

## HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**May 20, 2022**

### Attendees

David Bouchard – TriMet

Tom Mills – TriMet

Julie Wilcke Pilmer – Committee member, Ride Connection

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

Committee co-chair Jodi Parker – LiUNA L737

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

Adam Argo

April Bertelsen – Portland Bureau of Transportation

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

Catherine Ciarlo – PORTLAND BUREAU of Transportation

Chris Fick – Multnomah County

Claudia Robertson – Committee member

Dan Bower – Portland Streetcar

Deanna Palm – Committee Member

Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang – Committee member

Dwight Brashear – Committee member, South Metro Area Regional Transit

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

Justin Trubiani – TriMet

Kate Lyman – TriMet

Kristina Babcock – Clackamas County

Maia Vasconez – OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon

Mailee Xiong – TriMet

Mariana Valenzuela – Centro Cultural

Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas – Committee Member

Reza Farhoodi – Committee Member

Washington County Commissioner Roy Rogers – Committee Member

Tangerine Behere

Teresa Christopherson – Clackamas County

Sarah Ianarone – Committee member, The Street Trust

Mercedes Elizalde

Emily Motter – Ride Connection

### Preliminaries

- The meeting begins at 8:31 AM.
- Tom reviews the Webex interface and agenda.
- There is no public comment.

### Plan Schedule

- Tom reviews the committee's work schedule.
- We are slightly behind; Tom has been meeting with TriMet project managers to understand how much, if any carry-over there would be. He has also been working with TriMet leadership so that they may understand the budget proposals for the projects. Extra capacity to accommodate the delays has been built in, and public outreach is anticipated for August.

### By-laws Update

- The bylaws have been amended and are available on the TriMet website. The TriMet Board will take action on them in their June 22 meeting.

### Questions

- Mary Lou: is it alternatives or alternates in the bylaws? Tom: We will change it to alternates, and repost it on the website.

### Proposed Projects for FY24-25 STIF Budget

- The total budget is \$183.2 million. ODOT projects that we will receive \$62.7 million in FY24, and \$65.8 million in FY25. This is \$30 million more over 2 years than we originally projected.
- This proposal has been endorsed by TriMet leadership.

### Low-Income Fare Program

- Transit access grants have been expanded to organizations serving low-income veterans.
- Money has also been dedicated to outreach and a program reserve.

### Questions

- Aron: Is there a plan for recruiting new drivers? Could applications be posted on buses?
- Tom: TriMet has increased the signing bonus to \$7,500, and increased starting pay to \$25.24 per hour. Within 3 years of full-time employment, operators will make at least \$68,000 annually. Employees also enjoy a \$1500 referral bonus for each operator they refer who is successfully hired and retained.

- Recruitment efforts have ramped up; about 200 applications are being processed. A job fair at the Courtyard Portland on May 17 yielded about 150 applicants. TriMet is 50 operators short for the existing schedule, and 300 operators short of pre-pandemic schedules.
- Training operators is a choke point right now. TriMet is working with the ATU to shorten the time that operators must operate bus before transitioning to MAX.

#### Questions

- Mary Lou: Are community-based providers facing this same challenge? Julie: Definitely. The main thing we have done is conduct a compensation study analysis. Driver wages have been increased, and their benefit package is more robust. Ride Connection is paying shift differential for evening and weekend work.
- Jan: Is LIFT part of the low-income fare program? Tom will get back to Jan after consulting with John Gardner.

#### Service Expansion

- \$20 million in FY24 and \$22 million in FY25 with about \$2 million in one-time funding
- The largest portion of the funding is dedicated to maintaining services added in prior years; there is a 7% increase to account for inflation
- We do not know how much we will be able to increase service due to the operator shortage. However, there is financial capacity to do so.
- TriMet applied for and received federal earmarks to expand the Beaverton and Oregon City Transit Centers. Match money will be provided from HB2017 funding.
- The footprint will not need to be expanded, but the curb will be reorganized, allowing for more buses to serve these facilities. Operator facilities will also see an expansion.
- Our Scheduling software for operator signups will be upgraded. The current process is 40 years old.
- More staff will be hired to assist with service expansion and STIF.

