

Gorge TransLink Alliance  
October Meeting Minutes

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**October 12, 2016**

**3:00 pm**

**Hood River Library**

**Attending**

Deanna Bisbee, Columbia Area Transit; Rich Eberle, MCCOG; Bob Francis, MCCOG; Sara Mercier, Gorge Tourism Alliance; Dana Peck, Goldendale Chamber; Gordon Zimmerman, City of Cascade Locks; Jan Brending, City of Bingen; Amanda Hoey, MCEDD; Via phone: Shamus Misek, WSDOT; Christina Marnieris, DSHS.

**August 10, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

There were no corrections to the minutes from the August meeting. The minutes were accepted as presented.

**TransLink Alliance Mobility Manager Hiring Status**

Amanda Hoey reviewed the current status of hiring for a new Gorge TransLink Alliance Mobility Manager. There was excellent response to the position opening with candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and skill sets. The hiring team conducted two interview rounds. The first round interviewed five candidates. For the second round, the pool was narrowed to three candidates. Gorge TransLink Alliance providers were invited to participate in the interviews. Amanda stated her appreciation to Deanna Bisbee (CAT) and Arlene Johnson (Skamania Senior Services) for their participation in the interview process. Deanna Bisbee noted her appreciation to MCEDD for the opportunity to participate in the process and provide feedback on the hiring decisions. Amanda stated that MCEDD checked references on candidates and made an offer to the preferred candidate. MCEDD will send an announcement to the TransLink Alliance upon completion of a successful hiring process.

**Service Update and Coordination**

A great deal of new and proposed transportation services is underway. Highlights provided at the meeting included:

- Upper Hood River Valley New Service, Columbia Area Transit. CAT continues to work with MCEDD and Gorge Yellow Cab to design and implement a new transportation route that will serve the Upper Hood River Valley. Deanna noted that CAT signed their ODOT grant agreement which provides the funding to begin the pilot services. She noted that Ron Nails is driving the proposed route again prior to finalizing the schedule. She noted the anticipated sale of a surplus vehicle to Gorge Yellow Cab will assist with the necessary equipment for the joint service to be successful. Deanna discussed the complexities of marketing the service with a public provider and funds (CAT) and a private provider (Gorge Yellow Cab). Suggestions:
  - Outreach to Mayor Blackburn Latino Advocacy Group
  - Discussion on Radio Tierra collaboration between providers. Both CAT and MCCOG anticipate being on Radio Tierra. Both agreed to highlight the TransLink Alliance and continue focusing on connections between providers.
- Columbia Gorge Express. Amanda shared the data from the current year's service which exceeded 30,000 rides. She shared information on boarding by stop and day and the surveys conducted of riders. Rich Eberle noted that he anticipates even greater response in year two. Jan Brending noted her desire to see the service extend

- through October for weekends. TransLink Alliance providers discussed how to leverage this type of interest in transportation and the route to provide better service for local riders.
- Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grants are anticipated to be announced in November. Two proposals in particular would assist with the vision of completing looped access systems:
    - Columbia Gorge Express has proposed an extended route to Hood River.
    - Mount Hood Express has proposed an extended route from Hood River to Government camp.
  - The WET Seasonal Bus is FLAP funded and is reviewing schedule and stops.
  - Klickitat County Senior Services proposed an extension of cross-river services. Sharon Carter was unavailable for this meeting. Amanda Hoey provided a brief synopsis of the service extensions proposed as Gorge TransLink Alliance provided letters of support. The first service extension would provide a route between Goldendale and The Dalles. The second would provide a route between Bingen/White Salmon and Hood River. The proposals will be submitted through the WSDOT consolidated grants process. Dana Peck noted potential concerns related to the Goldendale service and the necessity of meeting employment transportation needs. Rich Eberle requested a copy of the proposal overviews to provide a letter of support.
  - The Dalles- Hood River Intercity schedule is being reviewed by CAT and Link to better match the service to needs, such as those for the Columbia Gorge Community College. A stop was also added in The Dalles to connect to the Transit Center. This opens up greater service to the western end of The Dalles.
  - The Hood River to Portland fixed route service will include an additional day. Deanna Bisbee and Amanda Hoey discussed the factors under consideration for which day and which stops the new service would provide. While the Human Services Coordinated Transportation plan lists weekends as the highest priority overall for new system coverage, only adding for the fixed route is a logistical complication and does not allow other systems (e.g. Link) to tie in with riders from systems outside of Hood River. In addition, the need for access to medical services is best met with a weekday service when medical providers have regular hours.

