

Appendix A - Gorge TransLink Alliance

February Meeting Notes

February 17, 2016
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
Hood River County Public Library
501 State St., Hood River, OR

Attending: BJ Jacobson, Christina Marneris, Shamus Misek, Ron Nails, Brent Olson, Norma Pickett, Dan Schwanz; Michele Spatz, staff

Notes for December 2015 Meeting – The notes from the December 2015 meeting were accepted as presented.

Gorge TransLink Alliance Website and Phone Calls

The Mobility Manager has begun keeping a log of the telephone calls and emails coming in via the Gorge TransLink Alliance website's contact info in order to identify any trends that might point to potential service gaps as well as opportunities to clarify our message. A small theme has already emerged regarding requests for public transportation from the city of Hood River to Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort.

CHST Plan Updates

The Mobility Manager has developed both the public and the human services clients' surveys and is beginning to work on the human services and transit providers staff stakeholder questionnaires. The goal is to conduct the surveys in late March/early April.

Connect Mid-Columbia

In coordination with representatives from Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation, regional economic development entities, SW WA Regional Transportation Council, ports, counties and cities, MCEDD hosted the Connect Mid-Columbia regional transportation priorities discussion on January 7, 2016, in White Salmon, WA.

The initial meeting focused on a coordinated approach to regional transportation conversations, beginning with developing a better understanding of existing transportation efforts, plans, issues and projects. Kelly Brooks (ODOT Region 1), Michael Williams (WSDOT), Kristen Stallman (ODOT, Historic Hwy), Dale Robins (SW Washington RTC) and Brad DeHart (ODOT Region 4) presented current plans and projects. Amanda Hoey introduced the regional economic development strategy and intention for enhancing the strategy with our regional transportation priorities and needs. All participants provided input on transportation projects and priorities, advocacy options and modifications to the strategy.

Several changes to the transportation section of MCEDD's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy were proposed and those suggestions were formally approved by the MCEDD Board at its Feb 11th meeting.

The link to the Connect MidColumbia meeting materials and notes may be found at found at <http://www.mcedd.org/services/ConnectMaterials.htm>.

Oregon Governors Transportation Vision Panel

The Governor's Transportation Vision Panel is a yearlong effort to develop a series of recommendations to the Governor that address transportation issues across all modes and regions of the state.

The Panel will have 11 Regional Forums around the state to seek local input and solutions to regional transportation needs and priorities. One will be held in The Dalles March 7th at the Readiness Center for ODOT Region 4 and another in Portland on March 14th for ODOT Region 1. These forums are being held in conjunction with the state's Area Commissions on Transportation and the public is welcome. The Mobility Manager will be attending both of these forums and will collaborate with other Connect Mid-Columbia participants to share the following key messages:

- Advocate for an Oregon transportation package and elevating this issue as a key priority.
- Discuss the proposal from the Port of Hood River on the designation of the river crossing between Hood River and Bingen as an extension of SR35 for planning purposes.
- Provide education on the unique aspects of this bi-state region, the interface with the NSA and that we are a singular economic region.
- Bring forward any policy issues—where they do not align with the federal or state governments, recognizing that this area is one economic region that crosses state lines.
- Bringing a map as a visual representation of the region and its interconnections.

The Mobility Manager will also advocate for enhanced state support for public transit in rural areas such as ours.

Discussion: What Federal, State or Local Policies Preclude Regional Transportation?

One of the results of the Connect Mid-Columbia meeting was to ask Gorge TransLink Alliance members to share their thoughts on what, if any, federal, state or local policies preclude or hinder regional transportation. The meeting participants brought the following items forward:

- Washington State private, non-profit agencies are precluded by law from running full or in-depth background checks (e.g. 10 years back) on potential volunteer drivers who live in Oregon. Funders of the non-profit volunteer driving program require the in-depth or full background check, so this is a problem because the current policy does not meet the requirements of the program's funders. The work-around is that Oregon volunteer driver applicants request their own in-depth background check and then grant the non-profit Washington agency the right to access it.
- It took over a year, and required assistance from Sen. Ron Wyden, ODOT and several regional agency partners, to work through the barriers of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety

Administration prohibiting Grant County's People Mover to take a larger van across state lines into Walla Walla primarily for Veterans to receive medical care under the Highly Rural Transportation Grant. One problem was the Feds did not recognize People Movers insurance risk pool through the Special Districts Association of Oregon. While the risk pool met or exceeded the federal requirements, it wasn't affiliated with the private insurance industry, thus was unrecognized by the FMCSA.

