requested information on state coordinated emergency evacuation plan using public transportation vehicles.

Next meeting is September 10.

The Committee adjourned at 4:00 p.m.