### **Mobility Management Application- Biennial Funding Cycle**

Amanda Hoey provided the draft scope of work for the Mobility Manager and requested feedback. The providers agreed with the focus on the website redesign and support for regional promotion materials. The group discussed opportunities through an Efare card and highlighted the Everybody Rides campaign. The scope of work will be revised as such: As the project moves into the scope of work for the 2017-2019 biennium, the Gorge TransLink Mobility Manager will engage in the following activities to achieve regional coordination goals and support special needs populations:

- Facilitate regular Gorge TransLink Alliance meetings, continuing and expanding local and regional partnerships to address gaps in service as identified in the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plans;
- Redesign [www.gorgetranslink.com](http://www.gorgetranslink.com) to raise awareness of regional transportation services. Improve the user interface and accessibility;
- Promote mobility options through gatekeeper organizations working with older adults, individuals with disabilities, veterans, low-income individuals/families and limited-English-proficiency individuals;
- Pursue and implement regional and individualized marketing campaigns,

including an “Everybody Rides” campaign to convey services to transportation-deficient populations within specific communities in the region, such as target neighborhoods in Skamania and Klickitat counties;

- Expand the travel ambassador program for outreach to limited-English-proficiency individuals and the growing Latino community in the region. The program identifies Ambassadors, largely in partnership with Community Health Workers, and provides travel orientation, training and workshops with user-friendly information, a regional TransLink mobility resource manual, and key outreach materials in Spanish;
- Support county transportation providers seeking to implement coordinated communication systems, route connections, and increased connections between transit services and high-demand destinations in the region;
- Facilitate coordination among Gorge TransLink members and with external partner organizations to build upon existing transit services in the region - including partnerships between transit providers and ports, healthcare providers, and regional employers;
- Promote commute options/transportation benefit programs among regional employers;
- Support identification and implementation of strategies enabling coordination of services between multiple transportation providers, such as shared training, planning, outreach, and regional volunteer driver recruitment/program management opportunities; and
- Continue to provide technical assistance to Gorge TransLink members in pursuit of funding and resources to stabilize the regional public transportation system.

Shamus reinforced the deadline for applications to WSDOT of October 14, 2016.

### **Providence 2016 Community Benefit Grant Opportunity**

Amanda Hoey presented the Providence Community Benefit Grant Opportunity, noting the deadline of October 14, 2016. She reviewed the priority focus area for 2016 which is directed to Childhood and Adolescent Obesity. Given the short deadline and focus area, Amanda proposed that TransLink consider developing a proposal for next year and beginning to work on that in summer 2017. She noted an opportunity to connect to the grant fund as transportation is increasingly recognized as one of the determinants of health and shows prominently in the Community Health Assessment. There is potential to further support a developing Travel Ambassador program and reducing barriers to use (such as covering fares) or incentivizing use of new transportation services. The Alliance agreed to discuss ideas in preparation for next year.

### **Program Updates/Plan Updates**

The following updates were provided by meeting attendees

- Drive Less Connect: The Oregon Drive Less Connect Challenge takes place Oct. 1-15, 2016. Shamus Misk noted the Washington equivalent challenge of “Wheel Options”
- AOC/ODOT Pilot Project Implementation. The project was delayed for contract signing with the Next Door, Inc. Amanda reviewed the objectives and planned deliverables.
- Coordinated Human Services/Public Transportation Plans. The plans for Wasco, Hood River and Sherman counties will all be completed by the first part of November 2016. Southwest Washington RTC previously completed the plans covering Klickitat and

Skamania counties, so this will give a full complement of updated plans for all entities in the five-county Alliance region.

- Deanna Bisbee noted that CAT is conducting a Transportation Master Plan. Amanda Hoey noted that City of The Dalles is conducting a Transit Feasibility Study as well.
- Sara Mercier provided an update on the Gorge Tourism Alliance and the addition of a workgroup related to car-free transportation options for visitors. There was a brief discussion on the opportunity to tie Gorge TransLink providers and objectives with this workgroup as well. Amanda highlighted the “Ready Set Gorge” site as well.
- Jan Brending provided an update on the Bingen overpass which was funded through the Washington State Transportation package. She noted it would be a long process with construction likely in 2020 or later.
- Gorge Zimmerman noted City of Cascade Locks priorities related to the Bridge of the Gods. He noted that David Evans and Associates had provided a quote to update their City TSP. He also discussed their need for the south bypass road.
- Dana Peck discussed east end Klickitat County transportation needs, particularly as it related to growth of vineyards and the needed workforce to serve that industry.
- CAT provided their new brochures and schedule
- Rich Eberle discussed the Link shopping bus Monday and Wednesday and the need for additional promotion. He highlighted his plans and the opportunities highlighted in the coordinated transportation plan.

### **TransLink Priorities**

Amanda reviewed the priorities listed at the prior meeting which the Mobility Manager had pulled together. She noted that they needed additional attention to reflect regional priorities, the Connect Mid-Columbia process and priorities listed in the Human Services Coordinated Transportation plans. The list needs additional work before it is presented to the Alliance for feedback.

### **Next Meeting**

Amanda Hoey noted a potential conflict of the next TransLink December meeting coinciding with the Southwest Washington RTC meetings for Klickitat and Skamania. Staff will poll the group to reschedule, if so.