

HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2022

Attendees

David Bouchard – TriMet

Tom Mills – TriMet

Adam Argo

Anne Buzzini – Metro

April Bertelsen – PBOT

Aron Carleson – Committee member, Executive Director, Hillsboro Schools Foundation

Cameron Bennett, he/him – Committee member, Portland State University

Chris Fick – Multnomah County

Christina Deffebach – Washington County

Claudia Robertson – Committee member

Deanna Palm – Committee member

Deb Bratland – Ride Connection

Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang – Committee member

Carol Vaughn

Dwight Brashear – Committee member, SMART

Emily Motter – Ride Connection

Eve Nilenders – Multnomah County

Jamie Surface – TriMet

Jan Campbell – Committee on Accessible Transportation, Committee member

Committee co-chair Jarvez Hall – East Metro Economic Alliance

Committee co-chair Jodi Parker – LiUNA L737

John Whitman – Ride Connection

Julie Wilcke Pilmer – Committee member, Ride Connection

Justin Trubiani – TriMet

Karen Buehrig – Clackamas County

Kate Lyman – TriMet

Ken Zatarain

Kristina Babcock – Clackamas County

Larry King

Mailee Xiong – TriMet

Marcy Hughes – Project Linkage

Mariana Valenzuela – Centro Cultural

Marie Haviland - Neighborhood House

Mary Lu Ritter – Committee member, SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION Fund Advisory Committee

MaryAnn Potter – Centro Cultural

Mercedes Elizalde

Michael Dohn – TriMet

Michael Ray – TriMet

Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas – Committee member

Washington County Commissioner Roy Rogers – Committee member

Stephen Achilles – Exceed Enterprises

Sarah Ianarone she/her – Committee member, The Street Trust

Victoria Paykar she/her

Catherine Ciarlo – Portland Bureau of Transportation

[Preliminaries](#)

- Jodi opens the meeting at 8:32 AM.
- Tom reviews the agenda and Webex interface.
- Tom: We are still on track to begin putting the plan together next month. We will have until August to complete the public outreach process.

[Public Comment](#)

- There is none.

[Meeting Format Discussion \(Virtual, Hybrid, in-person meetings, etc\)](#)

- There are pros and cons to all meeting formats. Virtual meetings have been highly successful in the past, but public input is more difficult to obtain. However, except during the first year of the plan, we have received very little input.
- A hybrid meeting may increase the amount of public input, but Tom has concerns with meeting functionality and audio quality.
- In-person meetings would be functional with a possibility of increased public input, but travel would be a barrier.
- The consensus is to continue holding virtual meetings.
- Sarah: If we go for a hybrid model, we will need to set guidelines for ensuring equity and accessibility for all participants. If public participation is a priority, we should be able to stimulate that regardless of format.
- Tom will be sure that TEAC members are reminded that public comments are welcome at these meetings.

Jan asks Tom to do the same for CAT. She suggests making accessibility considerations for people without computer access.

Program Updates

Regional Coordination

- Tom: The HB2017 legislation had 2 somewhat similar requests; improve connections between communities inside and outside of the TriMet District, and regional coordination to reduce fragmentation. This committee has addressed these by funding two different program types.
- Funding for services between TriMet and other providers; SMART 2X service is a prime example.
- The committee has authorized \$3 million in funding annually for Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties to operate first and last-mile shuttles via a third party operator.
- Tom displays a map illustrating the services funded.
- There was some advocacy in 2020 to add money to the program. However, the committee decided not to add those funds due to uncertainties around COVID.
- The committee directed staff to begin expanding the program for FY24-25. As a result, Tom has been working with providers to look at their goals and costs. Starting next month, Tom will return with a proposal for the committee to review and modify as they see fit. Many of these shuttles are performing well, with Clackamas County shuttles in particular exceeding expectations.

