

Gorge TransLink Alliance

April Meeting Notes

April 12, 2016

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

**Hood River County Public Library
501 State St., Hood River, OR**

Attending: Kim Curley, Commute Options; Arlene Johnson, Skamania County Community Transit; Shamus Misek, WSDOT, SW Washington Community Liaison; Dale Robins, Senior Transportation Planner, SW RTC; Michele Spatz, staff

Notes for February 2016 Meeting

The notes from the February 2016 meeting were accepted as presented.

Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plans Update

The Project Manager reported that Human Services Agencies' staff and clients were surveyed across Hood River, Wasco and Sherman counties. In addition, participants were surveyed at Area Agency on Aging's Senior Meal sites in Hood River, Wasco County and Sherman counties. Meals on Wheels drivers in Hood River and Wasco county also distributed surveys to their clients and collected completed ones.

The vehicle inventories for the public transportation providers in each county and Human Services agencies which provide transportation to their clients was completed. Directors of the Transportation Provider Agencies and their operations managers have been interviewed.

A survey for the public in both electronic and paper form was just closed on April 8th with the exception of Sherman county where participants of the Pioneer Potlatch on April 18th will be invited to complete the survey. The data collected will be analyzed and a focus group of stakeholders will be debriefed on the results and invited to share their thoughts on the findings.

Connect Mid-Columbia Update

Representatives from Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation, regional economic development entities, SW WA Regional Transportation Council, ports, counties and city elected officials along with MCEDD staff continued their Connect Mid-Columbia regional transportation discussions on March 10, 2016 specifically in regards to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2016 update. Important items for the Gorge TransLink Alliance members include:

- The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy's (CEDS) transportation vision is: "Provide a safe and efficient transportation system to enhance the livability and economic vitality of the Mid-Columbia region."
- Strategies to meet the transportation vision were highlighted, noting that actions would be developed for each strategy. Strategies include:

- Coordinate transportation investments to support the region's economies and communities.
- Maintain and preserve existing infrastructure.
- Identify, seek funding and complete priority highway, road and bridge transportation infrastructure projects.
- Improve safety of regional transportation network.
- Increase capacity of regional transportation network with efficient and accessible bi-state transit options.
- Provide modal options with facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

In no particular order, the following ten projects were identified as potential high priorities:

Priority Projects

- Hood River Bridge: Final EIS and replacement
- Cascade Locks Exits/Truck Route
- SR 141- combined projects (Klickitat)
- Hwy 14 (Skamania)- combined projects
- The Dalles Bridge Redecking
- Columbia Gorge Regional Airport De-icing
- Historic Columbia River Highway reconnection
- Bridge of the Gods Maintenance/Preservation
- Expand/realign: Biggs Junction to Spanish Hollow Canyon
- **Mobility/transit projects on the TransLink Alliance priority list**

Gorge TransLink Alliance Infrastructure & Service Priorities List includes:

- The Hood River Bridge – Replacement
- Skamania County - Bus Garage.
- Columbia Area Transit - Replacement vehicles as four vehicles are nearing the end of their useful life.
- Shuttle Service to promote tourism and recreation, an economic driver, e.g. funding for daily bus/transit from Portland into the Gorge.
- Skamania County – Extend transit Eastward from Skamania County.
- Klickitat County – Provide week-end transportation service.
- Columbia River Gorge Region – Additional transportation funding to fully support NEMT (specifically Medicaid) including pharmacy trips; as well as transit to support employment, shopping and other essential services
- Columbia River Gorge Region – Volunteer Driver Program Development
- MCCOG - Complete The Dalles Transportation Facility: Unfinished items include Bus Storage Structures; the Shop; a Park and Ride.

The next meeting of Connect Mid-Columbia is scheduled for May 19 at 9am. The tentative location is Skyline Hospital conference room in White Salmon, WA.

