

HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee Meeting minutes

January 20, 2023

Attendees

David Bouchard – TriMet

Tom Mills – TriMet

Eileen Collins – TriMet

Jan Campbell – Committee on Accessible Transportation

Kristina Babcock – Clackamas County

Dwight Brashear – SMART, Wilsonville

Andrew Plambeck – Portland Streetcar

Dyami Valentine – Washington County

Todd Wood – Canby Area Transit

Andi Howell – Sandy Area Metro

Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas

Adam Argo – Rider Representative, Clackamas County

Reza Farhoodi – Rider Representative, Portland

Anne Buzzini

Julie Wilcke-Pilmer – Ride Connection

April Bertelsen – Portland Bureau of Transportation

Cameron Bennett – Portland State University

Catherine Ciarlo – Portland Bureau of Transportation

Christina Deffebach – Washington County

Dan Bower – Portland Streetcar

Deanna Palm – Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang

Elias

Emily Motter – Ride Connection

Eve Nilenders – Multnomah County

Hayden Miller – Multnomah County

Jarvez Hall – Rider representative, East Multnomah County

Jodi Guetzloe-Parker – OR-ID Council of Laborers

Justin Trubiani – TriMet

Kate Lyman – TriMet

Luke Norman – TriMet

Kelsey Lewis –SMART, Wilsonville

Mailee Xiong – TriMet

Mariana Valenzuela – Centro Cultural

Mary Lou Ritter – Committee on Accessible Transportation

Michael Ray – TriMet

Washington County Commissioner Roy Rogers

Sarah Ianarone – the Street Trust

Scott Simonton

Valerie Egon – Oregon Department of Transportation

Vee Paykar – Climate Solutions

Preliminaries

- The meeting begins at 8:34 AM.
- Tom reviews the WebEx interface and agenda.
- There is no public comment.

Formula Funds Plan Update

- TriMet staff are working on the finishing touches, and will be submitting the plan today at noon.

Discussion of STIF Discretionary funds and Intercommunity Funds

- When the program was created, it was indicated that 90% of funds would go to the STIF formula funds program. 5% of funds would go towards a competitive STIF discretionary project. 4% would go to the STIF intercommunity fund, and 1% would go to ODOT program administration.
- Some projects qualify for multiple funding sources.
- Everyone who submitted their letter of intent was given permission to move forward, although not everyone chose to apply. Applications have been shared with the qualified entities and the Region 1 Area Commission of Transportation. Both the R1 ACT and HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee must go through the process of deciding which programs should move forward, and how they should be ranked.
- Commissioner Savas appreciates the complexity of this process. He emphasizes that the intent of the funds is to cover the first mile, as opposed to the last mile. He would like a quarterly

report showing a pie chart showing where the funds are going. Tom will ensure that the committee gets a report.

- Tom notes that feedback from these committees is due by February. In mid-February, ODOT will form a selection committee, consisting of ODOT staff and a member of ODOT'S Public Transportation Advisory Committee. The PTAC will review the recommendations, and may make changes as they deem necessary. Finally, the plan will go to the Oregon Transportation Commission for a final award decision. The grant agreements will be executed in July.

Applicant Presentations

Canby Area Transit – Todd Wood

- Canby Area Transit is asking for a master plan update. Their plan was done in 2017, and much of it has been accomplished. COVID had a major effect on ridership patterns. The updated plan would look at how COVID has changed the system, and what the best uses of funding are to improve service. CAT is asking for approximately \$200,000 to update the plan.

Sandy Area Metro – Andi Howell

Andi gives an overview of SAM'S network; a bus along US-26 connecting Gresham to Sandy, a route connecting Sandy and Estacada, an in-town shuttle, a public dial-a-ride service, and medical transportation.

SAM has 2.8 full-time employees, and contracts operations out to MV Transportation.

SAM wishes to continue funding technology upgrades to passenger information systems. Mobile ticketing is being explored for Clackamas County partners. An RFP will be created, and a technology plan will be established, to be shared with other agencies across the state.

- Andi emphasizes how these technologies improve equity and accessibility.

SMART, Wilsonville – Kelsey Lewis

- SMART has requested two projects.
- A mobile battery backup unit would allow for greater resiliency in the event of power outages. The unit could be shared with other nearby providers experiencing localized power outages.
- SMART plans to hire a consultant to study how riders of the regional routes can be best served. They will study the feasibility of deploying electric buses along I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem, and I-205, between Clackamas Town Center and Wilsonville. Cherriots and Salem is starting to implement battery-electric buses. As they do that, SMART would like to work together to have reciprocal charging. An agreement will be sought to accomplish this.