Human Services Transportation Program Updates

- Tom: The committee has invested \$1 million annually to fund transportation services provided by TriMet and Ride connection for seniors and people with disabilities. Much of the funding is devoted to capital costs and demand response operations.
- This program supplements STF. The STFAC determines where that \$1 million is allocated.
- TriMet has used the funds to replace 19 vehicles during the FY19-21 biennium, and 42 vehicles during the FY22-23 biennium.
- John Whitman gives a presentation on Ride Connection's use of the funds.
- Much of the service from Ride Connection is provided by multiple non-profit partners. Each partner has specific needs.
- John provides background on the origins of Ride Connection.
- Ride Connection's goal is to provide services in ways that TriMet's network is unable to.
- The organization has its own centralized scheduling and dispatch center. They also provide referrals to clients.
- Ride Connection's fixed-route travel training program provides one-on-one instruction on how to use public transit.
- Fare assistance for seniors and people with disabilities is provided.
- Ride Connection operates 4 public shuttles in Washington County using STIF funds. Several of their partners operate group shopping trips for older adults and people with disabilities.
- Ride Connection also provides demand-response door-to-door services.
- The organization focuses much time and energy on partnership development and support. Network management functions involve grant writing, fleet management, training of drivers and volunteers, credentialing drivers, operating the centralized call and dispatch center, funding matches, capital purchases, etc.
- Total STF funding amount: \$6.1 million; total STIF funding amount: \$2 million.
- We will next hear from several Ride Connection partners.

Centro Cultural, Mary Anne Potter

- Ride Connection assists Centro Cultural in operating their Golden Years program, which serves individuals 60 years and older.

- With the onset of COVID, Ride Connection mobilized their drivers to deliver food boxes to 30 seniors per week. Last June, Centro hired a driver to deliver food boxes using Ride Connection provided vans. To date, they have provided over 2,300 meals.
- Ride Connection hired a bilingual mobility specialist, housed at Centro, who works one-on-one with community members to provide transportation navigation in a bicultural manner. The specialist also works with a Centro driver on scheduling, reporting and maintenance of the vehicles.
- Beginning in late spring and throughout the summer months, they plan to have weekly trips to working dairy farms where 15 seniors have land reserved for producing fruits and vegetables.
- They also provide individual medical transportation to seniors.

Forest Grove Office – Deb Bratland

- This office oversees 4 main services; demand-response in Cornelius and Forest Grove, door-to-door rides for the general public in Washington County, WestLink, with 4 weekday round trips, and GroveLink, a deviated fixed-route serving Forest Grove.
- Deb shares a story of a client who started out using Ride Connection's door-to-door service before transitioning to GroveLink through the assistance of the travel training program.

Project Linkage – Marcy Hughes

- The goal of this program is to respond to the unmet needs of seniors and people with disabilities by connecting them with neighborhood resources and volunteers.
- They have partnered with Ride Connection since 1991. With Ride Connection, they can provide door-through-door services.
- They also offer 3 ride-about community shuttles in North Portland, Northeast Portland, and the mid-county area. Destinations are published on a monthly calendar based on rider feedback. They regularly visit grocery stores, community centers, and recreational sites. They travel to destinations well outside of the district such as the Coast and Columbia Gorge. These services foster community among clients. Friendships have been proven to form on these buses.
- Pre-pandemic, they had 80 drivers, and now have 13. More drivers keep returning each month.

Clackamas County Services – Kristina Babcock

- Their services have a 3-pronged approach; a shared ride door-to-door service known as Transportation Reaching People, volunteer buddy programs, veteran driver programs where vets drive other vets to appointments, and senior centers with drivers offering door-to-door service.

Conclusion

- John: Looking ahead to the next biennium, they will be focusing on maintaining current services, and review successes and challenges emerging from the pandemic. Ongoing challenges include a significant labor shortage, and evaluating travel patterns and needs. Ongoing community engagement with seniors and people with disabilities is also needed.
- To visit Ride Connection's YouTube channel, [go here](#).
- Tom notes that Ride Connection's costs for providing demand-response service are significantly less than paratransit costs.

Portland Streetcar – Dan Bower

- Tom notes that while STIF funds may be used for rail operations, they may not be used for capital expenses for rail such as rail construction or railcar procurement.
- Dan: The approximately \$700K annually is used for operations. Early on, morning and evening service was added on the A and B loops. Currently, they are using the funds for service preservation.
- Portland Streetcar has the third highest ridership in the state, and runs through 15 equity districts in the City of Portland. They provide 5% of the total rides in the region.
- Portland Streetcar has 17 vehicles, with 3 more expected to arrive in 2022. They are beginning to replace older vehicles.