Washington Transportation Policy Committee Updates (April 6, 2016)

Klickitat County Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) Meeting

Dale Robins, SW RTC shared that there was a broad discussion on federal funding streams for replacement of the Hood River Bridge. The new Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act now explicitly includes roads within the NSA. While this was implicit before, the new legislation calls this out. Other recent events include the designation of The Hood River Bridge (SR35 in Oregon; SR14 in Washington) to the National Highway System. These significant developments now open up new funding streams for the bridge allowing the Port of Hood River to seek competitive Federal and state grant funding for EIS, design and construction of a replacement bridge. Dale reported the Port of Hood River may be pursuing a FASTLane grant for 2016. There is an April 15, 2016 deadline for FASTLane proposals.

Dale explained a new provision of the FAST Act that requires states to designate Critical Rural Freight Corridors or CRFCs. Washington state is working on determining which roads it will designate. This is determined in Olympia by WSDOT personnel. The SW RTC is advocating, through the appropriate channels, to list all the bridges in the Columbia River Gorge as CRFCs, with the priority being the Hood River Bridge since it is currently looking at funding streams for replacement. This designation is beneficial as there is some money in the FAST Act dedicated specifically for these freight corridor projects. In Washington state, \$20million is funded for CRFC projects for 2016.

Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) Meeting

Dale also reported that the Bridge of the Gods is now seeking National Highway System (NHS) designation. This process is required by both DOTs and then the request goes to the Feds for approval. NHS designation will open up funding streams to the Port of Cascade Locks to help realize its 10 year Bridge of the Gods maintenance and operations plan. They are in year 3 of the 10 year plan. Tolls are expected to increase either this summer or early fall. [A handout with the proposed toll increases is included at the end of these meeting notes.] Dale noted that TPC meeting participants want any increase in tolls to go towards a dedicated/restricted maintenance fund for the Bridge.

The Mobility Manager, who attended the Skamania County TPC meeting stated that the Interim Director of the Port of Cascade Locks, who was also at the meeting, noted that about \$1.6 million/year is received in tolls for this bridge, of which approximately \$250,000 is spent on maintenance. The Interim Director also shared there is preliminary discussion on the formation of a Bridge Authority to govern the bridges of Cascade Locks and Hood River.

The next TPC meetings will be held on Wednesday, June 1st.

Oregon Area Commission on Transportation Meeting Updates

Region 4 Lower John Day Area Commission on Transportation (ACT).

The Mobility Manager is a voting member of the Region 4, Lower John Day ACT which encompasses Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler Counties. Region 4 is actually comprised of 3 ACTS, of which the Lower John Day is one. At their April 4th meeting, the Lower John Day commissioners reviewed the status of the Enhance grant applications. The Mosier Bike/Ped Streetscape Improvement Project ranked 2nd in the LJD ACT and 4th overall for the entire Region 4 ACT. It's a \$495,000 request for funding. The project made the 150% list and now goes to the SuperACT on May 12th, which is a meeting of two representatives from the three Region 4 ACT representatives. Gilliam County Commissioner Michael Weimer and Sherman County Judge/ LJD ACT Chair Gary Thompson will represent the Lower John Day ACT at the May 12th meeting.

Connect Oregon VI Funding applications were also discussed. The City of The Dalles submitted two projects: The Dalles Gorge (Bike) Hub and the Dallesport Airport Taxi A Rehab, which is phase 3 of a 3-phase project. Upon ODOT staff review, the Hub project ranked 20 of 22 submitted in this category while the Airport Taxi A Rehab project ranked 22 of 24 aviation projects submitted. Neither are looking strong unless the Region 4 SuperACT finds it has small dollar amounts left over that it needs to spend as the The Gorge Hub request is for \$48,930 and the Dallesport Airport Taxi A Rehab request is for \$130,000. The next step is for these projects to go to Super ACT for their prioritization.

It was announced that additional FAST ACT funding is available and the 2015-2018 STIP was amended to include seismic improvements on Hwy 97 from Biggs to OR 58.

