

Appendix A - Gorge TransLink Alliance

August Meeting Notes

August 12, 2015

3:00 – 4:30 pm

**Hood River County Public Library – Conference Room
Hood River, OR**

Attending: Dan Schwanz, Michele Spatz (facilitator); via phone: Nick Ford, Arlene Johnson, Christina Marneris, Shamus Misek, Norma Pickett

Welcome/Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm.

April Meeting Notes: The meeting notes were approved with the submitted corrections.

Discussion: Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Legislative Policy Summit

The Mobility Manager shared that MCEDD, in cooperation with the Gorge Commission, Mid-Columbia Housing Authority (MHCA), Columbia Gorge Community College and Mid-Columbia Council of Governments is planning a bi-state legislative summit on September 11th. The focus of the summit is on issues affecting the Eastern Columbia River Gorge which includes Wasco, Sherman and Klickitat counties. The Summit, an all-day session, will address four important issues: Housing, Telecommunications, Transportation and Recreation. Federal and state legislators have been invited to participate in a morning bus tour of the eastern Columbia River Gorge. Following lunch, local officials have been invited to join the group for a facilitated, interactive session focusing on each of the four issues. The Mobility Manager is preparing a one-page handout to share with the Summit participants and asked Gorge TransLink members what they would like brought forward and specifically, what “Ask” would they recommend making? On the Federal side, the group recommended “Support a multi-year omnibus legislation funding FTA transit programs, especially rural transportation, which includes demand response and paratransit [Section 5310; Section 5311]” On the State side, the group recommended, “Continued, stable and increased funding for elderly and the disabled transit and continued consistent support for rural mobility and STF [Section 5310, Section 5311]. The Mobility Manager asked if there was a willingness of the group to support and Ask for “funding a feasibility study to identify human, technical, capital and operational resources to create and sustain a true regional public transportation network.” The group appreciated the vision of this proposed Ask but chose to stay with the request for strong support of consistent and increased funding. Gorge TransLink Alliance members discussed the fact that while operational costs are going up, funding is either flat-line or decreased. Service drives demand and as the number of people served increased, it is harder to sustain with current funding levels. The Mobility Manager noted that the Summit is by invitation only and invited Gorge TransLink Alliance members who are interested in attending to contact her and she will see what she can do to get them an invite.

Discussion: Gorge TransLink Brochures

The tri-fold Gorge TransLink Brochures were discussed. Members like the current format because it is easy to keep each transit service’s information current. Not everyone had seen the brochure and it is something that the Mobility Manager uses primarily. The Mobility Manager will get copies to Christina

and to Dan. In regards to any changes, a suggestion was made to make the brochure less chatty and to include more bullet points.

Discussion: Gorge TransLink Alliance Meetings

The Mobility Manager started a discussion about the Gorge TransLink Alliance meetings in preparation for a 2016 schedule. How often do we want to meet? When, where? The majority wanted to meet every other month or quarterly. There was agreement that one face-to-face meeting per year would be very nice. There is support for a web-based meeting platform as well. The Mobility Manager will take these thoughts into consideration in planning for 2016.

Mobility Manager Update – Michele Spatz, Project & Mobility Manager, MCEDD

Regional Transportation Priorities Education for Hood River County EDG/ODOT

ACT 1 Hood River County Representatives

The Mobility Manager is facilitating a short-term project at the invitation of the Hood River Economic Development Group. Oregon has regional Area Commissions on Transportation that meet and inform the Oregon Transportation Commission. Hood River County has joined the newest ACT, Region 1 ACT made up of Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Hood River County. There are 31 members of the Region 1 ACT and this is the first time the four Hood River County Region 1 ACT members will be going through the STIP process as part of the ACT. In the past, this was the purview of the Hood River Economic Development Group. They've asked the Mobility Manager to provide education on regional transportation issues so they can have a holistic picture of what is happening in the Columbia River Gorge and to be able to advocate for those issues as opportunity arises. MCEDD met with reps from SW Washington Region RTC, ODOT Region 1 & ODOT Region 4 to clarify the process and ascertain current regional priorities. One major issue is there is limited funding for Fix-It, Enhance & Connect Oregon projects. Connect Oregon will include a new approach, one of which will likely be a competitive grant application process.