- In Oregon, STF Funds are divided and allocated by County as are 5310 and 5311 funds.
- In Washington, WSDOT funds by allocated by service type – the funds are available on a biennial basis and awarded according to the merits of the requests made for the service mode.
- In Washington, County government may determine the public transportation providers' service area and prohibit crossing county lines to deliver transit service.
- Cities may put regulations and fees in place for non-local or out-of-state transportation service providers to stop within their city limits. e.g. Gateway Transit Center; OHSU. Right now, Columbia Area Transit and the Human Services Council have *informal* agreements in place allowing them to stop.

Provider Updates

Dan Schwanz, MCCOG reported the Transit Center construction project is coming along nicely. The project is expected to be completed and the Center ready to move into by mid-May. It will house The Transportation Network, which is The Link, the Medicaid Brokerage, as well as all vehicles and equipment.

Dan also reported they are having some Ecolane software issues they are working to resolve.

MCCOG is gearing up to hire more drivers in Hood River and Wasco counties to meet the expectations of their contract with PacificSource CCO. PacificSource would like to double the number of rides provided to their clients. Dan is also busy providing trainings to transit staff.

Dan reported The Dalles Transportation System Plan (TSP) update now includes a Transit Development Plan that will assess the need for and feasibility of fixed route service in The Dalles. Kittleson & Associates are conducting the work. The City of The Dalles paid the match for the additional funding required to add the Transit Development Plan into the TSP scope of work.

Ron Nails, Hood River County Transportation District, reported that CAT has hired its first bilingual driver. They will also be conducting a Hood River County Transportation Master Plan which will look at the efficiency and productivity of their current routes and identify opportunities for public transit service along with feasibility and how any changes in service could be financed.

Ron also said the Gorge Transit Study is ongoing and is looking at both a pilot project for this summer to relieve traffic and parking congestion at Multnomah Falls as well as longer range

public transportation options to get both visitors and residents to/from East Multnomah County to the Gorge.

He also noted District staff will be meeting with City officials to discuss downtown transportation as the City is considering installing parking meters on the waterfront and parking fees is a continuing sore spot for local residents. CAT is also hiring more drivers.

Christina Marneris, AAADSW, reported they have started a new supported employment program. The new program includes helping clients get to/from work.

Shamus, Misek, WSDOT, noted that the Grant Program Advisory Committee will be evaluating the last grant solicitation process and will be hosting a series of four meetings to elicit feedback. The 90-minute meetings will be held once/week and Gorge TransLink Alliance members will be hearing from Nicole Patrick, WSDOT, regarding their participation in the program evaluation.

Shamus also reported that Roger Millar was recently appointed Acting Secretary of Transportation for the Washington State Department of Transportation.

Norma Picket, Klickitat County Senior Services, reported that things are status quo with MATS. They have noted an uptick in ridership for their Bingen/White Salmon to Hood River route.

BJ Jacobson, Human Services Council, noted that Medicaid Pilot transportation projects will impact Clark and Skamania Counties. She also shared that they have hired a VISTA to replace Nick Ford and this individual will start March 21st in a one year appointment. The new VISTA will serve Skamania, Klickitat, Wahkiakum and Cowlitz counties.

Funding/Training Opportunities:

The Mobility Manager noted that as Gorge TransLink agencies apply for grants, MCEDD is available to write a Letter of Support.

Dan Schwanz noted MCCOG is going to submit a vehicle replacement grant to the ODOT Rail and Public Transit's Discretionary Bus fund.

Dan also noted he recently completed the NTI Advance Securement Training and found it valuable. Norma and others expressed interest in this training. Michele asked Shamus if this is something we can submit to the Washington State Public Transportation Conference as a possible training session. Dan and Michele will get information on the training to Shamus and he will contact the Conference organizers to submit a request for their consideration to hold an Advanced Securement Training at the September Conference in Wenatchee.

ODOT Rail and Public Transit Division:

- *Discretionary Bus Application Package* – 3 Grants
 - 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
 - 5307 Mass Transit Vehicle Replacement
 - 5339 Bus & Bus Facilities

Information on the discretionary grant applications including eligibility requirements and application materials for each grant may be found at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT/Pages/news.aspx>

All three grants are due to ODOT on March 31, 2016.

Please note, if there are remaining 5339 funds after replacement vehicles have been awarded, RPTD may award critical/urgent capital needs. Use Section E “Discretionary Capital Grant Need Information” in the 5339 Bus & Bus Facilities application to describe in detail your specific urgent/critical vehicle expansion, capital, or facility need. More information may be requested if/when remaining funding is available.

Transit Network Discretionary Grant Program Application Available

Dan Schwanz noted there may be merit in exploring a grant request to expand the The Dalles - Hood River to Portland service from 2 to 3 days/week.