Region 1 ACT - (Hood River County)

The Region 1 ACT also reviewed the submitted Enhance Proposal projects at its April 4th meeting. The City of Hood River's May Street Elevated Sidewalk Replacement and ADA Enhancement Project Enhance Proposal is on the Region 1 150% list. This list will need to be refined to a 100% project list, which will likely occur at the May 2 meeting.

The Region 1 ACT also reviewed its Connect Oregon VI (COVI) projects. The Port of Hood River's application for an Aviation and Technology Emergency Response Center for the Ken Jernstedt Airfield is currently tied for 3rd in the Region 1 ACT's priority rankings. In the state modal review, it ranked 8 out of 13 aviation submissions statewide, so we'll see.

Update on Gorge Transit Projects

Seasonal WET Bus

- Arlene emphasized that this year's service has a focus on safety at the Dog Mountain Trail Head. She shared the plan for this season's WET Week-end Transit. To start, there will be two long runs between Stevenson/Carson and Fisher's Landing Transit Center, Vancouver WA. A short-term shuttle will provide a Park n Ride option to the Dog Mountain Trail Head. A Variable Message Sign (VMS) will alert eastbound drivers on SR 14 that the parking lot at the Dog Mountain Trail Head is full and it will divert drivers to the Stevenson County Fairgrounds to catch the shuttle bus service. The start date for this service is April 16 and runs through June 12. Beginning June 18 – September 4, the Sat/Sun transit will operate 4 long runs/day between Stevenson/Carson and Fisher's Landing Transit Center in Vancouver, WA. Arlene stated that USFS partners have striped the Dog Mountain Trail Head parking lot to lend more structure there and that last week-end (April 9), 2 USFS staff members monitored the parking lot. The Skamania County Sheriff's office reported ticketing 21 drivers for going 65+ in the 55 mph zone near the Trail Head that same week-end. She also noted the seasonal transit service has been posted on several trail association and project partners' websites.

Gorge Transit Study

- Michele talked about the Gorge Transit pilot project taking shape on the Oregon side of the river that will provide public transit from Gateway Transit Center, Portland to the I-84 Multnomah Falls parking area. The proposed fee is \$5.00 roundtrip. Similar to the seasonal WET bus, a Park N Ride option is also in development to help ease pressure and address safety concerns at the Multnomah Falls parking lot exit. A VMS will alert eastbound drivers that the Multnomah Falls parking lot is full and divert them to Rooster Rock State Park where Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation is waiving parking fees for those who take the shuttle to Multnomah Falls. The shuttle will be free during the pilot project. Both the public transit and the Park N Ride shuttle service are expected to begin in late May/early June. A near-term (3-5 years out) expansion of public transit services from Portland to destinations within the Columbia River Gorge is also in the research and planning stages.

HCRH Collaborative

- Parallel to Gorge Transit study, this group convened by Governor Brown, is focusing on both the transit options as well as the safety aspects of the Historic Columbia River Highway – particularly at the Multnomah Falls parking area. A safety study to improve crossing from the old highway's parking lot at the falls was recently completed and the results shared with the Collaborative. A private tour operator, Grayline, will begin a transit service along the Historic Highway on Thursdays – Sundays from June 16 through September 4. The service will depart from downtown Portland and two locations in Troutdale then travel the Historic Highway to Horsetail Falls and back.

The Dalles Transportation Development Plan

- The Dalles Transportation System Plan update now includes additional ODOT funding to conduct a Transportation Development Plan. The City of The Dalles approved the

required match for the additional grant funding. The Transportation Development Plan will explore the feasibility, potential service routes and sustainability of a fixed-route public transportation service in The Dalles.

Member Updates

Guest Kim Curley shared Oregon's Transportation Options Plan that was recently adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission. It is the first such plan in the nation. The plan can be found at: <https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/Plans/TransportationOptionsPlan.pdf>

Funding/Training Opportunities:

15 min.

Oregon/Washington

FTA Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant Program (Bus Program).

Purpose is to improve the condition of the nation's public transportation bus fleets; expand transportation access to employment, educational, and healthcare facilities; and to improve mobility options in rural and urban areas throughout the country.