#### Questions

- While Commissioner Savas does not speak for Oregon City, he has heard concerns from individuals that parking is hard to come by at the Oregon City transit center. Local leaders in Clackamas County still believe that there will be a need for drivers to park at transit centers, since the area is so rural.
- Tom: The transit center expansion will allow us to launch more service in Oregon City. Additionally, Clackamas County also operates the Oregon City shuttle as part of the Regional Coordination program.
- Parking is being discussed in our conversations around the tolling program. TriMet looks to Oregon City to determine their parking needs, which could include general downtown parking for transit center users and downtown visitors.

#### Zero-emission Buses

- Two years ago, \$30 million was set aside for electric buses. 24 long-range battery electric Gilligs will be purchased.
- \$7.2 million is set aside annually for the purchase of battery-electric buses. TriMet will also be using other funding sources to fully fund the transition away from diesel. Other projects include:
  - 30% design plans for the infrastructure at Columbia Garage.
  - New charging islands to be installed at Merlo and Powell. Power will need to be upgraded at Powell. TriMet hopes to hire a new project manager to assist with this work.

#### Questions

- Mary Lou: Is there going to be money in the future for partner organizations to fund electric vehicles?
- Jan: Is LIFT part of this program? Tom: Not at this time. They just recently transitioned to R99 diesel. Ultimately, they will become part of the program.

- Commissioner Savas: What's the radius that an electric bus system can work? Could electric buses from Powell Garage reach places such as Estacada? He is interested in a bus base for electric buses in Clackamas County.
- Tom: Long-range battery-electric buses can travel 110 miles or more. Some blocks are well over 110 miles. These long blocks could be handled by charging them at each end of the line. Fuel cell electric buses could be used, but they are still an emerging technology.

#### Human Services Senior/Disabled Transportation

- The Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee acts as a subcommittee to this one. The Special Transportation Fund will be merged into the STIF program.
- \$2 million will be set aside for this program annually; uses include:
  - Paratransit: purchasing vehicles, providing service, and upgrading dispatching and scheduling software
  - Some funds are allocated to partners such as Ride Connection and Clackamas and Multnomah Counties.
  - TriMet intends to have an allocation process to determine a final list of projects, which will be presented to the committee.

#### Questions

- Jan is concerned about on-demand paratransit service. She emphasizes the need for it, and is concerned about the level of demand which exists. More funding overall is needed.
- Julie: As we are seeing changes in individual patterns, we are seeing that there is more need for additional services and programs to provide more equitable access. In addition to labor shortages, the pandemic has also decreased the amount of volunteers. The recruitment and retention of volunteer drivers is being revamped.
- Kristina: In Clackamas County, we are turning down between 400-800 riders a month for demand-response services. Clackamas County needs more dollars to buy more vehicles and service.

#### Access Transit Student Fare Program

- This program pays for free transit passes to low-income high school students outside of the Portland Public Schools pass program. The Legislature requires us to spend at least 1% on the student transportation program.
- TriMet will launch a summer pass program for low-income students.

#### Better Bus

- There is some carry over as we wait to pay for projects that have already been set in motion.
- There is a funding match from Metro for \$5 million, which will go towards more construction, design and engineering for additional projects. There is also a request for a staffing position to focus on transit priority and transit center expansion projects.

#### Bus Stop Amenities Program

- TriMet wishes to develop a new shelter design. Vandalism to shelters has increased costs for replacement glass threefold since the pandemic began. The new design would be more durable while still being safe, attractive, and useful. These two-post shelters with a cantilevered roof and more durable glass would occupy a smaller footprint, so that they may be placed on narrower sidewalks.
- TriMet is running out of space where current shelters can be placed.
- 20-year replacement program; TriMet wishes to replace about 700 shelters which are over 20 years old.
- Shelter maintenance and cleaning; funding has been allocated to clean shelters twice a week.
- ADA improvements, primarily focused on bus stop pads, which are relatively cheap to implement; these concrete pads provide a stable boarding area.