Overview

- The purpose of this grant program is to support projects that enhance Oregon’s statewide fixed route transit network. Successful applicants will make the case that their project either improves the overall transit network in ways that go beyond normal practices of local and regional transit agencies, or will improve one or more “key transit hubs” (see Selection Criteria for complete description). The “Statewide fixed route transit network” is the collection of all fixed route transit service (including passenger rail) that operates in Oregon and serves the general public. Projects that improve a single transit agency’s service without a clearly articulated significant benefit to the overall network are not likely to receive a grant award.

- Approximately \$1 million will be awarded – with a \$100,000 maximum project award. Transit operating projects are eligible for funding under this grant solicitation, but there is no clear path to continue funding through RPTD. Depending on the availability of funding and the outcome of this grant process, there may or may not be another transit network grant solicitation in two years. Applications are due April 18, 2016 and materials for the grant may be found at: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/PT/Pages/news.aspx> (Agreements executed in August 2016).

WSDOT Call for Projects for the 2017-2019 Biennium

For grant information and applications, visit:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/SafeRoutes/CallForProjects.htm>

- ***Pedestrian and Bicycle Program*** – Pedestrian/bicycle safety and/or mobility infrastructure projects are eligible, including design only projects that will result in a construction ready bike/pedestrian improvement project. \$18,380,000 available. While no match is required, priority will be given to those projects with a match. Applications due on May 6, 2016.

- ***Safe Routes to School Program*** – Infrastructure projects within 2 miles of a school and/or local transportation safety programs (education and encouragement activities) serving children K-12 that will improve safety and/or increase the number of children walking and biking to school. \$19,150,000 available through both state and federal funding. While no match is required, priority will be given to those projects with a match. Applications are due May 13, 2016.

2016 - 2017 Travel Oregon Matching Grants Programs

- The program makes awards to eligible applicants for projects that contribute to the development and improvement of the tourism economy in local communities throughout the state in support of Travel Oregon's mission of "a better life for Oregonians through strong, sustainable local economies."

The ***2016 - 2017 Travel Oregon Matching Grants Program*** has \$500,000 available. Eligible projects may be awarded up to \$100,000. An additional \$60,000 of available funds will be administered through ***the Oregon Wine County Plates Matching Grants*** Program that awards up to \$20,000 for wine and culinary tourism initiatives. Both grant programs require applicants to match the awarded grant dollar-for-dollar. Up to 50% of the match may be in-kind.

Additional Grants Program details, including upcoming webinars to further explain the grants program and application criteria, are available at:

<http://industry.traveloregon.com/industry-resources/matching-grants-program/>

Applications for the Matching Grants Programs are due June 30, 2016.

Community Transportation Association of America, in partnership with Easter Seals, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and Westat –

- ***Strengthening Inclusive Coordinated Transportation Partnerships to Promote Community Living - The Transit Planning for All Project***

The purpose of these community-based demonstration grants is to encourage development of an inclusive coordinated transportation system in which people with disabilities and older adults actively participate in both advisory and decision-making capacities. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time on Friday, March 18, 2016. For more information, visit:

<http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=3265>

Announcements

Christina announced there are resources available on the wacfc.org website that Gorge TransLink Alliance members might find helpful.

Transit Awards Management System (TrAMS)

Direct federal funding recipients only will be using TrAMS. On Feb 16th the Federal Transit Authority opened its new transit grant awards management platform. If you were a member of the TEAM reporting system, you should have received a notice regarding this change. Webinar training sessions are scheduled this week and through March 4th. http://www.fta.dot.gov/16260_15775.html

Community Transportation Association of America Annual EXPO 2016 in Portland, Ore., May 22-27.

Subject-matter symposiums, intensive training certifications, workshops, and networking we offer throughout EXPO to hone your skills. Symposiums feature presentations by industry leaders and panels of practitioners. Intensive Training Sessions offer recertification in Vehicle Maintenance Management and Inspection (VMMI) and courses such as contract procurements. Workshops feature focused sessions on topics like Improving Service Delivery and Innovative Operations. For more information, visit the EXPO website at:

<http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=4416&z=140>

Announcing the new National Aging and Disability Transportation Center

Easter Seals and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) are pleased to announce the launch of the new **National Aging and Disability Transportation Center**. NADTC will promote the availability and accessibility of transportation options for seniors, people with disabilities, caregivers and communities through technical assistance, information & referral, community grants, training and outreach. The new Center will also include a focus on effectively leveraging the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act's (MAP-21) Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and People with Disabilities formula grants and other transit investments.

Contact the NADTC: (866) 983-3222; Email: contact@nadtc.org

Follow the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center on Facebook.

Next Meeting:

NOTE DATE CHANGE: Our next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 12, 2016** from 3:00pm to 4:30pm at the Hood River County Public Library meeting room.