City of The Dalles Transportation System Plan Update

The TSP update process for The Dalles is to begin soon. The stakeholders group is being finalized.

Mt. Hood Transportation Options Promotion/Outreach Plan

MCEDD received an ODOT Region 1 grant to develop a transportation options promotion plan for the Mt. Hood Express. The Mobility Manager attended the MHTA meeting with Dan Schwanz recently.

Association of Oregon Counties (AOC)/ODOT Pilot Project

The Mobility manager reported she's spent lots of time spent scheduling and conducting stakeholder interviews. She gave a presentation on the pilot project to the Community Advisory Council of the Columbia Gorge Coordinated Care Organization's Health Council in July as they may be a source for additional funding for one of the recommendations resulting from the completed project. The survey tool used and initial stakeholder results will be shared in advance of the project's Aug. 28th Small Working Group meeting. Once the project is complete, the Mobility Manager will give a presentation on what was learned to the Gorge TransLink Alliance members.

Coordinated Human Services/Public Transportation Plans

(Coordinated Plans) for Hood River, Sherman and Wasco Counties.

Under a subcontract with the Hood River Transportation District, MCEDD will facilitate the update for Hood River, Wasco and Sherman County's Coordinated Human Services/Public Transportation Plans. Work will begin in Nov with stakeholder identification followed by meetings with county commissions and the Hood River Transportation District Board in December. The project will begin in earnest in January 2016 with data gathering. The plans will fold in the work done on the AOC/ODOT pilot project focusing on Limited English Proficiency.

WET Seasonal Bus

The Mobility Manager continues to facilitate stakeholder meetings to promote use of the seasonal service. Arlene reported ridership is up 30% for July. Overall ridership is up. She noted she will make changes in the service if it is refunded for years 3 and 4 to accommodate a Dog Mountain shuttle during the height of the spring blooming season, then revert to the regular seasonal schedule. The Mobility Manager pointed out that Arlene will be part of a panel at the upcoming Washington State Public Transportation Symposium discussing the Seasonal WET bus along with Susan Law, of Western Federal Lands. Arlene added that Stan Hall, Friends of the Gorge, will also participate in the panel.

ATC Meeting

The Mobility Manager attended via conference call the Accessible Transportation Coalition meeting held at the Human Services Council in Vancouver, WA on July 31st. Nick Ford presented an overview of the One-Call, One-Click website he is working on.

Statewide DLC Challenge (Oregon) Oct. 5-18, 2015

The Drive Less Connect (DLC) Challenge is coming up soon. ODOT will be moving to online Mode Kits this year, replacing the paper Mode Kits that previously were mailed to requestors.

ODOT Policy Plan and Strategy Consolidation & Alignment Website External Users Group

The Mobility Manager was asked to serve on this group. ODOT Planning is working to integrate eight statewide policy plans, including the Oregon Transportation Plan and associated modal and topic plans. The effort is designed to organize and clearly illustrate policy connections between the plans, encapsulate the movement of people and freight across modes, and provide a centralized online resource (plan integration website) for people using Oregon's transportation policies and strategies. The target audience for the website includes planners, elected officials, local jurisdictions, and the traveling public.

Provider Updates

Dan Schwanz reported that CAT has a new Operations Manager, Ron Nails. He's been there about a month now and comes from the automotive industry. He is fitting in well.

CAT also received a replacement bus for one that was wrecked. The security cameras have been installed at the CAT Park-n-Ride Lot. Dan requested the assistance of the Mobility Manager in working with Deanna of his staff to develop and distribute a flyer to promote the new Park-n-Ride lot.

With regards to LINK, Dan reported the PASS training he provides is complete for this year. He's had lots of face-time and been on the road a lot this summer. He will attend the recertification class for PASS trainers this week-end.