- continued deployment of e-paper displays; the higher amount to be spent in FY24 reflects subscription costs to be paid to the company which provides the technology.
- Funding for additional staffing to manage shelter replacement and maintenance efforts

#### Questions

- Jan hopes that the shelter design comes before CAT. She is concerned that some mobility devices may not be able to fit in the shelters; this problem exists with current shelters.
- Tom: We will bring it to CAT. He emphasizes that these shelters will fit at stops where our existing shelters cannot.
- Mercedes: If we do not concern ourselves with long-term planning in the committee, who does? The idea that having something is better than having nothing at all gives us permission to inadequately serve communities.
- Tom acknowledges the work of April Bertelsen, and the agreements between TriMet and the City of Portland to improve bus stops once the City improves sidewalks. TriMet is willing to engage other cities in these partnerships.
- This work has been done on 122nd AVE, and Holgate BLVD is being discussed. April: We are also having discussions regarding Outer Stark. PBOT will soon be releasing a draft plan for improvements to 122nd AVE.
- Mercedes suggests that TriMet be more proactive in engaging other municipalities. April acknowledges [TriMet's Pedestrian Plan](#), which has much of the data which jurisdictions would need.
- Sarah acknowledges the advocacy work of the Street Trust. She would love to see more neighborhood groups take part in the [Adopt-a-Stop Program](#), particularly focusing on shelters.

#### Security

- Expenses are higher than previous years.
- In the past, money has been spent on more cameras, lighting, and CPTED.
- Funding would be stabilized for the Safety Response Team, and their numbers would be doubled from 24 to 48, plus additional supervisors.
- More cameras and staff to monitor them will be funded.

#### Reporting Compliance

- ODOT requires TriMet to audit themselves and sub recipients in regards to how the funds are being spent. This is an un-funded mandate.

#### Regional Coordination

- These dollars fund service on routes on the edge of the District, as well as services connecting TriMet to providers outside of the district.
- Two years ago, there was a late request to expand the program. At that time, it was decided to freeze expenses due to COVID. Tom met with all partners to determine what they could accomplish in the next 2 years. Inflation has been accounted for in these costs.
- Sandy Transit proposes a bus route between Sandy Transit Center and Clackamas Community College via Estacada.
- Washington County wants to expand shuttle options to unincorporated areas north of Highway 26.
- TriMet is asking for funding to expand the trip planner to areas outside the district.

#### Questions

- Commissioner Savas: Is there more opportunity for us to make a bigger ask? This is a big deal for Clackamas. Tom: The committee can choose to adjust the numbers, but this is already a doubling of funding for shuttles. Also, the dollar amounts reflect what the providers believe is realistically possible to implement within the next two years.
- Commissioner Savas: Do you see the shuttle between Tualatin and Oregon City as a Regional Coordination project, or a TriMet service project? Tom: There is money to make that permanent, but TriMet is considering a bus between Oregon City and Tualatin as part of the tolling project.

- Kristina: Washington County has asked for money to provide service on Boorland RD. SMART has asked for funding to provide express service on I-205. Clackamas County has a grant to get that project going, and the Regional Coordination dollars would sustain it.
- Christina: All of the contracts have been signed at Washington County. We are getting ready to move forward, and Ride Connection will be providing the services. Washington County is looking at future routes, and will continue to queue up opportunities.

### Portland Streetcar

- Funding for operations to be increased to \$3 million annually to fund long-term asset maintenance and upgrades.
- April notes that half of Portland's affordable housing is served by the streetcar.

### Conclusion

- Tom: We are expecting another revision to the projected funding from ODOT. We also expect to get an STF funding projection, which we hope to discuss at the next meeting.
- Commissioner Rogers: Silence does not mean agreement with what Tom is saying. We have very specific things which we want to discuss. He asks that less time be devoted to presentations and reallocated to discussion and input from partner agencies.
- Jarvez reminds everyone to study materials in advance of the meeting at [TriMet's HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee homepage](#).
- We adjourn at 10:03 AM.