Discussion

- Reza asks if the 2X to Tualatin will be part of this modeling. Kelsey confirms that it will.

Washington County – Dyami Valentine

- Washington County contracts with Ride Connection to provide transit service. Dyami reviews the various services Ride Connection provides, as well as ridership statistics.
- Washington County is planning a microtransit pilot in a transit-deficient area in the county.

- Washington County intends to purchase 2 battery electric vans, with a total project cost of \$689,000 with a request of \$551,000.
- The Community Connector Stop Enhancement Project was funded during the previous biennium through a STIF Discretionary grant. Once implemented, there will be stop improvements throughout Ride Connection's service area. The improvements will improve awareness of the service, and enhance safety for riders. The project is very saleable.

Discussion

April is interested in the microtransit pilot. Dyami notes that the service will not collect passenger fares. The intent of the service is to provide connections to TriMet's fixed route network. He points to planned future expansions to bus service in South Beaverton.

Jan confirms that microtransit will provide same-day service, but pre-scheduled trips are also possible.

Dwight asks how the vehicles will be charged. Julie: Ride Connection received a PGE grant, and a strategic plan on what infrastructure looks like. It is expected to be depot. The vehicles should be able to complete the route within a day without the need to recharge in the middle of the day. The range of the vehicles are approximately 130 miles.

Portland Streetcar – Andrew Plambeck

- Portland Streetcar proposes to expand their Rider Ambassador Program. The ambassadors work in pairs to assist riders experiencing houselessness and addiction. They have coordinated with multiple partners such as TriMet, Portland Street Response, OPAL, etc.
- Andrew reviews the supplies ambassadors carry. The goal is to establish this as an ongoing program over the next biennium, and hire a team lead to establish deeper relationships with community partners.

Discussion

- Reza wonders if there is a plan to continue the Rider Ambassador program after the next biennium. Portland Streetcar has not yet identified a sustainable funding source. However, they hope to find additional funding, and are optimistic that advertising revenues will increase.
- Jan rides the Streetcar almost daily. She asks if the ambassadors are responsible for vehicle cleaning. Andrew confirms that this does not fall under their scope of work, but ambassadors do monitor and report conditions while riding.
- April recalls that this grant request would potentially expand the number of staff. Andrew notes that shift schedules will determine if teams can be deployed over more hours of the day.

TriMet MAX Service Plan – Kate Lyman

- TriMet has found that bus ridership is rebounding faster than MAX ridership. This service plan would complement the Forward Together plan. The plan will focus on ways to maximize ridership in an equitable way. The plan does not call for expansion of MAX lines.
- There are 2 key deliverables, a near-term, financially constrained plan reflecting current budget realities, and a strategic service plan, which will examine future demand, and ideal service levels.
- The funding request is saleable.

Discussion

- Reza asks if TriMet is considering any capital components, such as pocket tracks. Kate notes that this plan does not call for any capital improvements. Reza is interested in ways to improve throughput across the Steel Bridge.
- April is interested in potential reallocation of peak service to off-peak hours. Kate notes that while there are some physical constraints, there is still room to restore some pre-COVID service.
- Kristina asks if this project will study current infrastructure constraints. Kate notes that this plan creates the desire of where service should be. Infrastructure conversations would follow the development of the plan.

TriMet's Transit Priority Spot Improvement Application Request – Luke Norman

- This funding allows TriMet to partner with local jurisdictions to assess, design, and implement projects to target delay hotspots across the system to improve reliability for riders. Traffic congestion is returning. The project includes tactical solutions such as bus lanes, signal adjustments and turn improvements. These improvements are typically low-cost, and can be implemented over 2 years. Since 2019, over 10 STIF-funded projects have been implemented.
- Luke provides an overview of funded projects.
- TriMet partnered with the City of Portland to add a lagging left turn signal at NW 21st and Everett for Line 77. Delays were reduced by over 30% in the PM commute period.
- A new bus lane was added on North Whitaker, reducing delays for Line 6 riders. A bike component was also added to enhance connections across the Interstate Bridge.
- Bi-directional bus lanes were added at the intersection of SE Hawthorne BLVD and Cesar Chavez BLVD. The project was incorporated into a larger road diet along SE Hawthorne to improve overall safety and access to transit.
- An upcoming project will add a left-side bus island at Collins Circle for buses connecting to the Providence Park MAX Station.