- Ramps are deployed across the streetcar network approximately 35 times per hour, facilitating access throughout the service area by individuals with mobility devices.
- Pre-COVID, system ridership was about 14,000 rides per day. Currently, there are about 8,000 daily rides.
- Many riders live in housing units adjacent to streetcar stops. 54% of all subsidized housing in the City of Portland is directly served by the streetcar. 76% of the housing under construction in Portland is along the streetcar line.
- The streetcar turned 20 years old in July 2021.
- Portland Streetcar launched an art on board program featuring artists of color. Four pieces of artwork are displayed on the sides of the streetcars.
- Portland Streetcar-in partnership with OPAL and the Street Trust-launched a Rider Ambassador program. The five ambassadors-who speak multiple languages-are intended to act as non-police intervention to assist vulnerable populations. They are trained in crisis intervention, and are on duty seven days a week.
- The program is currently 3 months old, and is funded through the end of the year.
- Portland Streetcar is in the middle of upgrading the communications and camera systems on streetcars. Platforms-particularly on the west side-are being renovated, and vehicles are being replaced with newer models. They are on track to replace 10 cars by 2028. This should cost approximately \$4.5-5 million per car with a 5-year lead time for purchasing.
- They are currently working on repairing the structure connecting Highway 99E to OMSI Station. The structure is slowly sinking into the soil.
- Portland Streetcar is currently pursuing a half-mile expansion of the NS Line to Montgomery Park.

TriMet Capital Programs (Triangle Funds)

- Tom: We are currently running \$13 million of new service since the program began, but expanding the fleet and operator pool will take time.
- The intent is to transition these funds from capital costs to service delivery over time. COVID has stymied service increases, and the labor shortage has prevented full service restoration and expansion.
- Six Enhanced Transit Corridor projects have been completed, and another four are in progress. These projects have helped TriMet maintain reliability, and customers have noticed a reduction in travel times.
- New bus shelters are being installed. Prior to this program, the boarding threshold for shelters was 50 boardings per day, but HB2017 funds have allowed this threshold to be lowered to 35. 35 shelters have been purchased, and 24 have been installed. We are somewhat behind due to personnel turnover and COVID. The personnel turn-over has now been resolved.
- Money has been set aside for shelter replacement. There has been a significant increase in shelter vandalism, requiring 10 glass panes per day to be replaced.
- TriMet is in the process of designing more durable shelters which are still attractive, safe and useful. The new shelters will be smaller, allowing them to be deployed in more places.
- Additional money will be allocated for shelter cleaning.
- New concrete pads are being funded to allow for easier boarding by riders with mobility disabilities. These pads are relatively inexpensive. The program is now resuming after being put on hold due to COVID and personnel turnover. TriMet staff has a list of locations for pad installation.
- TriMet has 240 digital transit tracker displays, with more coming this year. TriMet pays a subscription fee to maintain and replace damaged or stolen displays.
- The committee has asked TriMet to invest more in lighting, cameras, and sightline improvements. Cameras have been added to 17 locations. They are clearer, and provide an additional 8 views.

Questions

- Victoria: What is the prioritization for siting the bus stop amenity program? Tom: If you recall our equity map, we prioritize our shelter deployments in the identified equity areas.
- Jan: Please think about people accessing and using the shelters with mobility devices. SIDEWALKS have to be a specific width under ADA and state code. Tom notes that the new shelter designs are being considered based on these requirements.
- April: What do the numbers mean on the digital displays? Tom: Those numbers indicate the number of displays at each location. The displays indicate the number of minutes away the bus is.
- Jan: Are the displays being upgraded to improve glare? Tom: the new displays address the glare issues.
- Claudia: Are the e-paper displays accessible to the blind through nonvisual means? Tom confirms that they are not.

Conclusion

- Tom: The goal is to have a plan ready for public outreach by August. In September, the outreach will be reviewed. A final decision will be made on the plan in October or November.
- We adjourn at 9:56.