Total Funding Amount Available: \$211 million.

For More Information: Contact Sam Snead, FTA Office of Program Management, (202) 366-1089, or samuel.snead@dot.gov.

Applications are accepted on the Grants.gov website.

Application Deadline: Friday, May 13, 2016.

FTA Low or No Emission Bus Competitive Grant Program (Low-No Program).

Purpose: supports 1) the transition of the nation's transit fleet to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient transit vehicle technologies, and 2) the deployment of technologically advanced U.S.-made transit buses.

Total Funding Available: \$55 million.

For more information on the Low-No Program, contact Tara Clark, same office, 202-366-2623, or tara.clark@dot.gov

Applications are accepted on the Grants.gov website.

Application Deadline: Friday, May 13, 2016.

Rides to Wellness Demonstration and Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility Grants

The Rides to Wellness Demonstration Grants are part of a series of activities to support FTA's Rides to Wellness Program (R2W Program). The R2W Program seeks to address challenges for the transportation disadvantaged in getting access to healthcare, such as getting to the doctor; returning home from a hospital procedure; getting to rehabilitation services; getting to behavioral health services; getting to the pharmacy; and getting to free health screenings.

Total Funding Available: \$5.3

For more information: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/03/29/2016-07008/rides-to-wellness-demonstration-and-innovative-coordinated-access-and-mobility-grants>

Applications are due: May 31, 2016.

Arlene shared that Skamania County Community Transit (SCCT) is exploring a grant submission for ITS, which would allow its operations to be fully computerized. Currently, they use an Access database and write their transportation schedules by hand. The ITS grant proposal would seek funding for the Ride Express product to replace the outmoded system and allow SCCT to communicate with other Gorge TransLink alliance systems, including Klickitat County and the Human Services Council. She is waiting to hear if the state of Washington will be seeking a grant and then decide whether or not to submit.

Oregon:

Federal Lands Access Program Grant

FLAP is viewed as an excellent opportunity to fund some of the solutions we have discussed to help manage congestion in the Gorge. A group on the Oregon side will be meeting soon to collaborate on a submission. FYI, the next Oregon FLAP call for projects probably won't be until 2019, so "waiting for next time" will be awhile out. If you need an application, let me know or contact ODOT regional manager. Total funds available: \$47 million.

Eligible projects include mobility management; health and transportation provider partnerships; technology; and other actions that drive change.

Applications are due July 1, 2016.

2016 Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Program Planning Grant.

Application packet - <http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/pages/grants.aspx>

Applications will be due June 10, 2016.

Award announcements will be mailed in August.

TGM grants are awarded on an annual basis. TGM grants provide planning resources to help Oregon jurisdictions address transportation, land use, and growth management issues in their communities. Proposed projects may be submitted for either of two grant categories.

Category 1 grants relate to transportation system planning (TSPs), either complete TSPs, TSP updates, TSP refinement plans, individual TSP elements (such as bike and pedestrian or transit plans), and safe routes to school-related infrastructure plans. Category 2 grants are to do integrated land use and transportation planning, including area plans, downtown plans, and concept plans for areas being brought into an urban growth boundary.

Eligible applicants include cities, counties, councils of government on behalf of a city or county, and tribal governments. Certain special districts are eligible, such as transportation districts, metropolitan planning organizations, ports, mass transit districts, park and recreation districts, and metropolitan service districts. School districts may be eligible as part

of a joint application with a local government for an otherwise eligible project. Eligible applicants may join together to propose a project, such as a multi-county TSP or multi-city or city-county corridor plan.

Award amounts generally range between \$75,000 and \$200,000. Grantees must provide a match of 12% or more of the total project cost, in the form of cash, staff time, monetized volunteer time, and direct project expenses.

For questions about the TGM grant program, contact Cindy Lesmeister at 503-986-4349.

Washington

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 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>

Michele noted she will be taking a 1-day intensive: Network Design for Small Cities and Rural Areas: How to Understand and Explain Your Community's Options on May 24th.