TriMet's Accessible Transportation Program Eileen Collins Mastel

- Eileen provides a brief overview of the TriMet LIFT paratransit service. She displays TriMet's fleet replacement schedule. TriMet needs to purchase a number of new vehicles to replace aging equipment.
- Supply chain shortages have pushed vehicle procurement times from 6 months to 12-18 months if they are lucky.
- TriMet has seen a 61% cost increase for vehicles.
- Eileen reviews vehicle life cycles, and average vehicle mile numbers. Some vehicles are 12 years old, which means that they are 140% beyond the age requirement of 5 years.
- Eileen reviews funding, which shows that there is \$6.1 million in unmet need.
- Eileen displays the mean distance between failures, between 8,000-10,000 miles.
- Eileen notes that cab providers do not have sufficient capacity to provide reliable service. On-time performance has gotten worse.
- Eileen reviews the service challenges in Washington County, with about 40% of trips being assigned to cabs, which have a 74% on-time performance rate.

- TriMet has experienced capacity constraints, which is prohibited under the ADA. The request is saleable, but the need is urgent. Next to our fixed-route service, LIFT has the largest transit fleet in Oregon.

Discussion

- Commissioner Savas believes that this is a jurisdictional budgeting issue, and this request does not seem to match the core intent of the HB2017 funds. Is this not a functional core responsibility for general fleet funding?
- Eileen notes that LIFT has relied on a variety of revenue streams; general fund and bond proceeds, 5310, and STIF funding. It is not out of the ordinary, but the dollar amount is larger than it was in the past. Historically, federal 5309 funds have been used, but those funds were not applied for for this project.
- Dwight agrees with Commissioner Savas. If not for STIF, how would TriMet go about funding these replacements? He understands that this is the easier route, but acknowledges that TriMet is required to fund the replacements at some point. Eileen states that this project would compete with the multitude of capital projects being reviewed for prioritization and funding. This could mean that some vehicle replacements cannot be funded, resulting in capacity constraints.
- Sarah was surprised to see that gasoline-powered vehicles are being procured. Why is this? Eileen notes that diesel vehicles are no longer available on the ODOT State Price Agreement. Renewable diesel is not an option. The LIFT garages also do not have the infrastructure to support CNG or electric vehicles. They are looking for their next procurement to be hybrid vehicles until the low-emissions infrastructure is put in place.
- Jan rides LIFT as well, and understands how important this need is. She predicts an increase in LIFT demand. If dollars are taken out of other pots at TriMet, fixed route could be negatively impacted. Those impacts could be felt in the LIFT program.
- Commissioner Savas appreciates Sarah's question. Gasoline-powered vehicle procurements are a red flag for him, as they are not as reliable. Maintenance costs could be high. How many cutaways are gasoline-powered today? Eileen says that none are. Ford and Chevrolet no longer make diesel vehicles. She concurs with Commissioner Savas' comments. The Dodge and Mercedes cutaways are not Buy America compliant, and are not on the state price agreement.
- April wonders what amount from the STIF Discretionary grant request would be needed to adequately match 5311 funds. Is there a minimum needed to match them? Eileen: We already have match, and will take whatever funds we can get. The federal match rate is 10.27 percent, and TriMet committed to a 20% match using general fund bond proceeds.

Polling

- The committee needs to make a recommendation of which programs should move forward to be considered for funding by ODOT. The committee will then have the opportunity to rank projects. Tom will use the polling function in WebEx to manage the voting and ranking.
- Julie and Andrew ask if they need to state any conflicts of interest. Only committee members may cast votes. As a reminder, the committee decides which projects move to the next phase. Tom sees no reason why projects should not move to the next phase. Tom does not believe that

the conflict of interest is that strong. There are enough people on the committee who do not have a specific interest in a specific project.

- Tom opens the poll.
- Please indicate which of the FY24-25 STIF Discretionary Intercommunity Fund Applications should be funded?
- Every project received at least 10 votes to move forward.
- Do you want to rank the projects? Yes or no.
- Eight favor ranking, and 11 do not. They will not be ranked.

Discussion

- Dwight believes that this is the best result we could expect. There was not enough time to scrutinize the projects enough to give an honest ranking. The committee is primarily Portland-centric. He appreciates the direction that the committee has taken. It positions this region well.
- Commissioner Rogers: The recommendation will go to the R1 ACT, which he chairs. Next week, a subcommittee of the ACT will discuss these applications. The OTC will then vote on the projects, and will rank them. It would have been helpful for the committee to rank these projects. There will be some cuts, because there is more demand for projects than resources can accommodate.
- Tom will inform ODOT that this committee has moved all projects forward for funding, and that they are equally important. He will also indicate which projects are saleable.

Conclusion

- The committee will go on hiatus for several months, as there is no new STIF business. We will most likely meet again in October. Mary Lou asks for a report on the outcome of the projects. Tom will be sure to send out the OTC'S final recommendations to the committee.
- The meeting adjourns at 10:06 AM.