Nick Ford reported that, while his VISTA time is coming to an end, he will be continuing on until early November as the grant manager for the VTCLI grant to establish the one-call; one click transportation resource center. He shared access information to the beta-site for the transportation resource center and invited Gorge TransLink Alliance members to preview it and email him with any feedback. Nick noted there is filler text on the current beta-test site and that in the next few weeks, the search function should be up and running. He offered to inform the membership when this happens. To access the one-call; one-click transportation resource center:

trc.kanaitek.com

Username: development

Password: access

Christina reported the Area Agency on Aging is in the process of completing an area plan. They surveyed community members and agencies and will be using the information gathered to inform their plan. She noted one of the top priorities identified is that older adults and adults with disabilities want to be able to stay in their home and transportation is vital in order for them to do so.

Shamus noted that he's been working hard getting all the new biennium contracts out. He also reminded everyone of the Washington State Public Transportation Symposium, August 23-26, 2015 in Vancouver, Washington. WSDOT partners annually with the Washington State Transit Association, who is host this year, to offer the statewide conference.

Arlene shared personal news that her husband has a rare bone marrow disease and she will be adjusting her work schedule as needed to help him through his rigorous treatment regimen. She asked for everyone's patience in accommodating her need to be out of the office on a more regular basis. In regards to transit, she noted their new Veterans Van is fully functional and has a beautiful wrap. It's already in service. She noted SCPT has to maintain the VAN and keep meticulous records.

Michele reported for Marnene Benson-Wood that SCCT is hard at work toward their next year of funding for their Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Grant. The grant has helped them tremendously with transportation reimbursements which are submitted quarterly. Marnene also reported SCCT has received two new 2015 small vehicles: 1 Ford Explorer & 1 Ford Escape. They are hard at work on preparing Veteran flyers, etc., for the upcoming Sherman County fair, Aug. 19 – 23.

Funding/Training Opportunities:

Complete Streets Program.

The Washington State legislature enacted a law authorizing a Complete Streets Grant Program in 2011 (codified under [RCW 47.04.320](#)) but the program was without funding until the 2015 legislative session's [New Law Transportation Package](#) was passed and signed by Governor Inslee on July 15, 2015. The New Law Transportation package provides \$106 million for the Complete Streets program over 16 years. [\$6.6M/year]

While page 50 of the Washington's [Complete Streets & Main Street Highways Program Report](#) (November 2011) provides some information on the grant program, details have yet to emerge following funding of the Program. We might expect the program to be statewide competitive and Lynda David, RTC understands the state's Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) will be administering the grant program. Cities are expected to have a Complete Streets (or similar) policy in place in order to be eligible for the funding. To be eligible for funding, cities must have a Complete Streets Policy in place. e.g. White Salmon, Bingen & Goldendale have these in place; Stevenson does not but according to Lynda, these can be pretty simple to put in place. The Mobility Manager suggested contacting Lynda for Complete Streets policy templates. Complete Streets funding supports things like sidewalks, bicycle lanes, signage and transit lanes.

Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) Training Program

Offered online through the Community Transportation Association of America. <http://training.ctaa.org>; Offer PASS BASIC Program \$25.00 for CTAA members \$50.00 for Non-Members. There are 6 online modules that prepares students to take the hands on portion of the PASS training; PASS BASIC Recertification Program - \$25.00 for all students; PASS Full Driver Recertification Program -\$35.00 for all students.

Announcements

Washington State Public Transportation Symposium, August 23-26, 2015 in Vancouver, Washington.

Registration open; Conference hotel (Hilton) sold out but overflow hotel is Red Lion Vancouver. Conference Schedule is available online. Ask who is planning to attend?

Oregon Public Transit Conference, October 18-21, 2015 in Eugene, Oregon.

Registration to open mid-August. Hotel reservations open now. Bus Rodeo on Oct. 17th (Sat) new event.

Due to the Oregon Public Transportation Conference, Please note Next Meeting Day and Date

Change: Our next meeting will be Thursday, October 29, 2015 from 3:00pm to 4:30pm at the Hood River County Library. The Conference Line will be available.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:25pm