She also shared that ODOT is sponsoring scholarships to the national CTAA Conference in Portland as well as two others and has cancelled its own Oregon Public Transportation Conference that was scheduled for this fall. In addition to scholarships to the CTAA conference, ODOT is also offering the following two choices for scholarship opportunities:

The Association of Commuter Transportation (ACT) International Conference in Portland, OR, July 31 through August 3, 2016.

The conference website is: <http://actweb.org/2016-conference-portland/>

19th Bi-Annual Pro Walk, Pro Bike, Pro Place Conference, Vancouver, BC, September 12-15, 2016.

The conference website is: <http://walkbikeplaces.org/>

Washington State 40th Annual Public Transportation Conference in Wenatchee, WA, September 18 – 21.

The conference's theme is: *Community Engagement – Local Solutions – Statewide Investments*. Registration is now open. Visit the Conference website at:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Transit/Conference/>

Next Meeting:

1 min.

June 8, 2016 (Wednesday) from 3:00pm to 4:30pm at the Hood River County Public Library meeting room. Michele will conduct a Doodle Poll for a possible Face-to-Face meeting as the Alliance members expressed a desire to meet together in person on an annual basis.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25pm.

Port Report



Commission Considers Bridge Toll Increases ➡

The Port Commission has adopted a revised Maintenance & Preservation Plan for the Bridge of the Gods, totaling a minimum of \$14M in work over the next 10 years. The Port has committed at least \$250,000 per year from toll revenue into a dedicated bridge fund to implement this plan. While the Port does plan to seek state and federal grant funding sources for the largest projects, these grants typically require between a 20-40% match from the Port. In order to address the rising costs of maintenance on the bridge, the Commission is considering the proposed toll increase schedule shown on the right. Port representatives have hosted several opportunities for public input on both the Oregon and Washington sides of the river, resulting in productive dialogue, questions, concerns, and suggestions. The last time the Port Commission approved a toll increase for autos and pickups crossing the bridge was in 2002. A later toll increase in 2014 applied only to large trucks. The Port Commission is committed to keep the bridge tolls low for local residents. There are varying suggestions how the “local resident” category might be defined and indicated during this process. The current proposal would keep the coupon books, and add a “local” window decal.

VEHICLE TYPE	CURRENT TOLL	PROPOSED TOLL
Bicycles, Motorcycles, Pedestrians	\$0.50	\$1.00
Local Autos & Pickups w/ Proposed Decal	\$1.00	\$1.00
Non-Local Non-Coupon Autos & Pickups	\$1.00	\$2.00
Coupons for Autos & Pickups	\$0.75	\$1.00
Commercial & Non-Commercial Trailers (per axle)	\$0.50	\$0.50
2 Axle Trucks w/ Dual Rear Wheels	\$2.00	\$3.00
3 Axle Trucks	\$4.50	\$5.25
4 Axle Trucks	\$6.00	\$7.00
5 Axle Trucks	\$7.50	\$8.75
6 Axle Trucks	\$9.00	\$10.50
7 Axle Trucks	\$10.50	\$12.25
8 Axle Trucks	\$12.00	\$14.00

The Port of Cascade Locks is in close communication with the Port of Hood River to ensure that increased bridge toll rates remain competitive between both port-owned bridges. Once the Commission approves a new toll schedule, the changes could take effect during the summer or early fall of this year, depending upon the Commission’s direction.

The public is encouraged to attend these upcoming meetings to discuss tolls:

- **Thursday, April 7**
- **Thursday, May 5**

Follow the Port Online

The Port of Cascade Locks maintains a website and facebook page in order to provide local residents and businesses access to important information 24 hours per day / 7 days per week. Both online resources are updated regularly to include upcoming meeting agendas, past meeting minutes, job openings, bridge construction delays, budget documents, and a community event schedule, among many other helpful items. If you have problems or suggestions for this public resource, please contact the Port office at 541-374-8619.